



Module 4 visual exercise

[Dan Wilton](#)
[All Sections](#)

40 40

The power of pictures

Each week we encourage you to seek out and select a different image describing that week's key topics. Try using the internet to find an existing graphic, map, cartoon, diagram, graph, or photograph that illustrates some element, pattern, or regularity you see in this module's topic of work and livelihood. Alternatively, you can sketch, draw, paint, photograph, collage, or upload an image from your digital camera, scanner, or phone camera that speaks to that weekly topic.

Consider how you think "visually" about the week's issues based on your experience. In Module 4, we have been talking about questions of commodification of labour, workers growing precariousness, extractive digital models that marginalize workers, co-operative use of digital platforms that empower workers, and more broadly, approaches being taken by communities to build power and increase citizen influence, and democratic ownership of the local political economy.

Find or create an image of any one or more of these topics, post it to the CANVAS discussion file marked Visual Exercise. (Note that small files are better). Tell us where you found the image. If you like, add a sentence or two explaining what the image means to you in terms of the course.

Then, explore and comment on your classmates' postings. Done well, the exercise should become a bit like crowd sourcing an idea. Try to comment on a few of the postings by your MOOC-mates (more than "well done" or "nice one"—try to be analytical and share any feelings invoked by the images!).

How to embed an image

[See this FAQ from the Help and FAQ forum](#) for tips on embedding an image into your post.



[David Schneider \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/907095\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/907095)

Apr 15, 2019



Not the dust bowl town, Jackson, Mississippi certainly is depressed with where it is

and where it apparently it will be going if there isn't a major cultural and economic shift that will meet the needs of the people who are otherwise at the bottom with no hope of the being assisted up. Instead the people are organizing themselves to take in hand control of their lives and livelihoods.

The Chris Hedges interview of Kali Akuno is a marvelous presentation of what measures have to be undertaken to firstly overcome the same old, same old and initiate meaningful programs that the capitalistic system won't accept. The power of the people and its socialistic bent is the necessary approach to bring the majority population of Jackson up and away from the grim circumstances that would otherwise leave the people tied to dead end jobs and depressed livings.

↳ [Reply](#)



[David Schneider \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/907095\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/907095)

Apr 15, 2019



[https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjKx4qpz9LhAhXDI-AKHWgUDI4QjRx6BAgBEAU&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.americanyawp.com%2Ftext%2F23-the-great-depression%2F&psig=AOvVaw0yXR0zyjeFkZj0VSQLhH_L&ust=1555435565607148\)](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjKx4qpz9LhAhXDI-AKHWgUDI4QjRx6BAgBEAU&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.americanyawp.com%2Ftext%2F23-the-great-depression%2F&psig=AOvVaw0yXR0zyjeFkZj0VSQLhH_L&ust=1555435565607148)

↳ [Reply](#)



[Kelleigh Wright \(https://learn.canvas.net\)](https://learn.canvas.net)

</courses/2527/users/897550>

Apr 18, 2019

With the rise of self driving vehicles, it's only a matter of time before there's a Country song where the guy's truck leaves him.

[← Reply](#)

[Michael Lewis \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/263480\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/263480)



Apr 20, 2019

OMGoodness Kelleigh it is 5:47 a.m. , I am a bit bleary eyed and just starting my first coffee and then I see this. It sure awakened me... I am still laughing as I write.

[← Reply](#)

[Anthony Christie \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860)



Apr 20, 2019



Another fantastic woman from the 49th who knows a thang'r two 'bout hurtin' songs.

[Shania Twain - That Don't Impress Me Much \(Official Music Video\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqFLXayD6e8)
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqFLXayD6e8>)



(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqFLXayD6e8>)

Edited by [Anthony Christie](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860) on Apr 20 at 3:51pm

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[Kelleigh Wright](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/897550)

Apr 20, 2019

Anthony - was that you making a cameo appearance driving the truck??

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○



[Anthony Christie \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860) :)

Apr 20, 2019

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[Karl Horak \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/903858\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/903858)

Apr 19, 2019



From BBC News (April 16) regarding a new European Union law protecting workers in the 'gig economy'.

The EU law will require employers to inform all workers about "essential aspects" of their employment on their first day, including:

- Description of their duties
- Starting date and pay information
- Indication of what a standard working day is, or reference hours
- Right to compensation for late cancelling of work
- Only one probationary period, lasting a maximum of six months
- Allow employees to have other jobs, banning "exclusivity clauses"
-

Edited by [Karl Horak \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/903858\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/903858) on Apr 19 at 3:20am

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[Pat Conaty \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/379202\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/379202)

Apr 20, 2019

Thanks Karl. A key observation about Deliveroo as a case in point is the double standard in Europe evidenced by how Labour market regulations are either observed or allowed to be undermined in different countries. In Germany, for example, Deliveroo riders have been employed while in the UK and other countries the same corporation can get away with treating them as self-employed and having to provide their own bikes, buy the uniform, cover other risks and costs, etc. The GMB general union in the UK has played a lead roll in taking legal cases to court and advanced this successful work by securing a breakthrough agreement that drivers can opt into if they like GMB describes this as a first step forward. Here is more info in a short piece.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/feb/04/hermes-to-offer-gig-economy-drivers-better-rights-under-union-deal> (<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/feb/04/hermes-to-offer-gig-economy-drivers-better-rights-under-union-deal>)

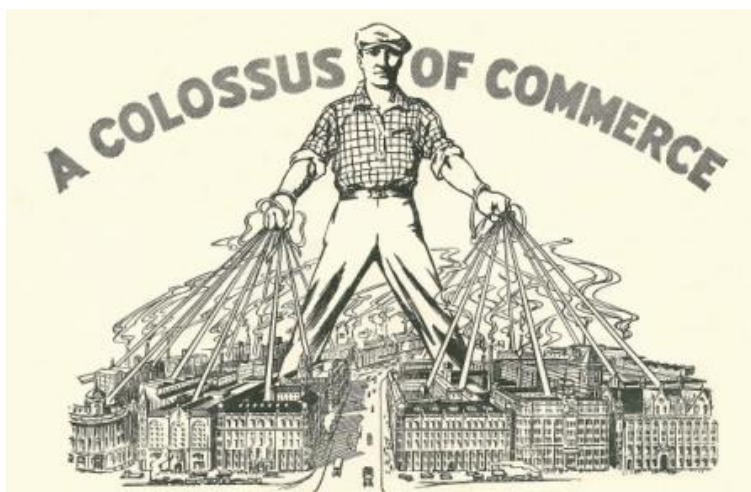
Pat

[↩ Reply](#)



Tristan Laing (<https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/679918>)

Apr 19, 2019



This picture is from a time when the Co-operative Wholesale Society was a Second-tier "Wholesaling" co-op which owned means of production and distribution on behalf of first-tier consumers' co-operative societies (i.e. Rochdale-type co-ops). Under the leadership of JTW Mitchell, the CWS was explicitly oriented towards replacing Capitalism with a "Co-operative Commonwealth" (although the basic idea had already been articulated by Charles Howarth). The vision, articulated by people like Beatrice Potter Webb, was to replace the current political state with a web of interwoven democratic institutions controlling the means of production, distribution, education, as well as social services, public order, etc. This wholistic vision of a co-operative society motivated the founding generation of the Co-operative League in the USA, and was also held by figures like [Toyohiko Kagawa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toyohiko_Kagawa) (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toyohiko_Kagawa), who I feel particularly indebted to as he effectively kick-started the student co-operative movement in

North America. His book "Brotherhood Economics" is worth checking out.

One of the reasons I'm so inspired by this vision is my experience volunteering and working in the Co-op movement in Ontario, I've overwhelmingly had the experience of it being **difficult to get co-ops to work together**. Differences in outlook, and a tendency of organizational myopia (I think a characteristic of overly bureaucratic organization), make it difficult for co-ops to work together. Without a common vision it's especially difficult, and I think that since the decline of Consumers' co-operation starting in the 1950s, the Co-op movement has largely lacked a coherent vision for where the co-op movement is really "going".

That said, I think this week we got our first sense of how all the myriad examples we've been looking at can add up to something worth calling a "Co-operative Commonwealth". The Cleveland/Preston model, while lacking the commitment to political autonomy which was central to traditional articulations of Co-op Commonwealth, it still does offer a framework and shared vision - co-ops working together to create a different kind of local economy. Corbyn's commitment to the community wealth building model is heartening, as well the way he naturally integrates the Community Wealth Building model into a larger logic of democratic institutions on multiple levels:

"it is about the feeling of community, and it is about a feeling of how people relate to each other. So you have to have a democracy in process at a local level as well as at a national level, as well as in your party and within your movement, that holds people to account. And so the local level is the Preston Model that we're using...where you've got post industrial places that are basically regenerating themselves through local endeavor and with national help."

[SPECIAL REPORT: Building the Democratic Economy, from Preston to Cleveland](#)

<https://youtu.be/qnXsteyfiUg>



<https://youtu.be/qnXsteyfiUg>

(starts at 22:09)

Now I think Corbyn's comments on the place of the Preston model within building social justice/socialism creates an interesting connection to what Polanyi's daughter has said about Polanyi's vision of socialism:

"Socialist economy has to build on actual existing institutions. And in Vienna at that time there was a socialist municipal government that was re-elected every year until 1933. There was a very strong trade union movement. There was a very strong co-operative movement that also owned banks. Incidentally trade unions also owned banks. I don't think any bank in Austria at that time was privately owned. So you had institutions, and on the basis of those existing ones...I think that is an important lesson, that thinking of socialism has to be something that is real, has to be something that builds upon what is actually present and real and not some kind of theory or fantasy."

[Karl Polanyi's Vision of a Socialist Transformation](#) <https://youtu.be/ZV76fMMj4YU>





<https://youtu.be/ZV76fMMj4YU>

(starts around 2 minute mark)

I still worry that these models leave out the real elephant in the room, which is **large scale production and distribution** (or should I say distribution and production?). I hope we're going to have some time in this course to focus on the role of the large societies (i.e. The Co-operative Group, Mountain Equipment Co-op, REI, Federated Co-ops LTD, La Coop Federe, Mondragon, etc etc) in building a co-operative commonwealth. I'm not sure if the MEC board members have ever heard of the term.

Edited by [Tristan Laing \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/679918\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/679918) on Apr 19 at 3:37pm

[← Reply](#)



[Pat Conaty \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/379202\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/379202)

Apr 22, 2019

Hi Tristan

A brilliant graphic indeed.

Before 1914 there were more than 1400 local retail co-ops across Great Britain and Ireland - cities had several and towns had their own local. Their role in co-operative economy advancement was vital and not least in the co-operative education work on the ground and in providing patient social investment. The Women's co-operative guild played a crucial role. Today in the UK there are about 1% of co-operative retail societies left with most, but not all, being very big. What has been neglected is what you underscore as a need - namely to focus on the ways and means for the bigger co-ops to act more strategically as co-operative social investors. They did this in the past as you set out so compelling above.

What happened as neoliberalism took command over the public narrative from the early 1980s was also a deliberate shift away from economic democracy ideas and the notion that the solutions are not technological but fundamentally political.

This mission drift was not the case in a number of European countries. In Italy the worker co-op movement was comparable in size to that in the UK in the mid 1980s (circa 2000) but the Italian movement to advance the solidarity economy (under the Third Italy strategy) set up an Eco-system. In Northern Italy this was implemented via city-region policies in Bologna and in other places similar to the thinking mushrooming up today in Jackson and Preston. To seek stronger power, this work was supported by getting the state to pass the Marcora Law in 1986 to facilitate worker buy-outs and later in 1991 the Social Co-operative Law (which provided tax relief and other mechanisms to advance social co-operatives in the field of education, social services, community health and workforce integration). More info can be found in the Working Together report on all this if you read beyond the summary reading.

Anyway the proof in Italy is in the pudding with a ten-fold expansion achieved today since

1991. Co-ops Europe report over 23,000 worker and social co-ops established now in Italy and over 850,000 workers with a co-op sector turnover of over €41 billion in 2015.

Sion Whellens is a colleague here in the UK and also the Vice President of CICOPA Europe. His blog on the Future of Work talks to your question very well. You and others will like his quotes from Rochdale Pioneers in 1844.

<http://www.cicopa.coop/news/cooperatives-and-the-future-of-work/>

[\(http://www.cicopa.coop/news/cooperatives-and-the-future-of-work/\)](http://www.cicopa.coop/news/cooperatives-and-the-future-of-work/)

Pat

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[Marion Repetti \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/892790\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/892790)

⋮

Apr 19, 2019

It has been an interesting series of information and illustration about the digital revolution, its constraints (massive extraction processes) and opportunities for improving socioeconomic security.

I don't find a good picture for that now.

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[Murray Hidlebaugh \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/895967\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/895967)

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Apr 20, 2019

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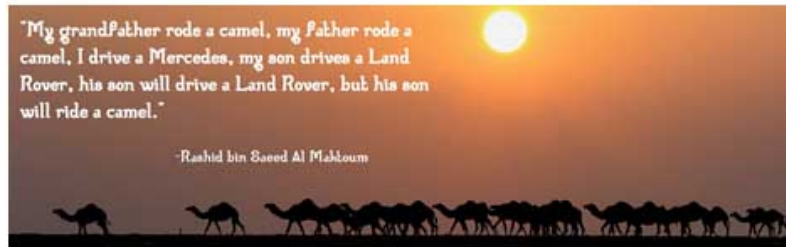
[Murray Hidlebaugh \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/895967\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/895967)

⋮

Apr 20, 2019

**Control Change
By Whom?
Controlled or Chaotic Contraction?**

Arab Saying



This visual reminds me that I have gone through phases and my grandchildren will probably need to adjust to a life that is much less affluent and consumption oriented than I have experienced. I relate to this because it very much tracks our family experiences in Saskatchewan. During the 1930's both my Mother's and my Father's farming families on the prairies were bankrupted by drought and low grain prices. As teenagers both were left on their own to work just to eat. They were in precarious jobs except the word hadn't yet been coined. It was no coincidence that a new political party, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), was formed in Saskatchewan in response to the rising level of inequality, lack of housing and employment, and no support from the ruling parties.

Over the years the coops and credit unions grew in strength with effective government support and collaborative leadership among the members and management. This started to erode in the 1970s, along with the CCF/NDP. Now our coop system operates more like a private corporate with management in control and members really just customers. Our provincial government no longer has a Ministry of Cooperatives. At the federal level, during a recent interview, Prime Minister Trudeau and Finance Minister Morneau both stated that precarious jobs were the new reality so we need to get used to it.

↳ [Reply](#)



[Anthony Christie \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860)

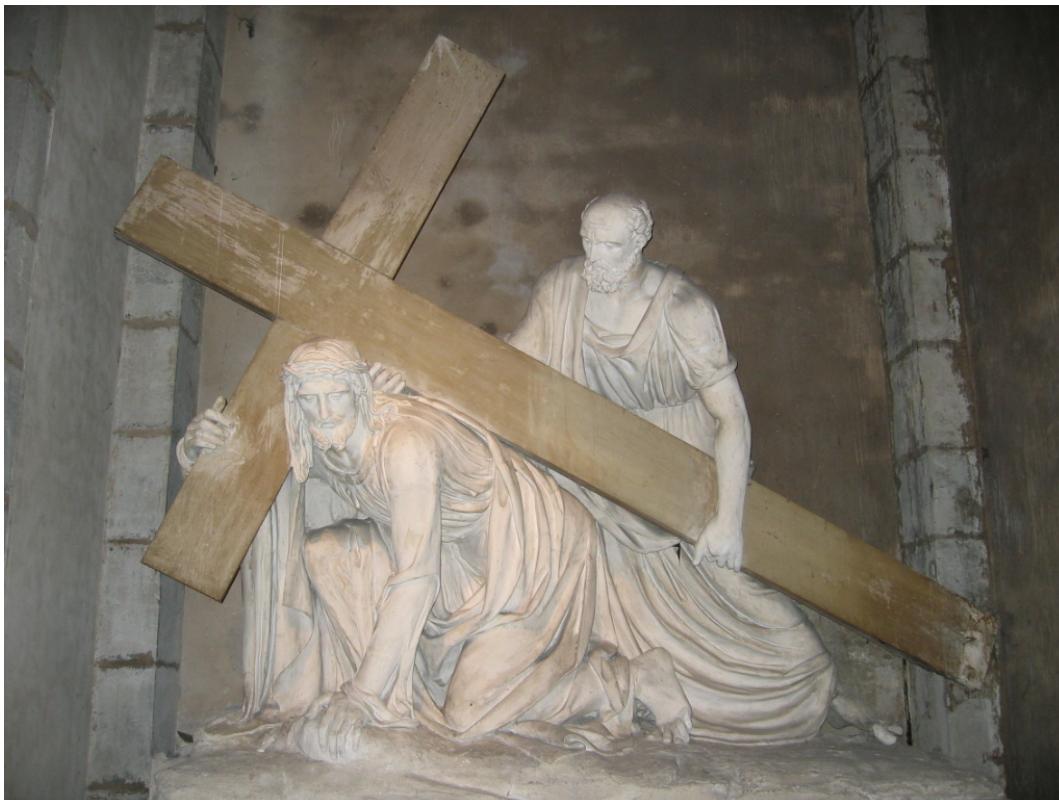
Apr 20, 2019

Much of the MOOC has been concerned with things prosaic and technical, though there have been quite a few brief excursions into more inspirational, psychological, spiritual territory. As I mentioned in an earlier post, I'm pretty much a lapsed Christian and regard the whole story as just that; Story. Ritualized religious practice seem very little different from Theater. From Art. But what magnificent, enduring, and inspirational Story! What epic Theater! What gorgeous Art!

Much of the history of social progress in Canada was animated by this. Alphonse and Dorimène Desjardins, in Quebec Catholic revulsion at the "usury" of commercial banks, founded the first Credit Unions in North America. James Woodsworth, Stanley Knowles, and Tommy Douglas, were all Protestant Ministers, were all Prairie Populists, were all influenced by Social Gospel thought and practice, and were all founders of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. The Saskatchewan CCF (now NDP), a sometimes wildly successful movement and Party, pioneered pretty much every significant progressive policy and programme in Canada, including the creation of Canada's first publicly owned automotive insurance service, the creation of of crown corporations ("arms-length" nationalized firms to serve the public good where gov't felt capital wasn't), unionization of the public service, free hospital care, The Saskatchewan Bill of Rights preceded the adoption of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Declaration_of_Human_Rights) (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Declaration_of_Human_Rights) by the United Nations by 18 months, and so on. Its influence spread to other provinces and to the national parliament in Ottawa.

Even now, in my own community of Kitchener-Waterloo, Joe and Stephanie Mancini's downtown Working Center <<https://www.theworkingcentre.org/ideas-and-influences/190> (<https://www.theworkingcentre.org/ideas-and-influences/190>)> was inspired in no small measure by Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker Movement. Another local Christian inspired project is the peace promoting organization; Project Ploughshares <https://ploughshares.ca/about-us/> (<https://ploughshares.ca/about-us/>).

Without detracting, I hope, from any other spiritual, religious, moral, or philosophical tradition, my audio-visual posts for this Easter-tide are offered in tribute to the Christian animating spirit that served to inspire and encourage those who came before, and those who can still find such things helpful.



Via Dolorosa: Auguste Clésinger



Pietà: Auguste Clésinger



Entombment: Auguste Clésinger



Résurrection: Auguste Clésinger

=====

A couple of performances of some especially redemptive passages from Messiah. Couldn't decide which I liked better.

50. Duet

Alto & tenor

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. (*I Corinthians 15: 55-56*)

51. Chorus

But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (*I Corinthians 15: 57*)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qflr9hGQFSA&list=RDQflr9hGQFSA&start_radio=1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qflr9hGQFSA&list=RDQflr9hGQFSA&start_radio=1



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qflr9hGQFSA&list=RDQflr9hGQFSA&start_radio=1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23s5ZOS_MAO&list=RDQflr9hGQFSA&index=2

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23s5ZOS_MAo&list=RDQflr9hGQFSA&index=2



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23s5ZOS_MAo&list=RDQflr9hGQFSA&index=2

And for those of you who might want to learn this healin' song and sing along with the chorus...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFeeWgzwKDC> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFeeWgzwKDC>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFeeWgzwKDC>

Happy Easter, fellow MOOC-ers!

Christus Resurrexit! (Or so the Story goes.) Alleluia!

Edited by [Anthony Christie \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860) on Apr 20 at 11:22pm

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[Jesus Martin \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/902512\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/902512)

⋮

Apr 21, 2019

Wow, Anthony i have woken up from a deep sleep of 3 days and I find this

← [Reply](#)

○



[Anthony Christie \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860)

⋮

Apr 21, 2019

We rejoice at your return!

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[Michael Lewis \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/263480\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/263480)

⋮

Apr 21, 2019

Prosaic and Technical? Anthony, I invite you a deeper reflection at some point on the opening to your inspirational post and your comment that this course is more or less '**prosaic and technical**' with some occasional inspirational detours.

Defining Prosaic: Having the style or diction of prose; lacking poetic beauty.

"prosaic language can't convey the experience"

synonyms:

[unimaginative](https://www.bing.com/search?q=define+unimaginative) · [uninspired](https://www.bing.com/search?q=define+uninspired)
[matter-of-fact](https://www.bing.com/search?q=define+uninspired) · [dull](https://www.bing.com/search?q=define+matter-of-fact) · [dry](https://www.bing.com/search?q=define+dull)
[humdrum](https://www.bing.com/search?q=define+dry) · [mundane](https://www.bing.com/search?q=define+humdrum) · [pedestrian](https://www.bing.com/search?q=define+mundane) · [heavy](https://www.bing.com/search?q=define+pedestrian)
[plodding](https://www.bing.com/search?q=define+heavy) · [lifeless](https://www.bing.com/search?q=define+plodding) · [dead](https://www.bing.com/search?q=define+lifeless)
[spiritless](https://www.bing.com/search?q=define+dead) · [lackluster](https://www.bing.com/search?q=define+spiritless) · [undistinguished](https://www.bing.com/search?q=define+lackluster)

The reality I have experienced working in the trenches since the age of 17, fed by a deep religious faith, led me to adopt a few personalized memes over the years: that I seek in my life to 'make hope more concrete and despair less convincing'; that I seek to retain a capacity for 'indignance at injustice and rationality in action'; and, last but not least, to become an **inspired grinder**. There is much I could write about with respect to each of these. I will confine my comments to this last one, as it speaks most directly to your commentary that a large part of this course is prosaic and technical.

My comment is based on my interpretation of your comment, that is, inspiration is a critical resource to motivate and sustain a life of contribution, and to inspire others to a common cause. You mentioned wonderful examples of inspired leadership such as Tommy Douglas and the innovations that emerged as a result- single payer, healthcare being one of many, that in turn, inspired our national health system. I agree, thus the first word in the meme is 'inspired'; it is fundamental, though I would add, there is no doubt Tommy Douglas knew what the word 'grinder' meant. My experience is that without the nitty-gritty work of inspired experimentation, building models, advocating for policy change to advance what is yielding concrete results, building the coalitions on the big issues that require active resistance and actively building the politics for positive change, inspiration, while critical, is insufficient.

This course is itself a testimony to this truism. Inspiration motivated and sustained the effort. But in 3+ years to arrive at this point it is the grinding that made it happen; the nitty-gritty, the thousands of hours of work invested by a highly experienced team, fed by inspiration, and a total budget of Can. \$29,000. It has been and still is a project full of life, passion, learning, creativity, challenges, contention. True, it was and is sustained by inspiration. However, no matter how much inspiration there might be it would have yielded absolutely nothing, without grinding away at the sometimes humdrum, tiring, plodding work involved.

I am not saying this to draw comment on our investment. It is a much larger point. There is not one case, model, macro analysis, a platform in these first four modules that have not in the past or in the present not required inspiration and careful attention to context, analysis, and attention to technical and organizational issues. There is also not one case or model I can think of, that did not begin with the convergence of indignation and values in the face of difficult life circumstances. But the grinding is always present in every instance. with organizing, creating dialogue, developing collective analysis etc. etc. shared inspiration and

vision will not evolve, nor will all the grinding work necessary to move from vision to strategic action relevant to transforming the context to enable concrete problems to be addressed. If I am mistaken I would appreciate having the specifics pointed out to me by anyone in the course.

What I am challenging you on Anthony, is the use of language that though not necessarily intended, can seem dismissive of just how hard it is and the time it takes to actually make things real on the ground and the absolute importance of understanding process, facilitation, organizing, technical and 'micro-political' contextual issues. Systems change is multi-level and complicated.

As you well know as a professional musician, you would never have elevated your musical aspirations into a profession without years of technical work. Nor would you have been able to have had the privilege of the wonder of being in the middle of an orchestra in concert, which in my much more limited experience is a joyful tapestry of creative collaboration. Though I aspired at one point to such a path, after high school jazz ensembles and years playing in the Band, and my early writing of music and lyrics, I turned my attention elsewhere. The inspiration for me was the Biblical call for liberation of the oppressed and the preferential option for the poor. This was for years the underlying motivation that shaped my priorities. But without collaboration, organizing, innovating in situ, always with others, leveraging whatever we could muster, our grinding made modest advances.

The process as my friend and collaborator Pat Conaty aptly put it over the years, when we would get stuck on this or that, 'what we have to understand much more profoundly when it comes to changing systems and advancing innovation is how to play jazz.'

The wonder of jazz is the incredible mix of riffed inspiration within a loose structure of chords and progressions that can only be wielded into an auditory tapestry by those inspired enough to persist in developing the competence, which at times feels prosaic but which is always is rooted in technical proficiency.

I sometimes think an apt metaphor for this MOOC experiment may be that we are figuring out if we have what it takes to learn how to play jazz. It is worth thinking about as we continue the journey of this MOOC. As we move over the next couple of months to the final module, and its focus on building the politics necessary for systems change, it is going to be fascinating to see how we collectively assess our readiness to do so. If this MOOC helps toward that end perhaps it will have a life beyond this experiment and refined to become one small but strategic contribution to the jazz ensemble we need assemble to navigate transition in a perilous century.

Thank you Anthony for your wonderful post.

Edited by [Michael Lewis \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/263480\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/263480) on Apr 21 at 11pm

[← Reply](#)



[Anthony Christie \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860)

Apr 22, 2019

Points all taken, Michael. Sorry to offend. I will take time soon to try to respond in a thoughtful way.

Edited by [Anthony Christie \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860) on Apr 22 at 9:47pm

← Reply



[Michael Lewis \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/263480\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/263480)

Apr 22, 2019

I feel there is no offense whatsoever taken Anthony. Just wanting to engage the difficult conversation of how we think about transition and systems change and its multiple facets.

← Reply



[Anthony Christie \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860)

Apr 22, 2019

Michael, I don't think it's necessary to read my first sentence as dismissive. In fact, it is simply an acknowledgement of the fact of "grinding" that you rightly laud. So I stand by the word. Prosaic. As it's conventionally used. As in "not poetic". Like grinding's not poetic. If I'd meant one of your (Oxford's) so-called synonyms, I'd have used it. None of them is a good substitute. None of them is equivalent. I was writing of the MOOC from my point of view. It's often hard work. It can be a real grind. (And let's agree to leave aside the poetics of info-graphics, shall we? Not worth a tussle.)

And for the record, I've done more than a bit of my own grinding in the sense you're using the word, mostly in my former union (the fightin' A F of M) but plenty of other activism too over many years for which I, like you and any other resistance/advocacy practitioner, have suffered my fair share of blow-back from various power structures. In this we are brothers.

Michael, notwithstanding Mikeg's musings about whether the final C in MOOC stands for "Community", and since we're doing systems analysis, and since the MOOC is a system, you and the other leaders *are* the power structure. In this we are *not* brothers.

Respectfully,

Tony

P.S. **Shameless name-drop alert.** I noted elsewhere that I've collected two autographs in my life, one Jane Jacobs', the other Oscar Peterson's when I had the honour to play in a backup orchestra that he (one of his few gigs post-stroke so he just "ghosted" parallel 3rds in the left hand while the right did all the usual miracles) and Peter Appleyard were fronting. Now you'll know that Appleyard's a pretty great jazzier but, IMNHO, not great enough to warrant my grovelling before him for an autograph. But Oscar? I grovelled with gratitude. He was gracious, of course. So I like your jazz analogy. Sort of. Sociology, Political Economy, Systems Analysis, I think it's fair to say, are considered by most to be more *prosaic* fields than jazz. But there's poetry to be found wherever one looks.

So keep on keepin' on, brother and keep on grindin'. And don't let me grind your gears too much, boss. I'm small fry. Beneath your dignity.

I suggest that if there's anything else to be said we spare the MOOC and take it outside. You can always reach me at tonynancymisha@hotmail.com

Edited by [Anthony Christie \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/843860) on Apr 23 at 7:27pm

← [Reply](#)



[Barbara Denbeigh Hollingworth](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/901554)

[/2527/users/901554](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/901554)

May 19, 2019

Hello Michael and Anthony, Michael, I am cognizant of and overwhelmed by the amount of "inspired grinding" that has gone into the creation of this MOOC. I also agree that all movement starts with an inspiration, or "vision", whose realization in reality involves much hard work and "grinding." This brings to my mind the interconnectedness of the "ideal" and the "real." Michelangelo was inspired by the Catholic (Christian) vision of the time, and thereafter spent years working on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, on his back (uncomfortably), manifesting in material reality his wonderful piece of art. Similarly all the other wonderful art of the period, and the same can be said for all religiously inspired art and architecture, Muslim, Hindu, Egyptian and the list goes on.

As a student of the history and philosophy of religion, and a lapsed Catholic, I am also aware of the manifestations of the religiously inspired visions which materialized in reality as the Crusades, the Inquisition, slavery and Naziism, to name only a few of the more negative manifestations of the Christian vision. This is not to denigrate the positive manifestations inspired by religions, such as Mother Theresa's lifetime of work in the slums of India.

If this seems unrelated to the question of hard work inspired by the vision (and the overwhelming necessity) of a new paradigm of how we are to live our lives in the here and now, I would claim that it is intimately related, as any new "system" must have as its base a common realization and an acceptance of the underlying sameness of all religious inspirations of all world religions, plus - and this will be the difficult ingredient - the moving beyond belief systems such as neoliberalism, a religion in itself.

It is inspiring to witness the recent marches and demonstrations of school-age children and young adults, demanding changes on all levels, political, social and (we hope) individual. This call for action on the part of the next generations is inspired. Now the true test of whether or not we can survive as a species and manifest a new paradigm in reality depends upon whether we all, including those youthful inspired protestors representing the next generation, have the "will" to engage in the "grinding" that is the crucial component of systems change. Thank you Anthony for raising the question of "inspiration" and Michael, for reminding us of the enormous amount of "grinding" involved in its manifestation.

← [Reply](#)



[Kristi Lewis \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/905890\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/905890)



Jul 5, 2019

I am late to this module, but have really enjoyed reading these thoughtfulnesses... grind on, grinders!

← [Reply](#)



[Benjamin Turner \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/897723\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/897723)



Apr 24, 2019



With all the information learned this week about cooperatives, I decided to dive further into my local area and see what food cooperatives exist. One that stood out for good and bad reasons was the City Harvest Co-op. They are a small urban farming operation located in Victoria, BC whose mandate is to produce food for the community, with the community, in the community. The land that is farmed is all loaned and is currently all in private backyards within city limits.

It seems like a great idea and provides an opportunity for residents to buy locally grown produce at a decent price. Through browsing their website, I recognized some weak points to their process. The flat rate actually requires customers to come pick the produce or for an increased price one can have it picked for them and have it ready to be picked up. The thought of having to go pick my produce in a community garden after an exhausting day of work sounds awful. This coop lacks a convenience factor which I think many people would happily pay other services (mainly mainstream grocers) to deliver their produce to their door.

As I dove deeper into the poorly designed up site all the timestamps looked old. The most recent was in 2013. I checked their facebook page and it was unavailable. Turns out this co-op is dead :(I have no idea the reasons why, but I cannot imagine they found great success in their strategy. We live in a world where convenience trumps a lot of things - perhaps they should have considered that.

← [Reply](#)



[Mike Gismondi \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/227458\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/227458)

Apr 25, 2019

Hi Ben,

Im of a different mind, sometimes we need to get our fingers dirty after a long day of "real" work, feel the sun on our necks, and the breeze in our faces, and even watch the sky enter its night shades, and then roll home with our veggies, eat and sleep better.....it works ... I can attest..

no excuses for their coop failing etc...and Im okay with convenience, but convenience is a learned expectation, real in its consequences for sure, but a social construct that we/you can change...

North Americans work too much. You might like to read Juliet Shor's Plenitude, or her many articles on overworked Americans...

Best regards

Mikeg

← [Reply](#)



[CJ Holden \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/906739\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/906739)

Apr 25, 2019

The Communitarian Movements of 1920s to mid 30's is now re-appearing.

Many "spiritual" communities advocated a return to community life, in a cooperative working and farming model. Among these were the Amy MacFerson community and the Emmissaries of Divine Light. The last is still ongoing with communities in Austraila, South Africa, Britain, Canada and the

U.S.

While far from perfect, these communities farm organically, and distribute work among all members of the community. Often the center of the community is a "retreat center" to host conferences and retreats, bringing contact with the outside world, and awareness of external people of what is offered in these models.

The Spiritual beliefs however, are often seeded in practices that no longer speak to modern people. "Descendence from Angels" and readings from Channeled tomes is not attractive to those looking forward. Leadership is often removed, and subject to mis-management of ego, punishment of new ideas, and banishment of those who challenge the no-longer effective prejudices. Still, there is much to be gained by living in these communities: Self-reliance, and sound environmental practices are attractive to millenials.

[\(https://sunranch.org/\)](https://sunranch.org/)

Its good to visit and explore this place, but do beware of the deeper beliefs and flaws of leadership. The people and place are lovely. <https://sunranch.org/>

[\(https://sunranch.org/\)](https://sunranch.org/)

← [Reply](#)



[Karl Horak \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/903858\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/903858)

Apr 27, 2019



From the One Laptop per Child initiative, <http://one.laptop.org/> [\(http://one.laptop.org/\)](http://one.laptop.org/). If you've

got an hour to spare, listen to Eben Moglen speaking back in 2006 about software development and community, free-and-open-source software, in the 21st Century --

[Software and Community in the Early 21st Century](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NorfgQIEJv8) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NorfgQIEJv8>)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NorfgQIEJv8>

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[Caroline Hurley](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/894561) (<https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/894561>)

Apr 29, 2019



[https://busy.org/@digitaldollar/first-one-is-](https://busy.org/@digitaldollar/first-one-is-always-special-to-admire-at-our-very-first-ever-strawberry-fruit-grown-in-our-home-garden)

[always-special-to-admire-at-our-very-first-ever-strawberry-fruit-grown-in-our-home-garden](https://busy.org/@digitaldollar/first-one-is-always-special-to-admire-at-our-very-first-ever-strawberry-fruit-grown-in-our-home-garden))

Because work can be effortless and beautiful :)

← [Reply](#)



[Mike Gismondi](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/227458) (<https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/227458>)

Apr 30, 2019

Snow today in athabasca but spring perennials are pushing up
My rhubarb has a head of hair out in leaf

One more week and
Perhaps a month till we get those strawberries
Mikeg

↳ [Reply](#)



[Rolando Ramirez \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/893132\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/893132)

May 5, 2019

↳ [Reply](#)



[Rolando Ramirez \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/893132\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/893132)

May 5, 2019



My reflexion on this fourth modules that at the bottom of all succesfu initiatives is the drive to organize. In whatever challenge you face. And alternatives will emerge from that drive..the picture relates on how by "organizing" they stop hydro damms in the Patagonia. Coops platforms follow the drive to individuals to organize and create alternatives to the present establishment.

↳ [Reply](#)



[Bernadette Cohen-James](#)

<https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/893046>

Jun 19, 2019

Sometimes it is easy to forget how much power we hold ourselves, that it is easy to see the "system" as in control when in fact we can reorganise and redefine what makes our living and life. The challenge is to recruit others to be willing to jump off the hamster wheel and come create the alternative path (well, to do so before disaster or need make it the only alternative). Sometimes I feel we, as humans, seem to want our lessons delivered in pain vs in pleasure or that we are so habit driven, sheep mentality driven that change scares the pants off of us or that unless it affects us directly we are not going to bother to try or look. We're weird like that.

[← Reply](#)



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May 20, 2019



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<https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/906461>

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May 25, 2019



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[Lazaros Angelou \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/886724\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/886724)

May 27, 2019



- o "Starting from nich level and expanding further. Building alliances between urban and rural areas. Supporting a "biodiversity" of entities, like economic, social, political and environmental actors.

- *Connecting anchor institutions with communities, addressing health, education, energy, local and regional economy etc.*
- *Putting pressure on legislators for laws that support all the above collective actions between community actors and stakeholders, as well as funding institutions for relevant supportive measures.*
- *Above all, building social and solidarity economy structures, operating with direct democracy principles, as preparative measures for an "other world", with social and solidarity economy and direct democracy, spreading from local to regional, national and international level".*

Internet Platform is the means to develop all the above actions at niche, regime and landscape level. Not only the working class or the precariat but the society as a whole, has to "get on the platform".

Edited by [Lazaros Angelou \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/886724\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/886724) on May 27 at 1:56am

← [Reply](#)



[Lella Blumer \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/896798\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/896798)

May 27, 2019

Thanks for your concise thoughts and diagram, Lazaros. My first instinct when contemplating big questions such as those posed throughout this course is to capture thoughts in graphics, and I was finding this module particularly challenging because it is so broad. You've captured it well.

I'm intrigued particularly in the second and third points in your text: I see a huge role for anchor institutions in system change, particularly post-secondary education institutions. There are so many possibilities for lifelong and cooperative learning that are not being explored, partly, I expect, because of the silos we've built around the institutions themselves. In terms of exerting pressure on legislators, I'd push that further - as Kali Akuno and others included in this module's resources have stated, political involvement (running for office) needs to be part of revolutionary change.

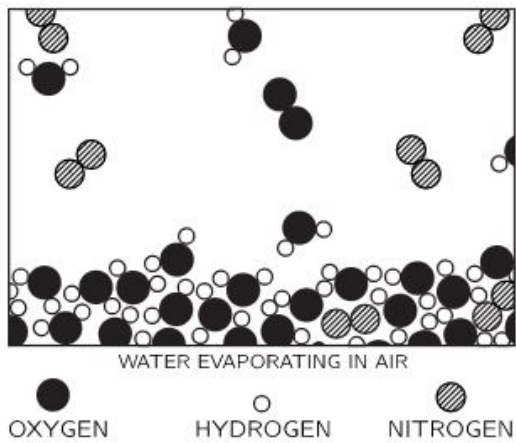
← [Reply](#)



[Lella Blumer \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/896798\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/896798)

May 27, 2019

Plenty of images came to mind while processing the ideas and material in this module. One kept repeating itself, so I'm going with it:



From Richard Feynman's lectures, available online here: [Link](http://www.feynmanlectures.caltech.edu/l_01.html)
[\(http://www.feynmanlectures.caltech.edu/l_01.html\)](http://www.feynmanlectures.caltech.edu/l_01.html)

[\(http://www.feynmanlectures.caltech.edu/l_01.html\)](http://www.feynmanlectures.caltech.edu/l_01.html) He builds on the key hypothesis that everything is made of atoms by saying that "there is nothing that living things do that cannot be understood from the point of view that they are made of atoms acting according to the laws of physics". Bear with me here, as he goes on to say: "if water – which is nothing but these little blobs, mile upon mile of the same thing over the earth – can form waves and foam, and make rushing noises and strange patterns as it runs over cement; if all of this, all the life of a stream of water, can be nothing but a pile of atoms, *how much more is possible?*"

So, in the case of humans, where atoms are arranged in much more complex ways that are constantly changing, *how much more is possible?* How we arrange ourselves in groups, as communities, and as a species, has immense possibilities if we use our own complex and ever-changing atomic makeup as an example. "When we say we are a pile of atoms" Feynman says, "we do not mean we are *merely* a pile of atoms, because a pile of atoms which is not repeated from one to the other might well have the possibilities which you see before you in the mirror."

← [Reply](#)



[Kenneth Eidel \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/901522\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/901522)

Jun 8, 2019





<https://youtu.be/P5hQHBNpd7s> (<https://youtu.be/P5hQHBNpd7s>)



<https://youtu.be/P5hQHBNpd7s>

I selected this video because it is an example of the growing de-humanization of the workforce. Automated cars and trucks, robot soldiers (cyborg cops, trans-human school teachers?) portend a dystopian world. The here-and-now reality of course is unemployment, under-employment, and an ever growing precariat class. an (un) intended consequence of the "gig economy" is a society further fragmented and in competition with itself for scraps. Margaret Thatcher famously said, "There is no such thing as society". Although that is not true, her statement stands as a goal of neoliberalism rather than an established fact. The alternatives presented in this module directly oppose that neoliberal worldview. We need to work diligently to see our way to a more just and inclusive community.

← [Reply](#)



[Brendan Reimer \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/903250\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/903250)



Jun 9, 2019



Whether it is about the Precariat, co-operatives, unions, collective and community organizing, how we build relations for a better world, or how we must work together to create the kind of sustainable, inclusive, equitable, and resilient communities we want - we must work together. This includes taking care of each other, building bonds of trust, accountability, mutual support and reciprocity, and holding those who may lack strength in a moment or in life. This may be in the economic, social, and political models we create for basic incomes, health care and education, and really in all aspects of life. We are all beautiful and wonderfully diverse individuals, and we should celebrate that, but when we organize life on this planet we lead our thinking with care for all, sustainable lives for all, health for all, quality of life for all . . . we are all better off when we are all better off.

← [Reply](#)



[Bernadette Cohen-James](#)

<https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/users/893046>

Jun 19, 2019



← [Reply](#)