

# The Social Artist

A photograph of a duck in a grassy field. The duck is brown and blue, standing in the foreground. In the background, there are other ducks and a tree with white flowers. The image is framed by a thin white border.

Home-makers

Health

Planet

Spring 2020

# The SOCIAL ARTIST

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# Editorial

Overnight, many people have stopped jumping into their cars every weekday and driving to work as a matter of routine. The skies are no longer criss-crossed with vapour trails as corporate employees and holiday-makers travel across the world. Instead, an uncanny silence and clarity of air greets us every morning. As we allocate our time to the essential tasks of managing the Household, shopping, cooking, cleaning, gardening and, above all, caring for the children and each other, we need to take some time out to dream about the future.

Will it be a nightmare regime of controls, as predicted in dystopian fiction such as *The Machine Stops*, *Brave New World* and *1984*?<sup>1</sup> Will we continue to proceed as before down the path toward greater insulation, isolation, domination, and separation? Will heightened levels of separation and control become normal, in the belief that they are necessary to keep us safe, so that we accept a world in which we are afraid to be near each other? Or can we, as Charles Eisenstein suggests, perhaps “take advantage of

this pause, this break in normal, to turn onto a path of reunion, of holism, of the restoring of lost connections, of the repair of community and the rejoining of the web of life”?

*“Covid-19 is showing us that when humanity is united in common cause, phenomenally rapid change is possible. None of the world’s problems are technically difficult to solve; they originate in human disagreement. In coherency, humanity’s creative powers are boundless. A few months ago, a proposal to halt commercial air travel would have seemed preposterous. Likewise for the radical changes we are making in our social behavior, economy, and the role of government in our lives. Covid demonstrates the power of our collective will when we agree on what is important. What else might we achieve, in coherency? What do we want to achieve, and what world shall we create? That is always the next question when anyone awakens to their power. Covid-19 is like a rehab intervention that breaks the addictive hold of normality.”<sup>2</sup>*

Charles Eisenstein’s work (<https://charleseisenstein.org/>) offers an excellent

starting point for engaging in the new thinking and action. Already, as I write, different time schedules are emerging. As we find ourselves locked into physical isolation, we are coming together socially in unprecedented ways. When the crisis subsides, we may perhaps consider whether we want to return to 'normal', or whether something may have emerged during this break in the routines that we want to bring into the future.

If a sustainable future for humanity is to emerge, all people, in all walks of life, rich and poor, young and old, will have to change from the 'business-as-usual' norms in order to think through and act out different ways of working together. That, for the vast majority of women, may not be too tricky. Without the caring and sharing of women in their

Households across the world, the global economic order could not have emerged. In this issue of *The Social Artist* we offer suggestions of thought-provoking work-in-progress. Heretofore the temptation has been to read an inspiring article and book, and move on to the next without engaging in new lines of action. Now is the time for change. The question is - will we take on the responsibility for change by becoming pro-active in choosing how we spend our time as we get and spend our money? We introduce here a number of inspiring examples of good practice rooted in a sound theoretical framework. Now is undoubtedly the time to pause for thought. The alternative - allowing ourselves to be swept along on a tide of fear and uncertainty - is too dreadful to contemplate.

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<sup>1</sup> See 'The Machine Stops' and 'The Economics of Sin' on <https://www.douglassocialcredit.com/resources/frances-hutchinson>

<sup>2</sup> <https://charleseisenstein.org/essays/the-coronation/>

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# The Conspiracy Narrative

Charles Eisenstein

*The following extract is taken from Charles Eisenstein's essay:*  
<https://charleseisenstein.org/essays/the-coronation/>.

If there is one thing our civilization is good at, it is fighting an enemy. We welcome opportunities to do what we are good at, which prove the validity of our technologies, systems, and worldview. And so, we manufacture enemies, cast

problems like crime, terrorism, and disease into us-versus-them terms, and mobilize our collective energies toward those endeavors that can be seen that way. Thus, we single out Covid-19 as a call to arms, reorganizing society as if for a war effort, while treating as normal the possibility of nuclear armageddon, ecological collapse, and five million children starving.

## The Conspiracy Narrative

The theories (there are many variants) talk about Event 201 (sponsored by the Gates Foundation, CIA, etc. last September), and a 2010 Rockefeller Foundation white paper detailing a scenario called “Lockstep,” both of which lay out the authoritarian response to a hypothetical pandemic. They observe that the infrastructure, technology, and legislative framework for martial law has been in preparation for many years. All that was needed, they say, was a way to make the public embrace it, and now that has come. Whether or not current controls are permanent, a precedent is being set for:

- The tracking of people’s movements at all times (because coronavirus)
- The suspension of freedom of assembly (because coronavirus)
- The military policing of civilians (because coronavirus)
- Extrajudicial, indefinite detention (quarantine, because coronavirus)
- The banning of cash (because coronavirus)
- Censorship of the Internet (to combat disinformation, because coronavirus)
- Compulsory vaccination and other medical treatment, establishing the state’s sovereignty over our bodies (because coronavirus)
- The classification of all activities and destinations into the expressly permitted and the expressly forbidden (you can leave your house for this, but not that), eliminating the unpoliced, non-judicial gray zone. That totality is the very essence of totalitarianism. Necessary now though, because, well, coronavirus.

This is juicy material for conspiracy theories. For all I know, one of those theories could be true; however, the same progression of events could unfold from an unconscious systemic tilt toward ever-increasing control. Where does this tilt come from? It is woven into civilization’s DNA. For millennia, civilization (as opposed to small-scale traditional cultures) has understood progress as a matter of extending control onto the world: domesticating the wild, conquering the barbarians, mastering the forces of nature, and ordering society according to law and reason. The ascent of control accelerated with the Scientific Revolution, which launched “progress” to new heights: the ordering of reality into objective categories and quantities, and the mastering of materiality with technology. Finally, the social sciences promised to use the same means and methods to fulfill the ambition (which goes back to Plato and Confucius) to engineer a perfect society. Those who administer civilization will therefore welcome any opportunity to strengthen their control, for after all, it is in service to a grand vision of human destiny: the perfectly ordered world, in which disease, crime, poverty, and perhaps suffering itself can be engineered out of existence. No nefarious motives are necessary. Of course they would like to keep track of everyone – all the better to ensure the common good. For them, Covid-19 shows how necessary that is. “Can we afford democratic freedoms in light of the coronavirus?” they ask. “Must we now, out of necessity, sacrifice those for our own safety?” It is a familiar refrain, for it has accompanied other crises in the past, like 9/11.

To rework a common metaphor, imagine a man with a hammer, stalking around looking for a reason to use it. Suddenly he sees a nail sticking out. He's been looking for a nail for a long time, pounding on screws and bolts and not accomplishing much. He inhabits a world view in which hammers are the best tools, and the world can be made better by pounding in the nails. And here is a nail! We might suspect that in his eagerness he has placed the nail there himself, but it hardly matters. Maybe it isn't even a nail that's sticking out, but it resembles one enough to start pounding. When the tool is at the ready, an opportunity will arise to use it. And I will add, for those inclined to doubt the authorities, maybe this time it really is a nail. In that case, the hammer is the right tool – and the principle of the hammer will emerge the stronger, ready for the screw, the button, the clip, and the tear. Either way, the problem we deal with here is much deeper than that of overthrowing an evil coterie of Illuminati. Even if they do exist, given the tilt of civilization, the same trend would persist without them, or a new Illuminati would arise to assume the functions of the old. True or false, the idea that the epidemic is some monstrous plot perpetrated by evildoers upon the public is not so far from the mind set of find-the-pathogen. It is a crusading mentality, a war mentality. It locates the source of a socio-political illness in a pathogen against which we may then fight, a victimizer separate from ourselves. It risks ignoring the conditions that make society fertile ground for the

plot to take hold. Whether that ground was sown deliberately or by the wind is, for me, a secondary question.

What I will say next is relevant whether or not Covid-19 is a genetically engineered bioweapon, is related to 5G rollout, is being used to prevent “disclosure,” is a Trojan horse for totalitarian world government, is more deadly than we've been told, is less deadly than we've been told, originated in a Wuhan biolab, originated at Fort Detrick, or is exactly as the CDC and WHO have been telling us. It applies even if everyone is totally wrong about the role of the SARSCoV-2 virus in the current epidemic. I have my opinions, but if there is one thing I have learned through the course of this emergency is that I don't really know what is happening. I don't see how anyone can, amidst the seething farrago of news, fake news, rumours, suppressed information, conspiracy theories, propaganda, and politicized narratives that fill the Internet. I wish a lot more people would embrace not knowing. I say that both to those who embrace the dominant narrative, as well as to those who hew to dissenting ones. What information might we be blocking out, in order to maintain the integrity of our viewpoints? Let's be humble in our beliefs: it is a matter of life and death.

COMMENT: Like so many others, I agree that “I don't really know what is happening”, and wish “a lot more people would embrace not knowing”. Get hold of a copy of Charles Eisenstein's 2011 *Sacred Economics* if you can possibly do so. *Editor*

If we are to reach real peace in the world, we shall have to begin with the children.

*Mahatma Gandhi*

# Don't Let Money Wreck the World<sup>1</sup>

Frances Hutchinson

If the present generation of children is to have a hope in hell's chance of living in a habitable world some revolutionary thinking needs to be done about the *financial* economy by those of us who use it every day. As the scene changes daily, we are being brought to realise that the cultural framework and the policy formation process is changing beyond recognition in the post-Corona virus era. The reality is that the natural world, which supplies our physical needs, and our home communities, which supply all our social needs, combine to form the real economy that enables us to live out our lives. For a sustainable future we need to set about managing the real economy. But, until the onset of the pandemic, we have allowed the financial economy to dominate our choices. Yet, we don't say: "That's a good idea! This project is vitally necessary to us, we have the skills, the knowledge and the resources to put it into action. So let's get on with it!" We say: "That's a good idea. But who's going to pay for it?" If no money can be found, we let resources waste whilst people die of starvation, no matter how sound the farming skills or how sophisticated the technology that might be available. So, how have we let this situation come about?

A century ago the crisis of the First World War was making people very thoughtful about the origins and purpose

of the institutions governing politics and economics in general, and the creation and use of money in particular. There was a great deal of discussion of the many and varied texts that appeared at the time, about the environmental issues, self-sufficiency, sustainable agriculture, craftsmanship, finance, philosophy, social justice, and human rights and responsibilities. As the following summary of thoughts on the world economy indicates, the identical issues have remained unresolved over the intervening century.

The Social Credit movement, which flourished in the so-called inter-war years, was part of the general questioning of the assumptions behind business-as-usual economics that was causing war and environmental devastation across the world

## 1. Whole earth economy

Humanity and the living planet that sustains all life on earth forms one seamless whole, and has to be managed as such. It no longer makes sense for schools of business and economics to talk in terms of the comparative *financial* wealth of a particular nation. The well-being of the real-life economy of the entire globe must be the concern of all human beings living today. Referring to other nations as 'our competitors' is absurd. *Cooperation* is the key word,

not *competition*. The choice is to revert to business-as-usual on the one hand, or finding ways to relate to all life on earth on the other.

## 2. The eco-centric mindset

By 'business-as-usual' is meant the sole rule of thumb that says: 'what's in it for me?' That is, the dominant consideration remains self-centred or ego-centric: 'How much money-value do I personally obtain from a certain course of action?' Under this mindset, the only tasks worth undertaking are those that are rewarded with money. The climate crisis calls for a generous or eco-centric mindset, that is, where the dominant philosophy is care for the environment and care for each other. That involves a fundamental shift from greed and power towards the altruistic caring and sharing essential to a sane economic system. Without the altruistic work of Households across the world, cooking, cleaning, washing, loving, caring and the whole process of Household management, there would be no 'labour' to keep the financial economy going.

## 3. Nature and agriculture economically central

All value creation starts with agriculture based upon the resources of the natural world. As people work with the natural materials provided they draw upon social capital, the accumulated knowledge, skills and wisdom of society, known as the '*common cultural heritage*'. The 'division of labour' enables individuals to work together in teams, sharing the increased produce with the rest of the community. In recent decades the growth of organic agriculture in general

- and biodynamic farming in particular, has allowed small-scale local living economies to emerge. These *closed loop* economies seek to eliminate waste, re-using resources, sharing, repairing, re-manufacturing and recycling. This is in contrast with the capitalist business-as-usual mindset that takes in resources, degrades them and spews out waste.

## 4. Labour is not a commodity

Manufactured items may be bought and sold. But labour - work - is not a thing to be bought and sold. People who have no resources of their own, and must therefore sell their services to the highest bidder, have been termed 'wage slaves'. Work, the spending of time in *self-directed labour*, is a human right, which demands access to land, skills, know-how and finance.

## 5. Money is socially created

Money and capital are socially created phenomena. Hence they belong to society as a whole, and not to powerful corporations or individuals. The question of what money is and how it is administered has filled many a text discussed in these pages (i.e., *The Social Artist/Crediter*) over past decades. The present crises demonstrate the necessity of coming to grips with the whole story of money, its circulation and use.

## 6. Purchase money, lending money and gift money

One way of seeking to understand what money is, is to define it according to its uses. We are all familiar with spending money on commodities, on the goods and services we need. This has been termed 'purchase money'. Finance can also be

allocated as a loan, enabling the borrower to accumulate plant and machinery, so-called ‘capital’, for making goods and services for sale. And money can be given as a gift to enable groups to engage in arts, sciences, education, home-making and cultivating the global environmental commons.

### **7. Decoupling the real economy from the financial economy**

Presently, financial value can go on appreciating without taking account of the fact that plant and machinery wear out. That is, investors continue to draw financial dividends on plant and machinery (real capital) that has come to the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced. Finance needs to *circulate* if it is not to destroy the vitality of the real-life economy. A suggestion that requires further experimentation and investigation is that of giving money a fixed term of life.<sup>2</sup>

### **8. Self-regulation based on whole system awareness**

In the mid-1990s Helga Moss, a Norwegian economist and mother, presented a fascinating study of the relationship between her Household, the wider political economy of which it forms a part, and the natural world upon which it remains dependent.

“I do not grow any food, or weave or sew clothes. I have not built my house or made the furniture in it. Everything I use has been made by other people. It is like a global Household. But of course, normally you do not reflect on that. If you have the money you buy things in stores. When they are no longer useful, they

become waste and will be disposed of by a public service. If I look around my flat I see hundreds of items whose history I know nothing about; in this respect I am a ‘normal’ Western urban individual.”<sup>3</sup>

Moss has a strong suspicion that if she scrutinised her purchases critically, there would be reasons to boycott most of the items she buys on grounds of their social and environmental costs. As things stand, she has to buy all the things she needs, normally up to about ten items per day. Since she has little time to ponder over the purchases she makes, as she has to hurry back home to her children, it is normally the price factor that settles her choices. As the present crisis makes us aware of our interdependence, we are increasingly called to take stock of how the whole system works, and to accept responsibility for our role within it.

### **9. The land question**

Helga Moss’s train of thought leads to the conclusion that all human beings have a right to a livelihood. As is widely discussed at the moment, that might be achieved by the payment of a Universal Basic Income independent of employment status. A less well-known suggestion that was current in the 1920s was every human being should receive a certain amount of agricultural land in order to take care of it. As this concept enters more and more into the global conversation it raises the whole question of property in land, capital, technology and the global commons.<sup>4</sup>

### **10. Informed participatory action**

Theory and practice must be inextricably interwoven. The call is to take time out

to study the economy, not as an academic exercise, but as a means of participating in soundly informed practical action.

We can all spot the errors of the rich and powerful, thereby seeking to lay the blame elsewhere. But the reality is that only well thought-out practical action at local level can pave the way forward to a new era of sound theory and practice.

Each of the above ten summarised issues represents vast libraries of documentation on theory and practice in the social order. The world-wide intellectual movements that evolved in the aftermath of the catastrophe of the First World War, brought men and women of all classes and creeds to seek ways to create a saner political economy. Crucially, however, the central question of the origins and nature of finance has yet to be fully tackled.

Money is useless on its own. You can't eat or drink it, be clothed or sheltered by it, or be kept warm or cook with it. It simply *represents* the goods and services that we require by easing the process of exchange on the market. And it is essential that those in charge of our national finances ensure that the amount of money in circulation does not escalate beyond the resources available for exchange on the market. Like the skills of the engineer or architect, the technicalities of money flows are matters which must rely on the expertise of the experts, in this case those experienced in banking and finance, overseen by the political process. That is, policy is formed in the political process, whilst

technical details are worked out by the financial 'engineers', under supervision.<sup>5</sup>

The Coronavirus pandemic has occurred, and we all have to face up to it. The minds of all are focussed on saving lives by caring for the sick within the NHS, and by insisting that we all follow guidelines that keep us safe. But if public institutions and businesses are closing down and huge numbers are staying at home, how, you might say, are we all going to earn or receive a living?

The government has decided to make enormous, indeed eye-watering amounts of money available to all sections of society whose livings have collapsed in recent days. Where there is a need for equipment, ventilators, protective clothing, mortgage repayment 'holidays', abolition of business rates, 80% of wages or monthly cash sums for the self-employed, it will be provided.

Quantitative easing eases the situation, no-one is in debt, there's no interest to pay, nothing to pay back. To quote an earlier paragraph, 'money belongs to society as a whole..' And the citizens will play their part, working extra hours to produce the ventilators, retired NHS staff returning to work, volunteers in their thousands helping the vulnerable, and keeping in touch with those who are isolated. Thinking and studying must be closely interwoven with *practical* action. We are learning lots of lessons. Be part of the process of remembering them as we shape our future.

For further material on this subject see: <https://www.douglassocialcredit.com/resources/frances-hutchinson>

- <sup>1</sup> Thanks to C. Otto Scharmer, whose paper on Rudolf Steiner's World Economy, published in *Kosmos Journal*, 6 March 2020, provided the inspiration for this discussion document. Thanks also to those who have contributed their thoughts on early drafts of the document.
- <sup>2</sup> This complex issue is explored by Charles Eisenstein in his *Sacred Economics: Money, Gift and Society in the Age of Transition*. Evolver Books. Published in 2011, the book opens with the statement: "The purpose of this book is to make money and human economy as sacred as everything in the universe".
- <sup>3</sup> Helga Moss (1994) "Consumption and Fertility" in Wendy Harcourt (ed) *Feminist Perspectives on Sustainable Development*, Zed Books.
- <sup>4</sup> See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happy\\_Planet\\_Index](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happy_Planet_Index)
- <sup>5</sup> For sources see Frances Hutchinson, (2010) *Understanding the Financial System*, Jon Carpenter. Available electronically at <https://www.douglassocialcredit.com/>

# What is the Economy *FOR*?

Shannon Hayes

"A thatched roof once covered free man;  
under marble and gold dwells slavery,  
*Roman philosopher Seneca (3 BC - 65 AD)*

Betty Friedan passed away in 2006 after a long life during which she witnessed fully the second wave of feminism that *The Feminine Mystique*, (published in 1963) sparked in the United States. In the final edition of her book (1997), however, she warned in her foreword that there was a bigger battle than sexual politics looming on our horizons: . . . the sexual politics that helped us break through the feminine mystique is not relevant or adequate, is even diversionary, in confronting the serious and growing economic imbalance, the mounting income inequality of wealth, now threatening both women and men.

Friedan pointed out that we have been living in a culture of greed that has been distracting Americans from a growing sense of anxiety and insecurity. She cautioned that it was easier to absorb

ourselves with rage between "women and men, black and white, young and old . . . than to openly confront the excessive power of corporate greed." We have bigger battles to fight....

It is not my intention with this book to draw men and women away from the valuable outside-the-home work of seeking justice, healing our sick, serving our communities, educating our citizens, or any other vocation *as long as it genuinely honors* the four tenets of family, community, planet and social justice. Too many Americans, however, are finding themselves working as wage slaves in employment that fails to honor this quartet. We must realize that we can be empowered and find opportunity when we live opposite to the corporate-centered world. In order to revive our culture and create a vibrant society that does not depend on a consumer-driven and ecologically rapacious economy, more of us need to look homeward to create a

life-nurturing alternative. Gandhi taught us that “to believe in something, and not to live it, is dishonest.” Thoreau warned that failing to honor our conscience was a form of self-inflicted violence: “Is there not a sort of bloodshed when the conscience is wounded? Through this wound a man’s real manhood and immortality flow out, and he bleeds to an everlasting death.”

Doubtless, the suggestion of creating a life-nurturing alternative to our existing consumer society still has countless key-punching economists puckering their mouths, rolling their eyes, and trying to persuade their sons and daughters that such an effort is fruitless. These folks go home at night and, sometime between having takeout on the table and finding the TV remote, they offer parental guidance, urging their daughters to grow up to continue the fight for fair treatment in the workforce, and their sons to practice their necktie knots so that they will be able to comfortably don their daily noose in adulthood.

It has been programmed into the conscience of many Americans that any alternative to the status quo will have a detrimental effect on the economy. Thus, as social critic John DeGraaf has observed, for any movement to succeed, whether it be for environmental protection, worker rights, or food security, advocates must first prove “that their suggestion will not adversely affect economic growth or the Dow Jones Industrial Average.” In short, advocates for social - change are under obligation to prove that they will do no harm to corporate America, because corporate America has become inextricably linked

with mainstream culture. It dominates our political system, foreign policies, food system, environmental policies and practices, music and entertainment, even our educational system.

**Since corporations claim no legal accountability other than to make money for their shareholders, we are living in, and largely governed by, an extractive economy that is divorced from our life systems.**

Curtailing any social movement by offering deference to an extortionate economy is no longer acceptable. “It’s long past time for a new framing offensive,” argues DeGraaf, “one that turns the obligatory question on its head and shifts the burden of proof to those who resist change. Imagine bumper stickers, posters, internet messages, a thousand inquiries visible everywhere, asking a different question: What’s the economy for?” Our national (now global) economic principles have served only a handful of powerful elites. In the process, it has wrought havoc on our culture, our planet, and on the lives of most who serve it. By rebuilding our home lives according to values of social justice, ecological sustainability, and family and community security, we begin the process of dismantling the extractive economy and creating in its place a life-serving economy that enables us to meet our needs while thriving in harmony with our earth and spirits. .

\* \* \*

In chapter one I mentioned that the Radical Homemakers seemed to be on a three-stage path. In the first stage, *Renouncing*, most of them were still leading conventional lives, but were

becoming increasingly aware of the illusory happiness of a consumer society. As a result of deep introspection, they would ultimately make the choice to step off their current path and become a homemaker. In the second stage, *Reclaiming*, the homemakers entered a period where they worked to recover many of the lost domestic skills that would enable their family to live without outside income. I observed that, depending on the individual, this phase could take years (especially if small children were at home) or a lifetime. As we saw in chapter six, it is an exciting and deeply fulfilling period. However, if homemakers dwelled in this phase for too long, a few of them admitted

to manifesting symptoms of Friedan's "Housewife's Syndrome," including a sense of aimlessness, despair about the rest of the world, cynicism, or sporadic bouts with depression. Those homemakers who were truly fulfilled had moved into a third phase, what I've dubbed *Rebuilding*, in which they worked to expand their creative energies outward. Their homes had become more sustainable and meaningful places, and now they were applying their talents and skills to bring their communities and society along with them.

Extract from Shannon Hayes, (2010) *Radical Homemakers*, Left to Write Press, NY. pp49-51. p250.

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## Our World

Black world of horror - grim, relentless, stark!  
 Suffused with passion greed and cruelty,  
 Can you be real? Can Man have sunk so far  
 That he refuses to admit the truth  
 For long enough to fill his hollow life?  
 His Absolute a string of daily needs!  
 If this be true then sordid Adam's shroud  
 Should surely blot him from the Universe.

Shall some cold thinker of philosophy  
 Resolve to patterns all chaotic thought?  
 Astute and subtle, finite in his aims?  
 A scheme which merely sways the intellect  
 Nor grasps the magnitude of what shall be.  
 Is man a monument of mind and flesh,  
 Shall he be bound within the thought prescribed  
 As sanity? Then shall his mind be dead.

Shall dreamers sit and idly twirl their thumbs  
 In vague content - sublime indifference -  
 Or follow in the greedy way of gain  
 Their mess of pottage bought - the price we know -

Is this our World, the world we sow and reap,  
Where hearts are ever grovelling in fear?  
If dreams are dust all-hail the scientist  
Who shall resolve us into dust again!

Grim pictures these - but false - Stupendous lies  
Which man has told himself till he believes,  
For racial thought has woven in his mind  
The net to trap him - crush his very soul  
That he may be like every other man,  
and live and think in masses. Undermine  
The very concept of Humanity,  
For tie which binds should lift him up sublime!

The truth - Oh Man! You face about, or die  
With folded wings and unawakened soul;  
Afraid to be yourself- afraid to live,  
Though seeking madly for the happiness  
Which intuition tells you is your right.  
Then face the truth, the self which is divine,  
Be fearless in your love for your own soul  
And strong because your soul is part of God.

Respect the souls ye see on either hand,  
Be proud if they have learned to use their wings.  
But love them all, and learn to understand  
That personality is but the tune  
Which each one plays in Universal Whole,  
When he has learned expression for his soul.  
Then free yourself that you may come to be  
A major chord in God's great harmony.

Margaret V. Underhill, via Malcolm Gluck. See New View 95, Spring 2020 for details of how this poem came to us at this moment in time. New View is available from: <https://www.newview.org.uk/>

“And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised,  
and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened  
more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows.

And the people began to think differently.

“And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless,  
and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

“And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their  
losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live  
and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.”

*Irene Vella translated by Kitty O'Meara*

# Dividing Up

## Bernard Shaw

Everybody knows now that Socialism is a proposal to divide-up the income of the country in a new way. What you perhaps have not noticed is that the income of the country is being divided up every day and even every minute at present, and must continue to be divided up every day as long as there are two people left on earth to divide it. The only possible difference of opinion is not as to whether it shall be divided or not but as to how much each person should have, and on what conditions he should be allowed to have it. St Paul said "He that will not work, neither shall he eat"; but as he was only a man with low opinion of women, he forgot the babies. Babies cannot work and are shockingly greedy; but if they were not fed there would soon be nobody left alive in the world. So that will not do.

Some people imagine that because they can save money the wealth of the world can be stored up. Stuff and nonsense. Most of the wealth that keeps us alive will not last a week. The world lives from hand to mouth. A drawing room poker will last a life time; but we cannot live by eating drawing room pokers; and though we do all we can to make our food keep by putting egg into water-glass, tinning salmon, freezing mutton, and turning

milk into dry goods, the hard fact remains that unless most of our food is eaten within a few days of its being baked or killed it will go stale or rotten, and choke or poison us. Even our clothes will not last very long if we work hard in them; and there is the washing. You may put india-rubber patches on your boot soles to prevent the soles wearing out; but then the patches will wear out. Every year must bring its own fresh harvest and its new generations of sheep and cattle: we cannot live on what is left of last year's harvest; and as next year's does not yet exist, we must live in the main on this year's, making things and using them up, sowing and reaping, brewing and baking, breeding and butchering (unless we are vegetarians like myself), soiling and washing or else dying of dirt and starvation. What is called saving is only making bargains for the future. For instance, if I bake a hundred and one loaves of bread, I can eat no more than the odd one; and I cannot save the rest, because they will be uneatable in a week. All I can do is to bargain with somebody who wants a hundred loaves to be eaten on the spot by himself and his family and persons in his employment, that if I give my hundred spare loaves to him he will give me, say, five new loaves to

eat every year in future. But that is not saving up the loaves. It is only a bargain between two parties: one who wants to provide for the future, and another who wants to spend heavily in the present. Consequently I cannot save until I find somebody else who wants to spend. The notion that we could all save together is silly: the truth is that only a few well-off people who have more than they need can afford to provide for their future in this way; and they could not do it were there not others spending more than they possess. Peter must spend what Paul saves, or Paul's savings will go rotten. Between the two nothing is saved. The nation as a whole must make its bread and eat it as it goes along. A nation which stopped working would be dead in a fortnight even if every man, woman, and child in it had

houses and lands and a million of money in the savings bank. When you see the rich man's wife (or anyone else's wife) shaking her head over the thriftlessness of the poor because they do not all save, pity the lady's ignorance; But do not irritate the poor by repeating her nonsense to them.

Extract from Bernard Shaw, *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*, Constable & Co (1929) pp 6-7; *The Intelligent Woman's Guide: To Socialism, Capitalism, Sovietism and Fascism* Alma Classics (2017) £8.99 451pp

COMMENT: Don't be put off by the patronising title! Like so much of the work of twentieth century writers that was inspired by the work of John Ruskin and William Morris, Shaw's work has not dated with the passage of time.

What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?

*George Eliot*

## Foodwise Extract 2

### Wendy E Cook

I have been endlessly fascinated by every aspect of cooking, from the growing of food to the eating of it - even the washing up doesn't put me off! But it seems that not everyone shares this love. In the West we seem to be more concerned with results than process, so it is little wonder that many women, and possibly men, see only a pile of washing up as the result of a two or more hours' cooking session (the food having taken a matter of minutes

to eat) rather than the enjoyment of the process. This is surely why convenience foods have such an appeal?

That the business of eating has been relegated to simply 'refuelling the machine' and meal-times are a 'pit-stop' pause, something to be got through as quickly as possible, has led to the kind of rushed eating called 'grabbing,' bite', 'eating on the hoof' or 'grazing'. I am

convinced that these practices (and I am aware that there are many people who do not live like this) are responsible for certain deteriorating social problems.

Until recently the family meal has been the cornerstone of community building, and I am glad to see that it still is in many cultures, particularly Third World countries where there has been little opportunity for them to become blasé about food. The act of eating together can bring such a wonderful feeling of being nurtured, of gratitude for the gifts of the earth skilfully combined to bring ‘companionship’ (from the Latin *cum panis*, with bread). So in breaking bread together we become companions. The meal table is also where many social skills can be learned — the skills of conversation, how to look after each other’s needs and to welcome guest and stranger. In Eastern traditions it was a time to honour the gods; the central portion of the rice pot would be placed on the shrine for the family deities. The kitchen would be next to the meditation room, and the wisest person was entrusted with the cooking and therefore the health of the household.

In Victorian and Edwardian households the kitchen seems to have been banished to below stairs, an unseen realm of chopping, boiling, roasting, and polishing - somewhat like our metabolic processes, warm, dark and unconscious. Occasionally the children of the house would secretly find their way into this enchanted and magical world and have it change their lives, but more often than not they were confined to the nursery floor - all the important activities in the house of the bourgeoisie were firmly

segregated.

Perhaps the aftermath of a seemingly joyless attitude to cooking and even eating, in terms of restrictive social interactions, has contributed to the situation that we see today. However, one might be encouraged to think that Britain had become entranced with the art of cooking in recent times, judging by the number of cooking programmes that have sprung up on the television. Upon enquiry, I am led to believe that many people watch them whilst eating their micro-waved pre-prepared meal, having a vicarious experience. Let us hope there are others who are experimenting, but, in view of the statistic that in Britain we buy over 80 per cent of our food from supermarkets, this doesn’t leave much margin for the kind of freshly harvested local produce that I’m advocating. As I see it, these TV programmes generally tend to treat food as a kind of plaything; vegetables are often just a garnish, the main course being a large portion of fish or meat, and grains and salads are much less in evidence.

I lament that children and young people are, generally speaking, no longer being taught cookery either at home or at school. They might be doing Food Technology, but this seldom seems to involve hands-on preparing a meal. Many young people leave university still unable to boil an egg! Now if education does not give young people practical life skills, what hope do we have of a strong, useful and creative society? What happens if all this technology and imported food for some reason cannot be sustained? Could Britain feed and sustain herself? We saw the results of short-sightedness

at the beginning of the last World War when Britain only had enough grain and sugar to last for three weeks. If we have generations who can neither cook a meal nor grow a lettuce we have again put ourselves in a rather vulnerable situation.

Do we have to lose something in order to know, too late, that we have lost it? The fish only realizes the importance of his watery environment when he is flapping about on the kitchen table. Do we have to lose the human skills and our delicately balanced environment in order to know to what extent we are dependent upon them? The sad reality is that many people feel that they have little power to change the juggernaut impact of factory farming and supermarket monopolies.

But we can bring about change, and the process starts in our own homes, our own kitchens, our own gardens. *We need to inform ourselves, experiment, retrieve our own authority back from the hands of the 'experts'. We have so much of our own wisdom, our own common sense - common to all of us until recently. We need to look with new eyes, for the more we look the more we will see, and the more we see the better we will know where to look.*

Extract from Wendy E Cook (2003) *Foodwise: Understanding What We Eat and How it Affects Us*, Clairview Press. pp 264-266, emphasis original.

COMMENT: Buy the book and read on ...

# Radical Homemakers

## Frances Hutchinson

Faced with climate change, dwindling resources, and species extinctions, people across the world are beginning to appreciate the fundamental steps necessary to solve our global crises: drive less, consume less, increase self-reliance, buy locally, eat locally, rebuild our local communities. Now, as the Coronavirus pandemic plays out its course, the rekindling the home fires becomes a practical possibility.

*Radical Homemakers: Reclaiming Domesticity from a Consumer Culture*, published in 2010 (and now sadly out of print), offers guidelines which

have become even more relevant with the passage of time. Shannon Hayes interviewed men and women across the United States who had opted to focus their lives on home and hearth as a political and ecological act; who chose to centre their lives around family and community not only for personal fulfilment, but as a way to bring about cultural change. The book explores what domesticity can look like in an era that has benefited from feminism; where domination and oppression are cast aside, where the choice to stay home is no longer equated with mind-numbing drudgery, economic insecurity, or

relentless servitude.

The author provides an historical account of how American women and men came to accept the self-defeating and dehumanizing view that only through work outside of the home, in an increasingly corporate dominated society, working for the advancement of a commodity or product could men and women find absolute personal and career fulfilment. In its second half, the book serves as a detailed account of couples, singles and families with young children who have renounced this view and chosen homemaking instead, to promote, as Hayes describes, a “life-giving economy based on the principals of social justice, democracy, care for the planet and its inhabitants.”

Much more than merely caring for children’s daily needs, cooking and cleaning the house, being an active participant as a radical homemaker allows one to “take a constructive role in society”, a much more fulfilling goal than that envisioned by the 1950’s tradition of the mentally and psychologically suppressed housewife. Hayes makes clear time and again that her book is not an attack on the many working professionals whose vocations help cultivate a life-serving economy. Attacks like these, such as the so called “war” between the working mother and the stay at home mother, more often originate from the mainstream media, providing further evidence of how a society that exalts

corporate success finds it necessary to constantly undermine the value of the home worker and homemaker in order to survive.

Well researched, the book is full of inspiration, practicality and philosophy all rolled up together, with many quotes from Betty Friedan, Lewis Carroll, Wendell Berry, Thoreau and Emerson. If you have given up paid work to care for your children, have chosen to live on one salary, with one car, or share working between partners; if you home educate, work from home, grow your own food, make your own bread, jam, clothes, furniture and try to do a lot of your household care yourself rather than spend money to get others to do it; if you put your quality of life above making money; or if you treasure community and human capital equally or more than economic capital - then beg, borrow or steal a copy and read it for yourself. And encourage others to do the same. Shannon Hayes has produced a powerful ray of hope in an increasingly uncertain world. This work deserves to be brought out in a new edition.

*Radical Homemakers* speak about empowerment, transformation, happiness, and casting aside the pressures of a consumer culture to live in a world where money loses its power to relationships, independent thought, and creativity. If you ever considered quitting a job to plant tomatoes, read to a child, pursue creative work, can green beans and heal the planet, this is your book.

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment  
before starting to improve the world

*Anne Frank*

# What As Individuals Can We Do?

## Wendy E. Cook

There are so many wonderful projects, that seek to reinstate ethical and spiritual values into the way we farm, eat, share our food and creative skills. They often do not get much publicity, but they are multiplying, that is certain. We can start to cook and garden again and restore the community-building activity of the shared meal. Let us be generous and hospitable, as nature is. She never holds back on giving of her best! We can do less and enjoy it more. Slow down and breathe deeply. Support our local farmers, take an interest in what they are doing, their particular problems - they have had a very challenging time, 'between a rock and a hard place'. Actively seek biodynamic or organic food - it is better for all levels of life. Try to develop a relationship with a piece of land - share an allotment. Make compost wherever you can and deal with your garbage in a conscious way; it is an aspect of our soul-life and we should only allow it to proliferate as little as possible. So take baskets with you when you go shopping; refuse packaging wherever you can [Note: this book was originally published in 2003]. Explore the possibilities of community supported agriculture (CSA). Use money in a creative way like seeds; though it is totally artificial and man-made it can be used to the good when kept in healthy circulation. Let's try to be conscious of what we are supporting when we spend it. Try to be active in local decision-making. Develop friendships (they are better than bank accounts). Try to treat others in a

way that you would like to be treated. This means loving yourself, having a sensitivity to the workings of one's body, soul and spirit as they affect one another, treating yourself with compassion, patience and understanding; thus we can retrieve our own authority from the grip of materialistic science.

With the emphasis on materialism in the West, we should be interested enough in matter to want to enquire into its role in the universe and how it wants to be used wisely. This is an important part of spiritual practice, I think. Many people are taking up a life of voluntary simplicity. Perhaps they have seen the ravages of excesses and know that that is not the way forward. We can join forces with an emerging system that is developing impetus and relies on human participation. Our higher ego is being formed by the way we make choices in life and by the motives behind them. When we are fortunate enough to have choices (and there are many who do not), can we make them from the perspective of 'What is ultimately good for me is also good for the rest of the world', so that out of egotism we can rise to a new kind of ego-hood that is self-governing and aligned to the good of the whole? As Mother Teresa said: 'Love until it hurts.' The purpose of the world is Love.

Concluding paragraphs of *Foodwise: Understanding What We Eat*.

# Book Reviews

## **Austerity's Victims: living with a learning disability under Cameron and May**

by Neil Carpenter

Create Space Independent Publishing Platform (May 2018) 72pp

Kindle: £0.99, pb: £6.57

ISBN: 978-1984977601

There are almost a million adults living with a learning disability in the UK. Neil Carpenter's book, *Austerity's Victims: Living with a learning disability under Cameron and May* is a highly readable but disturbing exposition of how they have suffered, and continue to suffer, due to government choices.

In a compelling and straightforward way, Carpenter tells the stories of five working age men whom he has befriended in his capacity as a volunteer advocate for Cornwall Advocacy. Frank, Les, Thomas, Mark, and Danny\* range in age from late twenties to early sixties, and all have found their quality of life deteriorating due to government decisions since 2010. The men's stories are much more than the 'case studies' which often accompany a report from a charity or a think tank. Carpenter has clearly developed good and friendly relationships with them, and their lives are revealed in an engaging but respectful and sensitive manner. Their stories are moving, often troubling, and are what make the book such a memorable read.

These personal narratives are set in the context of the political policies to which the men have fallen victim. Drastic cuts to local authority budgets have reduced

or withdrawn the support they relied on to feel included in society, making their lives narrower and more restricted, and in some cases more lonely.

One of the strengths of the book is the way in which it combines the personal and political. Whilst Carpenter has clearly done his research, references to statistics and documents are restricted to footnotes and don't interrupt the flow of the narrative.

There is also an analysis of the men's incomes and expenditure in comparison to the local median, and the Minimum Income Standard set by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. This kind of precise bread and butter detail is almost always lacking in political debate, but is sorely needed. It's very easy for a politician to glibly talk of 'incentivising' people to get a job by cutting their benefits – not so easy when confronted with the pitifully low sums of money on which men like Les and Frank are expected to survive, and the almost complete absence of opportunities for them to get paid employment.

As Carpenter says, "When I began work as a volunteer, one of my strongest impressions as I went to different day centres or visited people at home was how poor almost everyone seemed, as if poverty was an inevitable part of having a learning disability."

And yet – almost all the individuals in the book are working to some extent in a voluntary capacity, often showing great commitment and effort. One works at a centre growing salad vegetables. "He is

helped by others at various points but he is the pivotal figure in what is produced there – so pivotal that he had to change his day off to Monday because the centre couldn't handle without him the heavy orders that come in on Friday."

Carpenter is clearly shocked by the inhumane way Danny was put through a Work Capability Assessment in 2016. Having slowly learned to sit, crawl, and then walk again after a severe acquired brain injury, Danny now has emphysema and other health problems to add to his difficulties. Danny's mother accompanied him to his assessment but was not allowed to help him when he struggled to answer questions.

Danny said if he had to go on to Jobseekers Allowance, with the pressure that involves, he'd be "dead in a year – it doesn't matter". When the result came through and he heard that he would lose his ESA, he broke down in tears and asked "Who appointed them? God? Worst thing they've ever had is a broken finger-nail."

After a Mandatory Reconsideration, Danny's ESA was restored, but the experience was distressing and demanding for both him and his family – and as Carpenter says, the whole process for someone in Danny's position was 'insensitive and illogical'.

The overwhelming impression one is left with after reading this book is just how terribly precarious the lives of people with a learning disability have become. An administrative hiccup, another council cut, or a callous decision by the DWP can plunge their lives into poverty and chaos, leaving them dependent on foodbanks and the kindness of neighbours to avoid starvation.

The tone of the book is admirably reasonable and restrained, but towards the end Carpenter, clearly angered by what is happening to men like Frank and Danny, expresses his feelings. He quotes the government's *Work and Health Green Paper*, with its formulaic reassurances about support for people to get into work and a safety net for those who need it. "Such pronouncements would sit nicely among the 'alternative facts' of the Trump administration. Who, however, would you rather believe...the bland, seemingly soothing words of the DWP or the evidence of this book which reveals a supposed 'safety net' with gaping holes, some of them cut deliberately?" He writes about Theresa May's proclaimed commitment to 'fairness' and concludes, "the apparent commitment bears no relation to reality, to the impact that austerity has had on people like Alan and Danny. As long as it continues, for anyone with a learning disability such fairness is a lie."

Sadly, a postscript reflects how, relentlessly, austerity is continuing. Since Carpenter finished the book, funding for a scheme that enabled Thomas to go surfing was withdrawn, Cornwall Advocacy was on the brink of closure, and the roll out of PIP was causing extensive damage. Frank was not transferred to PIP from DLA, so his weekly income was cut to £115.10. Carpenter concludes, "With many cuts still to come it seems inevitable that by the time you are reading this, life for people with a learning disability will have deteriorated even further."

This book is yet more evidence that austerity has been a shameful attack on those least fortunate and least able to defend themselves. One would like to think that at some stage in the future

these inhumane policies will be reversed, and the politicians who devised and supported them will be held to account. This book would certainly provide compelling evidence for the prosecution. MARCH 22, 2019

\* Names and locations have been altered and information anonymised to protect identities.

### **Defending Middle-Earth: Tolkien, Myth and Modernity**

by Patrick Curry

Haughton Mufflin, 2004 pb 198pp, from £8.60

ISBN: 978-0618478859

Originally published by Harper Collins, London, 1998

Ring of Power: *Why is Lord of the Rings so popular?*

The publication of *The Lord of the Rings* in 1954 was greeted with cries of derision by the literary establishment. Nevertheless, sales have topped 50 million copies, and are still going strong, with public library lending total exceeding 300,000 per year. Despite the book's steady popularity – it headed a poll of over 25,000 readers as the most important book of the twentieth century – it continues to be shunned by the “clever” world of adult literary fiction.

The popular success of the Lord of the Rings lies in its relevance to the contemporary struggle of “community, nature and spirit against the modern union of state-power, capital and technology”. Noting the “domination of financial and technological magic” over “God’s enchanted world”. Curry concludes that root-less science, existing beyond history and locality, becomes inseparable from science and power.

Curry has arranged his book around the

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three interrelated worlds of the Shire, its culture, politics and society, Middle-Earth, its nature and ecology, and the spiritual and ethical world of the sea. Each “world” is inextricably intertwined with the others, creating a powerful sense of specific and recognizable place. In Curry’s view, by setting the Shire in pre-modern England Tolkien gives his tale universal appeal. Itself not “Europeanized”, the Shire is invaded by modernizing Mordor. Within the state, the Hobbits who share a strong sense of community and of decentralized bioregionalism resist.

Although he omitted specific reference to religious practices, Tolkien perceived *The Lord of the Rings* as “a fundamentally religious and Catholic work”. Curry argues that decisions based upon pure utility yield the centre ground to the forces of destruction: “the things, places and people we love will be saved for their own sakes or not at all; and that is ultimately a religious valuing.”

“The choice”, Curry observes, is between myths and stories that are liberating, and those that are destructive and debilitating.” *The Lord of the Rings* emerges as a major contribution to the former. Tolkien’s purpose was to challenge the myth of “progress” from primitive squalor to global civilisation based upon science and technology. His work echoes the ancient mythologies of a

fall from a past golden age. It also rejects the inevitability of “progress” in favour of a belief in individuals as free agents capable of determining events good or ill.

Tolkien’s mythology contains hope for “the re-sacralization (or re-enchantment) of experienced and living nature, in the local cultural idiom”. Escape from the prison of enforced modernity is presently barred by its “intellectual and cultural warders...the realists and rationalists” who declare “progress” is not only good for us, but also here to stay regardless of the trail of devastation left in its wake. The fatal charm of the Ring of Power leads its servants to feed it, rather than control it.

The book presents no simplistic division between good and evil: “one of the glories of Middle-Earth is its messy pluralism.” People with very different cultures, languages and habits, linked in a tenuous alliance, oppose the modernistic magic which is Mordor. Writing under the shadow of the “ongoing holocaust of the natural world” in the name of global capitalism, Curry quotes Ruskin:

“To watch the corn grow, and the blossom set: to draw hard breath over ploughshare or spade; to read, to think, to love, to hope, to pray – these are the things that make men happy; they have always had

the power of doing these, they never will have the power to do more. The world’s prosperity or adversity depends upon our knowing and teaching these few things: but upon iron, or glass, or electricity, or steam, in no wise.”

Curry suggests that the Ring has affinity with the most powerful economic and political forces in the material realm. Three Elven Rings, capable of creating beauty, understanding and healing are ultimately under the control of the One, which can transform and destroy their potential but is devoid of ability to create. The magic of the One Ring is its capacity for illusion. Evil, the lust for complete power in the world, arises from apparently innocent intervention in life in all its forms. In Tolkien’s works, “frightful evil can and does arise from an apparently good root, the desire to benefit the world and others – and speedily according to the benefactor’s own plans”. This magic has been appropriated and transformed by modern science and technology.

Curry reminds us not only of the dangers of abandoning the lessons of history, as encapsulated in myth, but also of the good sense and good faith of the vast mass of ordinary people and the capacity of small individuals to stand against great evil.

Frances Hutchinson

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**Humanity’s Last Stand:  
The Challenge of Artificial Intelligence.  
A Spiritual Challenge**

by *Nicanor Perlas*  
*Temple Lodge 2018*  
*ISBN: 978-1-912230-17-4*  
*Pb, pp 232, £20*

Humanity has evolved a highly complex worldwide technology system that is in danger of rampaging out of control. It appears to be a distinct possibility that

machines could master their masters if the makers don’t wake up and do something about it. Already, imperceptibly behind the scenes, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming all aspects of the social order as it is used not only in the economic sphere but also in the spheres of politics and culture. If steps are not taken urgently, argues Nicanor Perlas, AI will evolve the capacity to transform humanity into its own image, and, in doing so, will ultimately have the capability to destroy the human race. Perlas

calls humanity to move beyond passive acceptance of the materialistic benefits bestowed by the new technologies. It is now vitally necessary for us to wake up to what it means to be fully human. By cultivating a new science-based spirituality, we can use artificial intelligence to further the healthy evolution of the planet. If we continue to let things drift, we will be overwhelmed by the forces we have unleashed.

What exactly is AI? Perlas explains:

“Artificial intelligence is the use of sophisticated software (algorithms) to instruct ultra high-speed machines (hardware) how to process gigantic amounts of data and find connections and patterns in and among the data in order to achieve a programmed goal.”

Presently, AI is a sophisticated system of intelligence gathering and distribution that is already being widely used, giving us seemingly easy access to material goods and services, but with unexpected consequences, such as the Cambridge Analytical/Facebook scandal. AI is set to evolve into artificial general intelligence (AGI), a human-level artificial intelligence “that, then, through its own intelligence, morphs itself into Artificial Super-Intelligence (ASI)”. But, as Perlas makes clear, this is intelligence of data processing is the reductive intelligence of Ahriman supported by the forces of Sorath devoid of a moral impulse of its own, cold and mechanistic. Perlas says there are three ways for Ahriman to incarnate: in a human body, in the internet or as a hybrid of both.

In this book Perlas leaves aside the crucial questions of human rights, invasion of privacy, mind-altering addictions that are flowing from the new technology, to focus upon the ‘alignment challenge’, which is the need to align AGI/ASI with truly human values. The technological age has brought a loss of understanding of what it means to

be truly human. In the materialistic West, young people increasingly believe that they are nothing more than ‘complex biological machines’. For Perlas it is necessary for humans to develop the ability to address the temptations of super-health, super intelligence, super strength and physical immortality promised by the leading advocates of increasingly sophisticated AI and AGI/ASI. He cites Steiner’s warnings on the coming of ‘extreme technology’ or ‘sub-nature’. Failure to address this challenge would plunge humanity into the ‘abyss’.

Before the Enlightenment the natural world was seen as Mother Earth, a seamless whole to be treated with respect as the source of all life. Before the Scientific Revolution brought a market-oriented culture the self, society and the cosmos formed a single organism. Individual parts of the human body were interdependent, the individual formed part of the family, the community and the state, and life permeated the cosmos right down to the lowest stone. Scientific ‘progress’ sought to unveil the secrets of nature, so that she could be dissected and brought under control.

Perlas details the extent to which that quest for control has escalated so that we already live in a world controlled by artificial intelligence. A device in your car can direct you to your destination. And soon, your vehicle will drive itself for you. Robotic devices clean houses and tend the sick. AI can diagnose illnesses faster and more efficiently than can a human physician. The mass media and information systems can both direct and predict consumer behaviour. The digitalised classroom is emerging. AI can shape political behaviour, and can be used to undertake most technical tasks once performed by human beings. And now these machines can communicate with each other and, seemingly, programme themselves into higher degrees of sophistication. They do not live and breathe and love as humans do. But for the machines and their designers, this

is of no consequence. Progress dictates the inevitability of increasing sophistication in technical achievements.

But to what end is such control pursued? This is the fundamental question raised by the author of this complex exploration of a most challenging issue in these confusing times.

“Prominent businessmen, scientists, and AI experts have warned that, if humanity is not careful, ASI can wipe out humanity.”

Conferences and campaigns have been launched by engineers, experts, scholars, ‘distinguished’ business and academic institutions, and ‘a few concerned citizens’ seeking to spread concern for ‘safe’ and ‘beneficial’ AI. What exactly that might mean does not, however, emerge in the pages of this work. What is raised is the crucial question of what forces might be driving technological progress. Who or what is set to benefit from it? Few women in general, and mothers in particular, have difficulty in seeing that you cannot care for a sick loved one, a toddler, or the living planet with a remotely controlled machine. If these devices cannot be un-invented, how can they be brought to work according to human values? This quest, termed ‘the Alignment Problem’, informs the entire book. The machines have been brought to life as part of the quest to control and dominate the natural world. Perlas’ thorough review of the developments in AI raises the issues of transhumanism, spare part surgery and the invasion of privacy that massive data storage facilities inevitably raise. If these inventions are to be re-directed to the benefit of humanity, a great spiritual task lies ahead.

Already satellites can direct the ploughing, planting and harvesting of crops destined for mass markets. These machines have been developed on the grounds that sophisticated mass production techniques are necessary to feed the escalating world population.

However, such techniques render the land infertile, whilst displacing human labour, eliminating healthy food products and rendering the natural world sterile. Perlas’ solution is to re-direct the displaced labour into organic, preferably biodynamic agriculture. Although this raises the key question of finance - who is being paid, by whom, to do what, and why. These questions are, like many other crucial issues, barely touched upon in this most frustrating quest to raise informed debate on the crises of present times.

Perlas argues that it is the task of the global anthroposophical movement to work through and with sympathetic movements to bring Steiner’s teachings on the scientific approach to spirituality out into the world in general. He suggests prioritising work in education, medicine and agriculture. It is necessary to become familiar with the spiritual powers that guide humanity. That is, to recognise that Ahriman plays a part in the Christ being and that by facing up to the half-truths of Ahriman and the potential of AI we have the opportunity to wake up to the task at hand – engage with Michael to garner the strength to face the challenge of AI and create the world we want.

The hour is late, and the task formidable. But there is hope that the ‘truly and fully human’ will emerge through accessing the ‘Wisdom and Workings of the universe’. There are solutions waiting out there to be discovered. The necessity is for all to collaborate to trigger the workings of ‘Collective Human Intelligence’ hand in hand with the spiritual powers that guide the future of human and planetary destiny. This work cries out for individual study based upon meditative practice, leading to a sharing of different forms of expertise in a series of local group studies.

Frances Hutchinson, with assistance from John Bewick and Maria Lyons.

## The Social Artist

<https://www.dougllassocialcredit.com/>

The Social Credit movement was founded by Guild Socialist A.R. Orage and financial expert Clifford Hugh Douglas. In the immediate aftermath of the crisis of World War I, men and women of all walks of life sought to understand how the financial system could operate to create such devastation. A large part of the vast literature flowing from the social credit movement has been digitalised, and is available electronically via the website <https://www.dougllassocialcredit.com/>.

Over the past three decades, the worldwide web has developed, bringing instant communications, AI and robots into our very homes. Our website has been developed in parallel, offering access to new and second hand hard copy books and periodicals.

The website also offers an archive of solid progressive thought on the workings of the financial system and its command over policy formation.

*If we want to achieve a different society  
where the principle of money operates equitably,  
if we want to abolish the power money has over people historically,  
and position money in relationship to freedom, equality, fraternity ...  
then we must elaborate a concept of culture  
and a concept of art  
where every person must be an artist ...  
Joseph Beuys*

### THE SOCIAL CREDIT SECRETARIAT BUSINESS ADDRESS

Subscribers are requested to note that the address for all business related to KRP Limited and The Social Credit Secretariat is: PO Box 322, Silsden, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD20 0YE (UK)

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Cartoon first published in *Resurgence* 1995

### **FAO ALL OUR READERS**

Despite repeated increases in postage, and because of pressures on our very small production team, SC Secretariat members took the decision not to increase the prices (UK and overseas) of annual subscriptions to *The Social Artist* in 2020, but to publish instead just two issues each year - in Spring and Autumn. We trust that our loyal readers will continue to support us.

### **We recommend**

the journal *New View* as an excellent source of in-depth reflections on major issues of the day  
[www.newview.org.uk](http://www.newview.org.uk)

The body of economic theory known as 'social credit' was studied across the world in the inter-war years of the 1920s and 1930s, as ordinary men and women struggled to understand how it was that the world could afford the waste and horror of war. The Social Credit movement was supported by leading figures in the arts, sciences, the church, politics and social activism, all of whom presented the case for peace based upon social justice and environmental sustainability.

**What is physically possible and socially desirable must be financially possible**

### **Circulating *The Social Artist***

If you enjoy reading this journal and feel that friends or colleagues might find it interesting and helpful, you might consider asking us for extra copies each quarter. We would be pleased to send you them free of charge. If you feel that you would prefer to circulate the journal electronically, see [www.douglassocialcredit.com/publications](http://www.douglassocialcredit.com/publications) for two pdf versions of current and back numbers.

*The Social Artist* is a journal dedicated to breaking the boundaries between Christian Social teaching, Anthroposophical Social Renewal, and the institutional analysis of money as presented by the Social Credit movement.