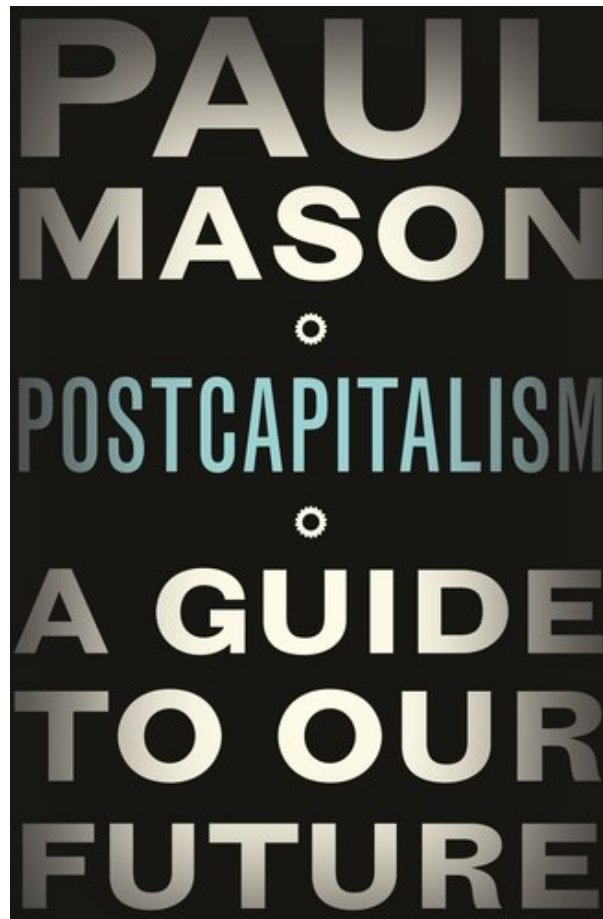


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## Review

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 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 Guardian 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 Zizek *Postcapitalism* is a groundbreaking book, both staggering in its ambition, and brilliantly executed... It's both a visionary and landmark work, and the most important book about our economy and society to be published in my lifetime -- Irvine Welsh Bella Caledonia

## About the Author

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From Paul Mason, the award-winning Channel 4 presenter, Postcapitalism is a guide to our era of seismic economic change, and how we can build a more equal society. Over the past two centuries or so, capitalism has undergone continual change - economic cycles that lurch from boom to bust - and has always emerged transformed and strengthened. Surveying this turbulent history, Paul Mason wonders whether today we are on the brink of a change so big, so profound, that this time capitalism itself, the immensely complex system by which entire societies function, has reached its limits and is changing into something wholly new. At the heart of this change is information technology: a revolution that, as Mason shows, has the potential to reshape utterly our familiar notions of work, production and value; and to destroy an economy based on markets and private ownership - in fact, he contends, it is already doing so. Almost unnoticed, in the niches and hollows of the market system, whole swathes of economic life are changing.. Goods and services that no longer respond to the dictates of neoliberalism are appearing, from parallel currencies and time banks, to cooperatives and self-managed online spaces. Vast numbers of people are changing their behaviour, discovering new forms of ownership, lending and doing business that are distinct from, and contrary to, the current system of state-backed corporate capitalism. In this groundbreaking book Mason shows how, from the ashes of the recent financial crisis, we have the chance to create a more socially just and sustainable global economy. Moving beyond capitalism, he shows, is no longer a utopian dream. 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, rather than simply react to, seismic change.

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"Ripped from the headlines!"

By Veronica Dale

"It hooked me at the first page!" "Ripped from the headlines!" "I couldn't put it down!"

Hey wait a minute. Isn'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, I'm worried about what's going on in today'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 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 "precariat." 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 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.

A challenging read.

By DAVID A FLEMING

Paul Mason mixes historical perspective with analysis of our current global economic system. Throw in terminology used by economists and political scientists and this book can definitely challenge the reader. I found myself wishing for more concrete suggestions for how we will manage the transition to post-capitalism but he is clear from the start that he is not suggesting specific answers so much as suggesting a roadmap for the transition. Very thought provoking.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Uneven but valuable

By Kindle Customer

The author's Marxist commitments make a lot of this book feel a bit strained, and the quality of the analysis was extremely uneven. However, there are some valuable insights to be found, and those same ideological commitments prevent this from being just another book repeating the same truisms about the future.

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