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The Long Earth: Approaching post-scarcity

Bachelor's thesis in Lektorutdanning i språkfag for trinn 8–13
Supervisor: Yuri Cowan
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The idea of post-scarcity is a lucrative one as we as a species have been hardwired to be accustomed to scarcity (Angehr 1), the only place where such an idea can be realised becomes the realm of speculative fiction. The novel *The Long Earth* by prominent authors Stephen Baxter and Terry Pratchett depicts a technological breakthrough that hands humanity the keys to achieving post-scarcity, infinite parallel Earths and the ability to traverse them as if going on a walk. Thus, humanity now has the opportunity to resolve material scarcity and pursue post-scarcity. Due to the sheer vastness and number of the parallel Earths humanity splinters as many head out into the far reaches of infinite Earths, splitting into fundamentally different societies, varying in how they approach the infinite wealth and pursuit of post-scarcity. To what degree the different societies succeed in approaching a state of post-scarcity considering the different components that go into the definition of such a state can indicate how humanity should approach such a situation in hopes of achieving post-scarcity.

The Long Earth follows the development of a piece of technology, the Stepper, that allows humanity to travel through an infinite series of parallel Earths by "stepping". The parallel Earths, dubbed the Long Earth, vary slightly from the original Earth, Datum, each parallel Earth slightly more different than the previous one with one overarching major difference, the lack of humanity. Untouched and unexplored by humanity, the Long Earth presents itself as the key to solving material scarcity and achieving post-scarcity as resources become infinite and humanity gains the opportunity to escape the constraints of material scarcity. But while the Stepper and the Long Earth might seem like the answer to all of humanity's problems, there exist several complications with stepping, the inability to carry over iron when stepping, some people being genetically unable to step, nausea when stepping and other unexplainable caveats. The Long Earth in its infiniteness holds untold treasure but also untold secrets that are waiting to be discovered. That is the premise for the exploration that Joshua Valiente and Lobsang set off on, determined to uncover as much mystery as possible and understand the inner workings of the enigma that is stepping and the Long Earth.

As the infinite vastness of the Long Earth entices humanity, society splinters into groups who, as they spread with minimal contact or interaction with one another, slowly change and diverge from the pre-stepping human society, altering their norms and standards becoming altogether different people. It is even hinted that given enough time this could result in genetic differences as the different groups evolve and become organically different species (Baxter and Pratchett 200). But that is only speculated upon in the novel and has not yet come to fruition. The fragmentation of humanity throughout the Long Earth with minimal

contact and collaboration, effectively creates many different societies that differentiate in structure and functionality. These societies must be taken into account and weighed up against each other when considering the possibility of post-scarcity. While there exist a multitude of groups scattered throughout the Long Earth, there are three fundamentally different categories that can be identified. The first category I have dubbed the Settlers. This category consists of all the people who, true to their namesake, decided to abandon Datum and settle somewhere in the reaches of the Long Earth, setting up colonies and small towns. The second category, the Drifters, also chose to step away from Datum but unlike the Settlers, never settled and kept wandering the infinite Earths, surviving as hunter gatherers and always stepping onwards into the Long Earth. The final category are the Phobics, those who chose to stay on Datum or are unable to step due to a genetic difference. The difference in attitude and availability of the Long Earth makes the societies of the different categories fundamentally different therefore requiring them to be considered and analysed on an individual level when discussing the possibility of post-scarcity. There exist outliers that do not fall into any of the categories such as the main character Joshua, but they are few enough in number to overlook.

To be able to discuss the potential the different categories possess for reaching post-scarcity, it is vital to understand what the term entails. Post-scarcity is a contrast to scarcity, it as a term refers to a time period where scarcity has been conquered on a major scale and is for the most part, no longer present. This is an important clarification; post-scarcity does not mean the complete elimination of scarcity, only that scarcity has been reduced to a degree that no longer impacts the survivability of man. Scarcity is therefore crucial for understanding post-scarcity, essentially being the antithesis of post-scarcity. On an extremely basic level, scarcity can be understood as a lack of material goods and commodities, post-scarcity therefore equating to an abundance of said goods and commodities. But to be content with only a basic understanding would be ignorance as post-scarcity is to be understood as much more than the abundance of resources. This point is emphasised by the prominent American social theorist Murray Bookchin, "To view the word "post-scarcity" simply as meaning a large quantity of socially available goods would be as absurd as to regard a living organism simply as a large quantity of chemicals" (Post-Scarcity Anarchism 7), highlighting the absurdity of accepting post-scarcity on only the basic level. Bookchin reflects on how an understanding of scarcity must encompass not only the condition of scarce resources but also "social relations and cultural apparatus that foster insecurity in the psyche" (Post-Scarcity Anarchism 7) that are a result of aforementioned scarce resources. This can entail oppressive

limits caused by hierarchies, ideologies, economic systems and notably resources management and distribution. Naturally, the term post scarcity therefore means much more than an abundance of necessary goods and merchandise, indeed an abundance of the "means of life" (Post-Scarcity Anarchism 7). It must include the kind of life these means support, the consequential influence that this abundance has on human relationships, psyche and society, the liberation from oppressive limitations and the freedom that follows (Post-Scarcity Anarchism 7).

There are several necessities for post-scarcity to exist and function successfully. First and foremost, the most important condition that needs to be fulfilled is the previously alluded to basic level of post scarcity, an abundance of resources. This abundance does not necessarily equate to infinite amounts of resources, nor does it correlate to an abundance of all goods and commodities. Bookchin describes it as "a sufficiency in the means of life without the need for grinding, day-today toil" (Post-Scarcity Anarchism 6) which can be understood as an amount of resources necessary for human survival that is available readily to any individual without the requirement of hard labour. Not only does this suggest that resources are not infinite, just sustainable enough to be readily available and not all resources at that only those necessary for life with any other plenitude of goods being a welcome addition, it also brings to light another condition for post-scarcity, an abolishment of hard, gruelling labour. This is envisioned to be achievable with well enough developed technology. Technology is more than often the cornerstone of a post-scarcity society. To fully conquer scarcity without the implementation of machines and mechanisms would be an extremely arduous task if not impossible. Indeed, Bookchin views technology a necessity for securing abundance and freeing man from toil (Post-Scarcity Anarchism 6). He draws upon our own society, claiming that we ourselves are on the threshold to post-scarcity due to our technological advancement that allows us to procure necessary goods and commodities without wasting both time and energy on "mindless labour" (Post-Scarcity Anarchism 6). But he also stresses the need to implement and use technology in a correct manner, stressing that although technology can be the key to post-scarcity, it can just as easily prevent post-scarcity. Technology must be implemented in an ecologically sustainable way as the domination of nature by man is a reflection of the domination of man by man (Post-Scarcity Anarchism 10). To overcome the hierarchical structure of today's society, humans must criticise such societal structure and develop new forms of political and social organisation based on a new, sustainable relationship with nature (Venturini and Verlinghieri 6). Thus, rejection of hierarchy and domination is part of the freedom that should follow post-scarcity.

A major difference between the categories is their approach and utilisation of the infinite resources provided by the Long Earth. For post-scarcity to be achieved, a society must possess a sustainable abundance of the means for life available to everybody. But this definition does not fully elaborate on what these means must encompass. Angehr describes post-scarcity as not the complete abolishment of scarcity but rather an era where scarcity is no longer the governing factor in society (4). Since resource scarcity is the foundation for economy, hierarchy and domination of nature and man (Konjic 6; Post-Scarcity Anarchism 6) the means for life must consist of enough goods that encourage the dismantlement of such governing factors. Therefore, it is within reason to consider that most goods and commodities are in abundance and cover most wants and needs (Konjic 6). In *The Long Earth* humanity gains access to a seemingly infinite number of parallel dimensions, copies of Earth with slight variations most notably the lack of civilization and humanity in general. These alternate Earths are therefore a treasure trove for humanity as they possess a plenitude of raw materials, untouched by man and provide as much area as one could ever want. This abundance of resources could be the solution to scarcity, something that is remarked upon by characters in the novel, claiming that the endless worlds are the key to ending scarcity (Baxter and Pratchett 283). But as easily as the infinite resources could be the solution, they could just as easily trap humanity in a scarcity-based economy and hierarchy. This is due to the simple fact that although there now exist infinite resources, they are all in raw, unprocessed form that require a certain amount of work to both harvest and process. This leads to several complications for achieving post-scarcity. The fact that the resources are only present in raw form means that not only are they not readily available for consumption, but there also exists no abundance of manufactured goods. This suggests a requirement for labour to both harvest, process materials and procure new goods. The reason this is problematic is that this becomes an avenue for business, enforcing hierarchical economic systems. The different categories handle this very differently.

The drifters are perhaps the closest to reaching post-scarcity in this regard as the ability to step provides them with the opportunity to revert to the hunter-gatherer lifestyle, living off the edible resources provided by the Long Earth and therefore not requiring any manufactured goods in their life. Since a particular part of the physical world must be something humans can utilise and provide desired services or goods for it to be considered a natural resource (Rees 6), any resource unobtainable by hand or simplistic means available to Drifters would simply not be considered as a resource by them as they would be unobtainable. The same can be said about manufactured goods as they simply do not cover

any wants or needs therefore a scarceness of these goods would not equate to scarcity (Kojic 7). This would signify that Drifters have access to all needs and wants if not for the caveat that they do engage in trade for goods like soap, occasional meals and health care with Settlers (Baxter and Pratchett 208). Similar to the Drifters, the Settlers also possess the ability to step and therefore can reap the infinite resources of the Long Earth. They are aware of the possibility of post-scarcity as they ponder on the idea of value, "What has value when every man can own his own goldmine?" but fail to realise a post-scarcity society due to their wants and needs of high-end technology like mobile devices (Baxter and Pratchett 130). This highlights the previously mentioned issue of the raw resources of the Long Earth and the lack of manufactured commodities. Settlers engage in both harvesting and processing of material and manufacturing goods but for a complete fulfilment of their need and wants, Settlers would have to greatly improve their infrastructure to allow for production of more complex goods. This signifies that the Settlers have not achieved a state of post-scarcity but would be able to if provided with more advanced technology. But it is monumental that technology does not dictate the economic situation of Settlers. If the possession of technology could contribute to status and economic power, it would ultimately lead the Settler society away from achieving post-scarcity. In fact, technology already has an observable effect on the Settlers society even in this very early age of development. Due to the complications with procuring iron tools, Settlers do not take advantage of resources in adjacent worlds ultimately binding them to a singular world and its finite resources as stepping away from the world with tools would put people at a disadvantage effectively creating a hierarchy based off iron and tools, with those with the ability to set up smithing forges for a price benefiting economically (Baxter and Pratchett 205). This shows that not only do the Settlers not take advantage of the abundance that is present, but they also let scarcity control their economy and society. Unlike the other two categories, Phobics do not all possess the ability to step. This correlates to the majority of Phobics, those without the genetic ability to step, to not be able to indulge in the abundance of resources provided by the Long Earth without involvement from steppers. Due to this, Phobics with the ability to step have a significant edge over those trapped on Datum in resources-based business. The ability to step allows them to harvest infinite resources and sell them in a scarcity-based society, allowing them to control the market with shortages or surpluses to profit the most from the basically free resources and enforcing economic hierarchy. This results in the abundance of resources not only available to a select portion of the population, but it also creates a rift in economic

ability and therefore contributes to reinforcing the already existent hierarchy and domination based on economic wealth.

This ties into the importance of technology in post-scarcity societies. As mentioned, Bookchin views technology to be a necessity for achieving post-scarcity, allowing for goods and commodities to be produced without "devouring the precious time of humanity and without dissipating its invaluable reservoir of creative energy in mindless labour" (Post-Scarcity Anarchism 6). The main constraints of scarcity, the abundance of the means for life and the abolishment of hard labour, are often envisioned to be solved with the help of advanced technology and automation. Due to limitations of various resources and endless human desire, speculative fiction almost always portrays post-scarcity as only achievable through technological advancements (Konjic 11). Technology is the answer to "satisfying material needs without toil" (Post-Scarcity Anarchy 60) and liberating man from want and work. Nevertheless, technology must be approached with caution as it can just as easily dominate man as it can liberate. Depending on how technology is implemented into society can dictate the lifestyle of humans, either free from toil and want or trapped in mindless labour. Technology constructed for the production of goods "tends to rupture the intimate relationship between man and the means of production" (Post-Scarcity Anarchy 80) limiting man to working industrial tasks he has no control over and reducing him to a cog in the system. Technology becomes a force above humanity, ruling society by the maxim "production for production's sake" and degrading craftsmen to workers as man ceases to exist for himself (Post-Scarcity Anarchy 80). The automation of production through technology can also contribute to low-employment and the possibility of technology as an economic tool as the economically elite can prosper from automation whilst those lacking economic stability are left without any work possibilities (Konjic 18-19).

The technology portrayed in *The Long Earth* is for the most part no different from the technology of modern society with the only major technological difference being the Stepper. The Stepper is the most important element for achieving post-scarcity as it is the tool that allows humanity to traverse the Long Earth by stepping into the next dimension. The Stepper is constructed of a small box, some wires, spring, a switch to choose which direction to step in and a power source, a potato (Baxter and Pratchett 8). Due to the Stepper being by far the most important piece of technology, effectively unlocking the entirety of the Long Earth, monopolisation of the tool would lead to serious economic differentiation as the possession of a Stepper allows individuals access to infinite area and infinite raw resources. But due to the overall simplicity of the Stepper requiring very little to construct and use, monopolisation

of the Stepper by government or private people is virtually impossible as seen when the British Parliament discussed banning Stepper, ultimately coming to the point that such a feat cannot be possible as they simply lack any control over Steppers (Baxter and Pratchett 76). The Steppers are also not machinery used for production of goods and is more akin to a type of transportation and as such does not pose any risk of dehumanising man.

From a technological standpoint, the category with the most potential for post-scarcity are the Phobics. Even though they do not currently possess the ability to fully utilise the Stepper and the resources that it yields, they have the technological infrastructure to pursue post-scarcity. As Bookchin points out, modern society is already on the threshold of post-scarcity due to qualitatively new technology (Post-Scarcity Anarchism 6), so it is safe to assume that the society in *The Long Earth* was in the same situation even before the inauguration of the Steppers. Steppers would only further the technological development of Phobic society as it would allow, with the cooperation of steppers, for renewable resources and opens a completely new field of science based on the inner workings of the Long Earth and interdimensional travel. Since one of the main constraints of stepping is the fact that it is impossible to carry over any iron or large vehicles when stepping, resulting in the inability to harvest resources efficiently, any technology that would bypass this constraint would further the progress to the attainment of material abundance and post-scarcity. An example of such technology is the airship designed by Lobsang for the purpose of studying and exploring the reaches of the Long Earth. This airship is the only reason Joshua and Lobsang can journey at the speed they do while also collecting data and performing experiments. It is safe to say that if used for resource collection and harvesting, it would be revolutionary. But unlike the Steppers which are easily accessible and assembled, the airship requires much more from an economical and technological standpoint. Therefore, the airship and other technology developed down the line could very well become either the answer to material scarcity or an economic tool to enforce hierarchy in society. Unlike the Phobics, the Drifters possess no major technology apart from the Stepper. Due to this lack of technology, it would be wild to consider the Drifter society as one that has reached post-scarcity. Even though the Steppers do enable them to live their hunter-gatherer lifestyle, it does not rid them of labour as they are required to continue stepping in search of provisions, facing dangers that nature throws at them. This cannot be considered a life without toil and therefore cannot equate to a state of post-scarcity. The Settlers take the role of a median on the technological front as even though they move away from Datum and its infrastructure, they settle and start rebuilding. Due to this reason, craftsmen who possess knowledge of trades such as smithing are highly sought

out in Settler society as the knowledge and experience the craftsmen possess can greatly speed up the rebuilding of infrastructure and decrease labour needed for harvesting of resources and manufacturing of goods.

The lack of necessary technology highlights one the main flaws of the different societies in *The Long Earth* namely the requirement of labour to secure goods and resources. Labour plays a significant role in the production of scarcity (Mizerak 109) and must be diminished to a minimal amount if not fully eradicated if post-scarcity is to be achieved. Although labour can be lessened with improved management and effective systems, any system that relies on labour cannot hope to achieve sustainable post-scarcity due to the nature of labour to be limited at any given time (Mizerak 112). This is perfectly illustrated by the Drifters. They rely on continuous movement to accumulate enough provisions and, although this is easily achievable due to the infinite amount of resources found throughout the Long Earth, their abundance hinges on them continuing to wander in search of their next meal. If they were for some reason in no condition to do so, be it injury or sickness, they would subsequently lose all access to the abundance they previously had. The same premise applies to both the Settlers and the Phobics as their production of goods and commodities requires labour to function. But unlike the Drifters, both categories possess an infrastructure that allows them to develop technology that would allow them to reduce labour and approach post-scarcity, the Phobics having developed their technology the most.

The reliance on labour for sustainability of resources also warrants the requirement of a monetary system to encourage continuation of labour. All three categories show reliance on monetary systems and trade to fulfil various wants and needs solidifying their reliance on labour. The notion of a monetary system in a post-scarcity society is contradictory as it suggests that several vital components needed for the realisation of post-scarcity are either missing or scarce. The existence of a monetary system is inevitable as long as the roots of economic problems exist, these roots being resource and labour scarcity (Mizerak 116; Konjic 6). If perfect post-scarcity has been achieved, society has no need for monetary systems since money as a concept has no value when everything and anything is readily available to everyone. Even in a society that has achieved post-scarcity to some degree with some commodities remaining rare and unattainable to many but with necessities being plentiful, money poses as problematic. If a society operates using a monetary system, it places different values on goods which implies that goods are in scare condition undermining the notion of post-scarcity. But as much as money suggests the existence of physical obstacles to post-scarcity, money as a management system presents itself as a bigger obstacle

for the realisation of post-scarcity as it encourages wasteful, conspicuous consumption of resources and goods, and the differentiation and domination of man through economic hierarchy (Angehr 37; Mizerak 109; Konjic 22). For post-scarcity to be achievable, the egotistical hoarding of wealth must be addressed and shunned, the pursuit of wealth must no longer be the driving force in life (Grech and Grech 37).

While all three categories show a reliance on money for trade and labour, they vary greatly in the degree that they utilise money to achieve their goals. Due to their hunter-gatherer lifestyle, Drifters tend to carry little if no money opting to use menial labour and stories as a form of payment when engaging in trade with Settlers (Baxter and Pratchett 206). While the reliance on labour does not further their progression towards achieving a state of post-scarcity, their use of stories as forms of currency is similar to Angehr's suggestion of using information as a form of currency. But the suggestion is based on the requirement that labour is no longer required and is merely adopted for self-enrichment which is a contradiction to the lifestyle that the Drifters adopt (Angehr 58). Similar to the Drifters, the Settlers also experiment with forms of currency, using both dollars and favours to pay for their varying needs. While the dollars function as they function now as a standard form of currency, the favour is a different take on currency that discourages hoarding of wealth and instead promotes the betterment of the community. The currency revolves around the completion and return of favours; if a Settler possesses too much of a resource, they can give it away to another Settler who might need it in return for a favour that can be paid back at a later date. While the favour as a currency can function in a post-scarcity society as it negates the contradictory aspects of modern money, it relies heavily on a small population for it to function so that people cannot cheat their way out of paying back favours, something that the Settlers are aware of (Baxter and Pratchett 206). Therefore, it cannot be adopted by large cities and would not function on Datum. Unlike the other two categories, the Phobics do not experiment with alternative monetary systems, sticking to the true and tested forms of money that are used in modern society such as dollars, yen and pounds and thus are not able to get rid of money related problems.

Although favours are not a feasible type of currency in large cities, this is not an obstacle for the realisation of a post-scarcity economy. Anderson emphasises that a post-scarcity economy should turn towards a communal and a more "primitive" way of exchange, where material goods are traded based on mutual satisfaction" (qtd. in Konjic 8) which is exactly what the favour is. Bookchin shares the view of community being a vital piece of a post-scarcity society (Post-Scarcity Anarchism 49) as it seeks to get rid of political hierarchy

and instead encourages public participation in political decisions (Libertarian Municipalism: An Overview 3-4). The necessity of a balanced, humanistic and decentralised community is a result of large cities being recognized as the main source of social and environmental problems (Venturini and Verlinghieri 51) and decentralised communities would allow for new societies that frown upon hierarchy and the domination of man and nature. The requirement of a positive relationship with nature is emphasised by Bookchin as he claims that "The notion that man must dominate nature emerges directly from the domination of man by man" (Post-Scarcity Anarchy 46) requiring successful post-scarcity societies to exist in eco-friendly ways. The Drifters and Phobics fall short in regard to these requirements as while the Drifters consume resources in a sustainable way, they travel alone and do not form any communities. The Phobics on the other hand possess the population necessary for the formation of decentralised communities but chose to remain cities and towns and continue to use resources as before. Unlike the other two categories, the Settlers are in the unique situation where decentralisation is almost forced upon them as their yearning for freedom and own place to live drives them to establish small humanistic, decentralised communities scattered throughout the Long Earth which are all economically sustainable due to their small population. In this sense, the Settlers are the only category to adopt a societal structure and economy that would help realise post-scarcity.

As mentioned by Bookchin, post-scarcity is to be understood as an abundance or the means for life and the lifestyle that is a result of the abundance (Post-Scarcity Anarchism 7), a lifestyle free from want, toil, domination and dehumanisation, a lifestyle that promotes freedom, equity and emotion-oriented consumption. In a scarcity prevalent world, consumption patterns are decided by necessities, focusing on more practical and critical object-oriented values but as constraints are lifted consumption patterns shift towards the consumption of emotion-based values such as satisfaction and pleasure (Bae et al. 251). Values are motivational factors that characterise groups, individuals and societies (Schwartz 3) and can be used to judge if societies truly fulfil the post-scarcity lifestyle. The Phobics do not display any shift in consumption patterns since the constraints of resource scarcity are not lifted and instead develop a grudge towards steppers deeming stepping as unholy and alien, discriminating against Steppers (Baxter and Pratchett 291) and further trapping themselves on Datum as Steppers become more wary of Phobics. The Settlers and Drifters on the other hand display a prioritisation of values similar to what is to be expected of a post-scarcity society. The choice to abandon their homes, wealth, stability and in some cases their own Phobic family members (Baxter and Pratchett 115-116) in search of a new and better life is clear

evidence of steppers prioritisation of freedom and opportunity, satisfying the thirst for self-government and their own place. Steppers value self-direction, fulfilling their needs of autonomy and independence, and security, reflected in their desire for a safe and secure community and home, values tied to freedom. They display a preference of these values over values such as power, control over others and resources, and conformity, the restraint of actions likely to hurt someone (Shwartz 5-6) when they actively chose to abandon Datum and Phobic family members. Steppers also present themselves as equitable, accepting and treating other steppers well, even extending this treatment to trolls, humanoid creatures capable of stepping, accepting trolls into settlements and treating them as equals.

In conclusion, the three different societies present in *The Long Earth* are fundamentally different in their structure, functionality and the degree of post-scarcity that they achieve as no single society is successful in achieving a complete state of post-scarcity. Post-scarcity entails an abundance of the means for life secured without the reliance on labour, instead employing technology to fulfil such an abundance, and lifestyle that follows out of consequence of the abundance, a life of freedom from wants, work, ecological and economical discrimination and consumption out of necessity. The different societies, the Phobics, the Settlers, and the Drifters vary greatly in what they achieve and what they still miss for the realisation of complete post-scarcity thus varying to what degree they achieve becoming a post-scarcity society. Due to the abundance of resources consisting of only raw materials, no society is able to completely conquer material scarcity due to a lack of manufactured goods and commodities. This can be solved with technological advances that would solve this dilemma by automating harvesting and manufacturing of products. The Phobics are in the best position for inventing and completing such technology while the other two societies regress technologically, taking a figurative step back in eliminating material scarcity. The lack of technology also makes the societies rely on labour in acquiring goods and materials, the Drifters living a life of constant labour while the Settlers and Phobics use technology to mitigate as much labour as possible. But while the Phobics are in the best position technologically and therefore have the highest potential to conquer material scarcity and eradicate hard labour, technology can just as easily be used to dominate the common man while the rich prosper furthering hierarchy in their society. To avoid this, money must be abolished as it provides incentive for economical domination and hierarchy and society should adopt a communal structure as it promotes public political participation and ecological sustainability, getting rid of political hierarchy and economic hierarchy based on the domination of nature. This is something that the Phobics do not achieve as they retain both

their monetary system, large cities and the consequences of this, the domination of man and nature. The Drifters are better off in this regard as they experiment with monetary systems that do not bear the same negative consequences as traditional money and live in an ecological sustainable way, albeit not forming any communities and travelling the Long Earth alone. The Settlers show the most promise for the annulment of both economic and political hierarchy as they settle in decentralised, humanistic communities, adopting a communal, primitive type of economy that carries none of the negative consequences tied to modern money and due to their small population size, are ecologically sustainable. This vanquish of hierarchy is reflected in the lifestyle and values that Settlers and Drifters prioritise, values closely related to freedom and equity, something that the Phobics do not display. This signalises that although an abundance of resources and a decrease in labour found in technological development are very important for achieving a post-scarcity society, the political and economic structure of the society dictates if the society can approach a state of post-scarcity. Therefore, if humanity is presented with the opportunity to achieve a state of post-scarcity, the pursuit of material abundance should not overshadow and instead promote equity and freedom through the annulment of the various types of hierarchy much like the case with Drifters and Settlers. But technology that can later resolve resource and labour related problems should not be abandoned as such a lifestyle is not sustainable in the long run and cannot hope of abolishing labour and resource requirements. Hence the most promising approach for achieving post-scarcity as a society, humanity should follow the Settlers example and focus on decentralised, humanistic and ecologically sustainable communities with communal economic systems that do not allow for economic hierarchy but also continue developing technology to lessen workloads and use resources more efficiently in hopes of material abundance that require a minimal amount of labour to sustain.

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