

Bernie Sanders: Catalyzing the politics of Green

Jeff: It's Tuesday, January 26th, 2016, and I am coming to you from beautiful Boulder, Colorado here with Brett Andrew Walker, our Daily Evolver producer. How you doing tonight, Brett?

Brett: Hey. What do you think of that song, 'America'? [played pre-call]

Jeff: I love that song. We picked it because Bernie Sanders used it in a commercial this last week that is I think the epitome of the political ad makers' art. I mean, it's really a beautiful thing. You can check it out on YouTube under 'Bernie Sanders America'.

Brett: That song was written about five or six years before I was born. By the time I was exposed to it, it was being forced through these horrible supermarket speakers. You know? I hated it really, but as I've gotten older, I've realized what a brilliant song it is, and it really fits his campaign well.

Jeff: Yes. The one line where she's sleeping, they're on a bus, and he's looking out over the fields, and he wants to tell her that "I'm empty and I'm aching, and I don't know why." That line has always wrecked me.

Anyway, the phenomena that we want to be talking about tonight is this explosive rise of Bernie Sanders and his presidential bid particularly in the last few weeks. For those of you who are international listeners, Bernie is running against Hillary Clinton for the democratic nomination for president. He launched his campaign back in April as a 74-year old rumped, grumpy, self-described old-school liberal, socialist. Today, he has in my opinion included and transcended those qualities to transform himself into a real political animal. I mean, in the last few weeks with starting really with the third debate, he's a real political populist taking on the system that he sees as being rigged against the people. He's filling auditoriums throughout Iowa and New Hampshire, the first two primary states. He's built a grassroots Movement reminiscent of Obama's juggernaut of 2008, and he has front-runner, Hillary Clinton running scared.

He's beating her in New Hampshire at the moment, and they're basically in a tie in Iowa. We'll know real soon. At any rate, there's a plausible scenario now where Bernie Sanders catches fire and becomes the democratic nominee. stranger things that happened. Not much stranger, but it's happened.

We have a 50/50 country here between the republicans and democrats, and any given election one can beat the other, so there is a plausible scenario where he becomes the president of the United States. I don't think it's likely for reasons I'll get to in a minute, but whether or not this happens at least at the moment because we just can't know, what's already more interesting is how Bernie has succeeded at moving the ball in installing a progressive worldview, the green developmental level worldview into the American political scene. We'll take a look at that in some detail in a few minutes. Before we do, I want to give a shout-out to Integral Life for being the leading web portal in the Integral community, also the home of Integral Radio.

For those of you who are listening live right now, that's where you're at. I thank you for tuning in live. It's always nice to feel your presence in real time as I pontificate in here. A special thank you to Corey deVos who is running things over at Integral Radio.

I also want to encourage you, particularly if you're not really fluent in integral theory, to check out a couple of charts that we have prepared for you that can really help you follow along. Brett will put them in the chat window. You can also find them at my home website, 'Dailyevolver.com' -- you just go to the homepage, scroll down a bit, and you'll see a section called 'About Integral Theory'. You can click on that, and then, first thing you'll see are two charts. One is the levels of development which map out human development both for individuals and for culture, and the other is the quadrants of reality. These are two of the five AQAL maps that Ken Wilber has designed.

All 5 are in the section, but these two are so important, I put them at the top. Check them out if you are really wanting to follow along and learn integral theory because it's what we're doing here at The Daily Evolver. On one hand, I'm trying to use integral theory to explain current events, and on the other hand I'm trying to use current events to explain integral theory, so it works both ways.

FIRST PEOPLE'S -- INTEGRAL SCIENCE ON PBS

I like to point out when I see examples of integral consciousness arising in the culture, and so I'd like to recommend a show that I've been watching on PBS called 'First Peoples'. It's a six-part series. I think the show hits two big bullseyes in the integral world. First of all, it lays out a really interesting graphic narrative format of the evolution of early humanity and how we arose out of Africa 200,000 years ago and basically took over the world. It presents the latest thinking that humans lived side by side and mated with Neanderthals, and Denisovans, and Homo erectus and other early variants of the human lineage for thousands of years.

The second bullseye is it's not just the story itself, but how the story is told and how the science itself is advancing that the show is reporting on.

The first show focuses on the story of this Mexican anthropologist, Arturo Gonzalez who got a lot of attention a few years ago for finding Eva de Naharon, the oldest skeleton ever found in the America. It's a skeleton of a young girl over 13,000 years old. They found her skeleton in an underwater cave in the Yucatan, a quarter mile down, clearly a ritual burial, and so, they tell the story of how Gonzalez explores these endless caves. He uses a most interesting technique to guide him: he does ceremony with the shaman.

He endeavors to enter the same spirit world that these early people did by taking a psychotropic drug that is traditional in that part of Mexico, extracted from the glands of a Mexican toad. This PBS documentary shows him dancing around. He's tripping. The shaman is playing these native instruments. The first time I'm sitting there, I'm thinking "This is PBS. What am I watching here?"

They interviewed him after. He says, "I am an anthropologist. I am a paleontologist. I'm very sure about the rational." I mean, he is a scientist through and through, "But now, I have a better understanding of why these early humans show specific places to make their connection to the source." Apparently, it works because his find, Eva, is one of the most celebrated discoveries of his generation. I thought that was really cool.

Then, just another quick moment in the show is later in the show, they talked about Kennewick man which is a controversial 9,000-year old skeleton found about 20 years ago in Washington State. There's been a legal battle for quite a while where the Native Americans demanded that the skeleton be reburied and not used for research. They call the skeleton "The Ancient One", their original primal ancestor.

There was a court battle, and the court finally ruled that the scientist would be allowed to study the skeleton because the Native Americans couldn't establish a link. It was so old that they thought it could be Polynesian, it could be South East Asian. At any rate, this 'First Peoples' show takes us to Copenhagen where this geneticist ... this is contemporary now. Eske Willerslev is studying the DNA from Kennewick.

He invites the Umatilla tribal leaders from North America to Copenhagen and shows them what he's doing. They dressed up in a clean room, and they're wearing their masks, and underneath, they're wearing their feathers. They're mostly western, but they like Native Americans, and it's really cool. They watched the procedure, and then he tells them that their study has confirmed that Kennewick man is indeed a descendant of Native Americans, and that's important for their court battle, and they're really touched. The one tribal leader says, "We tribes are still understanding what science is." Apparently, they'll get the remains of the remains of Kennewick men, and science will be served and everybody is happy. I think this is what you call a 'good outcome' here.

Overall, the point I want to make is that having a scientist enter the world space of tribal magenta people on one hand at the beginning of the show, and then at the end, inviting tribal people into the world of science in the laboratory ... this has the fragrance of integral consciousness to me. It includes both ends of the polarity. On one side, we have science and reason, and on the other side, we have myth and faith and revelation, and both sides take each other seriously not for the purpose of winning an argument, but for the purpose of broadening their own view.

If this is what scientists are doing these days, it's certainly exciting to me. Check it out, PBS' 'First Peoples'.

BERNIE SANDERS STUNNING CAMPAIGN

All right. Let's turn our attention to our main topic tonight, and that is this Bernie Sanders phenomena. Brett, why don't you play our Bernie clip?

Recoding of Bernie Sanders: *"Here's the simple truth, that in America, we have millions and millions of working people who are working hard but are not making enough money to put bread on the table or to take care of their kids, and that has got to end. (Applause) Now, the truth is that the billionaire class in corporate America and Wall Street, and the corporate media have enormous, enormous power. I would be fooling you if I suggested otherwise. They are very, very powerful people. They control this country and have controlled this country for a very, very long time. At the end of the day, while they have the money and while they have the power, we have something that they do not have. That is we have the people, and when people stand together, we can win."*

Jeff: Well said, Bernie. Ok, everybody, quick quiz: What value system is associated with that kind of thinking? The answer is green. The green postmodern system.

That's what Bernie Sanders is: a really beautiful and authentic, committed vehicle for that value system. Of course, this is associated with liberal progressive politics. The markers of a green economy for instance, which is mainly what he's talking about here, are things like a strong safety net, highly subsidized, even centralized healthcare, education, welfare, a lot of expensive programs. A lot of bigger government programs, so they're paid for with higher taxes and also some kinds of price controls and so forth, so far more activist government. It's just generally a move to a social contract that distributes more of the pie to more people. It's not so concerned about growing the pie as it is in the distribution of the pie and how workers are protected, so you have family leave and higher minimum wage. That sort of thing. If you want to see an example of this in action, of course you look to Northern Europe. These are countries that have a center of gravity green economics.

Evolutionarily, the arrival of the green worldview espoused by Bernie Sanders is right on schedule because we've been living mainly in the center of gravity of the orange economy, and we're beginning to see the downsides. It's really interesting. This is where integral theory really helps us to put a larger context around what's going on here.

If we look at the history of humanity through all of the levels of development that are charted on our levels of development chart, we see that the human project is about creating a more safe and prosperous world for more and more people. It's as simple as that. That's what every stage is managed to do and in often radically new ways of creating and distributing the wealth of the culture. We've moved from hunter-gatherers to horticulture to agriculture to industrial and informational and so on. We do that at each stage by working a tension that is really just built in to the human condition. This is the tension between the polarities of the individual and the collective.

The idea here is that there are a couple of irreducible dimensions of human reality. Actually four using Ken's quadrant map. There's an individual world. in my case "Jeff's world." I have an individual consciousness, and that world is mine and mine alone, and you have your world, and your body, and that is yours and yours alone. There's that.

Then, there's a dimension where I and you exist in relationship with each other and with all other beings, and we come together, and in that way, create a world space that is just as real and just as important to being human as is the individual world space.

Now, the whole idea of "an economy" is a perfect expression of this because an economy is one thing, an economy is made up of thousands or millions, or with today's global economy, literally billions of individuals. As we look at how that has evolved, we see that there's a natural oscillation as we move up the stages of development between an emphasis on the individual at one stage and an emphasis on the collective at the next. The pendulum swings between the individual and the collective, but of course the whole clock is moving forward. The polarity is indestructible, but it is expressed in newly emerging ways ... far more complex and capable ways as the whole system evolves. I think one of the best explanations of this or particularly in the world of economics is the book 'MEMEnomics: The Next Generation Economic System' which was written by Said Dawlabani.

I have an interview with him on the Daily Evolver site. I've mentioned his work before, but he points out a couple of really interesting things that relate to how green is coming on with Bernie and others in this moment. First of all, he mentions that economics is a lagging emergent, that is it's the last thing in the culture to really move into a new stage of development. Generally, cultures move into a new stage with philosophy or art. Those tend to be the leading edge. Economic and law, on the other hand, are the heavy systems that we all rely on, these are the ones you really don't want to screw up. You can screw up art. You can't screw up economies. People are conservative around that, so they want to protect.

With that in mind, Dawlabani, points out that we have in the US a red economic system all the way up through the turn of the 20th century.

The red economic system is very individual-oriented. It's the world of empires and monarchies and robber barons, again, right up into the turn of the 20th century. In non-monarchy red economic systems (like the early US) there's not much government. Taxes are low. There's very little regulation. This was true of United States in the 1800s, and we ended up of course with the Gilded Age, the robber barons ... and that all came to an end officially with the great depression.

At that point, Roosevelt ushered in at the next stage of economic development which is based on the traditional or Amber value system. Dawlabani calls this the system of 'patriotic prosperity'. This is a more communal systems, more egalitarian in a sense, but again, at a higher octave. It represents or emphasizes humility, duty, the idea that when everybody works hard and plays by the rules, they get to live a decent life. No free riders. Your rewards are proportional to your contributions, but very communal. The Amber traditional stage.

Of course, this built the great middle class of the mid-20th century, the World War II generation, higher taxes, higher wages, worker protections, ascendancy of labor unions, the beginning of a safety net. I would point out that although we talk about it being communal, it was still ethnocentric. It's typical of the traditional Amber stage that if you're in the in-group, you're in, but if you're not, you're not. We see lots of examples of people who are left out of this. One group that was written out of the Amber contrast in the US were African-American; Social Security was written so that household workers and most of the jobs that African-Americans held were left out. Of course, there was the the remnants of Jim Crow and so forth, and Civil Rights hadn't really come online until the '60s.

But as a whole, this traditionalist amber economy served as well through the '40s, '50s, '60s, and then finally, it exhausted itself, as everything does eventually, in the '70s with stagflation and the election of Ronald Reagan ... which kicked in the next stage of economic development: the orange modernist stage, which was skewed back to the individual again. Here we got lower taxes, busting the labor unions, deregulation, increase in inequality, and yet a growing economy. This orange economy took off. It created a better world.

It did in terms of the creation of wealth, but even the distribution to wealth. Even though it increased inequality, the poor, despite what people think in America, did not get poorer. They just didn't get rich to the same degree as the rich did. Anyway, you move up to go through Reagan, the first Bush term, two terms of Clinton, two terms of George W. Bush, and the orange economy takes us right up to the economic meltdown, the great recession of 2008 and the election of Barack Obama. Now, Obama predictably has set the pendulum swinging back towards the collective, with Obama Care, higher taxes on the rich (although nothing like what we had seen in the previous communal era or traditionalism where tax rates got up into the high 80s and 90%), a more activist government, more regulation, and so that is where we are.

Obama has not been green enough for a lot of the people on the left. I'll make the case in a minute that Obama is operating more from an *integral* center of gravity, but Bernie is not. Bernie is green. He's aiming to carry the ball further into green territory. He's running an unapologetic anti-Wall Street campaign. You heard him in our little clip.

He's promising to break up the banks. He's going for a single payer healthcare system. He's promising to raise taxes significantly to pay for it. He's unabashed about it. You have to note that all of these things are going to be almost impossible to actually get through congress because the congress doesn't change like the presidency does.

The senators are elected for six years. Representatives are often from gerrymander districts that never change, and so you work with at the least a six-year window in American politics, but nevertheless, it doesn't stop Bernie from campaigning on these ideas, and it's really making the establishment democrats nervous. We're talking people like Ezra Klein who called his healthcare plan 'Puppies-and-Rainbow Healthcare Plan'. Paul Krugman in 'The New York Times' said roughly the same things. Matthew Yglesias ... many centrist Democrats point out the pie in the sky.

And of course, Hillary Clinton is saying the same thing.

After Bernie came out with his healthcare plan, she said and I quote, "I don't want to overpromise. I don't want to come out with theories and concepts that may or may not be possible. What we need is a sensible, achievable agenda where we roll up our sleeves and work together." That's the kind of thing that an evolutionary sounds like instead of a revolutionary. It's very much like what Jeb Bush is saying on the right, but it really doesn't light up the true believer's heart.

Actually, about an hour ago, I got an email from a listener who belies that statement. I'll read it. I've jotted it down. She said, "*Bernie's rants drive me up the wall. Enough with angry men spouting ridiculous, impossible things. Please, God, give us someone with warts and battle scars who understands the real world and can practice the art of the possible. Hillary.*"

Bernie is a true believer, just like Ted Cruz is on the right. One of the markers of any first tier meme is that it has an exclusive worldview. Bernie is coming from green and Ted Cruz is coming from amber. Both of those are first tier memes, and they are mono-perspectival. They have a point of view that is self-evidently true for them. So, anybody who doesn't see things the way they do is wrong. They're maybe malevolent. Maybe they're stupid. Maybe they've been co-opted, but they're not seeing things right. What we need is a great communicator, a great, brave, uncompromising leader who's clear and who can transmit the rightness of our arguments to people who don't understand them yet. Then, we'll win the argument, and everybody will be on our side, and we can finally implement our agenda and set things right.

Sometimes, this happens, but often, it doesn't. Often, that's the road to winning the nomination for your party only to go on to a spectacular defeat in the general election. Now, I can't predict that that's what would happen especially in this election cycle because we have both the left and the right very plausibly nominating true believers on both sides. If we have a Trump versus Sanders or a Cruz versus Sanders, then those are our choices, and then we'll get a true believer. I don't think that's going to happen.

Generally, when push comes to shove, people tend to get real about not dying in a glorious defeat. I noticed the other night when Bill Maher was doing his show, 'Real Time', and he had Al Gore on. At one point, Bill stopped the interview and offered Al Gore a sincere, unironic apology for having voted for Ralph Nader in the 2000 election. Of course, Ralph Nader was the true believer back then for the left. He siphoned off a lot of support for Al Gore who was the establishment evolutionary guy, and Al Gore lost and gave us two terms of President George W. Bush. Democrats are very, very sensitive to that.

And of course, sometimes the true believer, even the one who goes down in ignominious defeat, really serves a purpose for his worldview. The classic example in America is Goldwater who was the true believer in 1964. He went down to his blazing defeat, but 20 years later, Ronald Reagan carried the same conservative flag became president and went on to have eight very consequential years in office. Bernie will be bringing in green and is bringing it in very effectively. I mean, again, I think he's turning it into a political thoroughbred.

I mean, I'm just really impressed with Bernie. Bernie 3.0 here after debate number three versus Bernie 1.0 after the first debate. God bless a 74-year old man for carrying himself through that kind of a transformation. Just a quick quote from the lefty magazine here in America called 'The Nation'. I think they sum up what I'm talking about.

They write, "The Sanders revolution is not only possible, but necessary. The United States has become a plutocracy in which the middle class has builded a way, and the gap between the rich and the poor has reached gilded age extremes. Americans across the political spectrum are furious, and Sanders rightly sees solutions in our country's proud democratic socialist tradition. Whether or not he goes on to win the Democratic nomination, his run has already created a space for a more powerful progressive movement."

I think that is absolutely true. Whether or not he's elected, that is the contribution of Bernie, and again I think it's inspiring to see it laid out there so effectively.

Okay. One more thought I want to share on this idea of the evolving economy is: What is the integral economy? What's that look like and what do we see that might be happening that could possibly be in the category of an integral economy?

Said Dawlabani refers to the integral economy as the 'Functional flow economy'. You see as you look through these patterns of history that I am presenting on the levels of development chart. You notice one really super interesting thing, and that that is that each stage of development is dramatically shorter than the previous one. A fraction of the previous one in terms of length, which means that evolution is accelerating. Now, when you get to where we are now, particularly in the developed world, you have economic systems that are in place for just a few decades.

I mean, the orange economy is only a few decades old. The amber economy is only a few decades old. You have a frothy edge where both sides of any polarity, in this case, the individual and the collective are on line at the same time. So we have in our country a red economy that's generally underground or even criminal, but we have it. It's there. We have an amber economy still going. We have an orange economy going, and we have the beginnings of a green economy coming on.

This calls for integral leadership, because integral can see the power and potency of each stage of development. Remember, integral is not mono-perspectival. Integral is multi-perspectival. It can hold both the individual and the collective polarity at the same time in a larger space of consciousness.

An integral economy will have the best of the *individual* side of the polarity -- that is initiative creativity, the ability to experiment, to fail, to move forward ... and an integral economy will also feature the characteristics of the *collective* side of the street that is taking care of those who are less fortunate and providing a basic level of security for every citizen. I think that's where we're going. I don't think it'll be Bernie's politics. I think it'll be more like Obama's politics.

I've never sensed that Obama was a doctrinaire green thinker. I know a lot of people disagree with me, but look at his record as president. He hasn't tried to break up the banks. He didn't go for a single payer health system. Obamacare works with insurance companies that are regulated like utilities. He didn't try to reimpose anything like the high tax rates of the '50s through the '70s. He's willing to use the military. Almost more important than anything, Obama doesn't have the animosity towards the other side that, say, Bernie Sanders does. I think the dropping of fear and hatred is a marker of integral thinking.

We will see how this all goes again in a week. We're going to actually have people voting which is going to be really interesting. Let's just leave it there for now and see how the world turns when the voters actually start speaking.

Jeff: All right. I think that wraps us up for what we're doing tonight. We'll just say good night right now and we'll see you next week on the next edition of The Daily Evolver Live. Thanks, folks. Good night.