

The Santa Fe Institute book - Scale by Geoffrey West - looks at how mammals, cities and companies scale in terms of power laws and energy consumption.

The Value of Everything - by Marina Mazzucato - deep insights into the history of how GDP calculations have changed over the years and how that drives what we value and don't value in society - relevant to the discussion of economic growth in the paper.

The sugar cane plantations near Lahaina on Maui stopped being viable when the workers could get better jobs in the tourism industry, and the last one was sold for housing development in 1999...

I recommend "Seeing like a State" where the concept of high modernism is introduced as a means to make nature legible, which is a condition for making process scalable.

<https://complexity.simplecast.com/episodes/35>

https://omny.fm/shows/simplifying-complexity/geoffrey-west-topic-1?in_playlist=podcast Both are multi-episode series

I also saw a huge crossover conceptually with Seeing Like a State

https://www.amazon.com/Scale-Geoffrey-West-audiobook/dp/B071YNQM2T/ref=sr_1_3?crid=9WKW2YTURR18&keywords=scale+book&qid=1678126623&sprefix=scale+book%2Caps%2C175&sr=8-3

Seeing Like a State, or part of it, might be interesting to read as a group

Richard mentioned "the mushroom at the end of the world"
J (The entire book the author of this paper, Anna Tsing, wrote about mushrooms)

For context, I don't know if Tsing knew about the work on racial capitalism that started coming into view in the mid-2010s; I'm pretty sure Caitlin Rosenthal's Accounting for Capitalism came out after this paper.

It also made me think about David Graeber's "Debt: The First 5000 Years" that explores money and transactional/non-transactional relationships. In that non transactional economies are relationship based and hence not so scalable?

But in the end, they *do* figure out how to scale something as nonscaleable as the mushrooms. Perhaps something like that for education?

ChatGPT summary I used when sharing this event with my org: It is a critique of the way that modern Western thought tends to impose a hierarchical, nested structure onto the world in order to understand and control it. Tsing argues that this approach, which emphasizes precision, predictability, and generalizability, is fundamentally unsuited to understanding the complex, messy, and contingent relationships that exist in the natural world. Instead, she proposes an alternative approach that emphasizes the contingency, heterogeneity, and unpredictability of the world, and that seeks to understand the world on its own terms rather than imposing a preconceived structure onto it.

do they scale the mushrooms or do they aggregate a bunch of non-scalable artisanal operations? Are those the same thing? (I would argue not)

Thinking. Is corporate use of OSS similar to what she talks about in terms of piracy of supply-chain capitalism? Non-scalable, to scalable?

In that non transactional economies are relationship based and hence not so scalable? Yes, and that growth is pursued by stripping away of relationships.

on that note, ponder the role of Tidelift, that aggregates the non-scalable open-source into a scalable commodity

WRT OSS - are informational goods (OSS, books, etc) inherently scalable? I think they are to the extent of copying/using them, but building software in itself isn't scalable, it's craft I wonder if expertise - being non fungible - is just inherently harder to control

I would argue they *are* the same thing... it looks exactly the same from the mushroom/sugarcane eater's perspective. Ultimately, who is scalability for?

Are there other perspectives that matter?

Relevant XKCD: <https://xkcd.com/2347/>

Gosh, is there even an "outside" anymore?

The Ford Foundation Roads and Bridges report on open source <https://www.fordfoundation.org/work/learning/research-reports/roads-and-bridges-the-unseen-labor-behind-our-digital-infrastructure/>

Of course, but Tseng herself says that "supply chain capitalism" doesn't guarantee anything about work conditions or environmental stewardship.

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, I'd argue that the system structure of aggregated craft mushroom foraging is very different to a mega farm though

<https://stories.platformdesigntoolkit.com/platforming-inside-and-between-organizations-differentiation-scale-and-scope-with-jabe-bloom-1d033b2c984a>

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Making software and supporting software - not scalable Running software - probably mostly scalable yep Different sides of software

The 3 economies by Jabe Bloom - Laura's comment about informational goods

<https://blog.jabebloom.com/2020/03/04/the-three-economies-an-introduction/>

^^ that's really interesting - I will have to read that properly later

To be able to make people fungible, the system might be relying on relationships that cannot be broken 😞

that's a great point. I think she means something like "mutually *beneficial* transformation"

There is also something to be said about how scale (with all its standardization etc) can help shield users of goods and services from all the cognitive complexity of dealing with things.

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A lot of what makes systems complex is in the relationships. Make relationships simpler, make your system less complex and unpredictable - and yes easier to control

(Relationships between components in the system, which might be humans)

But a state of relationship is one of interdependence, not of freedom

on 'trying to make things scalable will destroy it', consider Airbnb..

I don't think the author would say that the sugar slaves in their lack of relationships were free, ha

But why did they want profit?

The plantation owners controlled some of the elements of production. Even modern supply chain capitalists try to suppress coordinated activity by the workforce. But there were aspects of production that were not visible to them - including the fungus on which the sugar cane depended - so the production of sugar cane wasn't as infinitely scalable as they might have wished.

Ah yes

, great point 😊 - but they still had a relationship: their dynamic natural relationship network got replaced by a single relationship with the slave owner they had no power over anymore

link to The Undercommons book <https://www.minorcompositions.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/undercommons-web.pdf>

Code of Conduct

Our participation here reflects our mutual agreement and commitment to each other to follow this code of conduct during our discussion today. It applies equally to all of us (including facilitators).

- We share a commitment to providing a friendly, safe and welcoming meeting experience for all, regardless of level of experience, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, personal appearance, body size, race, ethnicity, age, religion, nationality, or other similar characteristic.
- Please be kind and courteous. Please avoid using terms that might detract from a friendly, safe and welcoming environment for all.
- Respect that people have differences of opinion and that our discussions will reflect different perspectives, trade-offs and impacts. There is seldom a right answer.
- Should anyone insult, demean or harass others in this setting, they will be excluded from interaction (contact the facilitators, if this happens). That is not welcome behavior.
- Likewise any spamming, trolling, flaming, baiting or other attention-stealing behavior is not welcome.

Note: We have adapted this code of conduct from the Ruby Code of Conduct.