

Some Sources for Extending Your Ideological Thinking¹

One of the problems with accessing material about ideologies is that most is very academic and difficult to understand. This is ironic given the **practical** impact of the ideas – particularly, the daily influence of values and beliefs on community service practice. The resources listed below are designed only as starting points to your thinking. They outline the resources that are the most accessible ... that's not a guarantee that all are readable!

Most of these resources have been around for a long time. This does not mean they are **outdated!** 30 years is *a drop in the ocean* when considered against the period of time that these ideologies have been developing ... in most cases, many centuries.

Sadly, I haven't been an academic for some time ... which means less opportunity to spend time searching out readings. The search continues, albeit in a more sporadic fashion, for more recent resources that are as clear and simple as those listed below².

General Resources – Ideologies & Values Development

Jagger, Alison M. & Rothenberg Struhl, Paula (eds 1978), **Feminist Frameworks: Alternate theoretical accounts of the relations between men and women**, McGraw-Hill, New York

Fantastic! This book is very accessible, and even after over 30 years **remains** the best available resource of its kind that we know. Whilst coming from a feminist perspective, most of the content can be applied more widely. Includes short articles of no more than 6 pages, chosen for their accessibility, which are grouped under: Conservatism, Liberalism, Traditional Marxism, Radical Feminism and Socialist Feminism. This is as good as it gets!!!

Arblaster, Anthony & Lukes, Steven (eds, 1971), **The Good Society: A book of readings**, Methuen, London

A very useful reference book. It provides around 50 essays/articles by key philosophers and political analysts written over the past few centuries. Authors include Hegel, Marx, Mill, Mussolini ... You'll get to know these names and many more, once you start reading about the relevant ideologies.

¹ © Copyright Suzi Quixley 1994 (jointly copyright with Liz Archer) and 2010. Particular thanks to participants in *Values Trainer Training* program run by the Youth Affairs Network of Queensland in November 2010, for their ideas.

² Liz & Suzi have found talking with people the most useful way of developing our ideological thinking. Books and other resources can add value to this. We are very anxious to try and identify the best resources available. If you know of any that are easier to understand than those below, please, please, please tell us about them! (Many community services workers and students will be very grateful to you!!!) Email your ideas to Suzi Quixley – current email address available at www.suziqconsulting.com.au.

Moore, Thomas (1998), **Care of the Soul**, (The Illustrated Edition) Harper Collins, New York

Understanding ourselves in the context of our values. For more about Thomas Moore's thinking and publications, see his website at <http://www.careofthesoul.net/index.htm>

Coover, Virginia et al (1981) **Resource Manual for a Living Revolution: A handbook of skills and tools for social change activists**, New Society Publishers, Philadelphia

Includes substantial commentary on values and the purpose of social change. Also, an **invaluable** collection of tools and techniques for use in social change driven work.

Lekachman, Robert (1981) **Capitalism for Beginners**, Writers & Readers Publishing, London

Very easy to read, this book is in a semi-cartoon format. It's included here under *General Resources* because different notions of Capitalism draw on different ideologies – in particular Individualism, Conservatism and Liberalism. (Capitalism can also be seen as an ideology in its own right.)

Fictional works can provide a useful starting point to thinking about values and ethics, for example:

Novels

- *Schindler's Ark*, by Thomas Keneally
- *Monsignor Quixote*, by Graham Greene
- Novels by Ben Elton, particularly *Gridlock*, *High Society* and *The First Casualty*.

Movies

- *Sun of a Lion*, set in tribal Pakistan
- *Bran Nue Dae*, by Jimmy Chi
- *Gandhi*, with Ben Kingsley
- *A Beautiful Mind*, with Russell Crowe
- The *Matrix* trilogy, with Keanu Reeves
- *Dogma*, with Ben Affleck
- *Rosalie Goes Shopping*, with Marianne Sägebrecht
- *Sex, Lies and Videotape*, with Andie MacDowell & James Spader
- *Milk*, with Sean Penn
- *Harvey*, with James Stuart
- *It's a Wonderful Life*, with James Stuart
- *Dead Poet's Society*, with Robin Williams
- *12 Angry Men*, with Henry Fonda
- *The Nugget*, with Eric Bana

Specific Ideologies

Fascism

The article by Mussolini in **The Good Society** (above) provides the simplest explanation. If you prefer fiction, try:

- *Cabaret*, with Lisa Minnelli (movie)
- *1984*, by George Orwell (novel) ... the movie's not nearly as informative!

Conservatism

The sections on Conservatism in **Feminist Frameworks** (above) are excellent. If you want something a bit heavier, try the article by Eccleshall, in:

- Eccleshall, R. et al (1984) **Political Ideologies: An introduction**, Hutchinson, London.

There are several useful fiction options:

- *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood (novel) or with Faye Dunaway (movie)
- *Equus*, with Richard Burton (movie) ... particularly interesting because it looks at the role of psychiatry in society.

Individualism

Most of the available material is pretty difficult to read. The most accessible seems to be:

- McGovern, Willing (1977) *Collectivism and Individualism* in Morley, Felix (ed), **Essays on Individuality**, Liberty Press, Indianapolis.

The above article looks at the impact of individualism. For a more philosophical approach (which is even more difficult) see:

- Chattopadhyaya, D. P. (1975) **Individuals and Society: A methodological enquiry**, 2nd Edition, Scientific Books, Calcutta.

A very interesting novel related to Individualism is:

- *The Fountainhead*, by Ayn Rand.

Liberalism

The excerpts on Liberalism in **Feminist Frameworks** are excellent. A valuable look at the practice of Liberalism in Australia is written by a former press secretary to Malcolm Fraser:

- Kemp, David (1976), *Liberalism: Is It Relevant?* in Mayer, H. & Nelson, H. (1976) **Australian Politics: A Fourth Reader**, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne.

You may also enjoy reading the section by John Stuart Mill (generally recognised as the founder of Liberalism) in **The Good Society**.

Humanism

Listen carefully to the lyrics in *Imagine* by John Lennon. A useful overview of the key features of Humanism are in:

- *The Humanism Manifesto II*, in Kurtz, Paul (1983) **In Defence of Secular Humanism**, Prometheus Books, New York.

Marxism

There have been a couple of good attempts to make Marxism accessible. The first is a cartoon book, which is excellent ... and still in print, despite being written in the 1970's. The second is more detailed, but still quite readable:

- Rius (1976) **Marx for Beginners**, Writers & Readers Publishing, London
- Martin, Joseph (1979) **A Guide to Marxism**, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia.

Again the sections on Traditional Marxism, in **Feminist Frameworks** are very accessible.

Socialism

You can't go past the excerpts in **Feminist Frameworks**!

Anarchism

There's a fantastic novel, which describes the way an Anarchist society might work. (Don't get put off by the first 50 pages, located in the present ... the main character *time travels* to the future!):

- *Woman on the Edge of Time*, by Marge Piercy (novel)

For a novel on an attempt at Anarchism gone wrong, try:

- *The Dispossessed*, by Ursula LeGuin (novel).

And, for a more academic account:

- Ehrlich, Howard et al (1979) **Reinventing Anarchy: What are Anarchists thinking these days?** Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.

If you're interested in Anarchism and its interface with Christianity, you might enjoy exploring Dave Andrews' writing about *Christi-Anarchy* at <http://www.daveandrews.com.au/publications.html>