

The Social Artist



sufficiency

subsistence

gift economy

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Editorial

Homo economicus, aka Rational Economic Man, operates on the principle that a job is only worth doing if one is *paid* to do it. This rules out much of the essential work that keeps us alive and the planet healthy, whilst it endorses a whole range of tasks that are destroying the planet's life systems and disintegrating the fabric of society. Mothering, for example, could not be undertaken by *Homo economicus*, because the service on offer would be too expensive in cost accounting terms. According to economic theory, which justifies practice in the economy of the corporate world today, the free market simply could not afford to pay a realistic income to carers under present codes of practice. Perhaps, as is suggested in this issue, things might have been very different if the founding fathers of economics had theorised a mother figure, rather than a single, self-centred male, as the role model for their typical economic agent.

So – what is the alternative? Rational Economic *Woman*? It certainly is

Irrational Economic Woman who seeks to juggle caring duties whilst meeting the demands of the corporate capitalist economy – no paid work, no income. Part of the trouble lies in the term *Homo*. Whilst it commonly means ‘man’, it is also taken to encompass all human beings, male and female alike. But all human beings do not, as noted above, act purely out of the motivations that inspire Rational Economic *Man*. Having juggled with this thought for decades, I owe a debt of gratitude to Veronika Bennholdt - Thomsen and colleagues for drawing attention to the term (coined by Genevieve Vaughan) *Homo donans*. The term reflects the motherly free-giving, nurturing and caring side of human beings in a way that includes men as well as women. Tragically, in patriarchal society, masculinity is associated with demanding and taking. This attitude has infected not only the economic sphere of society but also the political and cultural spheres that underpin the world economy. The term *Homo donans* is all-inclusive. It does not suggest that every woman

must bear children to be a gift-giving person. Rather, it brings the dawning realisation that the primary experiences of every human being are deeply influenced by gift-giving because we all, men and women, have been nurtured in a motherly way. The primary human experience develops in the attachment to the mother who offers her care freely, without thought of reward, from the consciousness that without appropriate physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual care, the infant will die.

With the term *Homo donans* a whole new ball game opens up. At last it is possible to debate the freely-gifted work done by women *and men*, not only as carers, but as farmers, engineers, artists, scientists, poets, technologists, novelists, teachers, healers – all the work that is not done primarily under an employer’s instruction for a money reward. All the work, that is, upon which the patriarchal capitalism of the corporate world depends for its very existence, but which it fails to account or acknowledge. The further question arises – could a complex society function on the basis of unconditional giving? The fact is that the vast majority of social interactions have always operated on the principle of giving freely, without thought of return. Thus I give, you give, the next person gives and so on, all down the line. This type of giving is not ego-oriented as in “I give so that you will give to me” but follows the needs of others. I give because I see, feel, perceive, know your needs. In this way a chain begins, and finally individuals become a circle of givers, a community. “Giving is the basic pattern of communication, of material and immaterial communication (*munus* latin for “gift”), neither taking nor with

the obligation to reciprocate” (Genevieve Vaughan quoted in Bennholdt-Thomsen *Money or Life* www.wloe.org).

The vast bulk of human endeavour is gifted freely to the human community at large. Recognising this fact of life openly and frankly leads to two conclusions. First, it may not be entirely inappropriate to suggest that working for money is at the root of much social evil. Many are the developments undertaken against the wishes of local communities – fracking, clearing of forests, airport runway extensions, polluting industrial plants, vast housing developments, motorways, the planting of genetically modified crops and so on. Waged and salaried labour is required for all those projects that are counter to peace, justice and ecological sustainability. No money, no jobs, no incomes are forthcoming if such projects are abandoned. But all concerned, from the highest-paid executives to the ordinary worker on site and in offices, benefit financially from devastating the earth. Which brings us to the second conclusion: the time has come for *Homo donans* to recognise the extent to which s/he is responsible for the very existence of irresponsible *Homo economicus*. The task is to move away from waged and salaried labour in order to focus on giving service, intentionally and directly, to those neglected worlds of household, childhood and the living planet. And that means finding new ways of living and working together. Fortunately, as we have frequently noted in *The Social Artist/ Creditor*, many individuals and groups are already actively engaged in inspiring social experiments. All we have to do is follow their lead.

From “Homo *oeconomicus*” to “Homo *donans*”

Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen

A team of social scientists... in 1981 launched the *Mouvement Anti-Utilitariste dans les Sciences Sociales* (M.A.U.S.S.), an anti-utilitarian movement opposed to the dictate of economic reason in the social sciences. Their message was that modern men and women and modern society do not function primarily according to cost benefit analyses, as postulated almost across the board in the social sciences. Rather the process of ‘give and take’ is individually as well as socially very differently motivated, primarily by ‘a longing for attachment.’ Humans, as expressed through their actions, including their economic actions, want to interact with each other instead of having to compete as opposing interests.

The work of the anti-utilitarian movement builds on the academic work of French sociologist and ethnologist Marcel Mauss (1872-1950), especially his essay “The Gift.” Here, based on research studies on indigenous populations, he analyzed the phenomenon of giving and taking and its importance for social cohesion. Mauss

concludes that the longing for mutual acceptance is a basic human need, the basis of social bonds expressed in the exchange of gifts as a form of mutual indebtedness. This exchange, the process of giving, receiving and reciprocating, is not solely self-interested, according to Mauss, because then society would no longer exist.

Alain Caillé, who contributed significantly to reintroducing Marcel Mauss’ anti-utilitarian version of work to the discussion, stresses that this viewpoint has nothing to do with moral judgments. The non-economic, non-self-interested aspect of the gift exchange is not reduced to donations or charity, but is simply part of the activity of exchange, which ultimately is, and will remain, a process of human socializing. “There is no more urgent task today, on a theoretical as well as an ethical and political level, than to break with the prevailing economic world view, according to which human motivation is exclusively economically determined –

We are born into a Gift Economy practised by those who mother us, enabling us to survive. The economy of exchange, quid pro quo, separates us from each other and makes us adversarial, while gift giving and receiving creates mutuality and trust. This website provides a discussion of the gift economy and its culture as a way to peace and abundance for all. We distinguish between gift and exchange, in order to understand them both and to finally phase out exchange altogether.

<https://earthrepairblog.wordpress.com/2018/01/12/dreaming-the-future-4-the-sea-the-sea/>

whatever this term may mean – and that ultimately the world is ruled by economic considerations and forces alone.” (Caillé 2008, p. 213).

But what about the very real force exerted by the mechanisms of the ruling economic system on individuals? Is it really possible to act differently? How does money separate people from each other? Isn't money a wonderful invention of civilization, easing the exchange between people? In this complex society is it possible to manage without money?

In her reply to these questions, the Texan-Italian author Genevieve Vaughan picks up from where the anti-utilitarian deliberations of M.A.U.S.S. left off. In her view the anti-utilitarian insight is correct and important, in that economic activity in modern society is not mainly motivated by the so-called economically rational calculation of wanting more, but rather by the desire for social attachment. Yet the authors of M.A.U.S.S. adhere to a basically utilitarian proposition, namely that human interaction is always bound to a cycle of the “triple obligation” of giving, receiving and reciprocating, i.e. returning a gift – with special emphasis on the return. According to Caillé, this is universally valid, and is, in fact, an anthropological constant. (Caillé, 2008)

Vaughan rejects this idea of humankind. She criticizes its patriarchal narrow-mindedness, which ignores that the primary human experience develops in the attachment to the mother, which has nothing to do with this triple obligation. The infant is nurtured and cared for because this is essential for the child's survival. The mother or another motherly, caring person gives without expecting a corresponding return. The fact that this

is so is due to far simpler reasons than an essential goodness of the mother. If infants are not looked after, they die; there would be no society. Vaughan also emphasizes the anthropological constant that is valid for all epochs of humanity. And also for our modern age. Therefore Vaughan contrasts the dominant idea of humankind, the “Homo oeconomicus,” with that of “Homo donans,” the giving person. (Vaughan 2004; 1997)

“If the fathers of capitalist theory,” with Adam Smith leading the way, “had chosen a mother rather than a single bourgeois male as the smallest economic unit for their theoretical constructions, they would not have been able to formulate the axiom of the selfish nature of human beings in the way they did,” Women philosophers in the Italian group “Diotima” show how patriarchal language considerably hampers women's ability to think of their own person in female categories. The subject/individual in this language (‘homo’, ‘man’, ‘mankind’ etc.) is not intended to be a woman. ‘She’ is the other, the one who is notoriously absent in the philosophical discourse (Cavarero). Luisa Muraro shows how the “symbolic order of the mother” was ousted from the dominant symbolic order and how it can be reappropriated.

The term “Homo donans” is one such reappropriation. It reflects the motherly giving, nurturing side of humans. The fact that Genevieve Vaughan adheres to the word “homo” sends two signals. On the one hand, it is that male giving is not excluded from the image of motherly giving. In fact, she considers it a traumatic experience for the small boy that during his socialization into manhood he is basically forced to distance himself from his own gift-giving

self because of its motherly-female connotations. And this is a tragedy for all of us. In our patriarchal society, masculinity is connected with an attitude of demanding and taking which as a whole has become the general economic attitude.

On the other hand, the term “Homo donans” signifies that not every woman must bear children to be a gift-giving person. Rather, it emphasizes the simple fact that everyone’s primary experiences

are deeply influenced by gift-giving because we all, men and women, have been nurtured in a motherly way.

This extract is taken from “*Money or Life: What makes us Really Rich*” English translation of the German original “*Geld oder Leben: Was uns wirklich reich macht*” (oekom press, Munich, 2010) See: www.wloe.org

Peasant Farming

Frances Hutchinson

Conventional teaching, reinforced by the information super-highway, claims that science and technology have brought the mass of the people out of rural ignorance and poverty, where life can only be nasty, brutish and short: it can only be a matter of time before all people benefit from the abundance created by scientific advance. Informed by this belief, Paul Richards (1985) embarked upon a study of the relationship between environmental science and the prospects for increased food production in West Africa. In the early 1980s he worked with a group of agriculture students in a West African university on a study of local small-scale farmers. The object of the study was to examine three ‘typical’ farms, providing a scientific assessment of the management of the farm with a view to suggesting technical improvements. ‘The work was well done, and the report makes fascinating reading. I think many of the students were genuinely surprised to find out how much farmers already knew

about the ecological processes at work in their farms’. The students were able to translate this knowledge into textbook scientific terms. They also sought advice from the farmers on problems occurring on the college farm.

As Richards explains, because West African farmers ‘tended to ride with rather than over-ride natural diversity it was assumed that their techniques were especially “ancient” and “primitive”’. Failure to invent the wheel and the plough were also seen as pure disadvantage. However, the studies revealed that farmers made the best use of natural conditions and capitalised on local diversity, rather than working to create uniformity and labour-intensive controls. In Western agriculture intercropping, the planting of different crops in the same field during the same season, is virtually unknown. The planting dates, maturity period and harvest dates are varied to give food in

the 'hungry period' before the harvest, to reduce storage losses and eliminate labour bottlenecks. Richards lists four basic advantages of the systems of intercropping studied. Yields are better and more reliable, as the system guards against poor yields from a specific crop. The labour input profile is smoother. The control of pests, weeds and diseases is improved, since all crops are weeded in one operation and minor crops keep the weeds down. Finally, subsistence is ensured through use of a wide range of foods and crop varieties saved and cultivated for specific advantages, including lateness or earliness in season, ability to store well, resistance to drought and suitability to different soils.

In the three villages studied students noted one hundred different methods of intercropping. Significantly, these 'small farmers' were subsistence peasant farmers supplying foods for themselves and their families as well as the market. Their skills and knowledge were the product of the work of past generations, constantly updated as ordinary people went about their daily lives. Supplies were supplemented by 'wild' foods and medicinal herbs, including fruits from the forest to which all had access.

By contrast, the ordinary 'person in the street' in a developed nation does not know where or how their food has been grown, still less the qualities of the particular varieties, the times and seasons of their growth and the conditions for their storage. Four-fifths of foodstuffs are processed in some way before they reach the consumer, the eye deceived by artificial ripening and colourings. The monocultural intensive farming techniques practised by the few on behalf of the many are dependent upon the advice and supplies of experts in

pharmaceutical firms for chemical means to remove blights, diseases and weeds. Loss of soil fertility is 'remedied' by chemical fertilisers which do nothing to improve the body of that most vital resource.

In spite of the wealth of information technology, ignorance about the land, the climate, the soils, local wildlife and vegetation has grown rather than abated since pre-industrial times. Knowledge of local wild foods is virtually non-existent. Children who can recite the names of dozens of branded products cannot name or identify common examples of their local flora and fauna. Skilled in the use of textbooks and computers, children learn of the ignorance of pre-industrial peasants and indigenous peoples across the world. For them, technology can supply all the answers. The problem remains, what is the question, who frames it and for what motives?

Extract from *What Everybody Really Wants to Know About Money*, Frances Hutchinson, Jon Carpenter (1998) p53-4. This work is available as free download on www.douglassocialcredit.com
Hard copies available from Publications Page.

COMMENT: Paul Richards' observations remain as relevant today as when he was writing in 1985. The indigenous farming practices evolved through close observation of the interactions between soils, climate, plants and habitat are today validated by biodynamic farming practices.

*Poverty is not mainly about money;
it's about a lack of imagination and of
community.
From a conversation heard on BBC 4's
Listening Project*

Extracts from Farms of Tomorrow

Trauger M. Groh and Steven S.H. McFadden (1990)

“When tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers therefore are the founders of civilization.” — Daniel Webster New Hampshire statesman

Introduction

Agriculture is the foundation of modern civilization. Without a steady supply of clean, life-giving food, we have neither the leisure nor the energy to develop industry, science or art. Worldwide and in particular in the United States, our foundation has deteriorated dangerously. It requires immediate and fundamental restructuring. But how can we even begin to approach this task?

This book has been written to suggest some possibilities, and also to serve a need that is becoming more and more explicit: the need to share the experience of farming with everyone who understands that our relationship with nature and the ways that we use the land will determine the future of the earth. The problems of agriculture and the environment belong not just to a small minority of active farmers; they are the problems of all humanity, and thousands of people are searching for new ways and new solutions.

As the farming crisis deepens, many people are seeking wiser, more effective ways to re-establish the relationship

of human beings with the earth. The financial and agricultural practices of recent decades have made it increasingly difficult, and in some cases impossible, for existing models of agriculture to prosper. In America, the family farm has fallen victim to a relentless marketplace; meanwhile, corporate farms have tended to place short-run economic advantage over the long-term considerations of our relationship with each other and the earth. Modern ways of industrial and chemical farming play a major part in the deterioration of our environment on all levels: soil, water, air, landscape, and plant and animal life. Only a new, ecologically sound approach to farming can slow down or stop this deterioration.

When we look to the universal questions of land use and land abuse, and see the manifold dimensions of these questions, we understand quickly that there is no universal solution. There is no simple recipe or remedy for the many challenges we face. Out of this understanding, the authors decided upon the following approach: first, to work out some fundamental questions and principles of land use as it concerns our food, our environment, and our general ways of living with the land. Second, to present living examples of a new approach to the use of land. And third, to offer readers a list of resources so that they may have ready access to information which will

support them in the pursuit of new, healthier uses of the land.

Part I was written by Trauger Groh, and it represents the fruit of 30 years of experience in practical farming and advisory work, as well as numerous lectures in various countries of both the new and the old world. Part II, the descriptive part, was written by Steven S.H. McFadden, a journalist with a special interest in ecological and agricultural questions. The resources at the end of the book were gathered by Steven and by Rod Shouldice of the Bio-Dynamic Association.

The experiments in farming described in this book represent new social forms of agriculture which have arisen in recent years while traditional family farms have declined and industrial agriculture has increased. These farms are not static organizations, but rather living organisms which constantly change. Many of them have, in fact, changed considerably during the writing and publication of this book. These new farms involve many local families directly in the decisions and labor which produce the vegetables, fruits, milk, and meat they eat. In that way they re-establish a link between the farm, the farmer, and the consumer. While this approach may not be the full answer to the questions posed by the modern agricultural dilemma, we believe it has much to offer.

The authors tried to select examples that show great variety in approaches to the farms of tomorrow. Generally these approaches are run in America under the name "Community Supported Agriculture" (CSA). As with many catch-all names, the term community supported agriculture or CSA is slightly misleading. It implies that the problem is special support for agriculture. As

important and necessary as that may be, it is secondary. Although it may seem a fine point, the primary need is not for the farm to be supported by the community, but rather for the community to support itself through farming. This is an essential of existence, not a matter of convenience. We have no choice about whether to farm or not, as we have a choice about whether to produce TV sets or not. So we have to either farm or to support farmers, every one of us, at any cost. We cannot give it up because it is inconvenient or unprofitable.

Since our existence is primarily dependent on farming, we cannot entrust this essential activity solely to the farming population — just 2% of Americans. As farming becomes more and more remote from the life of the average person, it becomes less and less able to provide us with clean, healthy, life-giving food or a clean, healthy, life-giving environment. A small minority of farmers, laden with debt and overburdened with responsibility, cannot possibly meet the needs of all the people.

More and more people are coming to recognize this, and they are becoming ready to share agricultural responsibilities with the active farmers. Out of this impulse, many CSAs have developed in America from 1985 to 1990. Out of these, the authors have selected seven different farms as models. In recognition that the deterioration of our farm system is frequently caused by our monetary system, we have made a special effort to explore new ways of farm financing.

Some things are typical for all community supported farms. In all of them there is a strong dedication to quality; most of them are organic or biodynamic farms, most of them show great diversification, most are

integrated farm organisms having their own livestock and thus their own source of manure, or they are aiming in this direction. At all of them, far more people are working regularly per 100 acres than in conventionally run farms; and generally there are just many more people around participating in all the dimensions of agricultural life: working, relaxing, storing, shopping, celebrating. This human element is of enormous importance. It shows that these farms have something to offer beyond good food. They embody educational and cultural elements that draw the interest of many people. Besides clean, healthy, life-giving food, and a strong contribution to an improved environment, the educational and cultural elements constitute the third great gift that the farms of tomorrow have to offer.

Neither the urban nor the suburban lifestyle of today are able to provide the fullness of experiences that the human being needs for its development. In the future, as in the past, everybody, especially in childhood and in youth, needs the soul and body nourishing experience that only the active and creative engagement with nature in gardens and life-filled farm organisms can give.

Food – Environment - Education

When we speak about the need for healthy farm organisms, we think first of our food supply and then we think of the farm as part of our natural world, shaping the environment in positive or negative ways. Rarely do we have in mind the great contribution that living on farms and working in nature gives to our inner soul development and to the shaping of our social faculties. Yet all three of these considerations are essential elements of

agriculture, and of the farms of tomorrow.

Healthy Food The question of food and food quality is very complex. We speak in general terms about healthy food, or life-giving food. But these terms can mean different things to different people. In the modern context, perhaps a more accessible concept is “clean food,” clean meaning free of any synthetic substances that might be added during growing, processing or preserving. Such substances are typically preservatives, insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, synthetic colors, and so forth. Arguments about which additives are tolerable and which pose a health threat are complex and confusing to most people, and so we let the government step in to make such determinations. But we should be skeptical towards authorities who decide these questions for us. It is extremely time-consuming and difficult to establish the exact health effect of any of the many synthetic substances that are routinely added to our food. One thing we can say with certainty. The cumulative effect of the different substances that are added is largely unknown. Government agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are simply not in a position to guarantee the safety of any food additive, even if they pretend to be. They are not even able to test properly what is in use, never mind the new synthetic substances constantly being introduced to the market. The standard declaration of additives on food packaging is a good thing, but the widespread belief that what is declared, and therefore allowed by the government, is without problems is an illusion.

That leaves the wise consumer only one choice: to demand food without any additives. If we ask for a carrot, we should demand carrot, and only what

nature gives us in the carrot. If we ask for milk we should demand milk in the beautiful composition given by a properly fed cow, not accepting anything more or less, such as the synthetic vitamins typically added during processing, or the loss of the life essence that occurs during pasturization.

Can we, or should we, allow the state to make the basic decisions about what is good for us? Is this not a basic right of the citizen? In the case of milk, for example, the government has assumed the right to decide that milk as nature gives it is hazardous to human health, and that therefore all milk must be heat processed in a way that changes markedly its natural composition, robbing it of essential parts and driving out all the life forces that are in it. If someone wants to consume raw milk or some other forbidden food, and if that person believes the food is good, and also has a trusting relationship with the farmer who produces the food, should they not have that right?

The absence or presence of additives alone does not determine the quality of food. The fundamental secret of quality production is to handle the plants and animals so that they attain their highest performance by their own nature. In each creation, there is an innerharmony of substances and forces that is typical and healthy. It is not the presence of certain substances in certain amounts that makes a vegetable or grain healthy; rather, it is the harmonious relationship between the substances and the forces. To a large extent, modern agricultural methods have drastically affected this harmony. As research has shown, already between 1896 and 1932 many crops exhibited a strong rise in the content of potash while their magnesium content declined.

Meanwhile, other research shows that the silica content in cultivated plants has tended to decline while the potash content has been rising. (FN:)

The results of this change to a less harmonious balance showed up in Eastern Europe, where for hundreds of years people thatched their roofs with rye straw. Those roofs typically lasted for 15 years. But after the rye crops were treated with synthetic nitrogen, and the natural harmony of substances and forces had been altered, the roofs fashioned from the resulting straw began to rot after just three to five years. Though perhaps not so obvious, similar changes have occurred in the bread grain that is a staple of our diet. There the weakening of the plants through unharmonious fertilization shows up in the excessive appearance of fungus diseases, which again provokes the use of harsh fungicides. As for the grain itself, the potash and phosphorous content is higher today than 100 years ago, and the silica content is less. What influence does this profound change have on the human beings who eat the bread and other products made from this grain? Some observers believe the high phosphorous content in many processed foods, much of which comes through industrial food processing, is a major factor in problems of hyperactive children, and other observers believe that the reduced silica content has led to a dulling of our senses.

While science has developed highly sophisticated ways of making quantitative measurements, the concept of quality is difficult to measure with gauges and scales. To evaluate quality, we must observe how the food affects the higher organisms who digest it. For example, carefully designed tests have conclusively demonstrated the effect of organic, biodynamic, and conventionally

grown grains upon the urine of domestic animals. If the quality of the food can be detected in the excretion of an organism, then clearly the quality of the food is also having an effect on the health of the organism.

As we create the farms and the culture of tomorrow, we need to aim in a certain direction with our nutrition. What do we want to achieve with nutrition besides keeping up our bodily functions? How can our diet support not only our physical health but also the development of our spiritual faculties so that they function in the best way? The point that men and women live longer today than in the past is a poor argument for the quality of our food if we do not pose questions about the condition of our lives. What do we want to achieve in life? Are we really in full possession of our faculties of thinking, feeling, and willing? One striking example of dulled spiritual faculties comes in the realm of free will. In general, modern men and women have strong will forces, but their lives lack direction and creativity; the will forces are not channeled in the service of creativity. Common deficiencies in enacting one's will forces and the moral insanity that we perceive all around us may well be connected to the low quality of the food generally available for consumption.

Food quality is first determined upon the farm by the way we interact with nature and its forces. The profit motivation does not lead to quality of food production. This thesis can be proved by looking into the history of modern farming in the last 100 years and into the state of affairs with our processed foods. Farming differs here from the production and marketing of industrial goods. You cannot sell cars that have grave deficiencies for very

long, but you can deceive mankind for a long time with deficient food. The consequences of a deficient car show up very rapidly, but the effects of deficient food — nicely colored and flavored with artificial ingredients — are much harder to discern, and turn up mainly in the soul life of humanity or in the health problems of old age.

Nearly all manipulations with food — additives, radiation, and conservation methods — serve not the purpose of quality, but rather the purpose of distribution over long distances, shelf-life, and a pleasing appearance. Contrary to what might be right for many industrial products, the production, processing, distribution, and consumption of food favors quality when it is done locally. At the same time, this is the most economic approach to food because it saves transportation and preservation costs. The consumer supported farm systems of the future will proceed in this way; that is, producing for the local community, which includes the closest cities. Here households will connect themselves with local farms directly or via trusted agents so that they can support a system of production that aims primarily at quality rather than profit.

FN: *Lebensgesetze in Landbau*, Remer (1968), *The Dynamics of Nutrition*, Schmidt, 1980.

Concept -Land – People

The farms of tomorrow must arise from a new concept, a new leading idea that serves the basic aims of agriculture. Those aims are, first, to grow life-filled, health-giving food in ample quantity and diversity to feed the local community and to serve regional and urban needs that are not met locally; second, to do this in a way that not only conserves but improves the natural environment;

and third, to give all who want it the educational experience of working with nature. Without a leading concept that concerns itself with the wisdom that lies in nature and with the relationship of the human being to nature, we will be unable to create new farms that will serve these three purposes.

In the past, the motivation for agriculture was primarily taken from the need to support oneself and one's family with food, firewood, and clothing. The methods of farming were shaped by experience and the traditions that resulted from them. Far into the 18th Century, farming was not so much an economic venture as a means of self-support, and also the general lifestyle. In that sense, it was pre-economic. Before industrialization and the growth of cities, most people were engaged in farming. There was no real market for agricultural goods. For many centuries the only money that was needed was money to pay taxes to support the nobility, their soldiers, and the clergy who did not support themselves through farming, and also to buy necessities such as tools for farming and salt. Salt was essential because in cold climates one could not survive the winter without salted meat, fish and vegetables. To get the little necessary cash for these things, many people went into a craft or a service business without giving up farming. They became blacksmiths, carpenters, or innkeepers in their home villages, and by this created tradeable goods or services. So the general pattern was for rural people to keep farms to feed themselves, and produce goods or render services to trade. Only toward the end of the 18th Century did farming, very slowly, become a business itself. It was in this epoch that agronomists like the German Albrecht Thaer proclaimed "agriculture is

a trade, the purpose of which is to make profits or money. Farming is a way to earn money like any other business."

The motive to earn money through farming, to make a profit — profit being the difference between money input and money earned — took its place beside the traditional values of farming, and steadily became more and more domineering. The rapid development of natural science in the 18th and 19th Century, and the concurrent development of agricultural science, provided the tools for a vast and necessary expansion of agricultural production. Modern agriculture was formed through the combination of the new economic approach and agricultural science with the rapid growth of population and the expanded economic resources available through industrialization. Agricultural science took more and more to the new economic trend. It aimed less at exploring the ideal conditions under which a whole farm with its plants and animals thrives as a natural organism. Instead, science turned the art of agriculture into agronomy, techniques of exploiting soils, plants and animals for monetary profit. The guiding question of agricultural science has been, under what conditions is plant or animal production the most profitable — with profit measured solely in money. The nature of the farm organism and the question of its relationship to the environment was rarely considered.

Generally questions of quality became, and still are, secondary to questions of profit. If we look at the farm scene of America today, at the farm crises of this century, at the devastating impact of this approach to farming and to our natural environment with its vanishing soil, its sick and vanishing forests, its polluted ground water and its often miserable

rural population, we perceive what a high price not only the rural population, but the whole of society has to pay. It has become obvious that the profit motivation does not lead to healthy life-giving food, nor to conservation or improvement of the environment. The history of agriculture in the last 200 years proves this clearly. As stated in the first essay, we need farms for three reasons: for healthy food, for a healthy environment, and for cultural and educational reasons. In dealing with these needs we have to be aware that they are basic to everyone, and in creating the farms of the future we have to make sure that the needs of all are met. Consequently, three different motivations have to come together to shape the farms of tomorrow.

- The first is the basic spiritual motivation: that every year life on earth is created anew, so that human beings can be born safely and have healthy bodies that will allow them to live out their individual and collective spiritual destinies.
- The second is a social motivation: to shape our land use with the goal that everyone have access to healthy food, wood, and fiber in the right amount and independent of his or her life situation.
- The third is the economic motivation that makes all other goals possible, and is the basis of the new farm concept. We must develop the farms of tomorrow in such a way that they regenerate themselves more economically and become more and more diversified, serving as the primary source of food for the local community. This diversity and regeneration should arise with the help of the forces of nature inside the farm organism so that it becomes less and less necessary to introduce into the organism substances and energy from outside such as feed, manures, and fuels, and so that human labor is used as economically

as possible. Stated another way, the economic ideal is a farm that achieves and maintains high fertility within itself, generating a surplus of food for the community, and its own seeds for the coming year while the input of outside substances, energies, and labor goes toward zero.(pp 17-19)

Extracts from Groh and McFadden
Farms of Tomorrow: Community Supported Farms: Farm Supported Communities, Bio-dynamic Farming and Gardening Association (1990).

COMMENT:

“These new farms ... re-establish a link between the farm, the farmer, and the consumer”. The sentence is from from a book published in 1990, before I started by researches into Social Credit and Guild Socialism, *Farms of Tomorrow* has been on my bookshelves since it was first published. Yet its significance in relationship with Social Credit theory has lain hidden until I came to review Dan McKanan’s *Eco-Alchemy: Anthroposophy and the History and Future of Environmentalism*, published last year by University of California Press. The sense of mutuality of interests between producer and consumer is pure Guild Socialism/Social Credit. See Hutchinson and Burkitt *The Political Economy of Social Credit and Guild Socialism*, (p72). Equally, the necessity “for the community to support itself through farming ...” has remained relevant since the days of the Alberta Experiment in 1930s Canada (ibid p172-80). Since finance has caused the deterioration of sound farming practice, it makes a great deal of sense to “explore new ways of farm financing,” coupled with community building.

Land and Community

Abraham Lincoln, Washington, DC, 1862

“The land, the earth God gave to man for his home, sustenance and support, should never be the possession of any man, corporation, society, or unfriendly government, any more than the air or the water, if as much. An individual or company ... requiring land should hold no more than is required for their home and sustenance, and never more than they have in actual use in the prudent management of their legitimate business, and this much should not be permitted when it creates an exclusive monopoly. All that is not so used should be held for the free use of every family to make homesteads, and to hold them as long as they are so occupied.”

COMMENT: This quote appears in Trauger

M. Groh and Steven S.H. McFadden *Farms of Tomorrow: Community Supported Farms: Farm Supported Communities*. It raises many questions about the legitimate ownership of all types of property, particularly land, – the value of which is determined by the contribution of society as a whole, and not by the contribution of any single individual. *Farms of Tomorrow* raises fundamental questions of rights balanced by obligations which lead us beyond the sterile dualism of state versus corporate capitalism.

The true secret of happiness lies in taking a genuine interest in all the details of daily life.
William Morris

Subsistence, not crisis: we can't eat money!

Veronica Bennholdt-Thomsen

On the one hand we say „it can't go on like this!” But on the other hand we have no idea how it should go. Against our better judgment – and consciences! -- we accept measures most of us see as harmful in many ways. We remain trapped in the straightjacket of the current capitalist money and commodity system. That's true, but I am convinced that we can free ourselves if we focus on

subsistence. “Subsistence” means having what we really need for our lives. Yet the term “subsistence economy” – an economy focused on life's necessities -- is met with resistance and frequent comments like: “This means going back to the Stone Age.”

Does that mean that an economy organized to provide all of the necessities of life is not considered desirable? As

a question, this can shed light on the ideological prejudices leading to the rejection of a subsistence-based economy. These stem from a firmly established perception of a modern economy of abundance where all products on earth are available as commodities, where everyone can live in comfortable prosperity, and no one has to worry about the basic necessities.

From the viewpoint of this fantasy, subsistence evokes visions of poverty, insecure and primitive living conditions. But what if all of a sudden it becomes clear that this fantasy of a modern age of abundance for all is just that, a fantasy? Such a moment of clarity seemed possible with the financial crisis. But then something like the subsidy for junking older cars is offered as a countermeasure, and gets an overwhelming response. "Germany addicted to the junking mania," reported the *Spiegel* magazine. Although everyone knows that cars contribute to global warming and oil reserves are dwindling. Still, we are glad that this way thousands of jobs may be saved. What nonsense! Or take the so-called bailouts. The banks that caused the crisis receive billions of Euros in subsidies and guarantees from the national treasury. We all know that in this way money belonging to all citizens jointly is handed over to private profit-making interests. We know that in the future these funds will be lacking for community projects and that all of us, especially ordinary people -- and thus the majority of the population -- will have to pay the price. The process that began a long time ago continues: the poor get poorer and their number grows, and the rich get ever richer.

But there are no massive protests. Evidently the majority has the impression that governments have no choice, that without these bailouts the entire

economic system would collapse and things would get even worse than during the Great Depression of 1929. And most so-called alternative proposals stay within the narrow frame of the chosen direction: Save these banks and firms -- but not those, increase state control here, relax it there. But no one questions that the system has to be subsidized with public money for banks and companies.

Intuitively, however, many people see that for quite some time something has gone fundamentally wrong with our kind of economy. But the longer they have organized their lives and expectations to fit a growth economy, the less they know what an economy organized around providing necessities could look like. For decades we believed that nothing was more important than making lots of money. And the experience of the post-war economic 'miracle' and subsequent decades of prosperity seemed to prove us right. Everything, every handshake, was aimed at making money. And for a long time there never appeared to be a problem in transforming that money into tangibles like food, clothing, the roof over our heads -- what we need to live.

But what happens if this kind of transformation breaks down? What if we no longer get anything for the handshake? Then we realize that although money can evaporate into thin air, as has happened since the beginning of the financial crisis, it cannot fill us up. In short, we cannot eat money.

We realize that we don't know how to grow food, build a roof or mend old clothes. Because in our highly specialized world with its ever increasing division of labor, only some have these skills. We no longer know, other than through the exchange of money, how to come together and share this knowledge. On a very basic level, namely the level of

subsistence, we lack communication and block it from our consciousness.

In order to be able to recognize the specific, material, life-sustaining value of things and services instead of purely their cash value, we need a new term: "Subsistence production – or production of life – includes all work that is expended in the creation, re-creation and maintenance of immediate life and which has no other purpose. Subsistence production therefore stands in direct contrast to commodity and surplus value production. For subsistence production the aim is 'life.' For commodity production it is 'money,' which 'produces' ever more money, or the accumulation of capital. For this mode of production life is, so to speak, only a coincidental side-effect." (Bennholdt-Thomsen / Mies 1999)

2. THE ECONOMY – WHAT IS IT REALLY?

"What is good for the economy, is good for us all." This sentiment seemingly overcomes any misgivings about the purpose of economic stimulus packages and subsidies for bailing out banks and corporations. But it's wrong. Because the economy is more than just bankers, businessmen and trade union bosses, it includes all of us, and is in fact a social process. We all determine its course, and it moulds us too, as well as our culture and outlook on life. That is why the present financial and economic crisis is also a crisis of our society and the values that define us. Self-interest and fear of scarcity buttress a worldview based on industrialization and growth.

In this belief system the understanding that every person lives and thus is acting economically, does not exist. Instead, there is only the economy, with employees who must be happy if they can sell their labor. Capital, not people, is credited with economic know-how and

maybe even the exclusive skill of acting economically. There exists, at best, a vague notion of an economically acting community where people work together and depend on each other. In the present crisis however, this is changing. Not so long ago, the Deutsche Bank decided to downsize its savings and current account business, indeed, to phase it out by offering poor service to its smaller customers, concentrating instead on large-scale financial operations. Now everyone, also the Deutsche Bank, fears that these customers will withdraw their savings, threatening to result in more bank failures.

A separation between the financial and the real economy is pure fiction

The economy appears to have as little to do with useful goods as it does with people, at least in recent decades. Instead, it seems to be limited to number games with derivatives, futures, certificates and funds. But the financial jugglers, those glamorous heroes, have juggled so poorly that - just as with the Chinese jugglers' porcelain plates in the circus – their offerings have come crashing down. And now they remember that, to continue the metaphor, the plates they juggled are actually real, made from clay and soil. Now we hear that there is "concern that the financial crisis could affect the real economy." This sentence was read and heard everywhere, from the German chancellor Angela Merkel to many commentators.

So let's think this over. Were they actually admitting that the financial economy has disengaged from the real economy? In fact, ordinary citizens have been under this impression for quite some time, as they attempt to make sense of hedge funds, futures and derivatives or to understand why managers receive severance packages worth millions despite (or because of?)

the fact that they fail to prevent risky investments or the take-over of their firm. Bonus payments to managers of ailing companies in the middle of the financial crisis follow the same principle. But why, if separating monetary gains from economic performance is considered legal and okay, is the collapse of the financial economy suddenly such a threat to the real economy that all forces must be mobilized to prop it up? ...
TO BE CONTINUED ...

Extract from: *Money or Life: What makes us really rich*. **Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen**, professor, ethnologist and sociologist, currently works in the Institute for Theory and Practice of Subsistence (Institut für Theorie und Praxis der Subsistenz, ITPS e. V.) in Bielefeld, Germany,

COMMENT: We are very grateful to Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen and to Women and Life on Earth, for making the document *Money or Life: What makes us really rich* freely

available as a download from the website (see below). It was translated into English by Sabine Dentler and Anna Gyorgy in 2011. Further information from info@wloe.org.

The principle of free access to scholarship is fundamental to Social Credit, which has always been a movement primarily of women and farmers (and women as farmers) concerned with local communities working sustainably to conserve the living resources of the planet. See also Martin Parker's article on Capitalist Dynamics, in the Autumn issue of *The Social Artist/Crediter*.

Women and Life on Earth: women in international cooperation for peace, ecology and social justice (WLOE e.V.) is a German non-profit association based in Bonn. WLOE e.V. offers and supports the work of women especially, in connected areas of ecology, peace and global justice, often through translation and editing of original texts. The website is active in English, German and Spanish at www.wloe.org.

Joy in Enough

This year's conference of Green Christians, held in Bristol on 7th November 2017, focused on new ideas in economics. Pope Francis has spoken of developing 'a new economy, more attentive to ethical principles and new ways of regulating speculative financial practices and virtual wealth', of 'outdated criteria' in economics and of 'a magical conception of the market' (*Laudato Si'* 189). Speakers at the conference, including Molly Scott Cato MEP, economic speaker for the Green Party, and Jonathan Rowson Director of the Social Brain Centre at the Royal Society of Arts, provided an inspiring glimpse into the many imaginative ideas and

projects for a new economy. Real change is possible, and the Church possesses the values, the understanding of humanity, the networks and the communities to empower such change. But first of all, we need to listen, learn and understand.

The key ideas of the new approach include:

1) *Rethinking the assumption that economic 'growth' is a good thing.* GDP goes up when any money is spent, however bad or sad the reason. While poor countries need to increase their wealth (in the right way), rich countries do not. Most importantly, ecological limits mean that ever-increasing growth

is suicidal. Fortunately there are other ideas out there, including the idea of a 'steady state economy'.

2) *Rethinking the social role of wealth.* Economic growth is driven by commercial and personal competition, and governments often encourage competition to improve social well-being. Such growth then damages the environment. Fortunately there are other ideas out there: socio-economic research now proves that, for richer nations at least, relative equality is far more important than absolute wealth in creating well-being, better for the rich and for the poor alike. People are simply happier, saner and healthier in societies with a more equal distribution of wealth.

2) *Rethinking the flawed system of money supply, which creates the apparent need for growth.* Most voters, including the large majority of MPs, do not understand this. 97% of money is created out of thin air by private banks, bearing compound debt, and repayable to those banks for their profit. Consequently it becomes logically necessary for debt across the board to continue to increase exponentially. Fortunately, there are other ideas out there: other ways of creating money (e.g. quantitative easing, social credit) and even local forms of money.

3) *Rethinking social and economic*

organisation, so that people have a real choice to live more lightly on the earth. At present, many people feel trapped within a system that depends on wasteful supply systems, at home, in the shops, and at work. Fortunately, there are other ideas out there, for example: a 'bioregional' economy which delights in what is locally produced; businesses that are defined by social goals, not by profit-seeking.

4) *Rethinking moral attitudes.* Our current society is based on a collective obsession with pleasure, speed and minimising effort, all of which cost money. Fortunately, there are other ideas out there: the shared activities that make for simpler and saner living offer ways of life that are healthier, saner and open to joy.

The conference in Bristol offered a real experience of hope: small changes can make big changes, provided we do it together. It also provided a challenge: we need to make the small changes ourselves.

What can you do?

This article was first published in *Green Christian* Winter 2017. A fully referenced version is available from: secretary@socialcredit.co.uk

The Art of Greg Tricker Reviewed

Bernadette Meaden

The website on which some of Greg Tricker's work can be seen (see below) also carries a short video, which gives an insight into the surroundings and the

atmosphere in which he works. Deep in the heart of the Cotswold countryside, his wooden hut is like a small church or chapel, and the isolation and peace

in which he works gives the feeling of a monk in a cell, his labour a form of worship and contemplation. Indeed, his painstaking production of a book with a binding of carved oak to contain his *Bride of Iona* works give the finished object an ancient yet timeless feel, work which would sit comfortably alongside illuminated manuscripts of earlier centuries.

The different materials Tricker chooses for his work, like oak panels and even old doors serve to give it extra layers of texture and character. This is particularly effective in a work like *John the Baptist in Prison*, where John's captivity is embodied by the bulky metal door hinges which impinge upon his face – yet the colours of luminous blue and gold leaf transcend the heaviness and suggest the spirit which cannot be contained by a prison. In *Magdalene: The Grieving*, the grain of the wood still visible beneath the paint seems to emphasise and add depth to the sadness in Mary Magdalene's face as she grieves for the crucified Christ. Tricker's versatility enables him to work with a variety of materials, carving in wood and stone, painting, drawing, and stained glass. Whilst his paintings can have a delicate, ethereal feel, carvings like *The Grail Journey: Joseph of Arimathea* are extremely solid and weighty, and in this way his body of work unites the physical and the spiritual. For his *Bride of Iona* collection, the use of the blue we associate with the Madonna, combined with aquamarine and green and earthy browns and greys seem to unite the subject with the landscape, the sea and the sky of the Hebrides. It is clear that, as Tricker says, he has immersed himself in the place, and the place is reflected in the work he produces. This reminded me of what George Macleod, founder of the Iona Community wrote - that Iona is "a thin

place where only tissue paper separates the material from the spiritual."

But whilst always retaining a spiritual element, this artist is not afraid to include the ordinary, the everyday and mundane aspects of life, perhaps making the point that all of life is sacred and sacramental, not just the overtly spiritual or religious. The holy figures he portrays were also truly human. There is a painting, for instance, of Bernadette Skipping, conveying the pure and simple joy of a young girl at play, reminding us that where holiness and spirituality are concerned, solemnity is not essential. It is refreshing and inspiring to see an artist focus so strongly on the feminine element of Christianity, not just the Madonna but several strong female figures, like *Bride of Iona*, Bernadette of Lourdes and Joan of Ark. This reflects both the Celtic Christianity of Iona and the early Christianity of the catacombs. Indeed, Tricker has also taken inspiration from the art of the catacombs. He clearly relates to the essence of Christianity, before it became constrained by the orthodoxies of organised religion. In this art, contemporary Christianity is brought face to face with its more feminine origins.

I was very interested to learn that Tricker is inspired by the life and works of Vincent Van Gogh, who I have always felt to be an important Christian figure, but seems not to be properly recognised as such. To read Van Gogh's letters from the time he spent living with poverty-stricken mining communities as a preacher, sharing their poverty and giving unconditionally of himself, both materially and emotionally, is to appreciate the foundations of his life and art. This emotional, whole-hearted relationship to Christ and the gospels is clearly mirrored in Greg Tricker's work. A strong identification with the

individuals who, like Van Gogh, stand to a certain extent outside of conventional society and the church is a continuing theme in Tricker's work, from Francis of Assisi to the remarkable and mysterious 'holy fool' Kaspar Hauser, subject of a series of 40 Tricker paintings. The short video in which Tricker and Sister Wendy Beckett look at an exhibition of his work and quietly discuss it is rather poignant, as it is clear that Tricker's work is so deeply felt that there is a difficulty, even discomfort in his attempt to explain his work in words – his art is its own language, rendering words superfluous. Yet he has collaborated with writers to produce books which

combine a collection of pictures with a text which explores the work and places it in context, thus making his work accessible to a much wider public than those who can get to an exhibition or even purchase an original work. I would highly recommend an exploration of this artist's work, if only via the website. It is an uplifting experience.

<https://www.piano-nobile.com/artists/60-greg-tricker/works/>

Bernadette Meaden writes on political and social issues, and currently blogs for Ekklesia, the beliefs and values think tank. <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/blog/1251>

Ethics and Economics

by Peter Maurin

Lincoln Steffens says:

“The social problem is not a political problem; it is an economic problem.”

Kropotkin says:

“The economic problem is not an economic problem; it is an ethical problem.”

Thorstein Veblen says:

“There are no ethics in modern society.”

R. H. Tawney says:

“There were high ethics in society when the Canon Law was the law of the land.”

The high ethics

of the Canon Law are embodied in the encyclicals of Pius XI and Leo XIII on the social problem.

To apply the ethics of the encyclicals to the problems of today, such is the purpose of Catholic Action.

Easy Essays by Peter Maurin

<http://www.easyessays.org/>

Catholic Worker Movement

<http://www.catholicworker.org/petermaurin/easy-essays.html>

The Social Artist/Crediter

www.douglassocialcredit.com Publications

Recent back numbers of *The Social Artist/Crediter* can be viewed on screen and/or are available as download for educational purposes.

Social Credit literature currently available in print or online.

Over the century (virtually) since Clifford Hugh Douglas first put pen to paper, a vast literature on the subject of Social Credit has appeared in print. Douglas' own works were translated into many languages, and most of his books can still be bought over the internet.

The Political Economy of Social Credit and Guild Socialism

Frances Hutchinson and Brian Burkitt, (2005)
£12.99

Social Credit: Some Questions Answered

Frances Hutchinson £3

The Grip of Death:

A study of modern money, debt slavery and destructive economics

Michael Rowbotham £18

Understanding the Financial System: Social Credit Rediscovered

Frances Hutchinson (2010) £15

What Everybody REALLY Wants to Know About Money

Frances Hutchinson £12

Asses in Clover (Fictional dystopia)

Eimar O'Duffy (2003) £11

This Age of Plenty

A new conception of economics: Social Credit

Louis Even (Pilgrims of Saint Michael)

The Social Artist

The quarterly journal is freely available electronically. For both print out and read only versions see www.douglassocialcredit.com.

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Oikonomia, the material economy where tangible and useful wealth is created, is now dominated by *chrematistics*, the money economy that is parasitical upon *oikonomia*. The “real” economy is the one which “earth has given and human hands have made”. The money economy takes from the God-given earth, and from human society, destroying and not replenishing. In short, we have an insane system of economics which counts waste, devastation, pollution, war and social devastation as “wealth”.

“It is not a sane system that before you can buy a cabbage it is absolutely necessary to produce a machine gun”, commented Clifford Hugh. Douglas, author of *Social Credit*.

See www.douglassocialcredit.com.

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**

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The Social Artist is a quarterly 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.