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Utopia

"Every society invents the failed utopia it deserves"

Marie Violette Tranchot (aka "Octave Obdurant")ⁱ

"To understand the future, we must study the past", she said. "We know the past best by the future it dreams." - Marie Violette Tranchot (aka "Octave Obdurant")ⁱⁱ

*"To discover it requires us to establish what is **given**, what is **dreamed**, and what is **needed**. The **given** is easily observed. To learn what was **dreamed** it suffices to read the forward-looking testaments of speculators. It is the **real historical need** which is the most difficult to ascertain." - Marie Violette Tranchot (aka "Octave Obdurant")ⁱⁱⁱ*

So powerful are these words that I am loath to add to them for fear of diminishing their succinctness and importance.

We dreamt of a society without government or tribal boundaries, bound by decency and democracy, with the backdrop of a cornucopia of resources and technology driven productivity enhancements.

We dreamt of an earth that was not slowly harming the very environment we needed to thrive.

We dreamt of artificial intelligence, which enhanced our logistics, upgraded our workplace and improved our lives.

What we are potentially looking at however is a failed utopia. . .

The cornucopia we envisaged turned out to be a massive fiscal deficit, which is fast approaching the natural constraint of the limits of feasible borrowing in the future.

Technological improvements have the unintended consequences of diminished mental health and weaker social cohesion, whilst strengthening the means to control and persuade us through increasingly powerful oligarchical and governmental forces.

Mother Earth is also approaching the limits of her generosity to humankind...

AI, another star to which we have hitched our wagon, needs implausible amounts of electricity to run effectively. Even if it did run effectively, I suspect that its biggest role in the future will be to enhance warfare. i.e., disrupting the social and economic fabric of nations.

A multicultural, fair and equitable society has come an extremely long way to be fair. But it remains to be tested in the crucible of hardship. A cursory glance at history would suggest that at the first fractures in the social fabric, people will retreat to their own tribe.

I have never thought about this through the lens of Octave Obdurant before, but it certainly does seem prudent to choose one's dreams wisely.

How are we to achieve the integration of the actual and the possible?

We either acknowledge our failed utopia and adjust our dreams accordingly, or we borrow more from the future and Mother Earth in the hope that we achieve our dreams before the resources run out. Which will it be?...

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ⁱ <https://publicdomainreview.org/>

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