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MONEY GROWS ON TREES

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Abstract

Purpose: To introduce the thought of sociologist Georg Simmel on money to the critical and social accounting community and use it to analyse the relationships between accounting, accountability and money.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Exegesis of one of Simmel's major works, *The Philosophy of Money* from the perspective of Frankfurt School Social Theory, and application to current incarnations of accounting technologies. It is argued that in line with the aims of the brand of critical theory at the heart of the critical and social accounting project, understanding money and its valuation may assist in dealing with monetary accounting's failure as a basic human technology to genuinely assist in the pursuit of a harmonious and sustainable existence on this planet, and thus in moving away from a myopic focus on monetary interests towards a more encompassing and potentially emancipatory form of accountability. Insights from this analysis are then applied in the context of environmental sustainability.

Findings: Simmel's thought on money is valuable in understanding the relationship between money and accounting, the course accounting and conceptions of accountability have taken in recent history, and how we might be able to differentiate between prudent and damaging ways of using money.

Research Implications: A need for work to be done in communicating a deeper understanding of money and its value, as well as its potentially limiting effects on the practice of accounting.

Originality/Value: Introduces a prominent social theorist not yet considered in the critical and social accounting literature, as well focusing on a crucial factor that has been conspicuously absent from accounting debates since the beginning of critical dialogue in the discipline: A qualitative analysis of the money form in and of itself, and its potentially limiting effects upon the practice of accountability.

Conceptual Paper

Keywords: Accountability and money, Simmel, critical accounting, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation, Canopy Capital

> Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts – Albert Einstein.

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent scientific (Flannery, 2005) and social (UNWFP; ACF, 2007) inquiry has demonstrated humanity's failure to accurately give account for the world it exists in. Humanity's failure to prudently account and prepare for the potentially dire exigencies its current and future generations face is reflected in the resounding failure of its dominant system of account to match up to its ideal genetic form, accountability. Instead of being used to prudently assist humanity anticipate the basic problems involved in the use of scarce resources on a finite planet, accounting techniques have been enlisted in the service of capital in the guise of modern financial and management accounting, hastening the atrophy of the natural environment, fragmenting social relationships, and reifying individuals.

This paper focuses on a defining element of modern accounting which has been conspicuously absent from accounting debates since the beginning of critical dialogue in the discipline: A qualitative analysis of the money form in and of itself, and its potentially limiting effects upon the practice of accountability. It does so through a (brief) exposition of Georg Simmel's *Philosophy of Money*, before applying Simmel's insights to an investigation of the interaction between money and accounting, and the impact of their union on individual and social existence in the context of environmental sustainablity.

The following section begins by explaining the need for a more nuanced apprehension of the money form of value and its interaction with accounting technologies. Section 3 introduces Simmel's contribution to our understanding of the development of the money form of value while demonstrating its links with the ideological perspective of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory before discussing Simmel's analysis of money's effects on individuals. In Section 4 the paper investigates the implications of Simmel's analysis for contemporary accounting, demonstrating what a deeper understanding of the nature of money reveals about the foundations and practice of accounting under the hegemony of capitalism. Section 5 then applies the insights gained from Simmel's work to (critically) apprehend the latest move to curb global CO^2 emissions – Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation or REDD – recently considered by the 2009 Copenhagen United Nations Climate Change Conference. Both REDD and a project currently being undertaken by Canopy Capital in Guyana practically illustrate some of the issues encountered in a deeper consideration of the relationship between accounting and money and the causative yet potentially emancipatory power of money in the context of global sustainability in a predominantly capitalist world.

2. MONEY AND ACCOUNTING

It is trite to say that ‘accounting’ in the simple sense of giving account or discharging an obligation of accountability is an important social practice, indeed it has been since the dawn of the civilised age (Carmona and Ezzamel, 2007). It has only been relatively recently in its long and distinguished history however, that a particular type of giving account has succeeded in overshadowing the genus from which it emerged. Over the last century this species of accountability ‘has come to occupy an ever more significant position in the functioning of modern industrial societies … it has developed into an influential component of modern organizational and social management’ (Burchell *et al* , 1980 p.5).

Developing rather benignly as a technique to assist the agrarian turn in world history in Egypt (Carmona and Ezzamel, 2007, Ezzamel and Hoskin 2002), today ‘[a]ccounting’s central values are those of profit and rate of return on capital to which both producers and the activity of production are merely instrumental’ (Roberts, 1991 p. 359). Indeed, accounting is considered by some as a manifestation of Adorno and Horkheimer’s claim that ‘[a]bstraction, the tool of the enlightenment, treats its objects as did fate: it liquidates them’ (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979 p. 13). This has been evidenced at several points in modern world history where the use of accounting technologies has resulted in devastating consequences. Examples which spring to mind include the slave trade in the American South, where ‘accounting was used to convert qualitative human attributes into a limited number of discrete categories (age, sex, colour) that could be differentiated and monetized in order to facilitate commercial slave trading’ (Fleischmann and Tyson, 2004 p.393), and the Holocaust, where ‘[a]ccounting numbers were substituted for qualitative attributes of individuals thereby denying them their humanity and individuality and making them invisible’ (Funnell, 1998 p. 435).

More recently, accounting has been used as a tool in the normalisation of war, ‘transforming it from a horrific potentiality to a series of problems to be solved….transforming the planning for war into a routine resource allocation exercise, rather than an insane preparation for genocide’ (Chwastiak, 2001 p.501). It has also been unleashed upon the ‘business’ of modern health care, evidenced in the fact that while ‘[f]inancial controls can make hospitals more efficient… they can also make them less humane’ (Morgan, 1988 p.482, see also Kurunmaki 2004, and Samuel *et al* 2005), as recently illustrated in Australia by the Bathurst Base Hospital debacle.

Accounting technologies have probably played their most conspicuous role however in the domination of modern social existence by the corporate form, with devastating consequences. A quick example will suffice here: In Anderson v General Motors, a case concerning GMs culpability for fuel fed fires in rear end crashes, the following calculation, part of a report prepared for GM management was tendered as evidence:

$$(500 * \$200{,}000) / 41\text{million} = \$2.40$$

In what appears to be an otherwise benign equation the figures represent 500 fuel-fed fire fatalities per year, paid an amount of $200,000 each, apportioned across the then 41 million GM cars on US roads. This "cost" of $2.40 per automobile was compared with the amount required to ensure the fuel tanks did not explode on impact ($8.49), management chosing to save $6.19 by producing life threatening cars (Bakan, 2004 p. 63).

As these latter examples demonstrate, it is becoming increasingly important to include reference to the changing ways things have been measured and valued and how money became *the* representation of value in trying to find ways to make our systems of accountability and our accounting technologies less damaging to social existence and more useful in a new world beset by mounting environmental and social crises (Manicas, 1993). From this perspective, "accounting" is not seen as intrinsically bad (Francis, 1994). Nevertheless, the idea that strengths used to excess can become glaring weaknesses can be seen to apply to modern financial and management accounting which, by privileging a particular conception of value and reproducing themselves in its image, have marginalised (pun intended) all other conceptions of value (Tinker, 1980).

All of this of course may seem to point to the supposed emancipatory potential of accounting via Social and Environmental Accounting (SEA) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as the solution. Unfortunately 'a growing body of research in CSR indicates that corporate social responsibility initiatives … tend to be motivated more by managerial desires to maintain or advance the power and wealth of capital by deflecting potential threats to capitalist hegemony' (Unerman and Bennett, 2004 p.692). O'Dwyer (2005), de Villiers (2006), Moerman and Van Der Laan (2005) and others have demonstrated that 'a conception of social accounting can be emasculated by management and designed to serve organisational as opposed to broad stakeholder interests' (O'Dwyer, 2005 p.292), reflecting the phenomenon of managerial capture and the weight of the (monetary) wealth maximisation imperative in modern business.

In the face of the reluctance of powerful modern institutions to do anything which fails to serve the bottom line, Adams and Larrinaga-Gonzalez ask '[h]ow can such inertia remain intact in the face of demanding calls for corporate social responsibility and accountability? How can so many organisations resist the demands of social accounting scholars? How can they resist calls for accountability towards their stakeholders?' (Adams et al, 2007 p.344). The answer has to be "easily", for '[n]o matter how the bottle is spun our current versions of international capitalism reward and punish, admire and chastise, on the basis of the profit figure…' (Gray, 2006 p. 805), making any organisation engaged in anything resembling real pursuit of sustainability "significantly unpopular" with most financial markets participants, whose concern is focussed, somewhat understandably in the current financial climate and economic paradigm, on monetary as opposed to social or environmental performance.

Neimark asks '[w]hat is it about the structure of our economic system that so often pits profits against people? And why are the former so regularly the victor?' (Neimark, 1995 p.81). The answer is probably quite simply, that many people want monetary profits, so long as it does not hurt them and *their* people (family, friends) directly. Although critical accounting studies have identified what has proven to be a flaw in the nature of modern accounting in its foundation in marginalist theories of value (Tinker, 1980), there has been little research into understanding exactly how we value, why we maintain our preference for monetary valuation above other types in areas where it has already failed, how accounting assists in perpetuating this view, and what the effects are on accounting and society in maintaining this preference (Tinker *et al*, 1982). Such inquiry can assist us in making fully informed, truly rational choices in terms of how we value phenomena, which types of value we should "account" for in the broadest sense of the term, and how we can tailor our conceptions of value and accountability to cohere with the realities of the world we live in. If we wish to prevent any negative consequences arising from our use of money as the central unit of value in accounting, we must phenomenologically examine how money and value appear in consciousness (see also Tinker, 1988 p.167).

Accordingly, this paper seeks to add to accountants' understanding of the raw material of their endeavours, the money form of value. Georg Simmel's analysis of the psychological processes surrounding valuation in his *Philosophy of Money* (1901), and his exposition of money's potential effects bear implicit links to the critical theory at the heart of the critical social and environmental accounting project. In this light, the premise of this paper is that understanding money and its valuation may assist in dealing with the failure of modern accounting to genuinely assist in the pursuit of sustainable existence on this planet. This, it is hoped, may assist in the movement towards a more encompassing and hopefully emancipatory type of accounting where non-monetary values are accounted for and valued more prudently and accurately. Such an analysis meets Hopwood's call to action some 25 years ago: 'Much more effort should be devoted to knowing accounting through its effects…By looking at accounting in action, such a way of appreciating accounting will not blind us to the broader organisational, social and political consequences of the craft' (Hopwood, 1985 p.19).

3. SIMMEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF MONEY

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Simmel states that his aim in *The Philosophy of Money* is to:

> construct a new storey beneath historical materialism such that the explanatory value of the incorporation of economic life into the causes of intellectual culture is preserved, while these economic forms themselves are recognised as the result of more profound valuations and currents of psychological or even metaphysical pre-conditions (Simmel, 2004 p. 55).

Simmel's approach is therefore to analyse the foundations of historical materialism through an investigation of the philosophical and psychological conditions for the possibility of the existence of money. This constitutes a challenge to and avoids the abstraction constraining quantitative analyses of money, reaching uninhibited into the psychology of the "economic actors", the results of whose "economic actions" quantitative thought analyses, to expose the qualitative interaction between money and its possessors. Appreciating the effects money has upon social existence and its interaction with accounting and concepts of accountability, requires an understanding of the conditions necessary for the possibility of the existence of money. These conditions broadly lie in the psychological development of our very ability to value (our valuing intentionality) and the development of the social process of exchange, discussed in turn below.

According to Simmel, our ability to value phenomena derives from the tendency of the developing mind to differentiate its directly controllable self from all other reality surrounding it. The eventual recognition of the nascent self and the objects it wishes to control leads to the awakening of desire within the subject, a conception of desire which forms the backbone of Simmel's theory of value.

Simmel states on several occasions that the psychological process of valuation which is born of desire is a specific intentionality or "vantage point" from which humans view the world. As such, subjective valuations from within the minds of individuals exist in addition to, and do not form part of, the already existing and completely determined phenomena which are subjected to valuation: '…value is never a "quality" of the object, but a judgment upon them which remains inherent in the subject' (Simmel, 2004 p. 63). Valuation is therefore the attribution of worth to a particular object by a particular subject and is informed by, but independent of, the actual qualities the object possesses. These qualities do not change in response to valuations of them, as is shown by the fact that two people may accord completely different values to the same object.

Implicit in this perspective is an important development which may occur in our otherwise rational capacity for valuation. Through the development of our valuing intentionality, we can begin to ignore the basis of the valuation – the object with pre-existing qualities which valuation supervenes upon – seeing objects instead simply as "*values relative to us*". Objects thus come to be valued only to the extent that they satisfy our desire, rather than being seen as objects of value in and of themselves, outside of our immediate relation to them.[1]

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[1] Indeed, it is in contrast to the fundamental view of the world simply as *being*, which perceives natural entities in their "universal equality", that valuation works on objects by "disregarding their place in that series", arranging them in another order "in which equality is completely eliminated…in this series the fundamental quality is not uniformity but difference" (Simmel, 2004 p. 59). So while the very fact that we exist and the irreducible category of being gives us the very basis for our thought, the abovementioned developments in the formation of the subjective mind constitute a new mode of relation to the environment surrounding the differentiated self. This new basis for thought which arises on the back of the already existent structure of being sees the subject arrange objects according to her own criteria of valuation.

According to Simmel, the development of our valuing intentionality leads to the development of a mechanism through which we might gain control of objects and satisfy our desire for them. The phenomenon of exchange, where the balancing of values takes place, in turn provides the possibility for the crystallization of the money form of value, and also hosts conditions which require the mind to place greater emphasis on fully subjective valuation.

The reciprocal balancing of values which occurs in exchange, where one object has its value expressed in terms of another 'removes both objects from the sphere of merely subjective significance' (Simmel, 2004 p. 79). The subjective elements of valuation are "absorbed" by the objects, and so originally subjective determinations of value become converted into objective relationships between things, detached from the subjectivities which created the values to begin with: 'for even though each of the elements in exchange may be personal or only subjectively valuable, the fact that they are equal to each other is an objective factor which is not contained within any one of these elements and yet does not lie outside of them either' (Simmel, 2004 p. 81). The process of exchange thus transforms subjective valuation into objective measurement, dislocating value to a site external to the source of the original valuation and potentially the perception of the exchanged in and of itself.

Simmel states that '[t]he specific characteristic of the economy as a particular form of behaviour and communication consists not only in exchanging *values* but in the *exchange* of values' [italics in original] (Simmel, 2004 p. 80). The same way that our valuing intentionality may come to disregard the object of exchange as a thing in itself through simple valuation in the process of exchange in order to secure the object on the other side of the transaction, the process of exchange and its focus on the equality of values can abstract from the reality that exchange is concerned with *values* to begin with. Exchange itself reinforces the initial developments in the mind, for the exchange of one object for another requires the expression of subjective valuation in terms of an already fully determined object, thus requiring the projection of my subjective value, in effect *into* objective things, and carrying on as if that fully determined object had no worth other than that accorded by my valuation of it. The problem is that my valuation is purely subjective and temporal. In the case of a small time transaction this is a problem my bank account or my pride might have to wear. In the case of more pressing transactions which affect millions of people and the planet these are deficiencies in valuation the world can ill afford. A further danger is that some valuations can become culturally held and transmitted, and the placement of belief in any such incorrect or temporal valuations can result in a distortion in our ability to appreciate value as wholly and rationally as we need to.[2]

[2] The process of exchange can thus have a distortive effect on the truly rational development of our capacity for valuation. Through it, subjective valuation is elevated to a category beyond the strict meaning of subjectivity and objectivity: "In exchange, value becomes supra-subjective, supra-individual, yet without becoming an objective quality and reality of the things themselves" (Simmel, 2004 p. 78). Because value comes to be determined in this supra-subjective way through the demand for objects in exchange, which simultaneously represent a sacrifice on the other side of the exchange equation, "objects balance each other and value appears in a very specific way as an objective, inherent quality" (Simmel, 2004 p. 80).

As such both subjective valuation and the process of exchange can come to overshadow the category of being *in and of itself*, and thus the very non-purposive, non-instrumental existence of objects, people, and nature. Our instrumental rationality, concerned as it is with our purposive control over existence, compels the development of methods of exchange which heighten the possibility of a distortion of our rational capacity to value being in and for itself in its full authenticity. This allows us to fall into the distorted intentionality of judging the value of being *solely* in subjective terms, while believing that we are in fact valuing objectively and in full view of the existence of the phenomenon being valued. This insight is also articulated by one of Simmel's students, Georg Lukacs, who was to become a significant ideological forerunner of the Frankfurt School: 'This rational objectification conceals above all the immediate – qualitative and material – character of things as things. When use-values appear universally as commodities they acquire a new objectivity, a new substantiality which they did not possess in an age of episodic exchange and which destroys their original and authentic substantiality' (Lukacs, 1971 p. 92).

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Exchange begins with the simple, direct process of sacrificing one value for another through barter exchange, what Simmel terms the 'transformation of use-values into commodities' (Simmel, 2004 p. 84). The instrumentally rational capacities of exchangers drive the realisation that the exchange of goods can be more efficiently served by the use of an intermediate element which is able to equate values more easily than disparate goods or values are able to balance each other out. For Simmel, fulfilling this function as 'an institution through which the individual concentrates his activity and possession in order to attain goals that he could not attain directly' makes money the purest form of the tool: the absolute means (Simmel, 2004 p. 210). Indeed, through its divisibility and unlimited convertibility, money is able to effect exchange much more efficiently than would be possible without it.

In the same way that exchange is capable of reifying subjective valuation, money, which 'is nothing but the relativity of exchangeable objects' for Simmel, is similarly able to reify value and its psychological origins, as well as the objects it interacts with (Simmel, 2004 p. 127). To say a thing is equivalent to, or worth a particular sum of money is essentially to allow its purification of anything that is not economically valued, for the second our minds process a money figure attached to an object we may begin to ignore the non-economic qualities of the object in itself which may not have underpinned the original valuation, and begin to think of it only in terms of how much money it is worth, or how much money it will make in the future. In this way, money makes possible an even deeper abstraction from the realities of valuation through the reification of exchange itself: '…money is the reification of exchange among people, the embodiment of a pure function' (Simmel, 2004 p. 176).[3]

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[3] In a discussion of what money represents, Simmel makes a comment reminiscent of Marx's statements on commodity fetishism in *Capital Vol. 1*. Marx stated that:

"It is however precisely this finished form of the world of commodities – the

The importance that money subsequently assumes after asserting its control over fundamental processes of social metabolism leads us to forget that ‘outside exchange, money has little meaning’ (Simmel, 2004 p. 176). In the absence of qualitative reflection on the phenomenon of money, we prevent ourselves from appreciating the potential dangers involved in valuation, particularly monetary valuation, as well as the effects which money has upon us and upon human technologies dependent on money as their unit of measurement.

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Inherent in Simmel’s analysis of the psychological developments underlying the use of money is the potential for a distortion of the process of our actualisation of reason, a potential which has been realised in modernity in the form of negative effects of the use of money.

Simmel argues that although we are ‘accustomed to understanding the dynamics of life, especially where they relate to external objects, as either acquisition…or as the enjoyment of things’, in assessing the impact and effect of money on individuals it is important to ‘characterise possession as an action if one wishes to grasp the whole depth and breadth of its meaning’ (Simmel, 2004 p. 304). By focusing on the acquisition and enjoyment of objects, we ignore the side-effects which objects could be having upon us through the simple act of possession, which is important precisely because ‘…there is a chain from being to having and from having back to being’ (Simmel, 2004 p. 307).

Being a dynamic action as opposed to a static phenomenon, possession entails an extension of the ego (Simmel, 2004 p. 322). Since money in modern Western civilisation is defined by its lack of characteristics, it has no qualities with which to exert limitation upon the ego in possession in the same way objects can (Simmel, 2004 p. 321). Money thus makes possible a new relationship between the subject and the objects surrounding her, defined by a powerful controlling attitude born of the sheer volume of being capable of being controlled by money, and the ease with which this control can be exercised, lending a distinct character to modern existence – money can achieve almost anything. Precisely for its undefined potentiality does money secure for itself a special type of value and the psychological implications which follow, which sees money become an end in itself, pursued in greater and greater quantities for the increased instrumental freedom

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money form – which conceals the social character of private labour and the social relations between the individual workers, by making those relations appear as relations between material objects, instead of revealing them plainly” (Marx, 1990 pp.168-169).

Similarly, Simmel notes that money exists

“in a realm organised according to its own norms which is the objectification of the movements of balancing and exchange originally accomplished by objects themselves. However, this is only a preliminary view… it is not the objects but the people who carry on these processes, and the relations between the objects are really relations between people. The activity of exchange among individuals is represented by money in a concrete, independent, and, as it were, congealed form” (Simmel, 2004 p. 176).

it provides in relation to objects, regardless of whether that money is actually used in exchange or not and valued on par with other objects which it was originally designed merely to facilitate the exchange of.

This seizing upon objectified value by our valuing intentionality itself represents a deformation in the development of our rational valuing capacity, as it permits the pursuit of the ultimate means as if it were an ultimate end. According to Simmel, this development is inherent in the very structure of the valuing intentionality within our minds; money is able to be valued 'because the sense of value has nothing to do with the structure of things…valuation does not strictly adhere to its logical boundaries but evolves liberally beyond the objectively justified relations to things' (Simmel, 2004 p. 228). In this way, we come to value the money form of value itself, valuing the means as if it were an end for its ability to embody our desire for control over being.

The problem with the elevation of money to the status of an ultimate end leads to the degradation of other ends which become a mere means to the attainment of greater quantities of money, and the ignorance of the fact that while we may think we control money, it is able to exert real power over us and our psychology: 'countless things that are really ends in themselves are thereby degraded to mere means' (Simmel, 2004 p. 431).

With money's ascension to the status of an end in itself we see a corresponding increase in the permeation of money into the lives of individuals. With more and more elements of life becoming tied to money and its pursuit, what comes to matter the most is the defining quality of money, its quantity: 'with reference to money, we do not ask what and how, but how much' (Simmel, 2004 p. 259). This is carried to exponential heights when an instrumental intentionality leaves no chance for a limitation on our desire for money (Simmel, 2004 p. 251). Money thus represents the "perfect science" – the reduction of qualitative determinations to quantitative ones (Simmel, 2004 p. 277).

This leads to our interaction with money demanding 'a certain kind of rationalism, based on exact, precise, and rigorous measurement of calculable magnitudes'. (Harvey, 1989 p.170) Requiring the interaction with money it does (with individuals, professions, and societies alike being immersed in the analysis of the interaction of abstract quantities represented by money), life in a money economy encourages the hypertrophy of the calculative capacities in the human mind, whose 'cognitive ideal is to conceive of the world as a huge arithmetical problem, to conceive events and the qualitative distinction of things as a system of numbers' (Simmel, 2004 p. 444).

This constant use of the mind to perform quantitative calculative operations leads to the development of a mind the strength of which lies in its ability to abstract and reorder according to predetermined characteristics. The problem here is that this mental ability comes to spill over into other spheres of life not properly reducible to quantification in calculable terms, or as Simmel puts it, this 'entails as a necessary logical consequence the invitation to us not to restrain ourselves in those spheres of life in which money predominates … for no other reason than because this guiding principle is logically the simplest, the closest at hand' (Simmel, 2004 p. 441). The functions and operations which the mind is made to perform in the course of everyday life form an instrumental mode of interaction with existence which becomes "natural" to the psyche over time, and which finds itself referring to that instrumentally dominated intentionality in a growing number of personal decisions, with the effect that life becomes more calculated, intellectual, and potentially less emotionally driven. The effect of this atrophy of the emotional elements of character is that more and more room is made for the development of further intellectual functions and abilities, reducing our propensity for full emotional responses, money thus perpetuating its hold upon "reality" (Simmel, 2004 p. 429).

Indeed, this concentrated and specialised intellectuality spilling over from dealing with money culminates in the calculating character of modern times in a capitalist economy (Lukacs, 1971 p.96). A cool, prevalently cognitive frame of mind comes to characterise individual psychology and thus societies where minds are exposed to such functions. Money can thus be seen to create the possibility for the concealment of its own effects from the mind, which comes to see a calculative orientation to reality as normal, and any other relation to the world as not fully "rational". Such an orientation towards existence reduces the mind's interest in grasping existence in its non-quantitatively reducible totality, thus reducing the possibility that individuals and entire societies will exercise their full freedom and non-instrumental capacities in attempts to reach their full human potential.

Representative of this individualisation and intellectualisation of existence is the character of work arrangements in a money economy, which are defined by the division of labour. The division of labour developed to its present form only through the use of money to constitute payment for labour, allowing specialisation to sustain the worker. If a worker continued to be paid in kind as a proportion of the fruits of her labour, her work would not be able to be divided, for producing one particular product or part of it could not sustain her existence. Although the division of labour would have existed prior to money in early societies, money's role here is that it 'makes possible the evaluation of very specialised tasks, and without their conversion into a general value they could hardly arrive at mutual exchange' (Simmel, 2004 p. 477). Indeed, the drive for specialisation can be traced to the growing calculative instrumental orientation to reality and existence which decrees that more efficient and effective production can be achieved through specialisation, illustrated in Smith's classic example of the pin factory. (Smith, 1904 para I.1.3).

Given here in this self-reinforcing structure of the division of labour in contrast to other methods of work organisation, is the separation of ownership of the means of production from the worker. What is concealed however, is that work itself has also come to be separated from the worker to the extent that labour has become a tradeable commodity: 'The fact that labour now shares the same character, mode of valuation and fate with all other commodities signifies that work has become something objectively separate from the worker, something that he not only no longer *is*, but also no longer *has*'(Simmel, 2004 p. 456). Simmel highlights his point here by contrasting products of the division of labour with works of art, which cannot be produced in this fashion with any real success

(Simmel, 2004 p. 454). He concludes similarly to Smith that the specialised activity which defines the division of labour serves to stunt the growth of the personality, for energy is directed outwards into specialised repetitive tasks which cannot possibly develop the personality. In the quest for efficiency through the division of labour, humans themselves are treated as objects by other humans, forced to act as if they were mere integuments of productive potential to be controlled. Indeed, 'it becomes more and more plausible for the worker to consider his work and its effect as purely objective and anonymous, because it no longer touches the roots of his whole life system' (Simmel, 2004 p. 455). Such modes of thought and existence ignore the possibility that work can be an important avenue for self expression just as property and money have become in modernity.

In the developed division of labour Simmel has identified a form of life made possible by money which has robbed man of an essential natural relationship to existence through life fulfilling, self actualising work. What money has made possible through the division of labour is the increased distance between the mind and an essential metabolic function and purpose in life – work, an institution which in its ideal form, is able to develop real individuality and strength of character, and allow the expression of their human potentialities and life energies more wholly.

Having given this brief exposition of Simmel's major ideas in his *Philosophy of Money* including the conditions for the possibility of the existence of money and some of the more relevant psychological effects of its use, it is now possible to use Simmel's insights to investigate the interactions between money and accounting in modernity.

4. ACCOUNTING AND MONEY

Simmel's analysis suggests that the process of exchange itself results in a reification of the abstractions already made manifest by the subjective process of valuation. This constitutes a distortion of our valuing capabilities, a phenomenon which is amplified when money is inserted into the process.

Amongst this interplay of reifying forces,accounting steps in and performs an operation akin to a modern mass production line, by converting the raw material of acts of exchange from discrete transactions into "relevant, reliable, timely and useful financial information". In other words, accounting takes the reification performed by exchange and money and adds a further level of abstraction through the collation and aggregation of phenomena already reified by valuation, exchange and monetarisation.

This heightened form of the reification of value and valuation amplifies money's power, as these aggregated figures which discipline many varying types of information are then used to measure and dictate the future direction of all manner of phenomena including human existence and the fate of the planet. By precisely defining and accounting for the movements of specific types of money (indirect costs, direct costs, prime costs, conversion costs, variable costs, fixed costs, semi-variable costs, committed costs, discretionary costs, controllable and uncontrollable costs, product costs, prime costs (see Bourguignon (2005) for a discussion of the different types of "value" within management accounting), and by adopting money as its only "real" or "meaningful" measure of value, modern accounting reinforces the idea that money is *the* measure of value for the purposes of decision making, and by omission, that other types of important information relating to the value in phenomena are irrelevant. Financial reporting ignores, indeed obscures from view the importance of real elements of the lifeworld which exceed the boundaries of, and are unable to be contained within monetary amounts. Such elements inevitably fail to be taken into "account" in decision-making, leading Gray to quip: 'conventional accounting as we know it intentionally excludes almost anything that might be thought of as wonderful, aspirational or desirable in the human condition…Accounting produces a social construction of a world of precision and accuracy, of measurement and rationality, of bleakness and inhumanity'. (Gray, 2006 p. 798)

Accountability, through the modern practice of accounting, has thus become ensnared in the reifying milieu of modern capitalist existence, completing an inversion and becoming a tool for that which was to be *its* tool of measurement (Ezzamel and Hoskin 2002). Accounting becomes a vehicle through which to hyper-rationalise the movements of money between interested parties, and thus provide opportunities for them to generate more and more quantities of money. Through accounting, money has elevated itself to a new status – the ultimate arbiter of value, the matter from which all accounting reports are constructed and which is used to make decisions – the crux of our conception of accountability, that to which we are responsible for all our endeavours.

Using Simmel's approach to the fundamental raw material which accounting works with we can see the situation from another angle. By understanding the effects money has on the mind, we can determine the extent to which accounting reinforces money's negative effects upon society through its continued and developed use of money as its alphabet, its unit of account, more clearly than if we had analysed accounting in isolation.

As noted above a significant degree of money's power comes from its undefined potentiality, and the extension of the ego it grants its users. Through its ability to rationalise huge amounts of transactions and communicate aggregated monetary amounts, modern financial accounting allows the mind to enter new realms of power and control which would not be accessible to it without a rational, dependable, reliable, comparable calculus for the quantification of qualitative actions. This results in a heightening of the controlling attitude imparted by money to existence in a money economy, with huge amounts of money being available for the digestion and control of more and more people as simple numbers on a financial statement or management accounting report.

This has not been a unidirectional phenomenon – the monetary appropriation of accounting techniques has served to increase the depth and breadth of calculation of monetary figures throughout society by reinforcing it as *the* unit of account. The problem with this, apart from the fact that accountability has been appropriated and redefined by monetary interests in its image, is that the development of the calculative functions which money alone encourages in the mind are exponentially increased when introduced to accounting technologies. This results in a further debasement of fully rational and emotional responses to other humans and nature, human intentionality being consumed by more and more financial information and correspondingly more ways of performing calculations upon it. These heightened intellectualised modes of existence and thought driven by numeric representations of reality are causative of the atomization of individuals in societies the world over. This problematic potential of the use of accounting to forsake its grounding ethos in accountability and don a new cloak privileging financial interests was sensed by Schumpeter when he wrote:

> Once hammered in, the rational habit spreads…capitalist practice turns the unit of money into a tool of rational cost-profit calculations, of which the towering monument is double entry bookkeeping . . . primarily a product of the evolution of economic rationality, the cost-profit calculus in turn reacts upon that rationality; by crystallizing and defining numerically, it powerfully propels the logic of enterprise. And thus defined and quantified for the economic sector, this type of logic or attitude or method then starts upon its conqueror's career subjugating - rationalizing - man's tools and philosophies, his medical practice, his picture of the cosmos, his outlook on life, everything in fact including his concepts of beauty and justice and his spiritual ambitions. (Schumpeter, 1950 p. 123-4).

A serious effect of this fusion has been the impact of accounting upon the world of work in the service of capitalism and money. With money first allowing the potential for the division of labour to become the dominant mode of production by making payment in terms other than the product produced feasible, the efficiency paradigm of the division of labour has been taken as gospel by management accounting practices, with Tayloristic work management processes dominating work and the opportunities for development it used to provide the worker. Indeed, accounting's reinforcement of money as the central measure of value has seen the commodification of all manner of phenomena, including humans, even accounting and finance professionals (Tinker and Koutsoumadi, 1997 p.455).

The reduction of people and their interests to their monetary relations also marks the destruction of many of the relationships which have historically sustained humankind. Nevertheless, with the help of accounting, money has made possible new "relationships", or more accurately, new "associations" devoid of any content bar monetary relations: 'Money is the ideal representative of such a condition since it makes possible relationships between people but leaves them personally undisturbed' (Simmel, 2004 p. 303). We can see this phenomenon at work in general interest groups, as well as in groups with specifically economic purposes and relations: 'The money form of equivalents makes individual relations with the outside world and entrance into unfamiliar groups that are interested only in the money value of tasks or the money contributions of their members more easy'. (Simmel, 2004 p. 477)

An important development out of this unique capability of money is to unite otherwise disparate people in the pursuit of money related goals, which has had profound consequences for our world in terms of economic development and globalisation. The primary example of this in modern Western civilisation is the business corporation ‘whose shareholders are united solely in their interest in the dividends, to such an extent that they do not even care what the company produces’ (Simmel, 2004 p. 343). This has been crucial for the development of capital markets worldwide, which only require the decision of the owner of money to place their money in the hands of the management of a company, or even more distantiated, with a portfolio manager, whereupon it assumes a life of its own according to its own norms, and returns to the owner in multiplied (or diminished) form. This worldwide focus upon money and its growth sees a corresponding increase in money’s determination of the daily existence of people all around the world, distorting our chance for emancipation from the instrumental rationality which money dictates, and deforming the development of our objectively possible standards of reason. The possibility of the combination of many participants’ capital made possible by money only became a feasible option for widespread use with the development of accounting methodologies which could track injected capital, account for its growth and movement, and finally its return to owners (Cf Bryer, 1993, 2000).

Especially important here is the concealment of the fact that the bringing together of these “owners” fails to allow the importation of any moral restraint, leaving the company’s management to pursue profit by whatever means, through the constant movement of money around the economy in pursuit of money related goals. By allowing the possibility for new types of reified relationships between individuals to come into existence, money has been instrumental in the replacement of previously existent forms of relation with objectively driven “associations”, distantiated from the humanity of the individuals involved, reducing the chances of successful cooperative self-actualisation of those who have allowed the deformation in rationality which money drives to take hold. Indeed, it has appeared to be a natural development that ‘because of its indifferent nature, money is the most suitable bridge and means of communication between many and diverse people’ (Simmel, 2004 p.505).

The effect of the modern corporate form, enabled as it is by accounting, on the planet’s trajectory over the last century has been unmistakeable, indeed, it has been a study in the pre-eminence of money, and the manipulation of it in and through accounting, which have come to dominate the decision making capabilities of human agents: ‘Keynes, for example, wrote that under the peculiar logic of accountancy, the men of the nineteenth century built slums rather than model cities, because slums paid’ (Tinker et al, 1982 p.190). These operations appear normal in the modern world, with the corporate vehicle able to push these behaviours to their exponential heights only through the use of accounting technologies

The instrumental rationality which the continual use of money develops in the mind further reinforces purposive attempts to dominate nature, and not only in the quest for self preservation as was originally the case in the development of our rational capacities. Under a money economy nature has been seen as a vehicle for profit and the multiplication of the money form of value. While human imagination and technology has the potential to free nature and humanity from these effects, money, while reinforcing our instrumental attitude towards nature, provides a powerful tool in exercising our domination over it through the misuse of technology, usually for greater profits. Money has been instrumental in distantiating humanity from nature, the life force which creates the possibilities for our very existence and the pursuit of profits, even if it means the complete degradation of the environment as the basis of our continued existence as a species. In allowing money to distantiate us from nature in these ways, a project financial and management accounting have until recently at best only assisted, we further detrimentally impact upon our chances for successful human flourishing as we lose our connection with the Earth, other people, and ourselves, as we all form part of nature. (Hines, 1991)

Money's interaction with accounting denotes the deformation of objectively possible standards of reason concerning the equitable and effective allocation of resources in society, whereby a set of techniques for the more just and socially effective tracking and allocation of resources has been hijacked to serve particular partial interests (i.e corporations and profits) rather than serving the entire global community and future generations. As the preceeding discussion demonstrates, as a technology which 'is primarily about rendering everything into monetary terms, whether the exercise makes sense or not' (Courtis, 1993 p. 42) accounting has been appropriated by monetary interests and the profit motive and is complicit in the continued hegemony of these interests in society and the minds of individuals, serving to reinforce money as modernity's supreme arbiter of value. It also appears that money and the value actively placed upon it by society, especially by individuals who use accounting information, actively impedes other important types of value (social, environmental, human) from competing with it in major decisions usually faced by corporations and governments. The result is that not only accountants, managers using accounting information and those who focus on working with money and its growth, but humanity as a whole suffer from the continued privileging of money and monetary interests, along with the natural environment which has become a major victim of increases in wealth which have a direct correlation to an increase in unsustainable consumption patterns.

How do we remedy the negatives occasioned by the interaction between money and accounting? '[D] we need new accounting or less of it? What would such a reconstituted accounting look like? How would other dimensions of corporate activity need to change to facilitate accounting innovation?' (Power, 1992 p. 493) Rejecting accounting completely is not likely to be the best alternative – as a powerful developed form of rationality, accounting and its tools can help us manage our activities for the improvement of the planet and human relations within it. As noted by Roberts, it appears '[t]he practical task is to recover accountability from the exclusive and apparently mesmeric grip of Accounting…' (Roberts, 1991 p.367).

5. REDD AND CANOPY CAPITAL

The current environmental imperative, addressing global warming, may be an opportunity to do just that – instil or recover a deeper, more prudent, wholistic sense of account in contrast to the mesmerising yet ephemeral short term prospects offered by modern financial and management accounting. Somewhat ironically however, it may have to be done through the use of money.

Global debate around this issue has focussed on the need to reduce carbon emissions to prevent an increase in global warming – evidence exists to the effect that the Earth will experience couple of degrees of continued warming if CO^2 levels continue to rise, and even possibly if they are held steady meaning that even maintaining the status quo could unleash catastrophic effects on the planet (Pagani et al, 2009).

In countering the threat posed by atmospheric carbon emissions, attention has turned to the effects of deforestation, which accounts for a significant chunk of global carbon emissions, 17% of global emissions on some reports, more than entire global transportation sector (The Commission on Climate and Tropical Forests, 2009).

BIO101: Through the process of photosynthesis, plants inhale and store CO^2, using light to transform it into organic compounds while exhaling oxygen, meaning that forest preservation is essential to carbon absorption in the future – once a forest is cut down or burnt, carbon is liberated into the atmosphere.

Of course, this has led to groups already (subjectively) valuing this inherent and untapped source of value in the forests seeing it as something which can be bought and traded to justify maintaining current levels of industrial carbon emissions. What were once seen as the great lungs of the earth – the forests of Brazil, Indonesia, Congo and Papua New Guinea are now being dubbed “carbon sinks”, devices which may be used to generate carbon credits equivalent to emissions saved through deforestation avoidance, credits which could be sold to industrialised nations which need to meet emissions targets.

This works very well for the global North – carbon credits would be cheaper to purchase from the developing world where it is less expensive to cut emissions, presenting a source of cheap offsets to industrialised nations – and in a monetary sense also for global South countries with forests “worth” protecting. Nevertheless, critics maintain that any carbon trading system to emerge from the plan known as REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation) will merely be a mechanism to allow developed countries to avoid reducing their own emissions by buying cheap international offsets. Buying credits in this way may suit certain companies on a subjective (shareholder-centric) cost-benefit approach, though it could also lead to less money being invested in emission reduction technologies and renewable energy, meaning that longer term sustainability could still be in danger, and that the problem is being put off to a later date.

At the December 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference (the Copenhagen summit or COP 15) no conclusion was made on a global financial framework for REDD. The Copenhagen accord which emerged from the meeting itself is not legally binding, but has been billed as a first step towards stronger agreement to be negotiated in late 2010, though it did receive criticism that it was not focused on

> real solutions to restore hundreds of years of natural resource destruction, nor is it about the creation of socially and ecologically sound production and consumption systems. System change is not on the agenda. Instead there is an obsession with carbon. The entire focus seems to be on financing an energy agreement and mechanism to create a transition through carbon markets. (Pressend, 2009)

Even if a REDD approach were to be taken, several practical difficulties surround the idea, including ensuring that a REDD forest remains standing long term and in the face of illegal logging and potential destruction through fire. In addition to corruption and the effects of any such project on indigenous inhabitants, issues surrounding conceptualisation also beset the project, for what defines a forest worthy of the REDD tag? Untouched jungle, regrown forests, new plantations, any or all of the above? What if forests were never in danger of being felled anyway, or if logging simply moves to another region? This would necessitate the development of indicators to measure the quality of forest governance: ‘To make it work, it is necessary to understand how fast deforestation has been occurring, find a dependable way to measure how fast its happening now – think satellites – and to then ensure that any forests protected from logging remain that way’ (Breusch, 2009). In response to these challenges, REDD+ has been developed, going a step further than REDD and considering the national policy changes needed to implement the plan, more specifically, enacting reforms in such areas as land tenure, forest monitoring, and governance (CIFOR, 2009).

The most important issue surrounds how accurately forest carbon emissions absorption can actually be measured. Without agreement on the measurement, reporting and verification of emission reduction schemes any market in carbon credits would be seriously flawed. In the face of this particular uncertainty we have to ask a serious question – do we book the value of this extraordinary, previously unrecognised asset on the global balance sheet as a wildcard asset or sell it off to carbon emitting industries without knowing what it is really worth, and take the monetary revenue without knowing the true environmental cost?

We must beware the potentially false economy of saving current levels of economic growth and living standards to the potential detriment of the planet if our accounting for emissions absorption is flawed. Greenpeace’s Senior Climate Advisor Charlie Kronick sees carbon offsetting as

> [t]aking a dodgy accounting proposition, which is that you can somehow identify the amount of carbon that any given new bit of forest picks up out of the atmosphere and sequesters, and make that correspond somehow to emissions elsewhere … It can't be done. The methodology is poor, and the logic isn't very good either. Once the carbon you've put in from fossil fuels is up there, nothing is going to make it go away (Morris, 2009).

This criticism goes to the heart of the idea of REDD, as it questions the ability of the plan to achieve what it says it will – adequately deal with CO^2 emissions. But while the politicking and issues relating to REDD appear far from over, private enterprise has jumped onto the potential of selling carbon credits through deforestation prevention. A more advanced example is that of the Iwokrama forest in Guyana. In March 2008 the government of Guyana sold a license to Canopy Capital, a UK based finance company, to study and market "ecosystem services" provided by the forest. These services come about via the mere existence of the forest, which generates oxygen and rainfall, prevents flooding, regulates the soil, cleans and stores water, protects biodiversity and stores carbon. The idea is to develop a financial instrument out of these services to be sold to investors. Nobody currently pays for these "services", though in their absence the provision of substitutes is difficult and expensive. This has prompted entrepreneurs to see the forest as 'a giant public utility' (Andrew Mitchell, founder and Director of Canopy Capital). The conceptualization of the problem is that the inaccuracy in the valuation of forest services (think the price of wood or cleared land versus essential ecosystem services) is what needs to be remedied through "proper" valuation. Hylton Murray-Phillipson, another director of Canopy Capital states '[m]oney is a means to an end, not an end in itself…If we collectively want forests to continue to exist, we will have to begin paying for them', and that means putting a monetary price on them.

President of Guyana Bharrat Jagdeo explains that '[t]he emerging carbon market provides us with a unique opportunity to use the global economy to save the world's rainforests by putting a value on them.' This has been termed eco-blackmail – for without monetary incentives, loggers would be allowed to take advantage of the forests. Logically however, this plan certainly makes sense – without monetary incentives, what is to stop the Guyanan people from using this natural resource however they like? While this monetarisation appears inevitable, and really just a recognition of and substitution for existing monetarisation of the forest, the more difficult question for accounting, money and accountability to answer is who pays for this protection of the forests, and what do we do with the benefits received? While traditional accounting for forests and trees fits the framework developed above for understanding Simmel's take valuation and money, how does this "new" plan fare?

Historically forests have not been valued other than for wood and cleared land. Whoever sold land for logging or ranching did not have an appreciation (nor a need some may argue) of the value locked up in a living forest. Subjective valuation of forests ignored the phenomenon in and of itself, exchanging it for comparably paltry sums of money relative to their true worth. This was no doubt part of a cultural construct, with societies seeing the environment as something to be used and abused without restraint in the pursuit of monetary profits. Exchange of such natural assets thus came to colour and then reinforce a particular perception of nature, which arguably has driven us to the current tipping point. Once monetized, forests and other natural resources were seen merely as figures which could be subjected to "rational" accounting techniques. The inability to capture the true, full value of such phenomena in monetary amounts exposes the weaknesses in the monetary valuation of phenomena which cannot properly be bound by monetary amounts. Indeed, 'the money economy will increasingly gloss over the fact that the money value of things does not fully replace what we ourselves possess in them, that they have qualities that cannot be expressed in money' (Simmel, 2004 p. 404).

Is this status quo any different in the case of REDD or Canopy Capital? Director of Canopy Capital Andrew Mitchell states '[t]his is not about buying land or trees…It is about trying to put a new value on forests for countries such as Guyana that are not destroying their forests. We need a new economic paradigm that values them, so that there's more of an incentive to leave them standing than cutting them down'. Though the plan may reek of financial opportunism and the incursion of capitalism even further into the lifeworld and the determination of issues and problems which appear to be a result of the imprudence built into it as a system and as a result way beyond its control, there may be something in this plan yet. While it is clear from Simmel's analysis that it is impossible to escape the subjectivity of valuation, the cure, from a Frankfurt School Critical Theory perspective is to recognize the point at which our rational faculties let us down. This is easily done in this case – it was when forests were valued solely for their wood and reified to a corresponding dollar figure. Not much seems to have changed, except for the fact that the new monetary amounts being placed on forests seem to be more wholistic and take account of features neglected in earlier valuations. Is something lost in their very reification and commodification? Probably (see Lukacs above), but we need to ask whether this really matters in view of the state of the world at present.

Other than a feeling of moral indignation which might attend the sight of forest carbon futures being traded on the stock exchange, is this really a dangerous step? The only reason it may be so in the framework developed earlier, is that the valuations made under this new paradigm actually turn out to be incorrect. Again. At the stage of development or regression the world is currently at this is a mistake we may not be able to afford. While it makes sense to pay poorer countries to protect their forests on a practical level, is the accounting and scientific methodology really there yet to guarantee that we wont be taking a backward step by allowing carbon credits from avoided deforestation to offset continued polluting production activities by industry? The basic motivation of monetary interests here no doubt will be to make a packet by jumping into carbon bonds ahead of the curve and selling up when the price is right. The pursuit of the ultimate means as an ultimate end by financial provocateurs may be clouding our perception of the worth of the forests and indeed of reversing industrial carbon emissions. By conceptualising this issue as a problem to be solved solely by the market may be doing the world and future generations a great disservice.

A more enlightened, prudent form of accountability might say instead that while money may be able to assist in the situation as a tool to ensure poor global South villagers do not need to result to cutting down swathes of forest to sustain themselves, it should not be allowed to be hijacked by industrial polluters through the sale of carbon credits, especially in view of the lack of clarity concerning scientific accounting for forest carbon sequestration potential, and the fact that we have little room for error on this question. What the analysis in sections 3 and 4 show is that we should not let money and accounting distantiate us further from nature on this question in the rush to maintain current living standards or meet monetary imperatives at all costs. A far more prudent position would be to band world governments together to contribute to a fund to pay for the actualisation of the REDD program and require emission control and reduction by industry necessary to prevent irreversible global warming.

6. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

> If we appreciate the power of accounting knowledge to influence resource allocations and sustain control of dominant power groups within the current socio-economic environment, we can no longer ignore the moral, ethical and political consequences of our trade. If we do so, we will continue as accessories, albeit unwitting/unwilling, in facilitating and perpetuating the alienation of vast numbers of human beings. We can no longer be satisfied with only interpreting the world; we must become an active catalyst for change. Dillard (1991, p. 25)

This paper has sought to offer a deeper understanding of the phenomenon central to modern accounting and practices of accountability: the money form of value. As noted by Laughlin, '[h]istorical analysis…is undertaken with a particular purpose in mind: to analyse points of progress, to discern the mechanisms leading to their emergence, and to allow these to be used again to encourage societal development to a truer, freer and more just life for all' (Laughlin, 1987 p. 482). So too with the preceeding analysis of Simmel's *Philosophy of Money*, the point of which was to analyse the development of our valuing intentionality and the effects of money's use in order to question these developments and their role in our collective existence through the technology of accounting and the operations it performs on already reified monetary expressions of value.

Although it need not, in modernity money actually comes to exert an influence over its users, their relationships, and their appreciation of social existence in ways which were certainly never intended, creating a state of social negativity and detrimentally impacting upon our chances for successful self-actualisation. Accounting takes these effects to higher levels via its ability to aggregate vast amounts of numerical information which reify qualitative events, thus amplifying money's power of abstraction and cementing minds in an abstract quantitative apprehension of existence, with little regard for the qualitative facts surrounding the existence of phenomena in and of themselves including the environment, and other human beings.

Simmel realises that the changes which money enforces in our subjective appreciation of existence are 'not exactly for the benefit of a superior style of living' (Simmel, 2004 p. 445). The social liberation from money's negative effects will be achieved only by our acknowledgment of money's current status as a site of the deformation of our rational abilities, tracing our development back to the point at which money began to manifest a distortion of historically possible reason and then lead to its negative effects. From this point we may see

Our use of money can take a negative turn if we allow it to further conceal the subjective character of our perception or "going out towards" objects and other subjects, and thus prevent us from seeing all being in and for itself. Several negative phenomena which spring from money's use stem from the pursuit of money as an end in itself, which reinforces a powerful form of the instrumental rationality developed in our struggle for existence. Indeed, our instrumental intentionality towards the world finds distinctive expression in the medium of money, through the control it is able to exercise over other objects, and its reduction of all else to the level of mere means. This is precisely what modern monetary accounting is geared towards achieving, the reduction of all phenomena surrounding capital to the level of a means in order to find a profit, no matter what happens qualitatively to those factors bounded by monetary figures, be they environmental or human. Although modern consciousness typically takes the existence of money and its permeation of social existence as given, we must remind ourselves that in the history of our existence 'never has an object that owes its value exclusively to its quality as a means… so thoroughly and unreservedly developed into a completely engrossing final purpose governing our practical consciousness' (Simmel, 2004 p. 232). In realising this we may begin to counter the blurring out of ends by the means which money accomplishes so well.

Money is undeniably a useful tool (Simmel, 2004 p.469). The problem however is that through accounting, it is allowed to extend further beyond its proper boundaries as a mere means to detrimentally affect our social existence. Simmel notes correctly with regard to the freedoms and benefits which the money form of value affords, that whether they 'will lead to personal refinement, distinctiveness and introspection or whether, on the contrary, the subjugated objects, in view of the ease with which they may be acquired, will gain control over men, depends no longer upon money but upon man himself' (Simmel, 2004 p. 470). This statement by Simmel applies well to the chimeral role of money in the face of the current environmental imperative.

In positing ways in which we may escape the domination of existence by instrumental rationality, the Frankfurt School takes its lead from Freud, who posited that 'the stress from suffering presses towards a cure by means of exactly the same rational powers whose function the pathology impedes' (Honneth, 2004 p355). Should we stop to reflect on money's effects upon our social existence, we would apprehend the ways in which money is able to create and dominate human intentionality in modernity. By thus creating a consciousness of this state of social negativity which money perpetuates, we begin our re-orientation towards self-actualisation, for we realise the damage done to our lives through money's permeation of our social existence.

Simmel notes that 'the ideal purpose of money … is to be a measure of things without being measured itself…' (Simmel, 2004 p. 511), and herein lies the key to pressing toward the cure of this social negativity. We must apply our non-instrumental valuing intentionality, which has had its development impeded by money, to the very deformation of reason itself, and begin to ask the question, "*What value does **money** hold in our pursuit of self-actualisation?*" Only then will we perceive what our highest standard of rationality demands of our use of money in the pursuit of harmonious social existence, and full human flourishing. If it is only to to make money out of carbon credits and continued levels of economic growth via environmentally harmful industrial activity, we will encounter difficult problems. If it is to think more along the lines of rescuing accountability from accounting, and to use money to secure the existence of a value vitally important to the future of the planet without being concerned about the generation of short term financial wealth as opposed to long term environmental wealth, we may be on the right track. A Nietzschean creed may assist us here:

> Are you co-conspirators in the current folly of nations, who want above all to produce as much as possible and to be as rich as possible? It would be your affair to present them with the counter-calculation: what vast sums of inner worth are thrown away for such an external goal (Nietzsche, 1954 p.90).

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