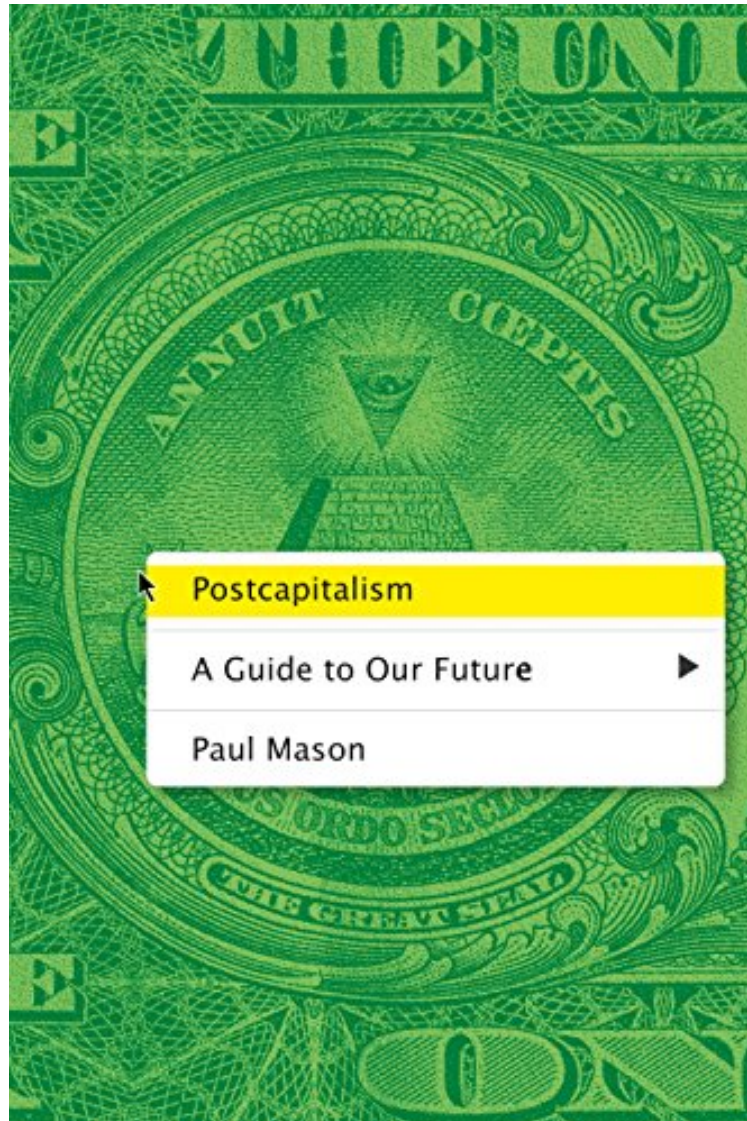


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Postcapitalism: A Guide to Our Future

Paul Mason

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Paul Mason : Postcapitalism: A Guide to Our Future before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Postcapitalism: A Guide to Our Future:

47 of 50 people found the following review helpful. "Ripped from the headlines!"By Veronica Daleldquo;It hooked me at the first page!rdquo; ldquo;Ripped from the headlines!rdquo; ldquo;I couldnrsquo;t put it down!rdquo;Hey wait a minute. Isnrsquo;t this supposed to be a review of an economics book? It is, and for me all those exclamations are true. In spite of the fact that I usually think economics is opaque and boring, I found this book to be positively riveting.Like a lot of people, Irsquo;m worried about whatrsquo;s going on in todayrsquo;s world. The Arab Spring

never bloomed; Occupy Wall Street petered out; the upcoming US election seems mired in chaos. We're supposed to have recovered from the 2008 recession, but most new jobs can't pay the bills. Every year breaks a record for the world's hottest, but certain political and corporate leaders still deny the existence of man-made climate change. Our population is getting older, poorer, and deeper in debt. What to do about the rising number of immigrants threatens many nations. So when Diane Rehm interviewed Paul Mason about his book, I decided to buy it. I wanted to hear more about his take on why we're in this situation and what we can do about it. Mason begins by reviewing humankind's turbulent economic history: feudalism, industrial capitalism, the rise and destruction of the labor movement, the booms and busts of neoliberalism, the phenomenon of today's "precarariat." These are the stressed-out people forced to work two jobs, who have lost or will never get a pension, who are acutely aware of how monopolies, outsourcing, or their company moving overseas make his or her job extremely precarious. Many workers are expected to be "at work" on their smartphones even when traveling or at home, and even worse—are forced to "live the dream of the firm they work for." In spite of our rising productivity, it's now clear that actual wages are in decline, except for the 1%. Mason then takes a look at how capitalism evolved in the last 200 years. It was mind-expanding for me to see how economic systems evolve and change just like human beings do. Today's capitalism, the author points out, is in its fifth great wave. It's trembling on the edge of becoming something new: postcapitalism. Why is this happening? The answer, basically, is because our planet has to meet several great challenges it never faced before: climate change, ageing, the information network, and massive immigration. Business as usual won't be able to meet these challenges. So what will? What does this new mutation of capitalism look like? Mason says we're already seeing it through models like the non-profit Wikipedia, Creative Commons, and Open Source. These share a communal nature, "free to use, but impossible to grab, own, and exploit." Because of the unprecedented availability of free information on the internet, people are able to form artisanal local businesses, publish e-books, join global communities, share videos, get the equivalent of a free college degree. Information, one of the most valuable commodities available to human beings, isn't scarce anymore, but free to all. Like any great novel, this book builds and builds into an explosive climax. Using the nitty-gritty facts of history and economics, Mason reveals what postcapitalism can mean to us and our future. There's tons more in this book that I can't even begin to deal with here. Whenever I read a book I think I'm going to review, I jot down notes: what grabs me, what new thing I learn, how it coincides with what I've noticed in the world and why it bothers me or gives me hope. For this book, I took six pages of notes. It's hard to review a book in which you struggle to assimilate a new idea when, on the next page, the author is already using the new idea as the foundation for yet another new idea. This book isn't an easy read, but boy is it an exhilarating ride! At the end—when we finally get the answer to the question "who's going to save us?"—I actually yelled Yay!--review by Veronica Dale, author of Blood Seed. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. New and advanced marxism By Gunnar Wessle. New and very important thinking. Read it and be inspired. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By Juan Ballesteros. Is a good start for a discussion and find solutions.

We know that our world is undergoing seismic change—but how can we emerge from the crisis a fairer, more equal society? Over the past two centuries or so, capitalism has undergone profound changes—economic cycles that veer from boom to bust—from which it has always emerged transformed and strengthened. Surveying this turbulent history, Paul Mason's *Postcapitalism* argues that we are on the brink of a change so big and so profound that this time capitalism itself, the immensely complex system within which entire societies function, will mutate into something wholly new. At the heart of this change is information technology, a revolution that is driven by capitalism but, with its tendency to push the value of much of what we make toward zero, has the potential to destroy an economy based on markets, wages, and private ownership. Almost unnoticed, in the niches and hollows of the market system, swaths of economic life are beginning to move to a different rhythm. Vast numbers of people are changing how they behave and live, in ways contrary to the current system of state-backed corporate capitalism. And as the terrain changes, new paths open. In this bold and prophetic book, Mason shows how, from the ashes of the crisis, we have the chance to create a more socially just and sustainable economy. Although the dangers ahead are profound, he argues that there is cause for hope. This is the first time in human history in which, equipped with an understanding of what is happening around us, we can predict and shape the future.

Even readers not quite persuaded will appreciate Mason's readable, reportorial style, his use of a wide range of economists, business gurus, and economic thinkers to help support his thesis, and his deft treatment of sometimes-difficult economic theories. . . . A radical diagnosis and a bold prognostication bound to energize progressives. Kirkus "Postcapitalism's vision for the future . . . is absorbing and provocative." Publishers Weekly "Mason weaves together varied intellectual threads to produce a fascinating set of ideas . . . The thesis about 'postcapitalism' deserves a wide readership among right and left alike. . . . Politicians of all stripes should take note. And so should the people who vote for them." Gillian Tett, *Financial Times* "Deeply

engaging . . . [Mason] is asking the most interesting questions, unafraid of where they might lead. What's more, he writes with freshness and insight on almost every page . . . I can't remember the last book I read that managed to carve its way through the forest of political and economic ideas with such brio . . . As a spark to the imagination, with frequent x-ray flashes of insight into the way we live now, it is hard to beat. In that sense, Mason is a worthy successor to Marx." "David Runciman, *The Guardian* "Ecological crisis signals the death knell for an economic system that was already profoundly failing us, as Paul Mason mercilessly illustrates in these pages. Building on a remarkable career's worth of reporting on the frontlines of global capitalism and worker resistance, this book is an original, engaging, and bracingly-articulated vision of real alternatives. It is sure to many spark vigorous debates, and they are precisely the ones we should be having." "Naomi Klein "After postmodernism and all other fashionable post-trends, Mason fearlessly confronts the only true post-, postcapitalism. While we can see all around us ominous signs of the impasses of global capitalism, it is perhaps more than ever difficult to imagine a feasible alternative to it. How are we to deal with this frustrating situation? Although Mason's book is irresistibly readable, this clarity should not deceive us: it is a book which compels us to think!" "Slavoj Žižek

About the Author Paul Mason is the award-winning economics editor of Channel 4 News (London). His books include *Meltdown: The End of the Age of Greed* and *Why It's Kicking Off Everywhere: The New Global Revolutions*. He writes for the *Guardian* and the *New Statesman*, among others.