



## **The Archeology of Coin and its Archetypal Future\***

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### **Keywords**

Coin, Power,  
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### **Abstract**

Coin is mainly a communication tool as a significant indicator presenting purchasing power. In terms of its cultural function Coin is not only purchasing power satisfying needs, It is also signifier of social position or statue as a sociologic phenomenon. So that coin is a means of communication as an intermediate space which at least dual oriented expressing force. Firstly It has economical function supplying needs as a vital concrete medium. Secondly resulting from reproduction of needs and unnatural needs, It has socio-psychologic function as an imaginary medium/tool/space indicating cultural identity and statue. Now then Coin is a fundamental communication form functioning on the process of economical/ social/ psychological. From barter/exchange economy to bitcoin within historical process even if surface of coin is being changed and also Its forms is being diversified Its indicators are steady with regard to archetypal meaning. In this study as an archetypal figure coin is going to be analysed with interdisciplinary approach, specifically socio/psychologic analysis. Cultural function of coin in communication is going to be debated in point of archetypal medium.

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## **1. Money, Power and Criticism of Modern Society in Theoretical Framework**

Before starting to analyse money and image of power as its derivative/archetypal forms, it is better to discuss the cultural environment of modern society briefly with a critical perspective. Since the process of modernization takes shape by capitalism, capital and hegemony of money.

Benjamin criticized the daily living which transforms into a commodity universe in the writings of *Arcades* and *Paris, The Capital of Nineteenth Century*. According to him, its vital nerve is “the fetishism that succumbs to the sex appeal of the inorganic”. Fashion prescribes the ritual according to which the commodity fetish demands to be worshipped. Benjamin considered the modern world as archaic. He made it to avoid the glittering captivity of bourgeoisies. He stood firm in the belief that “Even the smallest part of an empirical reality is equivalent to the rest of the world”. He was in search of preventing the alienation and commodification which

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capitalism brings. While he considered the idea of epoch as the archaic modernity, he mainly tried to describe the newly-introduced as the very archaic itself. These images which embody the desires keep someone away from an old-fashioned recent past. And the image-producer whose drive is to find the new tends to the distant past. The experiences hidden into the collective unconscious get together with the new to create the common dream of the humanity. From the persistent to the old-fashioned, all experiences merge with the new. Benjamin calls the Jung's the archetypes of the collective unconscious as "dialectical images" (Dellaloğlu, 2005: 52-55). According to Benjamin, every compromise has a compulsive character, because there is always an underlying feeling that "it would be better otherwise" in every compromise. But there is a possibility of non-violent resolution of the cultural conflicts. The conference is important as a technique of civil agreement. There is a sphere of human agreement that is nonviolent and this is the sphere of "understanding," language (Dellaloğlu, 2005: 113-114). Benjamin was distanced from the Western linear comprehension of history. His consideration was cyclical. There are continuums in Benjamin's thought, not breaks/leaps. It is so crucial to consider on the history for Benjamin who tried to integrate past into the future. The writing of *On the Concept of History* is one of the most important philosophical writings of twentieth century. Leaning on the progress will be "handing history over as the tool of the ruling classes". Because the dialectics of history doesn't run in necessities. Benjamin who said "capitalism will not die a natural death" criticized the Western conception of progress and history (Dellaloğlu, 2005: 29-35).

Mythical violence in its archetypal form is a manifestation of gods and is law-making. According to Althusser, the practical ideologies of which their main function is to reproduce exploitation relations put forth an illusionary history of philosophy. Because all moral, legal or political ideological views cover up the real ruling mechanisms of societies by illusionary notions. Althusser stated that history of humanity is a struggle and conflict of classes (Althusser, 1991: 59-63). Today the visual images which surround the daily life only have commercial aims and represent consumption, entertainment and fashion. The brand value of products are sanctified (Hobsbawm, 1996: 586). Benjamin identified the lonely man in the crowdedness of the modern society as idle, "flâneur". The arcades and the glittering streets are the home of this man who hides and seeks refuge in the crowd. Flâneur observes the crowd in his/her own loneliness. And he/she also observes the relations of crowds with commodities and money in the arcades and streets (in the universe of commodity fetishes). But money does not matter for the flâneur. Flâneur witnesses "the decline of aura in the experience of shock". The *aura of an object* is its particular status and uniqueness in time and space. But the tendency of bringing things "closer" to the masses causes the decay of aura and uniqueness. The corrupted examples of objects by means of duplication and reproduction are reduced to temporary goods and fashion. And this is also what the illustrated newspapers, magazines and visual media which works as an industry does. Everything turns into a commodity that can be bought and sold by money. The price of feeling of sameness is the decay of uniqueness (aura and distance) owing to duplication and reproduction. The very crowd brings the modern city-dweller the figure which fascinates him/her. According to Benjamin,

“The delight of the city-dweller is not love at first sight but at last sight. It is a farewell forever” (Dellaloğlu, 2005: 170-174).

*‘Books and harlots – footnotes in one are as banknotes in the stockings of the other’ Benjamin (Dellaloğlu, 2005: 175).*

*“The collector sees the world in front of him in each piece of object. He makes his concern the idealization of objects. To him falls the Sisyphean task of divesting things of their commodity character by taking possession of them. But he can bestow on them only connoisseur value, rather than use value. The collector delights in evoking a world that is not just distant and long gone but also better.” Benjamin (Dellaloğlu, 2005: 176-177).*

Just as the collectors, the children also experience the life by learning the world of the past. The children that come into the world from the body of the past experience the exterior world in the body of their mother and in the shelter of their first home. The children are the seeds of the bodies that they come off from, i.e., the old world – which will bush out in the future. Maybe because of this as Freud stated; “the childhood seems to us as heaven. And the image of heaven is nothing more than the collective imagination of the childhood” (Freud, 2001:297). Thus, for children learning the life and experience the old happens by recognizing.

According to Benjamin, the great passion of the collector is always anarchist, destructive. Because he feels loyalty to object, to individual item and to things sheltered in his care. He wants to handle objects, to inspire from them, to see through them into their past and to make their rebirths possible. Then, the deepest urge of the collector is to renew the old World (Dellaloğlu, 2005: 176-177). Here an object is not bought and sold in use value. For the object keeps its commodity quality and carries an archaic information within itself, it represents a historical value. Since according to Foucault, power is not always a sign of an image of greatness, actually is a sign of power relations. Power is in different forms and fluid (Mills, 2010: 35).

Even if the face of money has changed, the meaning of it as an image of “power” is perpetual. There are differentiated purchase values of differentiated commodities which meet the same needs. The brand value of every product, commodity or service determines the place of it in the hierarchy of objects. Thus, money is not a tool that meets a need, but a tool that meets the derivative reflections of this need.

With the differentiated living spaces, differentiated entertainment, education and health care services, the modern society transforms into an arena of a tour de force which is designed not according to needs, but to imaginal/brand values. While the form of money is changeable, the archetypal meaning of it still remains. Money is a part of a system of values which organize the relations of individuals and societies. In this context, it is both a communication instrument and a form of a tour de force. Money is a tool of a ritual in which values (economic/cultural) are exchanged.

Today media platforms run as an economic and cultural industry. All activities in communication media are perceived in purchase value explicitly or implicitly. According to Benjamin, the use value of commodity is receded into background and the exchange value of the commodity is glorified. The man who has alienated

from himself and others buys not only commodities but also a fake equality. Every sort of product and service (housing, automobiles, clothes, and so on) which has a raised brand value distinguish high classes from the low ones. All spaces of life are full of differentiations. The purchase value (money) determines the rationality or the base of differentiation. Here the very differentiations are the archetypal projections of power or money.

*“Modernity turns out to be hero’s doom. It moors him fast in the secure harbour forever and abandons him to everlasting idleness.” Benjamin (Dellaloğlu, 2005: 178).*

In the modern society wherein the alienation has intensified, there is no hero who will rescue people from this alienation. Yet the heroes of the past appears as archetypal images in the new forms of narratives. The cinema industry which produces dreams integrates the archaic heroes into today’s world. Such as in the films of Dark City (Proyas-1998), Matrix (Wachowski-1999), Interstellar (Nolan-2014), Only Lovers Stay Alive (Jarmusch-2013), the archaic heroes has been recreated. Thus, the archaic heroes which the cinema industry recreates are bought by the audience.

Sometimes these archetypal heroes, just like in the film of Interstellar, embedded an archaic feeling into today’s world. Sometimes they take the road for the emancipation of humanity (just like in the films of Matrix and Interstellar). Sometimes while they are fighting for the insurrection against the exploitation, they seek their own past by taking off from today’s world (Just as in the film of Dark City). The main sense of Dark City is to interpret the worlds of present and future by rescanning the past (See, Kaplan, 2017). And in the film of Only lovers Stay Alive (Jarmusch-2013), a time-space plane where money is of no use is created and love is sublimated. The love which money cannot buy represents the eternity of love not between two humans but between two vampires. Thus while even the love for the man signifies the desire of achievement of a purchasable object, for the vampire the love is still a desire as an archetypal image. In the film of Only Lovers Stay Alive - in the system in which even the love is reduced to a purchasable commodity – falling back upon the past, the love is resurrected by the archetypal vampire image. The production cost of these films which do well in the box office and are products of the cinema industry determines the form and value of purchase (distribution/cinema hall/ticket). The audience not only buys the film for a fee, but also buys the content of the film. All accesses in means of communication are subject to money and its content.

According to Williams, today television turns into a tool to exploit the psychological inadequacy of man. Television has been used to create a large scale and complex but an atomised society. As Habermas stated, the function of media in the public space is problematic. Because mass media emerges as an economic market. The media itself is a product that should be counted. Media, on the one hand, is dependent on advertisements and serves the product sales. On the other hand the very media itself is in danger of being a purchasable commodity(Kaplan, 2013: 19-23).

## 2. The Archeology of Coin and its Archetypal Future

The first coin in history appeared in seventh century B.C. in Lydia, West Anatolia. Lydia which was founded on a trade route, had both eastern and western cultures. Lydia was also rich in gold mineral. The first coin was minted from an alloy of gold and silver which is called "electrum" in the form of a fava bean in the period of King Croesus. With the regulation of coinage, a certain payment system emerged. The invention of coin and the makeup of the King Road in order to develop trading in Anatolia happened at the same period. Lydians were the first in the world who calculate the value of goods in money equivalent by using gold-silver coins. The stamping of coins with images/emblems is the sign of the power of person or kingdom. Also it is thought that different emblems figures different units. The invention of coin facilitated commerce-trade and made available to pay the wages of public employees regularly (Yükçü-Atağan, 2011: 86-93). Trade and monetary economies matters in respect to the relation with the temples which also includes market places/agoras. Money and monetary policy as a part of administrative and theological ritual is continuously fed by this mentioned *archaic context*.

Today cultural interactions and all accesses in means of communication is subordinated to money and content of the money. Walter Benjamin represented Paris of the 19th century so to speak as a universe of commodity/global market with its fashion, international exhibitions, metal constructions, passages and collectors. The authority of fashion expanded to include all universe (Dellaloğlu, 2005: 54-55). Because *Fashion, which is a sublime product of money and capital crystallization, is the Nirvana of the aesthetized form of power*.

Benjamin considered modern world as archaic. The forms of new means of production corresponds in the collective cognition, in the images wherein the new and the old meld each other. The dreams of every age related to the upcoming age indicate that the upcoming age will include archaic elements. The collective archetypes of Jung are the objective embodiments of Benjamin's "dialectical images" and historical dynamics (Dellaloğlu, 2005: 52-54).

Everything in history; power, success, welfare, weakness, poverty and for sure belonging are expressed by symbols (Hobsbawm, 1996: 586). Thus, today the above mentioned Nirvana is the Bitcoin which is the product of a new inter human-machine dialectical ritual as a product of a digital labour and mining. By the Baudrillardian view, this is the *Xerox phase* of monetary symbolism and ritual.

Nowadays, the images which accompany people are the branded/sanctified names of goods or commodities in common memory. Today, objects are reduced to temporary goods and fashion by means of duplication and reproduction. Objects are "pried from their shells" and their auras are destroyed. This system which functions as commodification of objects in the level of fashion is invalid for Bitcoin, a postmodern formation of money. For its production amount is limited and uncopiable, Bitcoin is an archetypal return of originality and uniqueness matching the system which Baumann exemplified by the furniture metaphor. Therefore it organizes an archaic and strong sense of pleasure and excitement among its users.

The collectors are the physiognomists of the world of things. They bestow connoisseur value on them rather than use-value. The object in the hands of the collector is not in the state of cheap and temporary goods (Dellaloğlu, 2005: 176-177). Just as the objects kept in the museums are not cheap commodities which can be sold and bought. Like the collectors, the children also examine the objects, value them and want to know the world of the objects. Today, for a child who collects and examines objects and wants to create something new from them, the coin is still important. Sometimes it functions to get a small daily necessity (to buy). Sometimes it has the potential to realize a small dream in the penny bank. While the first coins were made of precious metals, today the coins signify the smallest unit of currency. Nowadays the coin with a low use value and purchase value is not taken seriously and is ignored even in the case of dropping, losing or finding it on the street. But the banknote which has a higher value in terms of its use value and purchase value is the sign of the hierarchy of forces with its iconographic design. And today Bitcoin, a virtual money, almost gives the charm of greatness-power to the coin again as being an archetypal projection of it. The Bitcoin is the reproduction of the coin which is disfavoured as a magical virtual/digital object which implies "power". Thus, *the virtual archetypal derivatives of the objects are also included in their hierarchy.*

In this context, money with its real and virtual appearances is not just a tool that meets needs, but also a metaphor which implies power. According to Foucault, power is a fluid-circulating thing and should be understood as describing a chain relation. Individuals and all forms of relationships are means of power. Power has different forms and plays a role within the family, within the institutions and within the administration. Then power is plural (Mills, 2010: 35). *The chain relationship that emerges as a blockchain in Bitcoin is a meta-economic function of global digital fluidity and circulation.*

For the ancient man, the violence which is attempted to defy the destiny and gain a victory is divine (Dellaloğlu, 2005: 118-119). Therefore, money-indexed violence in stock exchange derivatives market is more understandable in the archetypal context. Because mythical violence is a law making symptom of power which is the archetypal reflection of divinity and transcendency. The financial myths connected with the short-lived speculation on the stock markets perpetuate anxiety and fears together with their ambivalences through the value paradox phantoms created on things. In this respect, derivative markets with their archetypal ontologies produce the heaven and the hell which are promised by power at the same time. Today, the financial sector is a playmaker or a law-maker divine derivative of the economy.

The face of money has changed by transforming from coin to banknote, credit cards to electronic accounts and finally to Bitcoin, Ethereum and its derivatives. Money is not only a tool which implies purchase value of needs; but also an image of 'power' as the value of purchasing more than you need. In the case of Bitcoin, the monetary image which holds the power doesn't have a corpse. *It is a hypothetical matrix corresponding to digital labour.* Bitcoin mining is in the form of Bitcoin hunting as the digital prize for the digital portage. In this respect, the postmodern money Bitcoin's relationship with the *Holy Grail* is obvious. Bitcoins which can be produced in limited numbers and have a limit of quantity, are

contemporary archaic analogues of archetypal basic motifs that have been carried to the digital world. Because the labour-value-reward mechanism is based on the 'Riddle' motif. In mythological narratives, the obtaining of Holy Grail, i.e. valuable prize which is the symbol of power impose upon the hero task steps which increasingly get difficult. The obtaining of Bitcoin which is in the state of Holy Grail requires processes which become much more difficult at every turn and take too much time and energy. In this task, the computers with powerful processors and graphic cards are the avatars of the hero. Even if the form of money changes, the primitive/archetypal meaning continues. *Money is a form of communication in the relationships between people and societies, is a form of tour de force, is a tool of ritual of the exchange of things/values.*

Nowadays which virtual culture is dominant, money appears in different forms even in the fictional world of cinema. In a cult horror film, Psycho (Hitchcock-1960), it comes out as stolen banknotes from the rich. As in the film Fight Club (Fincher-1999), money which is hidden as an invisible power into plazas revolts in the hero's anarchist personality against being almost a virtual toy of capitalism. This toy is the irony of the remarketing of soap from *liposuction* to plazas and hotels. The film criticizes modernity and consumer culture. Today, the traditional media including cinema and all platforms of the new media perform as an industry. And whether it is interactive or not, all activities are perceived within the value of purchase. Relations imply "a tour de force" as the archetypal transformation of money.

According to Benjamin, exhibitions and passages are places of pilgrimage to the commodity fetish. Entertainment industry converts the person into a customer identity. A false equality is provided by the production of a false value (Dellaloğlu, 2005:178). Indeed, Bitcoin and its production are based on the logic of the task episodes of online computer games which are *Jerusalem* of digital entertainment. In this respect, the relationship of the postmodern money with the game cult is obvious. In Bitcoin, the falsity is replaced by the digital one, and the equality is replaced by the global *electronic phantom of the power* that lives through web.

Nowadays everyone has become a hero of their own and withdrawn into their own shelter, but still keep the desire of salvation by resurrecting the past archetypal motifs. *Bitcoin, emerging as an archetypal reanimation of the desire for salvation, is a rebellion of the money image restrained to traditional institutional limitations.*

In today's capitalist economy order, goods, services and ideas, in brief, all products that have the value of purchase should be subjected to the exchange market. Economic accumulation realizes with the value transfer of the products that are subjected to the exchange in the market as an economic value. And the relations of hegemony provided through economic accumulation determine all social relations of the individual. This takes place with a consensus, which is formed without being noticed (by collective unconscious). And the hegemonic organizations constitute the rules about the exchange in the product markets. The individual and society reproduce themselves through economic values/products and economic-political means. The global capitalist market generates the organizations of production and distribution. It makes value transfers by putting goods, services and ideas into use.

For the capitalist economy, the means of distribution and exchange are very important. Today, as well as transportation and energy, communication sectors are also prominent economic areas. All mass media also generate commercial marketplace. All communication media from mobile phones to internet networks are tools with marketing potential (Bilgili, 2009: 163-166). Along with new communication technologies, the banking and finance sector has also entered the digital development process. The financial and banking sectors' role as the 'playmaker' in economic growth has increased (Dönmez, 2017, Prologue). Today, people and institutions purchase financial services. And financial institutions determine the purchase value of money for money. New communication media, for people and institutions that easily access all kinds of services by the digitalization in technology, is almost like an archetypal fairground. Today, the monetary power promised in the field of digital fairgrounds through digital playmaking heroes is Bitcoin, Ethereum and their derivatives derived from *Block-Chain-Condensate* (with reference to Quantum Bose-Einstein Condensate).

### **3. Conclusion**

Coin is a communication tool. Its primary function is an economic communication tool. Since the coin marks the purchasing power as a means of commercial communication. The value of the purchase of goods and services (usage and exchange value) is the measure unit. However, with its currency derivative functions, that is, a socio-psychological value, it is even more important as a means of expressing social power. And in this context coin is a cultural language which signifies power on a macroscale.

Needs are detached from its artificial context and manufactured artificial needs. Thus as a social statue and a virtual tool of identity indicator coin is a basic communication form in socio-psychological processes. Derivative functions of coin take support from archaic factors and in this context coin has archetypal indicators. Within in the cultural exchange process of barter/exchange economy to Bitcoin even if the facet of coin and therefore indicators has changed, its indicators are steady with regard the archetypal meaning. Coin's cultural function in communication extremely important as an archetypal medium. Therefore interdisciplinary perspective must be entailed in coin and its function of analyzing power relations. It will be difficult to resolve the tension in people and inter-communal relationships without exploiting the science of anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics and analyzing the archetypal appearances and meanings of coin. It is hoped that by analogical interpretation of the barter/exchange sample and the socio-psychological approach of this study will affect the next studies.

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