



Zen View of Social Constructionism from Alan Watts (c. 1960)

Remember the Great Depression of the Thirties? One day there was a flourishing consumer economy, with everyone on the up-and-up; and the next, unemployment, poverty, and bread lines. What happened? The physical resources of the country—the brain, brawn, and raw materials—were in no way depleted, but there was a sudden absence of money, a so-called financial slump. Complex reasons for this kind of disaster can be elaborated at length by experts on banking and high finance who cannot see the forest for the trees. But it was just as if someone had come to work on building a house and, on the morning of the Depression, the boss had said, “Sorry, baby, but we can’t build today. No inches.”

“Whaddya mean, no inches? We got wood. We got metal. We even got tape measures.” “Yeah, but you don’t understand business. We been using too many inches and there’s just no more to go around.”

A few years later, people were saying that Germany couldn’t possibly equip a vast army and wage a war, because it didn’t have enough gold. What wasn’t understood then, and still isn’t really understood

today, is that the reality of money is of the same type as the reality of centimeters, grams, hours, or lines of longitude. Money is a way of measuring wealth but is not wealth in itself.

Watts, Alan W. (2010-09-07). Does It Matter?: Essays on Man's Relation to Materiality (p. 4). New World Library. Kindle Edition.