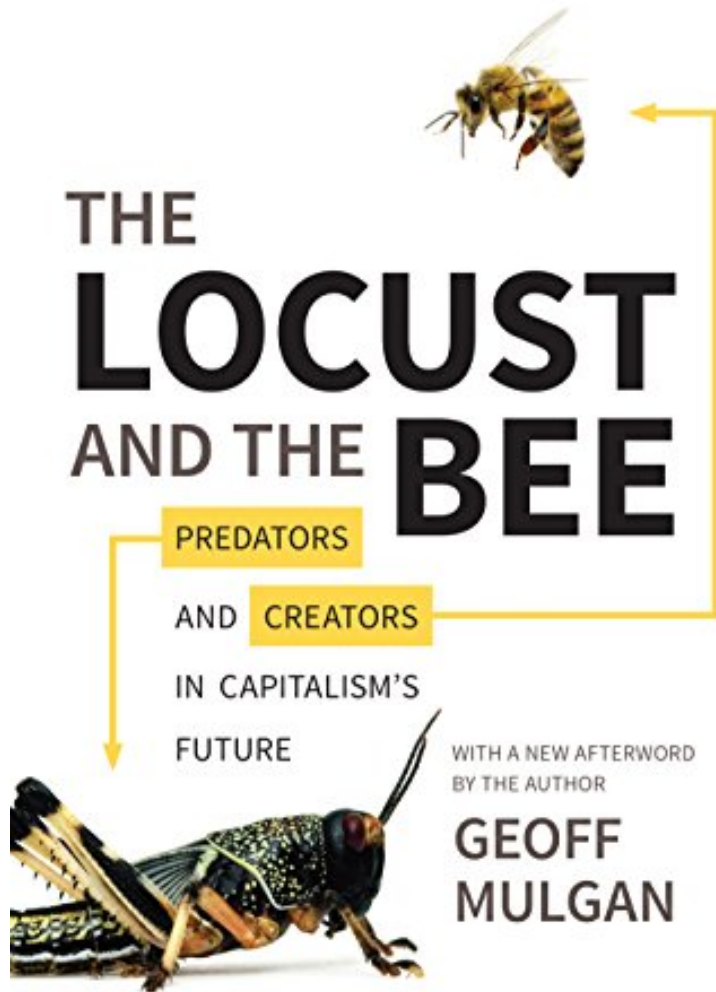


The Locust and the Bee: Predators and Creators in Capitalism's Future

Geoff Mulgan

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Geoff Mulgan : The Locust and the Bee: Predators and Creators in Capitalism's Future before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Locust and the Bee: Predators and Creators in Capitalism's Future:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An intelligent, succinct analysis of what is going wrong with ...By Pauline Lesley WettonAn intelligent, succinct analysis of what is going wrong with capitalism; it should be widely read and taken notice of.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I really like some of the concepts and

insight in the first ...By Ernest Christiansen I really like some of the concepts and insight in the first half of the book. Some of the conclusions I felt less sure about. 18 of 19 people found the following review helpful. 21st Century Lafayette By David Wineberg This wonderful tome is an attempt to distance us from capitalism, and see it from the outside, for what it really is, and then project what might come after. Because something will come after; it's just the nature of the beast that is society. It's a Herculean task, and some might say a fool's errand, but Mulgan provides incredible mounds of food for thought. It is like looking all around you at flat earth and trying to picture yourself living on the surface of a ball. It is a wide ranging work, spilling over with quotes and perspectives that make it continually fascinating. There's hardly a page I didn't want to make notes on. So I didn't make any. I'd never be able to find what I wanted - that's how many there would be. The basis of the whole book is the duality of capitalism. Its Janus facet, its hypocrisy, twosidedness, two facedness, its yin and yang. The predator and the creator - the locust and the bee. Mulgan manages to distance himself from living in a capitalist world, and looks at it dispassionately, not just warts and all, but also at the overwhelming advantages and accomplishments. It is enormously fair. Mulgan is Lafayette visiting the new world. The enervating and maddening thing about *The Locust and the Bee* is the amount of provocative information in it. It often seems that every sentence is thought provoking; if you let it, it would take all year to finish reading it once. In the first half, every paragraph merits a page, and every page merits its own book. The whole thing is important and informative. Those first pages are packed with great wisdom, just mentioned in passing, and often without further analysis. Hundreds of facts, quotes, and theories. It's not possible to give you an overview, but let me share a few that I want to remember: -The banks' biggest risk used to be the sovereign; now the sovereign's biggest risk is the banks. -Labor used to decide what was made, now labor is just another commodity and products decide what labor is required. -President Thomas Jefferson said the banks were more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies. -Communism collapsed because it didn't let prices tell the economic truth, and capitalism will collapse because it didn't let prices tell the ecological truth. -In the UK, universal healthcare came about because during WWI, one third of draftees were rejected as unfit. So healthcare was actually all about providing a higher quality of cannon fodder for the army. -As for nonprofits, one of England's first charities raised money for wood to burn witches. Imagining what might come next is as tricky as thinking the unimaginable, because we're so immersed in our system. Mulgan posits a time-based system (for example), where time is the currency instead of money. In capitalism, time is money, so what if we switched everything around and made it official? That requires some thought. In the end, the book converts to a wishlist, based on examples and experiments in different countries and societies all over the world. Following what Mulgan says in the first half, we should expect some of these things to succeed long term, become trends, change our thinking, and eventually transform our societies. But which ones? He focuses a lot on relationships and services such as healthcare, which is fairly obvious. But I was surprised that after the line about the ecological truth (above and on page 122) he never comes back to how ecology will change society. So it's not the bee all. But *The Locust and the Bee* is a big, sprawling, focused accomplishment.

The recent economic crisis was a dramatic reminder that capitalism can both produce and destroy. It's a system that by its very nature encourages predators and creators, locusts and bees. But, as Geoff Mulgan argues in this compelling, imaginative, and important book, the economic crisis also presents a historic opportunity to choose a radically different future for capitalism, one that maximizes its creative power and minimizes its destructive force. In an engaging and wide-ranging argument, Mulgan digs into the history of capitalism across the world to show its animating ideas, its utopias and dystopias, as well as its contradictions and possibilities. Drawing on a subtle framework for understanding systemic change, he shows how new political settlements reshaped capitalism in the past and are likely to do so in the future. By reconnecting value to real-life ideas of growth, he argues, efficiency and entrepreneurship can be harnessed to promote better lives and relationships rather than just a growth in the quantity of material consumption. Healthcare, education, and green industries are already becoming dominant sectors in the wealthier economies, and the fields of social innovation, enterprise, and investment are rapidly moving into the mainstream--all indicators of how capital could be made more of a servant and less a master. This is a book for anyone who wonders where capitalism might be heading next--and who wants to help make sure that its future avoids the mistakes of the past. This edition of *The Locust and the Bee* includes a new afterword in which the author lays out some of the key challenges facing capitalism in the twenty-first century.