

The colour of money, circa 2000

Everyone knows what debit is, right?

Instead of using real money, you make purchases via your bank card. Very convenient. No more messing around with all that cumbersome and filthy cash that has been loitering in people's mouths and God knows where else. Soon all communication systems will be digital and debit shows that our monetary system is moving in the same direction.

But what kind of effect is the separation between consumer and physical money going to have on our lives? What and who's convenience are we opening ourselves up to?

First of all, there is the issuer of the bank card itself, the bank. Electronic money (e-money) is going to work out beautifully for the international banking system. It will take all those dollars that are floating around there in your pockets, not making them a cent in investments and interest and put it all into, all the banks, all the time. E-money is a simple transaction from one account to another.

Now the banks having that much control over your money may not bother you that much but remember, money is property of the federal government and if they are issuing e-money to the banks, then their databases will have to be linked. The user, date, time and place of all transactions are recorded. That is surveillance, as long as you're using money, you can be found.

If e-money is going to be lucrative for the bank then it will be so

for the government as well. All purchases will have to be legit. That finishes the "war" on drugs. It's very hard to buy marijuana or anything else that isn't on the level with the bank card. Unless of course, you and your dealer can convince the local grocer to ring in an ounce of "crack" under produce.

With all transactions limited to hardware and software that can record their source and destinations you can forget working under the table for the summer or making money on the side during the school year. Escaping proper taxes and levies is impossible when your money is also an electronic snoop device.

Digital technology is information technology and to deviate from McLuhan. It's not the medium but the user that is the message. Gathering information on foreign powers is no longer a mandate of the western governments, instead the collection of information is turning toward their own citizens.

This isn't paranoid Orwellian ranting, just take a look at what our American cousins are up to south of the border. The F.B.I. have been trying to get their proposed "Digital telephony and privacy improvement act of 1994" through congress. This would mean that phone and other providers of digital information services would have to have "back door" listening and screening devices installed into the equipment they sold or rented to the public, so all transmissions could be intercepted to provide "call identifying information"

to the government. The manufacturers of such equipment would have four years to provide the goods with these capabilities. A very convenient way to find out who the miscreants and malcontents are.

Debit is being sold under the same "security" guise. Don't buy into the tissue of lies that say digital money is going to decrease your chances of being the victim of a violent crime. Debit does not eliminate the need

for people to rob other people, if anything it forces a robber to use more aggressive methods like abduction.

At the present your money is your own, to do with as you please, but should a digital cash system come to order it will be like having a "little brother" in your wallet.

I'm not trying say that your local bank teller is part of an enigmatic cabal to enslave you or that the debit

is a slave tessera with which the government is trying to construct a Romanesque human mosaic (that seems to be a job for the "smart card") but it is very possible and highly likely that by its technology and the information it provides, the debit will be put to uses other than those intended. *Caveat emptor!*

Morley Devine

Joe's rant is back

I have been asked recently why I haven't written a column as of late, and to that I have to say this: nothing has really pissed me off as of late. Well, at least not until recently. So here it is — Enjoy!

•If you happened to have read the editorial, you will have noticed that I am not in favour of the proposed national strike protesting the Social Security Review (SSR).

I do accept that some students (mainly left wing crazies) feel the need to protest, and as a result, a clause expressing support for these individuals' right to protest was included in the DSU motion of non-support for the strike.

Now, even though this clause was added, a few members of council for reasons obviously political in nature, decided not to vote for the motion, even though they themselves did not support the strike.

Don't you just hate politics and political bullshit? I mean, hell, you don't offer to represent students if you are afraid of what they might think of your choices. You can't have your cake and eat it too. If you don't take a stand, you are just full of shit and not worth my time of day.

Should student politics really be so fucking political?

•Hey there Grads. Guess what? Did you know that at last week's Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS) council meeting, some of the lefties tried to instigate a leadership review? I find this very interesting in light of the fact that one of the instigators is one of the DAGS appointed reps to the DSU and hasn't been to at least the last four DSU meetings. Talk about hypocrisy. People who live in glass houses...

•As a final little rant, I'd like to

say something about the owner of the gun that was used in last Friday's shooting of a Dalhousie graduate student. I do respect the right of individuals who feel the need to go into the woods and shoot defenceless animals. I also respect the rights of those survival types who just take their guns to the range to practice for the day the government collapses, but I have nothing but contempt for gun-owners who don't know where their guns are. As far as I'm concerned, the owner of the gun is just as responsible as the deranged perpetrator of the crime. This guy should pay some major fine and spend a month or two in jail just to make sure that if they ever let him own a gun again, he'll make sure it's in a safe place. What an idiot. I hope the victim sues his ass off.

Joe Tratnik

Empowerment: Unlocking the fear within

Some of the ideas in this article you will find hard to believe, and others may seem quite startling. Remember only this: you need not believe the ideas, you need not accept them and you need not even welcome them. But do not allow yourself to make exceptions in applying these ideas. Nothing more is asked.

When the Bible says "Judge not that ye be not judged," it means that if you judge the reality of others you will be unable to avoid judging.

The choice to judge rather than to know is the cause of loss of peace. Judgement is the process on which perception, not knowledge rests. Judgement always involves rejection. The meaning of what you are trying to communicate is lost to you and others because you are judging them. You do not need judgment.

It is automatically suspended and this is the process that enables recognition to replace perception. Judgement is a reflection of the ego, because to judge is to take on a position you do not hold, but want, it is an illusionary dream made real. When you feel tired, it is because you have judged yourself as capable of being tired. When you laugh at someone it is because you have judged him as unworthy. When you laugh at yourself you must laugh at others if only because you cannot tolerate the idea of being more unworthy than they are. The challenge is to do the same when you are angry at someone or something. Their are many reason to hate and seek revenge and some seek to turn a wrong into a right through unrighteous means and wrongful deeds. To rise above this hatred and bitterness takes strength, but remember, your enemies will not be able to

judge the truth if it is worthy of its place.

To empower yourself to remain unaffected from someone is seen as a weakness by some but it is what true empowerment is, for it forces the instigator to reveal their action for what they are.

The strain of constraint judgement is virtually intolerable. The seeking of energy implies that you are worthy to judge. The problem is that when we begin to realize the potential goodness in ourselves, we often take our discovery much too seriously. We might kill for goodness by spearing someone's spirit. What is lacking is a sense of humour. Humour here does not mean telling jokes or being comical or criticizing others and laughing at them. A genuine sense of humour is having a light touch. It is recognizing the point of privilege of knowing and helping others seek this comfort.

Everyone has experienced a

"Wind of Energy" in their lives. For example athletes feel a surge of energy when they are engaged in their sport. Or a person may experience a torrent of love or passion for another person, to whom they are attracted. Sometimes, we feel energy as a cool breeze of delight that travels our spinal column. For example when you are hot and perspiring on a hot summer day, if you take a shower, you feel so delightful, refreshed and energized at the same time.

Normally we think energy comes from a definite source or has a particular cause. We associate it with the situation in which we become so energized. Athletes may become addicted to their sport because of the "rush" they experience. Some people become addicted to falling in love over and over again because they feel so good and alive when they are in love. The result of letting go is that you discover a bank of self-existing energy that is always avail-

able to you beyond any circumstances. When you desire to let go, you go into worrying about your own state of mind and you can begin to think of others. You feel a longing to share your discovery, because you now trust in yourself and you want others to feel the same.

In some sense, we should regard ourselves as being burdened. We have the burden of helping the world around us and if we have the resources, the world beyond this one. We cannot forget this responsibility to others. But if we take our burden as a delight, we can actually liberate this world. The way to begin is with ourselves. We can also learn to be open with others. So we can work with the rest of the world, on the basis of the goodness we discover in ourselves.

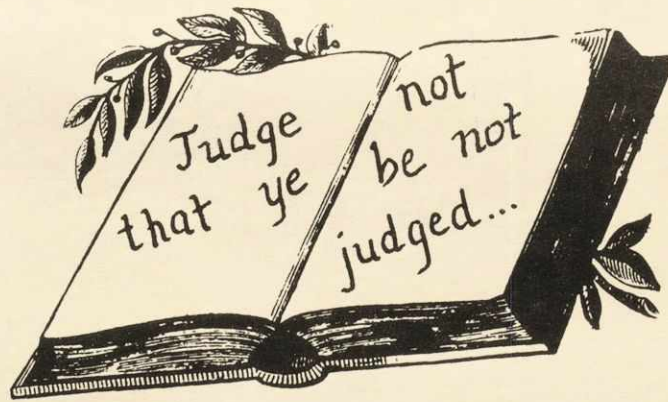
While everyone has a responsibility to help the world we can create additional chaos as described above if we try to impose our ideas or our

help upon others. Many people have theories about what the world needs. Many people think the world needs democracy, some people think that technology will save the world, some people think that technology will destroy the world, some people even believe that we need casinos. All this does not matter. All that needs to be acknowledged is that the purpose of our existence is evolution. Evolution in this sense means gaining an enlightened society that can distinguish between right and wrong. In order that we can help others we must examine our own experience, in order to see what it contains that is of value in helping ourselves and others to uplift their existence.

What this entails is an acknowledgement that we are gifted and hold positions of privilege. Secondly, we must aspire to do the near impossible. Here lies hope, for hope is acknowledgement of what can't be explained or communicated and requires someone to seek help and inspiration from the almighty.

The present world is in chaos. We are part of this chaos for our lives are based on consumption that is contingent on the conquest of others. No society in the history of civilization has ever survived at such a rate of consumption. I propose not to have all the answers but I hope that I have open discussion for some questions to be asked. For we are threatening the survival and justice our future generation deserves.

Ron Sampson



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