

From Ego to Eco: where are we, where are we trying to go?

Part 4. Relationships with and between human beings

Tom Boydell



Having considered, in Part 3 of this series, the first of Shiva and Shiva's three separations - between humans and nature - let's now turn to the second, namely that between humans and humans. This is a vast area, encompassing social inequality in general, within which there are classism, sexism and patriarchy, racism, slavery, the plight of refugees, colonialism, imperialism, terrorism, warfare, - you name it, it's linked to the separation between humans and the process known as "othering"¹.

Othering

As far as I can tell, the ego-conscious concept of "othering" was originally introduced in 1985 by Spivak², in the context of the way the British saw and treated the inhabitants of land that they³ had colonised - in this particular case India. It has since been extended to apply to the way I or we see people who are different from me and us. Although "different" may sometimes mean "somehow better than me", it usually has negative connotations, such as generally inferior, less important, less powerful, less able or competent, less trustworthy, less deserving (of earnings, rights, liberties, life). Or of course more - more dangerous, more malevolent, more anti-social, more evil - than me and mine. Thus, as described by Spivak,

"Othering is a phenomenon in which some individuals or groups are defined and labeled as not fitting in within the norms of a social group. ... [It] also involves attributing negative characteristics to people or groups that differentiate them from the perceived normative social group. It is an 'us vs. them' way of thinking about human connections and relationships.

¹ It seems tragically relevant that as I am checking this paper for typos, Ukraine is being invaded by Russia. s

² *The Rani of Sirmur: an Essay in Reading the Archives*, Spivak G. C, 1985

³ This sentence, by using "they" instead of "we", might be seen as an example of othering, whereby I'm denying that as an 81-year old Britisher I was in any way involved in colonising. But of course I was in that I enjoyed colonial benefits such as sugar, chocolate, cotton and so on.

This process essentially involves looking at others and saying 'they are not like me' or 'they are not one of us.' Othering is a way of negating another person's individual humanity and, consequently, those that are or have been othered are seen as less worthy of dignity and respect ... On an individual level, othering plays a role in the formation of prejudices against people and groups. On a larger scale, it can also play a role in the dehumanization of entire groups of people which can then be exploited to drive changes in institutions, governments, and societies. It can lead to the persecution of marginalized groups, the denial of rights based on group identities, or even acts of violence against others"⁴.

As I have indicated, I see othering as clearly being an ego-conscious process. I and the groups to which I owe allegiance, to which I feel I belong, are "us". The rest of you are different and therefore "others". Spivak focused particularly on race, gender and social class, but "the other" can apply to any characteristic that the otherer sees as significant - sexuality, age, tribe, profession, religion, political party, football team, eye colour⁵.

In Part 3 of this series of papers I described one view of "posthumanism" as meaning "not human centred", thereby giving more importance to other (life) forms such as animals, plants, mountains, rivers and other natural features. Another version, often referred to as feminist posthumanism, sees that the fields of science, politics, law, religion, art, literature have by and large been dominated by white Western heterosexual able-bodied males, who have othered or marginalised women, other ethnic groups, colonials, gays, transsexuals and indeed *any others* who do not fit into dominant privileged categories. This form of posthumanism therefore seeks to redress this imbalance of power, influence, justice and fairness not only with regard to humans and nonhumans but also to a multiplicity of relations between "superior-humans and lesser-humans".⁶

I imagine that we all other various others - I know that I do, and that at least for some of them I'm trying not to⁷. It might be instructive to identify some "favourite" othering targets - your own, or those of a group with which you are affiliated.

- Who are some of those you "other"? What do you think about them? How do you feel about them? What do you want to do in relation to them? What do you actually do? Can you explain any difference between what you want to do and what you actually do?

⁴ "What is Othering?". *Very Well Mind*, Cherry, 2020.

⁵ "Othering" is normally used in relation to other people. It could be used as a framework to explore how humans relate to other species - animals, plants and rocks, that - whom? - we humans treat as others to be used to our advantage

⁶ For example see *Posthuman Feminist Theory*, Braidotti, 2016; *Sustainability, Feminist Posthumanism and the Unusual Capacities of (Post)humans*, Fox and Aldred, 2020; *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth*, Adams and Gruen (eds), 2022

⁷ Those that I find particularly difficult include some groups of politicians; "celebrities" who are famous for being famous (that was an example of an othering statement); supporters of certain football teams; and so on. I'm not proud of this and see it as something I need to do more work on, but ...

- Why is this? Where do these thoughts, feelings and intentions and behaviours come from? What feeds them?
- When does it happen? All the time? On particular occasions? Are there certain "triggers"?
- What effects do those thoughts, feelings, intentions and behaviours have - on those others? On yourself? On yourselves? On the world in general?
- How would your life, their lives, the world's life be different if you stopped thinking, feeling, willing and behaving with regard to them in these ways?
- Do you want to stop othering them or does it make life easier, more comfortable, for you? What would you lose by trying to stop, by succeeding? Would this be too painful?
- If you do want to stop, how and when can you do so? What help might you look for in doing this?
- And how might you work to help *others* to begin to stop?
- How will you notice progress in those directions?

Whilst checking this text for errors, I have learned from Chris Blanter of a sort of "opposite" to Othering, namely Mattering, although this seems to refer to feeling that I matter to somebody else - thus it's a passive rather than active verb. We can however make it active. What do I do, could I do, that makes somebody else feel that they matter to me? to our group? to the world?⁸ And who are those somebody elses?⁹

Social Inequality: Haves, Have-nots and Injustice

Explorations of social inequality very often focus on financial differences - income and wealth. These have in fact been shown to be related to differences on many other dimensions. For example Wilkinson and Pickett¹⁰ show quantitative connections between income inequality and a number of societal issues, as shown in Table 1 - in which many of the items are inter-related. And of course, this table leaves open the question as to which is cause and which is effect - does higher income inequality lead to more mental illness, or does mental illness lead to more inequality, or do they both contribute to each other in various vicious circles or spirals?

It's important to note that we are looking here at the effects of *unequal* income - difference between rich and poor in a society, not of actual levels of income as such. Taking for example life expectancy, studies show that within a given society - say a country, or a state in the USA, or a geographical area in the UK, then poorer people die significantly younger than richer people. There are many contributing factors to this -

⁸ My eye is particularly caught by Mattering in the Later Years: Older Adults' Experiences of Mattering to Others, Purpose in Life, Depression, and Wellness, Dixon, 2011; sadly I cannot open the link that was tantalisingly proffered to me

⁹ We can also ask this with respect to mattering oneself

¹⁰ *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Much Better*, Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009 and the same authors' *Income Inequality and Wellbeing*, 2014.

quality and location of housing, medical care, sports facilities, leisure activities, holidays and so on and so on. But perhaps more surprising is that where inequality is high, the reasonably well-off also have shorter lives than their equivalents in places with lower inequality. It seems that no matter how well off you are, it's better to live in a more equal place.

Table 1: Wilkinson and Pickett data on Relationships Between Income Inequality and Health and Social Problems¹¹

HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS THAT ARE WORSE BY BEING <i>HIGHER</i> WHEN INCOME INEQUALITY IS HIGHER	HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS THAT ARE WORSE BY BEING <i>LOWER</i> WHEN INCOME INEQUALITY IS HIGHER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ prevalence of mental illness ✓ status anxiety ✓ conspicuous consumption and consumerism ✓ use of illegal drugs ✓ infant mortality ✓ obesity in adults ✓ overweight in children ✓ teenage pregnancies and births ✓ violence and homicide ✓ bullying and conflict between children ✓ harshness of penal system and numbers in prison ✓ number of working hours ✓ prevalence of "guard labour" (armed guards to properties) ✓ number of heart attacks* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ child wellbeing ➤ societal levels of trust ➤ status of women - their political participation, employment, earnings ➤ spending on foreign aid ➤ life expectancy ➤ scores on maths and literacy tests ➤ waste recycling ➤ social mobility ➤ participation in groups and local organizations ➤ happiness *

Dorling's Five Social Evils

Danny Dorling talks of "injustice rising out of the ashes of social evils"¹² - of which he identifies five.

1: "Elitism is Efficient". Dorling describes elitism as an unintended consequence of providing the best educational resources to those whose parents had generally themselves received the best. It is seen as a positive move by many, including those who rather misunderstand Michael Young's *The Rise of the Meritocracy*¹³,

¹¹ The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Much Better, Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009 and the same authors' Income Inequality and Wellbeing, 2014. The wording of some items is slightly altered following their Foreword to Injustice: Why Social Inequality Still Exists, in Dorling, 2015: xviii-xxi.

* Items marked * are from The Inequality Organization at <https://inequality.org/facts/inequality-and-health/>

¹² Injustice: Why Social Inequality Still Persists, Dorling, 2015: 20 and then the whole book

¹³ *The Rise of the Meritocracy, 1870-2033*, Young, 1973. The full title is rarely cited, the dates being omitted

"...a sociological fantasy set in the twenty-first century and portraying a sinister, highly stratified society organised around intelligence testing and educational selection. After some difficulty getting published, it was an immediate success and became very widely read. But it does not seem to have had the influence that Michael most wanted for it, over Labour Party thinking. The story was intended to help turn Labour away from meritocracy, by reminding it of the importance of communitarian values. Curiously, though, half a century later we have a Labour Government declaring the promotion of meritocracy as one of its primary objectives¹⁴.

This was exemplified to me when I heard Jack Straw, at the time the UK's Foreign Secretary, say that he thought the Labour Party's greatest achievement was replacing Aristocracy with Meritocracy. That is, a switch from being governed by those in positions of power due to breeding, family and social connection to those in power through having had the right education, with an emphasis on the intensely private public schools and Oxbridge.

Table 2: Synonyms and Antonyms of "Elite"

"ELITE"	
SOME SYNONYMS	SOME ANTONYMS
Highborn	Bad
Upper class	Dregs
Gentry	Herd
Aristocratic	Second rate
Exclusive	Low life
Noble	Working class
Champion	Poor
Best	Common
Thoroughbred	Unwashed
Elect	Trash
A1	Inferior

An online dictionary¹⁵ gives a number of synonyms and antonyms of "elite" as in Table 2. How would these affect you - your thinking, feeling, willing and behaviour - if you constantly heard them being applied to you - or indeed regularly apply them to yourself¹⁶ Table 1 has shown some of the effects on the "inferior second rates " as described by the antonyms to "elite" partly brought about by the loss of self-image and social face through being perceived as a "loser" by society and by oneself.

Michael Sandel¹⁷ suggests that this humiliation of those seen as "losers" corrupts institutions of higher education, creates a cynical and arrogant elite, and leads to populist backlash and thence the emergence of Trumpism and Brexit.

¹⁴ The Rise and Rise of Meritocracy, Dench, 2006.

¹⁵ Though the same site they each had their own url, namely wordslike.org and antonymswords.com, accessed 03.02.22

¹⁶ And what norms and values do they reflect of the way the dictionary compiler sees the society in which these words live? Who is the compiler? How do they decide on these synonyms and antonyms? All I can discover is that the list is from a company registered in Las Vegas

¹⁷ The Tyranny of Merit, Sandel, 2020

"Exclusion is Necessary". A fundamental feature of ego-consciousness and manifested through othering is competition - the strong urge or felt need to strive to prove that I or we are better than you or they, and therefore I/we deserve a better and happier life style than you/they. A doctrine on which the whole capitalist system is based, it is not only manifested in popular culture and entertainment by numerous awards and competitions, but is also the basis of our education system and of course much business practice. Alfie Kohn¹⁸ describes these as MEGA - Mutually Exclusive Goal Attainment in which "my success depends on your failure" and shows how in fact in education and business we punish and demotivate people through seemingly incentivising reward systems that actually reduce performance and output, for example by leading to mental health crises and dissuading teamwork.

Kohn is a strong advocate of the work one of the founders of Total Quality Management, W Edwards Deming¹⁹. Both of them strongly stress the dysfunctional aspects of competition in education and business, seeing it as a guarantee of lower morale, motivation, quality and productivity. This contrasts with the views of Jack Welch, at one time CEO of General Electric, who was a keen believer in elitism and decreed that those of his staff whose performance was in the bottom 10% should automatically be dismissed, no matter how good or bad that 10% figure actually was, nor what the reason for their relative performance.²⁰

3: "Prejudice is Natural". The ego-centric process of "Othering" is based on prejudice - the forming and holding of pictures of others that I choose to hold, either pretty much unconsciously or via deliberate, thought-through views - views based on combinations of ignorance, unawareness, peer pressure and propaganda.

Although not an essential prerequisite for prejudice, a deeply held belief that others are somehow inferior, undeserving of pleasures, of the basic necessities of life, or even of the right to live at all, makes it easier for me to ignore or justify - to myself as well as to everybody else - gross injustices²¹, the benefits that I gain from these, and my unwillingness to do anything to attempt to counteract or overcome them. These beliefs may indeed be so deeply held that I'm completely unaware that I hold them. My basic education was at a so-called public school, where I learned, not through direct "teaching" but by the ever-so-subtle indoctrination processes, that the "working classes" [sic; aka "the lower orders"] were both unintelligent and idle, and therefore their relatively poor existences were the natural way of things. It therefore came as something of a surprise to me when I went to University - Manchester not Oxford - and discovered that the majority of my fellow students were not only "working class" but rather cleverer than me.

¹⁸ No Contest: The Case Against Competition, Kohn, 1986, and No Contest: the Case Against Competition, Kohn, 1993.

¹⁹ Out of the Crisis, Deming, 1982

²⁰ Winning, Welch and Welch, 2005

²¹ "Just" is said to be derived, via French, from Latin *iustus* "upright, righteous, equitable; in accordance with law, lawful; true, proper; perfect, complete" - <https://www.etymonline.com/word/just>, accessed 06.02.22. As an unashamedly proud "Latin scholar" - I just scraped an O Level pass with 51% in the days when you knew where you were and marks were marks, I sometimes wonder where Latin came from

When it comes to gender, of course there continues to be worldwide prejudice and discrimination against women. The World Economic Forum produces an annual Global Gender Gap Report on four key dimensions (Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment), and tracks progress towards closing these gaps over time.

The gap score ranges from 100 - slightly non-intuitively this means there is no gap, women and men being totally equal, no difference between them - and 0 - a more or less unattainable score (hopefully) whereby women have no possibilities at all on those four dimensions. There is also a combined score that takes all four dimensions into account.

Table 3: Some 2021 National Gender Gap Scores

RANK IN 2021 in descending order from lowest gap - least difference	RANK	COUNTRY	GAP	COMPOSITE GENDER GAP SCORE the higher the score, the lower the gap 100 = no gender gap at all
	1	Iceland	89.2	
	2	Finland	86.1	
	3	Norway	84.9	
	4	New Zealand	84.0	
	5	Sweden	82.3	
	6	Namibia	80.9	
	7	Rwanda	80.5	
	23	United Kingdom	77.5	
	30	United States	76.3	
	50	Australia	73.1	
	150	Iran	58.2	
	151	Democratic Republic of Congo	57.6	
	152	Syria	56.8	
	153	Pakistan	55.6	
	154	Iraq	53.5	
	155	Yemen	49.2	
	156	Afghanistan ²²	44.4	

²² I don't know when the data were obtained with reference to Afghanistan, but it was probably before the Taliban took over in 2021, which I imagine may have changed the score somewhat disastrously

Some rankings and those combined scores, from the 2021 Report, ²³ are shown in Table 3. It's perhaps not surprising that the top five include four from Scandinavia - though Denmark actually comes 29th, just slightly better than the USA. Also the bottom seven - out of a total of 156 - more or less confirm my stereotypical views of the world, which, however, on the face of it are rather challenged by the positions of Namibia and Rwanda, which rank six and seven. However these scores say nothing about the *absolute* quality or level of, for example, educational attainment, or health and survival. It shows the extent to which these *differ* between women and men. So a high gap score (a low gender gap and perhaps would be better referred to as an equality score) could be obtained through women and men achieving almost equally brilliant educational attainment, or conversely if they were both equally dreadful - it's the comparison that is being measured, not the actual level as such.

These statistics provide one form of picture of prejudice and discrimination. Another approach is to hear from women how they experience the world in general, or the workplace, or the society and community in which they live. Many such descriptions are available ²⁴ - I have just selected a couple, one of which is about being a black woman and a trainer²⁵nearly 40 years ago. Are things changing?

Many of these stories and descriptions will be more than familiar to women readers of this piece, but men may not be so aware of them. They - perhaps I should say "we" - might benefit from reading and hearing more about them, as in the references that I have just given. Also we could try talking with women relatives, friends and colleagues about their experiences, if we think we can do so with appropriate levels of awareness and sensitivity.

It was the result of some such conversations that at the age of 42 I discovered that I am a man. Of course I had some vague awareness that this was so for quite a long time, but I had never given it much thought. It was when running some *Women and Men Working Together* programmes in the Civil Service with Pauline Farrell, Kirsty Ross, Myrtle Berman and Mike Pedler that I began to realise that not only am I a man physically, but also psychologically, socially, spiritually. This came about through a process that we called *Speak Out*. We divided into two groups - one for the women, the other for the men. The women's task was to prepare and deliver to the men a presentation that addressed three issues:

1. What it's like being a woman in this organisation
2. Things we'd like men never to say or do again
3. Changes in ourselves that want to make and would like men to help us with

²³ *Global Gender Gap Report 2021*, World Economic Forum. It's not clear - to me at any rate - quite how these scores are calculated

²⁴ *12 Things About Being A Woman That Women Won't Tell You*, Moran, 2016/2019.

²⁵ *Reflections on Being a Black Woman and a Trainer in Britain in 1985*, Douglas, 1985. This was published in *Management Education and Development*, the long-ago predecessor to this Journal, and was posted by David McAra in connection with my piece *Fifty Years On* in the Autumn/Winter 2020 edition

and conversely the men were invited to explore and present to the women on

1. What it's like being a man in this organisation
2. Things we'd like women never to say or do again
3. Changes in ourselves that want to make and would like women to help us with.

Two things became very apparent. The first was that we men couldn't do the task - it didn't make sense to us. "We're not men in this organisation, we're just people" - subtext "we're normal". When we presented this to the women many of them became rather angry, accusing us of refusing to share how it was for us, keeping it a locker-room secret.

The second thing was that the women found it extremely easy to do the task, and shared a whole host of things - talking about them, performing role plays, writing poems, drawing pictures. These sharings were shockingly revealing to all of us men, including me.

It was through this that I began the never-ending process of understanding how I live in the world, see it, feel it, experience it, from the position, the perspective, of a man. I'll never fully live it as a woman, never fully understand it, but at least I can make an effort to gain some understanding, some appreciation, of how women live it.

Of course we can ask ourselves similar questions with regard to other Others. If you are white - "what's it like being a white person in this organisation, this community, this neighbourhood, this country, this world?" Well for those of us who are indeed "white", (whatever that means) it's probably so "normal" that the question has no meaning - I can't answer it. If you are black and asked "what's it like being a black person in this organisation, this community, this neighbourhood, this country, this world? - you'll probably have rather a lot to say. Or Asian? Moslem? Hindu? Buddhist? Christian? Jew? Chinese? Or Able-bodied? Not Able-Bodied? Or Refugee? Asylum Seeker? Or neither?

And so on.

Ego-conscious prejudices around class, race and gender certainly played, and continue to play, a key part in capitalism's siblings, colonialism²⁶ and slavery. In the words of a colonialist who in the UK at least remains well-known and indeed still much revered as a great hero by many - namely Cecil Rhodes, "founder" of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe):

"We must find new lands from which we can easily obtain raw materials and at the same time exploit the cheap slave labour that is available from the natives of the colonies. The colonies would also provide a dumping ground for the surplus goods produced in our factories".²⁷

²⁶ Although some sources see what might appear to be a slightly technical difference between colonialism and imperialism, but here I am taking them to be much the same under the rubric "colonialism"

²⁷ *Development as Colonialism*, Goldsmith, 2000: 20

Let's hear it for those gallant colonies!

Of course Rhodes was speaking in the late nineteenth century, but his view of other lands as valuable dumping grounds appears to be very much alive, certainly in bodies such as the World Bank, whose president in 1991, Lawrence Summers, proposed that it develop a scheme to export rich nation garbage, toxic waste and heavily polluting industries to Africa. Thus, in a memo originally intended to be confidential

"I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that ... I've always thought that countries in Africa are vastly under polluted ... Just between you and me shouldn't the World Bank be encouraging more migration of the dirty industries to the Least Developed Countries?"²⁸

Unlike Jonathan Swift's *Modest Proposal* of 1729 that the children of poor people in Ireland be sold as foodstuff in butchers' shops in order to "prevent them from being a burden to their parents or country, and for making them beneficial to the public", the World Bank president's suggestion was not intended to be satirical, and certainly large amounts of waste have been exported, legally and illegally, from a number of countries, including the UK, to Africa and elsewhere, although those damned under-polluted countries are, for some inexplicable reason, defying the Euro-West's economic logic and resisting being dumped upon.

Rhodes didn't appear to be aware that slavery had supposedly been "abolished" some time before his call to action. Or perhaps he was just an observant realist, a true son of Empire. But whatever the legal positions in different parts of the world, slavery, although considered by many in the Euro-West to be a somewhat embarrassing historical aberration, best forgotten and not talked about in polite company - except when commemorated by statues of earlier multi-billionaire slave-traders - is a major element in today's ego-capitalism.

Indeed today there are more slaves - people held in enslavement - now than ever before. True they are not being manacled and shipped across the Atlantic as "black ivory", although many are flown across Europe to wealthier countries such as the UK with promises of well paid jobs as nannies and au pairs, only to find themselves held captive - trafficked illegal immigrants manacled by having their passports stolen - and forced to work for little or no wages in nail bars, as domestic servants, as car cleaners, as sex workers.

In 2017 there were an estimated 40 million people throughout the world who were considered to be held in some form of modern slavery - 25 million being held captive and working for no wages, 15 million in forced marriages. 71% of the total considered to be held in slavery were female, with 25% being children.²⁹ More formally or legally, in England and Wales over 5000 modern slavery offences were officially recorded in 2018-19³⁰. During this time consumers in the UK supported - possibly unwittingly? - the use of slavery world-

²⁸ *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, Nixon 2011; 1. Nixon refers to processes such as these as "Slow Violence" - as opposed the fast violence of armed invasion and warfare

²⁹ *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery*, The International Labour Office and The Walk Free Foundation, 2017

³⁰ *Modern Slavery in the UK*, Office for National Statistics, 2020

wide, importing 18 billion US dollars' worth of goods produced using slave labour - the fifth largest such importer. The largest was the USA, with 144 billion dollars' worth. By far the main types of imports were electronic goods (laptops and mobile phones) and garments, followed, albeit a long way behind, by fish, cocoa and sugarcane.

And what about modern colonialism? As I spell-check this there is the all-too obvious example of Russia and The Ukraine, with others such as the Chinese occupation of Tibet, and the forcible expulsion by the UK, between 1968 and 1973, of the indigenous inhabitants of Diego Garcia and other Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean.³¹ This expulsion was carried out by the UK Government so that a joint US/UK military base could be established on the island and is currently considered by "us" to be permanent, in spite of a number of United Nations rulings to the contrary and efforts by Mauritius to regain them. Is this colonisation, occupation or worse?

I will shortly come to Dorling's fourth evil - "greed is good" - which highlights growing inequalities of wealth and of income, one of the effects of which is the increasing political power of the wealthy and very wealthy, leading to what Savage refers to as "the return of plutocracy to the political table"³². These "economic elites who strut up and down the political stage" typically have little or no experience of political office, their success being due to the electorate's disillusion with established politicians by whom they feel they have long been ignored.

"Wealthy and authoritarian leaders - now the dominant form of dictatorship - use democratic vehicles for their own purposes, and to enhance their business opportunities ... it is completely explicable why xenophobia becomes the most potent issue in this new plutocratic politics, often manifested by the mobilization of anti-immigrant sentiment"

and the separation, the othering, of the despised yet feared foreigner³³.

Some see the United States, Israel, Australia and New Zealand as colonial states due to the displacement of their indigenous peoples by settlers³⁴, and the USA, often helped by the UK, is a sort of proxy-coloniser by what's known as "regime change" using force, assassination or punitive sanctions on 15 independent countries at the latest count. The main sufferers of course are the already impoverished bulk of the civilian population (again especially women and children).

³¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p08sfyf2> Accessed 15.02.22

³² *The Return of Inequality*, Savage, 2021:303-306

³³ *Whiteshift: Populism, Immigration and the Future of White Majorities*, Kaufmann, 2019, explores this in some detail

³⁴ Perhaps most countries are; for example who were the original inhabitants of various parts of the UK, and who were the invading colonists? How far back is it useful to go? Who were the "original" inhabitants of the UK, and where did they come from? A 4000 year old body at Amesbury, near Stonehenge, has been shown to be that of a man who came from what is now Switzerland. Damn those economic migrants! https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/archaeology/king_stonehenge_01.shtml accessed 15.02.22

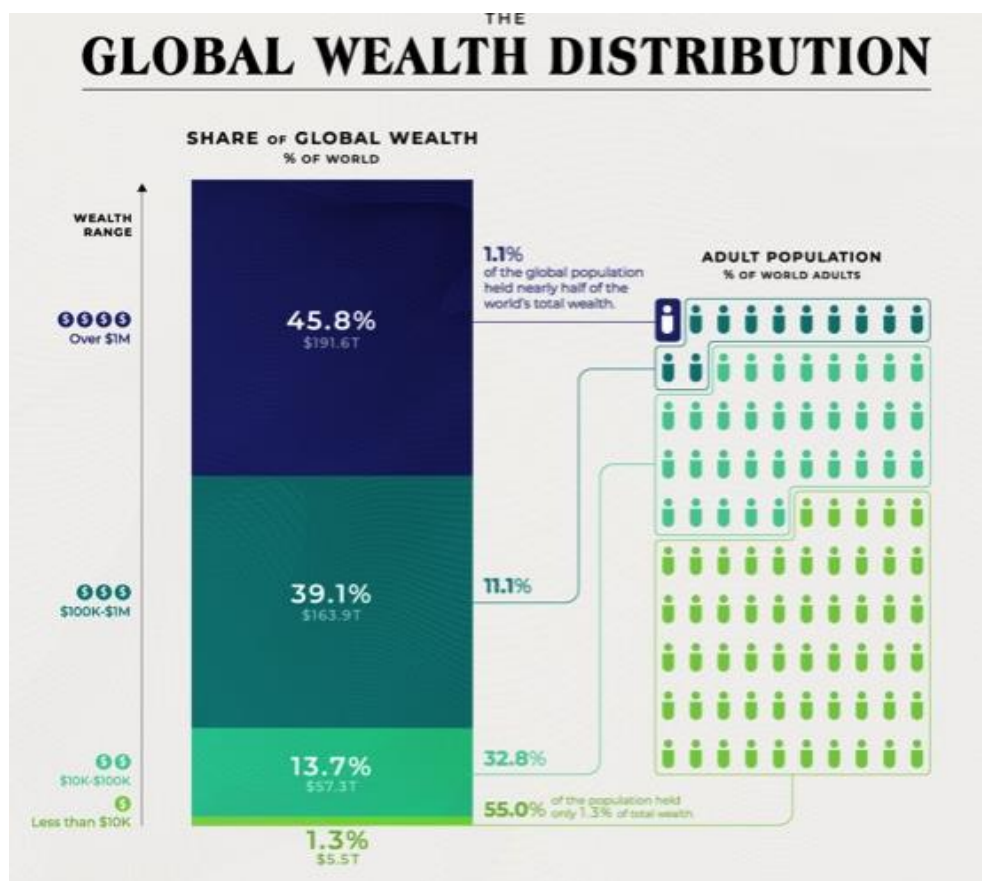
4: "**Greed is Good**". One of the problems when writing about *Ego to Eco* is that

"at the deepest level, ecological awareness is an awareness of the fundamental interconnectedness and interdependence of all phenomena"³⁵

which makes it difficult to separate those phenomena into a neat, linear sequence. Thus although Dorling identifies Greed is Good as a distinct "evil" it is clearly linked to his other four - as they all are to each other. Here I will follow his framework by making it the place to consider wealth inequality, to which I have just referred in connection with the growth of plutocratic economic elites.

Figure 1 shows the global distribution of wealth at the end of 2020. With recent changes due to COVID such statistics are changing by the day, but it seems that the proportion of wealth owned by the top 1% or less is currently increasing. The combined wealth of the 700 or so billionaires in the US has so far risen during the pandemic by around 70%, from an average of about \$3 trillion to \$5 trillion. The top five saw their combined wealth during the pandemic increase by 123% to \$779 trillion.³⁶

Figure 1: World Distribution of Wealth at the End of 2020³⁷



³⁵ Belonging to the Universe: New Thinking About God and Nature, Capra, Steindl-Rast and Matus, 1992: 70

³⁶ <https://inequality.org/facts/global-inequality/#global-income-inequality> accessed 13.02.22.

³⁷ Reproduced with permission from Visual Capitalist at <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/distribution-of-global-wealth-chart/> accessed 09.02.22

Then there is income inequality, which again varies from country to county. In the USA, whilst the wealthiest 5% people own no less than 70% of the wealth, the top 5% of income earners take 30% of all income earned. In the UK the top 5% of income earners take 20% of all income earned, and the wealthiest 5% own a relatively mere 32% of the total wealth. Of the ten countries cited³⁸, Finland has the lowest inequalities of both wealth - the top 5% owning only 30% - and income, with the top 5% income earners bringing in 12% of all income.

Am I in danger of displaying what's known, particularly in somewhat right-wing circles, as "the politics of envy"? Well, in 2019-20, in the UK, 4.3 million children lived below the government's own definition of poverty³⁹: is wanting to change this a sign of envy? Maybe - but I don't think so. And 75% of those children were living in households where at least one adult was in employment: is noting this a sign of envy? Maybe - but I don't think so.

More like the politics of justice - and hence the politics of survival. Of the human race.

5: "Despair is Inevitable". The issues of inequality that I have been describing are, by and large, seen by many as inevitable side effects of capitalism, which is nonetheless by and large taken to be the only economic system that works well - that is, it works well for some of us, including those with political and social power. The fact that it leads to ever-increasing levels and rates of anxiety, depression, suicide is seen as just one of those things, that we can address not by having to change the overall system, but, as I know⁴⁰, by creating and prescribing "better" medication⁴¹ and other therapies.

But are despair and sticking plaster remedies indeed inevitable? Do we have to create coping mechanisms and processes? Or can we change the way we relate to the world, the way we relate to each other, by moving away from ego towards eco?

So What Can We Do? Reducing Our Separation, Increasing Our Oneness with Human Beings

In Part I of this series of papers - *Overview and Eco-Consciousness* - I suggest a number of things that we can do individually and collectively to bring about a move from ego- to eco-consciousness. Here I will add some pointers to things specifically related to increasing our oneness with regard to other human beings.

1. Become aware of our own "-isms" - sexism, racism, whatever. Try to "catch yourself" when these click in. Is there a pattern to this?
2. Ask some others to help us by telling us when they experience us "isming"

³⁸ The Return of Inequality, Savage 2021: 80, referring to data in The Wealth Inequality of Nations, Pfeiffer and Waitkus, 2019

³⁹ <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/child-poverty-facts-and-figures>; accessed 13.02.22

⁴⁰ I'm not criticising these, but the conditions in which we live that cause them to be necessary. Some years ago I was helped to come out of a clinical depression through my trusty Serotonin, my supportive counsellor and my loving family and friends

⁴¹ Forming other highly competitive, highly profitable, industries

3. Do the *Othering Activity* that I have described - on our own, in our affinity groups. It can be completed as a purely verbal process or, perhaps in a group, we could use pictures from magazines, newspapers and so on to create collages that show examples of othering - ours, journalists', politicians', peoples'. Or instead of pictures, use extracts from articles, emails, letters, quotes from radio and television programmes, podcasts, blogs. Or create role plays. Or perform a short play to another group - ask them to "spot the isms."
4. Do the same but with the converse of *Othering* - namely *Mattering*. Who could we matter - how, when, why? How can we matter ourselves?
5. If we want to considering ways of supporting refugees and asylum seekers, see if there is a City of Sanctuary near us and if there is contact them to see how we might help. If there isn't, consider setting one up. The City of Sanctuary website has a lot of information, advice, tools and resources including guidance on lobbying MPs that can be applied to other areas of interest as well as issues concerning refugees. <https://cityofsanctuary.org/>
6. Again with reference to working with refugees and asylum seekers, if interested in various art forms, especially poetry and theatre, *Good Chance* runs groups mainly for refugees but with others - like me -as well.
7. <https://www.goodchance.org.uk/stories/tag/Poetry>
8. and
9. <https://www.goodchance.org.uk/theatres-what-we-do>
10. One of the pictures on the cover of this issue is of *Little Amal*, a 3.5 meter tall puppet of a Syrian 9 year-old girl who walked from The Syrian-Turkish border to Manchester. In the picture she is in Sheffield where she was greeted by a crowd of thousands and was danced a welcome by a group that included me
11. Practice developing and experiencing empathy and ways of being that are called Modes 5, 6 and 7 in Part 2 - Relationships With and Within Ourselves - of this serialisation
12. Consider joining or enrolling with organizations and online groups that match our interests. There are many of these - I'm just indicating a few of those with which I am connected.

YES!	https://www.yesmagazine.org/
Global Justice Now	www.globaljustice.org.uk
38 Degrees	https://home.38degrees.org.uk/
The Conversation	https://theconversation.com/uk
The Refugee Brief from UNHCR	info@news.e-unhcr.org

13. Listen to BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour*. I find it extremely informative on a number of issues, including discrimination and injustice in many forms -such as, but not restricted to, sexism, patriarchy, racism, modern slavery
14. Follow up some of the references indicated in this paper's footnotes and given in full below

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Tom Boydell writes

When I turned 80 I was advised to go part-time. So I'm now a part-time management development consultant, a part-time writer, a part-time actor, a part-time singer, a part-time poet, a part-time weaver and a part-time gardener. I'm glad I'm only a part-timer, otherwise I'd be worn out.

tom@centreforactionlearning.com