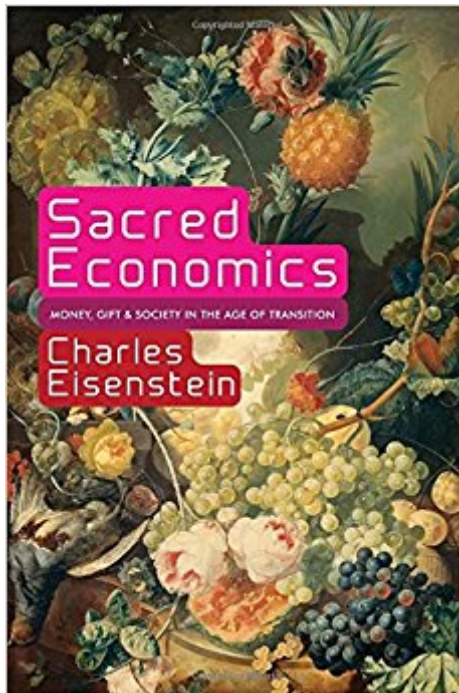




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Sacred Economics: Money, Gift, And Society In The Age Of Transition



Synopsis

Sacred Economics traces the history of money from ancient gift economies to modern capitalism, revealing how the money system has contributed to alienation, competition, and scarcity, destroyed community, and necessitated endless growth. Today, these trends have reached their extreme—but in the wake of their collapse, we may find great opportunity to transition to a more connected, ecological, and sustainable way of being. This book is about how the money system will have to change—and is already changing—to embody this transition. A broadly integrated synthesis of theory, policy, and practice, Sacred Economics explores avant-garde concepts of the New Economics, including negative-interest currencies, local currencies, resource-based economics, gift economies, and the restoration of the commons. Author Charles Eisenstein also considers the personal dimensions of this transition, speaking to those concerned with "right livelihood" and how to live according to their ideals in a world seemingly ruled by money. Tapping into a rich lineage of conventional and unconventional economic thought, Sacred Economics presents a vision that is original yet commonsense, radical yet gentle, and increasingly relevant as the crises of our civilization deepen. Sacred Economics official website: <http://sacred-economics.com/>

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sacred Economics: "This brilliant and beautifully written book is an indispensable must-read for all those who believe our economic system is terminally sick and in need of radical, sacred rehaul.

Charles Eisenstein has the great gift of being able to make complex ideas both thrilling and inspiring. I hope this book begins a serious, worldwide conversation on how we can reinvent our attitude to money."

•Andrew Harvey, author of *The Hope: A Guide to Sacred Activism*"While political pundits, financial analysts and Occupiers fumble on how to transcend the intensifying global financial crisis, Eisenstein is trailblazing bold new ideas and possibilities for how we conduct monetary exchange."

•Jonathan Phillips, Huffington Post blog"If you want a convincing account of just how deep the shift in our new axial age is and must be, look no further than this brilliant book by Charles Eisenstein, one of the deepest integrative thinkers active today."

•Michel Bauwens, founder of the P2P Foundation "With his breadth of knowledge, enthusiasm, commitment, diligence, and sensitivity, Charles has become a beacon of hope for others. Your heart and mind will be opened by this treasure of a book that shines with wisdom of crucial importance to our troubled world today."

•Kamran Mofid, founder of the Globalisation for the Common Good Initiative"[Sacred Economics] meticulously explains why our current system will inevitably give rise to cyclical and worsening economic crises. [Eisenstein] exposes the myths and lies that sustain power structure, the social and spiritual devastation in which we are all complicit, and lays the foundation for a way of thinking that can restore hope and help us emerge to a positive future. Eisenstein's book provides some of the most creative and hopeful ideas out there."

•New Consciousness Review"[Charles Eisenstein] puts his money where his mouth is. *Sacred Economics: Money, Gift and Society in the Age of Transition* is published under a Creative Commons copyright. This arrangement, similar to that of open-source software, is a tiny sample of the economic system that Eisenstein predicts for our future. Of course, a new economy means the old one needs to go. That would be scary news if not for Eisenstein's optimistic way of describing the transition. He effectively argues that when we dismantle monetization, we give birth to community. Together, we can help noble impulses become profitable enterprises. Money may have caused our biggest problems, but redefining it could help us solve those same problems."

•Grid Magazine"'If anything is sacred in this world, it is surely not money.' So says Charles Eisenstein, who believes that people can act outside of the money economy, despite the power it has over their lives."

•Foreword Reviews"Eisenstein is no revolutionary or anarchist. In fact, he's an evolutionary. While reading *Sacred Economics*, I realized I had not achieved an objective relationship with our money system. I don't have money. It has me."

•Common GroundAlso by Charles Eisenstein: *The Ascent of Humanity*: "Brilliant and original, with great depth of insight and understanding, Eisenstein's *Ascent of Humanity* easily ranks with the works of such giants of our

age as David Bohm, Julian Jaynes, Jean Gebser, Whitehead. It is a profoundly serious, indeed somber portrait of our times, even as it opens a door of honest hope amidst the dark destiny we have woven about us. Accept the challenge of this major accomplishment and discover the light shining within it." — Joseph Chilton Pearce, author of *The Crack in the Cosmic Egg*, *Magical Child*, *Evolution's End*, and *The Biology of Transcendence* — "Quite marvelous, a hugely important work... This book is truly needed in this time of deepening crisis." — John Zerzan, author of *Future Primitive* and *Elements of Refusal*

Charles Eisenstein is a teacher, speaker, and writer focusing on themes of civilization, consciousness, money, and human cultural evolution. His writings on the web magazine *Reality Sandwich* have generated a vast online following; he speaks frequently at conferences and other events, and gives numerous interviews on radio and podcasts. Writing in *Ode* magazine's "25 Intelligent Optimists" issue, David Korten (author of *When Corporations Rule the World*) called Eisenstein "one of the up-and-coming great minds of our time." Eisenstein graduated from Yale University in 1989 with a degree in Mathematics and Philosophy, and spent the next ten years as a Chinese-English translator. He currently lives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and serves on the faculty of Goddard College.

Eisenstein's passionate and eloquent book is truly a gift to us. Reading it, I often thought, this guy really gets it — about limits-to-growth and the need to downsize. Then suddenly, I would be floating in a never-never-land of New Age fancy and affluence. For example, he frequently uses the word "abundance" — despite the obvious lack of abundance in the de-growing economy that he knows is coming, an economy vastly reduced in size and consumption. He disparages techno-utopianism even while suggesting that perpetual motion machines will yield all the energy we'll ever need (p. 443). He opposes income taxes and never even mentions wealth taxes, despite the implied plutocratic governance and the kinds of social dysfunction from extreme inequality documented in the book *The Spirit Level*. Nor does he discuss unearned income from monopolistic practices or speculation. Somehow a new gift culture of non-accumulation and non-profit is supposed to take over, even without any legal sanctions or penalties to prevent abuses. But if you skip over such lapses, Eisenstein has a number of practical policy recommendations for the way down, based on solid readings in several fields. These include negative interest rates to keep money circulating and prevent concentration of wealth, taxing unearned rents on property and resources of all kinds,

carbon and pollution taxes, a "social dividend" or basic income for all, more expensive but fewer and more durable and repairable goods, voluntary donations instead of fixed pricing, internet based work and credit systems, and meaningful rather than regimented work. Eisenstein fully understands the need to reduce the interest rate to below the growth rate to decrease inequality, just like Piketty (who refers to "return on capital" instead of interest rate). This also prevents inflation in a contracting economy and provides an incentive to postpone exploiting resources that will be more valuable in the future, such as depleting fossil fuels and minerals. Even Keynes thought Silvio Gesell's proposal for negative interest had merit. Eisenstein wisely suggests a fully transparent and traceable digital currency that would automatically decay in value according to this negative interest rate. The result is smoothly declining material wealth if all goes well, though in a typical contradiction he covers all bases by suggesting that there would also be a short dark age of "facism, civil unrest, and war" (p. 439). This is an important book for an audience of a certain environmental and spiritual bent, as it takes very seriously the "collapse" part of the phrase "ecological overshoot and collapse". Other authors and progressive politicians suggest that it will be an easy transition to a sustainable economy if we just replace fossil fuels by renewable energy.

Humanity must now choose either fundamental economic transformation or continuing destruction and resource theft via war and oppression to keep growing until the earth is out of resources. We see many people worldwide standing up to denounce the latter. Still, many more are stressed, bewildered and don't know where to turn for solutions. This very readable book manages to be both witness for the many suffering the strain of the current system and also a detailed inspiration on how to transform it fundamentally. Sacred Economics is also a practical guide on how to design economic systems, locally to globally, that employs the best thinking of many movements: Transition Towns, Permaculture, and what could be called a diverse international commons movement. The goal is an all-win economy for mankind together with nature.

Absolutely incredible! A must read for anyone that cares about the future of this planet and of our race. Though some will argue that many of Eisenstein's recommendations in the book are not "practical" or "feasible", it nevertheless is a worthwhile thought experiment that exposes many of the narratives about the economy, money, and human nature that we assume to be facts but are in reality simply stories that we jointly share...meaning that they can change! Furthermore, Eisenstein

does offer some very real, concrete things that can be implemented starting today in our own lives that will promote the beautiful future that we all crave and know is possible.

I know it's a cliché and I would rather not say it, but I don't know what else to say: This book changed my life. I read it with Bliss, on every page recognizing the Truth, what I had known but not had words for, what I had felt was right but had not been able to envision. Now, I have finally found out what I want to do with my time, my life. Here is one thought I am now growing in my heart: If you are someone who has something to invest, don't ask yourself "How can I keep as much as possible for myself", ask "What is the most beautiful thing I can imagine creating for the good of the world". Security and happiness comes not from owning a lot, but from loving relationships, from being embedded in a social community. So: I am now engaging in starting up a social enterprise with the purpose of offering a loving environment for people recovering after a life crisis - an area I have been gifted with lots of knowledge about!

If you want to understand our contemporary crises and what we (as individuals as well as collectively) can do about them buy this book. Charles is ahead of his time ... both, intellectually and spiritually. Charles is a wonderful being and this book is also most beautifully written. I had tears in my eyes on like every other page just because of this deep feeling of connection with the author ... because the book is about all of our fears, dreams and hopes! One of my all time favorite books.

I'm not all the way through with this. Just a warning it is a heavy read. Very well written, but you will work your brains a bit. I nominate Charles Eisenstein for president/ leader of the world. basically the road map for a modern utopian society. If everyone at least with influence in politics could read this book, if these ideas could actually be implemented! I have hope Charles Eisenstein I have hope. For anyone interested in changing the world; a must read.

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