

How to Be (Ir)rational:

An Earthfarmer Guide to the Economics of the Anthropocene

Allen & Carver

*Almanac readers perennially write in to request advice. They want to know how to predict futures, and the terms of trade that might be available. This guide moves through the changing, strange nature of exchange in times beyond the Anthropocene, wherein worth is re-evaluated and values are liquidized. **

(In)commensurate Oblivion

Harmonious Accounting

Making things comparable and equivalent in nature is an essential component to practising rationality, one that we might trace back to none other than Plato. The Athenians believed ethical values must be organized according to common orders of worth, prevalent across civilized moral society—so that they could be ranked and prioritized. Complexity across different values results in irrational and disordered thinking and decision making. The goal of converting things to a common, commensurate form and format is to achieve harmonious accounting in quantities of what “we” care about: universal efficiency, productivity, and fairness. We have illustrated this system in the (Un)balance Sheet, which follows this guide. The import of life itself must balance on a ledger, or else how important could it be? Remember the old adage from management science: “you cannot manage what you cannot measure.”

Bounded Worth

Our task is to determine the means by which the things that matter to you might be categorised and organized

into bounded types of worth. The goal is to elicit a unit of measure that can be weighed against the same units of value; to society, and to you. We have provided a convenient Table of Measures located in the Measurements and Scales Department of this edition for additional guidance. Historically, monetary currencies have proved very effective at this. After numerals, they provide the most universal, widely agreed upon units that are handy for flattening and homogenizing the world into a continuous and horizontal space—ordered and liquid. Even time can be accommodated here, with the relevant discount and reduction equation, using the right ratios. This is rationality.

Numeranthology

Numbering, measuring and ranking—valuation—are integral to the ability to control, to make sense of and resolve complexity. Classifications always entail simplifications and are the basis of equal dealings with both the “outside” and the “beyond.” If you do not yet understand this statement, please read our advert for our course on the (Fun)amentals of Geognostic Metrology and consider registering.

Simbiot Simplifications

Disappearing Externalities

Simplification will usually involve uncomfortable decisions over what to include or exclude, hold or leave behind. Remember that this adjudication is rarely neutral or merely technical. Simplifications have outsides. You will do well to remember that entities or relationships (often dynamic in nature) will remain unaccounted for. They will endure as unknowable, unruly, immanent, and sometimes ingenious resistors to the flattening and disciplining impulses of the ordering processes of metrology.

Disobedient Data & Lurking Variables

Qualitative things are quantitative things at higher resolution. What remains, as disappeared externality, can only but be ignored. As important as management is, data can be disobedient. The noncompliant beings may never find adequate representation within the ledgers and measuring tables of the Beyond—but that is not to say that they are not still there...lurking. A well-designed earthfarming system includes design features that allow farmers to eliminate extraneous variables as explanation for the observed relationship between the independent variable(s) and the dependent variable. Extraneous variables are, as it happens, called lurking variables.

** In this guide we provide for the imagining and enactment of liquidization, normalization, and distillation of “value” and worth, goodness, and merit into one vaporous reservoir of standing reserve. Please see our advertisement for our (Un)fettered Hyper-Carbon-Potassium-Nitrogen Circulator-Elevator (pp. 87). We propose that a unidimensional flow of life’s currencies can be infinitely exchanged and therefore move freely in all directions. Please also see Strange Exchanges in the Inventions Department (pp. 82-83).*

Consider the metaphors and models that efficient balance sheet accounting and productive economic exchange have bequeathed us. We will leave the reader to judge, using her lingering illogicality, the degree (or amount) to which they have seeped into regimes where they perhaps do not, and should not reign, supreme.

WORDS OF CAUTION: Simplifications are often slightly more complicated than they may first appear.