

## *Reviews of Proud City:...*

For Marylou Bregy's entire review see:

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## *Articles*

### THE AUTHOR



Born in British Guyana, Amo Sulaiman grew up in Canada, where he studied psychology and philosophy at Guelph University. Continuing his studies in philosophy, he took his Master Degree in Montreal. He has resided in Switzerland for 12 years and has a doctor's degree in philosophy from the University of Bern. Mr Sulaiman has published several works in his field of philosophy. Proud City is his first novel.

### THE PLOT

The book deals with human relationships.

A police officer, Charles, is shot by accident in a robbery by a youth, becoming sterile as a result. Since he cannot have children, he leaves the police force to open a pizzeria, a place for young people to meet and discuss outside their parents' rigid range of control. One of these young people, Chuck, is suffering from the breakup of his parents' marriage. He suspects his mother of having an affair because she says she has to work every night as a nurse at the hospital, but he's unable to detect clear evidence of his suspicion. Another of the young people at the pizzeria, Virus, is a whiz at the computer and discovers the truth for Chuck: a network of adultery involving his parents. The young debate at great length at the pizzeria, wishing to change the way of life in Proud City.

## THE SOCIETAL FRAME



The story plays in a future when society has become divided into high-, middle-, and low-brow classes, who live, in Proud City AT least, in corresponding neighborhoods on high or low ground, with the middle-brow class clinging to the slope in between. Symbolic details such as the three streets leading from the shopping centre to the three different class-neighborhoods of the city underline the segregation.

Life in this society is controlled by Business and “being rich is like a religion”, lawyers defend only the rich as the others can’t pay, “economists rule the world”, schools are run “according to supply and demand”, “police patrol only the slums as they would otherwise be fired”, and “only the unfortunate are put behind bars”. Business controls charity organizations, forcing them to get people to boycott Third World countries’ products (allegedly because of child labor). Teachers are working for Business and “push Internet, a degrading technique for replacing the mind”, in a world where educational standards have been globalized. A Bilingual School teaches English and “Business Language”, other languages “are almost dead”. However, all the comments on this society are out of the mouths of the very bitter and cynical young intellectuals from all sections of society who meet at Charles’ pizzeria. Nor do they hold back with criticism of their parents, and adults in general. Are they perhaps exaggerating? The Kafka-like scenes at the Municipal Hospital suggest a negative answer here.

## ISSUES DEALT WITH

Various weighty topics are discussed by these young intellectuals in varying degrees of detail: euthanasia, child labour, birth control and family planning, cloning and “gene-babies”, new roles for retired people and of course the generation gap, which is very apparent here in most of the families.

A little humour is provided by the enigmatic anti-hero, Lenny, who, although low-brow, is a real businessman, dealing in school essays (and maybe other things), egoistically manipulating the system. However, in a society which has lost its human face and functions only according to computer rules, any remainder of human sympathy is scorned by Lenny as weakness, although he often plays on it to reach his ends.

Responsibility is the big word throughout the book. Responsibility “is the immortal

element in life”, “the only future certainty”, “the dough of the pizza, which keeps everything together. Indulging in sex is taking on full responsibility for the child that may result. Therefore, married couples with children have to sacrifice their lives and lusts to their responsibility to be a good and loving parent, creating a secure home for their offspring.

## SIGNS OF A NEW AGE



The computer, which, in this brave, new world, is able to hire and fire without human interference, can be manipulated by the well-named Virus. Normally busy removing all subliminal advertising on the Computer, he uses his abilities to change the work schedules of everyone involved in his friend’s family problems, placing the married but estranged couples in the same shift and department so that they have to get back together again. They must be made to accept their responsibility.

It is also Virus who seems to have the best line to his high-brow father, persuading him to break out established rigid patterns and employ people from lower social stratum his firm. He even convinces other firms to do the same. The encrusted social hierarchy starts to break up. Proud City will have reason to be proud.

### Final Comment

Mr Sulaiman expects the novel to be used in English classes as a basis for discussions. The level of the vocabulary is, however, very demanding and would be too great a challenge for any but every advanced classes.

by J. Schmid

Published in the magazine ETAS (English Teachers Association Switzerland) Nov. 2002, Switzerland.

[Brainwaves versus 100 years and 100 scientists](#)



Why does nobody take no notice of them? Why don't they have a platform to present their mental products? Who decides whether their ideas are useful or not?

An essay about the ideas of young people, to reference the novel Proud City .

Knowledge is power . This principle is an established fact everywhere apart from the world of young people.

During our childhood, we gradually lose the ability to unprejudiced perception and we usually turn into a state of mental stiffness. Unlike adults, children and young people usually have an impartial outlook on life. Therefore, quite a lot of good and revolutionary ideas occur to them, but not to adults.

But why is this like that? Has it really to be like that?

From a certain age, young humans have a matured brain, they are however not yet as adapted to their environment as adults and their thoughts are not yet adjusted to existing theories and procedures. That's why their ideas are not based on, or let's say limited to given facts and ways of handling problems. Therefore, they are able to find completely new solutions.

This is a great chance for progress, why don't we take it? Why can't all these revolutionary theories be taken seriously?

The novel Proud City takes this chance to give these mental products a platform. The presented characters are finding new solutions in science, often by using revolutionary ways of structured thinking.

The book has a good intention, but I think that it doesn't correspond to reality because several aspects of our society and the youth aren't mentioned.

If people don't have a diploma in scientific practice, their thoughts and ideas are not considered to have a reliable basis. These persons can't prove their thoughts seriously. In addition to that, such theories might even not be compatible with existing scientific principles. And what happens when a children's-theory turns out to be completely wrong? The Child couldn't ever take any responsibility for his theory because the child usually isn't able to estimate its risks.

By the way, this statement is supported by the character Virus in Proud City, who remarks close to the end of the book: "Knowledge without responsibility could be dangerous, too. Luckily, pigs aren't bearers of knowledge."

But once a revolutionary brainwave occurs, it is usually not accepted anyway because

it doesn't correspond to established facts, so it usually won't be taken notice of.

In addition to these troubles, young people usually aren't dogged enough, which is necessary to draw up completely and strengthen any kind of theory. A young person wouldn't stay day after day in an office to find a way how to prove his ideas in a scientific way. He might rather turn to another mystery until something new occurs to him again and so on.

Another important point concerning our culture is that in order that a scientific theory or discovery is officially announced, it has to be analysed by 100 scientists before. Also a new social order needs 100 years of integration. Even a new law needs 100 parliamentarians and many years of discussions until it is accepted.

But this is not a justification why mainly old men make political decisions or stay in economic leading positions! I think that we need a well-adjusted distribution of all generations in all official committees.

However, our society is not based on the ideas of young people, their brainwaves just seem to be important for their own personal development. Sorry about coming to close to our disciple of Francis Bacon, Virus, but the quotation at first should be extended as following: Knowledge, experience and perseverance is power.  
by Cinzia Gasser

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### Views of 'Proud City The Unaware Revolution'



The man who follows the crowd will usually get no further than the crowd. The man who walks alone is likely to find himself in places no one has ever been. (Alan Ashley-Pitt)

Proud City written by Amo Sulaiman talks about many dilemmas of society. Even though the story plays in the near future, a connection between the addressed problems, political and social hassles with today's issues can not, and most probably

does not want to, be hidden.

First of all Charles, one of the chief character, introduces the reader to his hometown, its problems and his way of seeing it. Charles appears like the storyteller, he might even represent the author himself. The introduction happens, like most things in the book, within a talk between Charles and one of his friends. During a tour around the Mall, the scene of the story, they explain the 'who and what' of their world. The shopping center symbolizes the division of Proud City in three parts, high-, middle-, and low-brows.

Proud City seem like any big American city, with the described division of poor and wealthy neighborhoods. LA just pops to mind, the rich and famous living in Beverly hills and the working stratum in the cheap areas far away from Hollywood. In addition the way police is working does remind of American policemen, or at least at the impression most people have, very strict and quite brutal, acting mostly in the poor regions of town. But if you think about it, the problems mentioned in the book are happening in every capitalistic organized system, therefore every western city may just be or become like Proud City.

A future city, with future teenage inhabitants taking about and trying to proceed against social and moral injustices, that is what the book is about. Although these young intellectuals want to change the system and want some responsibility, they were forced to learn living with the system. Look at Lenny, he thinks he is using and cheating the system dealing with school papers, but isn't he like any other businessmen, using and profiting of the way things work.

The main part of the book consists of conversation, it is not a story based writing, everything is built up on these dialogs. Sometimes one almost feels the ambition of the characters not to over stain and loose the reader with their challenging thoughts, thus the dialogs become quite long and very detailed. Due to these speeches many familiar phrases, quotations and even references to well known books are used, which makes the vocabulary quite well understandable. If a reader gets the deeper sense, can reconstruct the authors thought is another story. One thing is for sure, the book has a high density of truths and makes you think about today's world.

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[Why read Proud City](#)

Proud City, a book which demands more power for the youth of this world. Sulaiman Amo explains in an easy way how we might manage the next two thousand years. The

book is full of symbolisms and each of it makes a reader thinks about current situations in our world. But, unlike many other books, he suggests a way to solve all these problems.

For example, One of his ideas comes up with a place he calls “All-In-One”. Here, the adults don’t have any power. It is a restaurant where youth can discuss and share their ideas.

In “All-In-One” which is also a chapter in the book, youth discuss complex philosophical issues like “da-sein” – hi I am there. Or “cogito ergo sum” – I think, therefore I am. All the discussed topics are easy to understand in one big energizing discussion all through the story beginning at the bottom, ethics up to the top of economics.

Proud City will entertain you and bring you to think about the actual situation of our world and the possible future.

Michael Luggen

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### The world of The Youth



The book Proud City from Amo Sulaiman shows us a possible picture of our future. This world is controlled by powerful enterprises, which want to turn the young people into business thinking machines. The spirit of that world is very low. Everything is managed by the economy. Also the schools are used to put children into that society. Families become the only possibility to have social contacts. But work takes over the whole life of the old people. Their children are occupied with school and raised by computers. Society is divided into three classes, the high, the middle and the low class. There’s a huge difference between rich and poor. But there’s hope for society. The author of the book shows us a solution for all the problems: to give the power to the youth!

Proud city is a model, it could be every city. Are the youth really the last hope for a society like it was shown there? Are the old people not intelligent enough to see that the society is going worse, they have years of experience?

These questions are not easy to answer. It is a fact that a child can think different than old people do. A little child is free of all social problems, free of anger, free of social pressure, a child has no prejudice. But when a child becomes older it is getting more and more influenced by other people and the society.

On the other side, old people have a lot of experience. They learned how to survive on this planet, they made mistakes in their lives and they passed bad periods.

So the youth are between these both groups, they're not as influenced and they can see how society works. Old people acquire all their experience in their society, they're used to live in such a society every day. They have all sorts of habits and see big changes as a danger. They won't ask themselves a lot of questions if their society is good or not. For the youth, not all the things are obvious. They ask themselves questions, they see society different.

The youth in the book have different point of views about society, because they all have different social backgrounds. But most of them can see the problems that this society has. They ask themselves, if it is normal to treat people like products, as an example. They realize the invasion of businesses in their school. Their parents are too busy to realize such things.

So people should hear what the youth think about the society, it would perhaps open their eyes and give them another point of view for many things.

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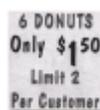
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By T. Kaser

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### [Special Topic - Restaurant All-In-One](#)



Proud City is a quite philosophical work about our society, especially about young people and how they see the world and how they manage to live in such a world. It tells us if we would let the power to the youth, let them realise their own ideas we would have a better world

The restaurant All-In-One, one of the main scenes of the book, is a place where the young people can, undisturbed of the presence of adults, discuss their ideas. All-In-

One has a very special philosophy: It is a place for people under 20, adults are not allowed. The employees have to change their job after 5 years of service. This fluctuation should prevent the employees from false security, boredom, stress and fictitious self-identity. The employees have to take their breaks and if they don't, they are penalised by being forced to do nothing for several hours.

Charles, the owner of the restaurant, has developed these rules. We can find the reason why he had this ideas in his former experiences. He served as a policeman and during that, he had an accident where the gun of a young guy shot off. He was very lucky that he survived this and after that, he quitted his job as a policeman. He realised that this could only happen because young people don't have any perspectives in their lives, they don't have a place where they can stay and discuss and develop their own ideas.

I think Charles has named his restaurant "All-In-One" because he didn't wanted to have only a place to eat and drink, he wanted to create a place where young people can have all-in-one: a restaurant, a place to stay with friends or alone, where they don't have to deal with authoritarian persons like teachers or parents.

I really hope that some adults read this book and start to think about this idea of creating a place only for young people.

By Lilian von Känel

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## SOCIAL CLASSES



This book surprised me with some of its passages. In chapter one for example, there is this scene at the shopping mall. I had to nod all the time while reading through it. No doubt, it is true that the longer the story of mankind goes, the wider the gap between us grows. Also the ruling class sees to it that there will always be such a gap, a big one if possible.

The author skilfully avoids the mistake to leave the reader without a clear message. He even provides the keyword to understand his philosophy which reads as follows: The Big Believer. It seems to be of paramount importance, since the author refers to it incessantly. Of course, when someone who is very down and very depressive ceases to believe in a better future, things are bound to end in disaster.

The book itself certainly contains an incredible number of symbols and references wrong word, so that it is quite impossible to fully understand them all. Sometimes the author almost seems to lift off when he talks about matter, anti-matter and other far-

fetches topics. Such things are currently subject to intense research and do actually not belong into this kind of book.

M. Thomann

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Proud City---Is it Utopia....



The youth of an utopian society in which adults are making decisions and the youth has no place for itself. The young people in the world of Proud City have no place to be, have no possibilities to express themselves. Most adults are just looking that they're doing their job right and that they're not violating any paragraphs and laws. They try to serve the community without reflecting whether the society is wrong or right. The problem in Proud City is that the parents don't take their children seriously. So the young people are on their own, they have to organise themselves. And that's what they're doing pretty good! They're hacking computers, they're selling former tests to schoolmates, but they're also reflecting a lot about the society in which they're living in and how you could improve the live in this society. But nobody is listening to them.

Proud City. That's a novel about the youth

Except Charles. As a former police officer he was also a faithful servant to the State, but after a heavy accident he decided to do something for the youth, to give them a meeting point. He opened the pizza restaurant All-In-One. But unlike in an ordinary restaurant there was the "up to 20 years" rule. That means that no adults are allowed. So the young people have their own restaurant... like the adults have hundreds of them.

The Book shows the problems and misunderstandings between the youth and the adults or maybe generally the problems of our society. That happens on the basis of an excerpt from the life of a few friends and their families.

Of course the society in this book is far different from our present society. But beside all differences there are some scaring parallels.

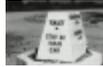
Proud City is not a concrete solution that we can apply to solve all the problems between the young and the old, it's not a guidance to integrate youth in the process of

deciding in our society. It is rather a book about understanding and listening. During the lecture the reader gets a view of the life of young people. This novell opens the eyes for the way of thinking of the youth.

By Bongard Joel

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## Proud City And Society



The story plays in a future when society has become divided into three classes, depending on their fortune. The author visualizes this segregation by the fact that the different classes live in separated residential quarters. They are also obligated to use separated parking lots and entrances at the “Fairview” shopping centre.

A group of young intellectuals isn't satisfied with society. This leads them to discuss a lot of weighty topics in a very cynical and bitter way like “Ah, adults and teachers, they make our lives, keep us like slaves.” or “Adults and computers are alike. Both of their worlds are crumbling.”

To show how the book deals with topics like capitalism, the generation gap and responsibility, I pick one interesting theme and point at the various statements. The topic I've chosen is “Should mercy killing be legal?” This thesis expresses that it would relief the hospitals and fortify the economy because the old people have zero output and hoard their money in banks. Further, we could help terminally ill patients to hold their honour and offer them protection from suffering. This argumentation leads to the legalization of mercy killing.

But now the author shows us all the difficulties that occur with the so-called ‘euthanasia’. Many poor people are suffering worse pain than terminally ill patients, so should we kill them all? Would the court system give up the sole right to kill to doctors and family members? Another problem, which appears, is that mercy killing would deny the promises of technology. According to most religions, killing is immoral. Christianity teaches us that life is precious and that killing is a sin. So mercy killing isn't a Christian thing to do. We can't ignore people's cultural values and uniqueness. Besides, if doctors assist in killing, it would be contradictory to their codes of conduct and moreover it would destroy our confidence in them. Another important question which cannot easily be answered is the following: when is a patient terminally ill? A lot of people have, at some time of their life, said that they wish they were dead. Does this mean that a doctor should act quickly and kill them? Another problem is that psychological problems might arise from active contribution to killing.

I think you can see that the author shows us the topics from different sides, including a

moral point of view. He also brings us to think about the raised problems which appear not only in this cooked up story, but in our present and in our near future.

Finally, the topics are really interesting and it's important that we think about them. So the book is suitable to discuss about. A major problem is the excessive vocabulary that is too demanding. Another weakness is that most of the statements of the young intellectuals are so exaggerated that they become annoying by overly provoking the reader. On the other side, the provocations force us to talk and think about the topics because nobody fully agrees to them. Moreover, the story does not feel authentic, but artificially created around the topics.

BY Andreas Müdespacher

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### PROUD CITY The hospital



Charles, a policeman, was severely wounded during a shooting. He was taken to the hospital and survived with a lot of luck after surgery. Charles' wife Elizabeth who only wanted to visit him, was mistakenly sent by the hospital personnel to the psychiatric department.

The question now arises, whether or not a hospital is the right place to get the necessary help.

In Proud City, hospitals and doctors are subtly analyzed in regard to the question stated above. When people are taken to the hospital, they lose their identities and become either a number or a case, usually both. How do doctors save lives, without having any emotional interest in the lives they are saving? Doctors are confronted with this every day. They save lives, however the person isn't important to them. Isn't that paradoxical?

Is it perhaps the money or the status, that moves medical doctors to do this? Or is it simply an instinct? Is this instinct common to all of us, and is it particularly distinctive with medical doctors? Assumed in this world there would be no such instinct or money, would hospitals exist at all?

For some of us it is perhaps of little importance, why doctors act this way, the most important thing is to become healthy again. That is surely not wrong, but could it be possible to avoid such a mix-up with Elizabeth, if hospital personnel really did care,

and paid more attention and respect to their patients ?

Fabienne Laubscher

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### Proud City: Social Responsibility and Reality



Fiction about social reality and responsibility, that's Proud City. Young people are discussing world-social-problems. They work out many solutions. Proud City becomes a social system with new rules.

In the following words I write about an idea in Chapter 10, about the "Priority Employees". See original-text on the bottom. This is one idea I liked very much in this book.

With that idea of Virus (a Character in the book), the social hierarchy starts to break up and the ideas start acting - the time of Proud City has come.

I asked myself if such a system could work. Why and why not? There are very good ideas which we could use in our social system today.

"Priority Employees", those are people from lower-town, who are out of work and don't have any money.

Instead of companies paying taxes to support these people, they'll use the money to provide direct social services in Proud City. Virus has the idea that all companies have to hire such people.

I think that's a good idea of social service. Taxes will go down, there will be a lower crime rate and people are happy, because they have a job.

But, there are also points, which we have to discuss and think about. The author has thought about ideal cases, but there should be some more rules.

What about "Priority Employees" who are hired, but won't work. People, who had no work, sometimes have to search the guilt by themselves. Maybe they were lazy and lost their job. I don't know if they really want to work? Are they motivated to work? What happens to unemployed who don't want to work and don't want to integrate themselves in the social system of Proud City? Do they fall through each mesh of the social system and end, where they would end in the today's system?

After five years "Priority Employees" will be transferred to another company of their choice. So, if you work once, you won't lose your job. And after these five years you

can change the job without any effort. You don't have to show that you are a good worker. What happens with the other unemployed who didn't get a job? Maybe, there are enough jobs for all. Otherwise, if you have made some money, you are not as poor as before. Shouldn't "Priority Employees" give their job to the poorest of the poor after five years of work?

Another open question about "Priority Employees" would be: "Who made their work before?" There were people who made it. The work had to be done. Were they fired?

If a "Priority Employee" does his job very well in the company, could he raise his salary and get a better job?

I think this system is a very good opportunity to get out of the vicious circle of "having no job - no money - no self-confidence - no home - drugs - no opportunity to get a job". In addition, it doesn't make the rich richer and the poor poorer. But we have to think about strict rules, that there is no abuse of the system. Then I believe that Proud City can act!

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### [Virus in conversation with Lerry](#)

Virus: "I spoke to my father, a week ago, in his office, and during school hours too. He was shocked to see me and knew it was important. We agreed about the car. He believes in me, and that a person ought to do what gives his life meaning. I told him about the Mayfair area; he couldn't believe that such awful conditions really existed in lower town... He asked me how he could help. I told him how. His company had to hire some people who were below the poverty line from lower town. Instantaneously, he called a board meeting. I was in it, too. He asked me to tell the board about Mayfair area. Fifteen minutes after my account, he asked everyone for a solution. After agreeing and disagreeing for a while, they started to vote. The result is—they can currently take ten people from lower town in his company. But there are strict criteria. The first one is, they will see about fifteen candidates and select ten. The second is, the people in the worst conditions will be chosen to work. The next is, if any of them lies about his situation, he'll be booted out. The contract is for five years. After that, they'll be transferred to another company of their choice. There are other rules for all employees, but I'm not interested in them. Their jobs will just be ordinary functions—cleaning, doing routine duties and tasks in the warehouse and shipping and receiving department. Generally, it's helping out wherever they're needed. Before I forget, they'll have the title, 'Priority Employees.' And only management has access to their files. You can send about fifteen people who want to work next week. Here is the company contract. You can read it later. It's about company policies and regulations." Larry was amazed at Virus's involvement. "I really don't know what to say. Well,

we've known each other for a long time, it finally gets to you," Larry said. "That's not all. My old man will have a meeting with other owners. They'll do something about Mayfair. They'll also contact our local representatives, here. It'll depend on the result of their meeting, but the way things look now, instead of companies paying taxes, they'll use that money to provide direct social services in Proud City. Local government will have to do some, too," he murmured to Larry hesitantly.

By Gabriel Lombriser

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### Mental sickness or social mismatch



As in Chapter 9 of Proud City Elizabeth is at the psychiatric hospital it makes the reader think from which point of view someone is considered mentally sick. The chapter may lead to the conclusion that actually there are no mentally sick people, there is only a society that considers them sick.

First of all, there is a person that somehow differs from average people, for he behaves strange or thinks different or has some mental problems. To get rid of such a person and the difficulties he causes, the easiest way is to consider him sick and exclude him from society including him into a psychiatric hospital, to eventually reinclude him into society as a healed person.

Convincing solution actually, but the thing is that psychiatrists don't heal his sickness nor do they help him to do so. They don't change the circumstances that made him sick, as they can't change a whole society. What they do is change the image of the patient, say, they remove him from society and call him sick. Furthermore, they fill him up with medicaments until he really suffers from mental distortion. As a consequence, such a person can never ever be released into a normal life beneath normal people.

Not matching with the ideas of a society is called mental sickness, although it isn't a sickness at all. But either you call a whole society sick or you call them sick that say so. It's not very difficult to determine which consequence is easier to realize. It is much easier to remove one person from a society that doesn't match with the pattern of the masses instead of changing the whole society.

by Alexis Reigel

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## Our Future and Interpretation



Proud City talks about a city in a future world, where people are segregated into three different classes: the rich ones, the poor ones and the middle class. The author visualizes that with the “Fairview” shopping centre. In this super market, you can clearly see the structure of those three different classes, shown in the arrangement of the entrances and the parking lots. Some of the people, living in this city, have very difficult living situations and the book talks about the problems of those people.

The book is very political, although it isn't obviously written that way. One very political passage in this book is the following: “To destroy your world, I must make someone more evil and powerful than me. A complete destruction would imply my own disaster. But the last answer is still mine.” I found that part in chapter 8, “Attitude-Man Reality”. Now, if I read between the lines, then I have to say, that this is a clear and precise political statement. That's really the way some politicians think and act these days.

The book has different messages, but two of the main messages are, that people should pay more attention to the youth and that everyone is responsible for his own actions. In chapter 5, “All-In-One”, there's a discussion between Chuck, Lenny and some other teenagers, where one of the teenagers says: “They (the adults) rub their unfulfilled conscience on their children's dignity, innocence and future. We have to swallow their irresponsibility in this world.” In these words you can see exactly the two messages that I was talking about.

Remo Schmid

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One aspect of Amo Sulaiman's «Proud City»



Charles his principle of another world Charles Brown is the owner of the pizza restaurant All-In-One. He is a former police officer in the late twenties and has his own system to make the world a better place. Like in many countries where a new government and the government representatives are elected into office for four or five years – Charles encourages each employee, himself included, to quit working after five years at the same place.

In his eyes this prevents inefficiency and mechanical existence. Another aspect is that breaks enhance good health – if an employee failed to have break he is forced to do nothing for several hours.

People should work for 40 years and then retirement follows. After that they live from their pension and their savings. In my opinion this way of job-hopping could be a solution against the boring daily routine. But what else? Some people like changes – others do not. Charles wants to prevent stress but there will be a lot of people who would be really stressed changing their job every five years. Look at Pedro, one of the cooks at All-In-One's, he didn't seem to be very happy. I think most people prefer knowing where they are tomorrow; as a consequence they have to put up with a mechanical existence.

One other possibility could be if people don't just change the location but the position too. Because doing the same job all day long is annoying, too. Let's see for example the CEO of a company. After five years he could become a worker so he is really interested to manage good working conditions for his stuff. But this would require that everybody has the same education and capabilities. And there isn't equality of opportunity at all because there are a lot more workers than CEOs. If possible, this could be a good approach against today's maximization of shareholder value and leeching the employees.

Concerning the breaks I'm sure that they enhance good health – why don't just let the employees make up for the missed break? If you don't let them work for several hours it's not good for the person nor is it good for the company. It's too extreme. I see no difference between working for 40 years and the following retirement, as it is the system nowadays, and the one proposed by Charles.

It's like Steve said. Charles has still a lot of homework to do.

Andreas Meyer

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## Mercy Killing



For me one of the most interesting discussions in this book is the one about Mercy killing. The first thing I thought was that Belinda was totally right, Mercy killing should be legalized. I had some experience that let me think that way.

I had an aunt who had a really bad car accident. A head-on collision. When she came into hospital she was unconscious. They had to put her on the machines in order to keep her heart beating. The doctors were convinced that she could never live without machines again, her heart wouldn't beat again by itself. So her father decided to stop the machines and let her die. He thought about how her life would be, just lying there in hospital, not able to move and to do anything, maybe not even able to speak. She could hardly become happy anymore. So it was the best thing he could do for her, I think.

I also saw my grand-father lying in hospital. He had suffered a lot. He had cancer and everyone knew that he would never leave the hospital again. I loved him really much and it was so terrible watching him. His legs and arms were so fat, so full of water, I haven't seen such huge legs since then. I was only eight years old, but I wished I could help him. I wished that he could die, because I knew that this would be the best thing for him and the only way his suffering could stop.

When I read Proud City I realized that a legalization of Mercy killing probably wouldn't be the best thing in this world. Especially Martin has a good argument against it. He says that any sick patient could easily be put to death and anyone could decide about their life or death. Or another example: If it was legalized and for example my boyfriend left me, I probably would say that I don't want to live any longer and that I want to die or something like that. So anyone who heard that could say, ok, no problem and kill me. That's not the meaning of legalization. If there is really no way out, if a patient has no other chance than death and he's suffering like hell, so why not help him and let him die. But there's another Problem: If the patient is not able to decide by himself if he wants to die or not, who's going to decide then? I would say only relatives or really close friends. But when I imagine that I would have to decide about switching off the machine of a really good friend or someone of my family, I don't know if I could do that. I think I would feel guilty of causing his death. And with that I couldn't live.

And what about the homeless? There would be nobody who could decide for them. So they would have to suffer until they die just because they don't have anybody. That wouldn't be fair. So finally I think legalization is not the solution. It's not possible to legalize Mercy killing because it always depends on the situation. We can't always permit it but we can't stop it either. But who's going to decide when it's good or bad?

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### Fairview Shopping Center



“Fairview Shopping Center” in Proud City shows class structures. In this shopping center you can mean separate all the people in different classes. The lowbrows, middlebrows and highbrows. The declaration in this shopping center you can compare very good with the “normal world”.

The highbrows think that they are “better” peoples than the middlebrows and lowbrows. They live like on a hill, all things are perfect and correct. The environment has the ideal values (height, weight, size, shape,...). The highbrow people means that their environment must influence the things in other areas. The middlebrows are the “normal workers”. They earn enough money for living, but no more. It’s difficult to rest in the middlebrow area, because the barrier between middlebrow and lowbrow is disappearing. In the lowbrow area most of the people live and it’s the smallest area. In “real life” it’s similar. The rich people think that they can control all things. The middle class people must work hard. They have a chance to be rich, but also poor. It’s right that there is no chance to grow up from poor people directly to rich people, only when you win something (in a show, lotto,...).

All in one, I can agree with the opinion of the book about the Fairview Shopping Center.

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### Proud City: It's too touch!

Proud City isn’t a book so easy to read because the vocabulary in the book is demanding. The typical choice of the author is to choose some philosophical words and themes and then develop them.

Many concepts are presented in the book like “The Big Time Believer”, technologies, computers, youth, politics, economics, and religion. As a metaphysics novel, it asks some unanswerable questions about life and human beings, but it gives the possibility

to think about them. Thinking gives not immediately concrete answers, but it has the power to show us how to behave in difficult situations that stand in front of humans. Personally, I wish to write something about Virus and his relations with his friends and life in general, because he represents the typical character that will concerns us directly.

As a computer freak, Virus is an example of a guy who is passionate by his studies. He spends a lot of time to learn by himself, alone at home with his books and his ideas, but what ideas! He doesn't have any oral communication with his computer, so nobody can give him another point of view about life. He always lives alone and most of the time has obtuse thoughts about ordinary life. But from where does his attitudes come from? We must understand Virus as a complex being who receives his entire satisfaction essentially by reading scientific books. How could that be so bad? Reading is certainly better than watching TV? The answer can be found in the following explanation, Virus doesn't meddle so much in other people's businesses, he isn't the kind of boy who go out so easily with someone. He is by nature a bit shy and introvert, so he finds confidence in expressing his knowledge about complex matter. He attends less to actually living in the world with friends – actual experience. His views are most of the time very elaborated but not so easily understandable by his friends, because his speak the language of a scientist who is not very spontaneous but rather boring for the others. It is difficult to imagine Virus suddenly becoming sensitive because his quite cold behaviour comes from his computer! So we have encountered a problem with such weird people. How can they handle specific human relations in their job for example? People can easily change a program, reinstall it, update it, buy it and sell it, but how is it with people? Workers are neither for sale nor for to update; we have to treat them with an ounce of tact, and I think Virus doesn't care about it. For him, the world is ruled by technology and his computers are the rulers. Unfortunately for him, we never ever have any personal relations with these machines- and fortunately for us- we still need love and real communications; otherwise life we find in the cities or in villages wouldn't exist for many years from now!! We would have been living with our computers in an impersonal way! Fortunately this is not the case today, and human beings are still the manufacturers and brain behind machines, but not the contrary. Virus shows us how computers can affect our lives, because they give us more and more communication possibilities despite our first one which is speaking. Perhaps this is the message the author wants to give us. We must keep in mind that we still have the power to make things become better, because we are free. We just mustn't let machines have total control on our liberty, because WE are the architects...the world is ours.

By Florian Champion

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[About Chuck](#)



I want to introduce you one of my favourite characters, Chuck, in the book Proud City..

I thought “Oh, he’s almost like me”. He criticises the whole system. He reflects about life. He can’t stand getting up early in the morning...

Chuck appears for the first time in the second chapter. He is lying in his bed, just some seconds before school starts. His room is some sort of messy: there are software cases everywhere and we also see a computer. After slowly getting up, Chuck reflects about why we are supposed to get up in the morning. In the Stone Age, they get up because of a roaring stomach. But today?

He is also very angry for several months. His father left the family, and he displays his anger against the whole social system. He wants to overthrow the system, beat the system with his own weapons: money. To reach this target and earn lots of money, Chuck, Lenny and Tim open some sort of business. A market for homework and other things teachers usually give students to do at home. For a small amount a student will receive any sort of homework perfectly done. Chuck writes almost everything, from essays to biology reports.

Between his mother and him a kind of small battle exists. He complains about his mother’s responsibility for him and his life. She tries to explain to Chuck that it is necessary for both of them that she goes to work. Chuck simply hates it, when other persons other than his mother taking care of him.

When Chuck is among his friends he speaks little, but when he speaks it’s like crushing all other speakers. He also appears to be very sarcastic that nobody expects such from him. He is not assured of himself. Sometimes he blames himself for his family messed; he thinks that he is suffering. That’s also a reason for him to sit together with other people and discuss how they can get their lives together. How would it be when there are true ethical rules? True humanism everywhere? That’s something the youth in Proud City is talking about and want. Chuck and some friends are about to realize this.

I look up to people like Chuck. They are really gifted. Sometimes they have serious difficulties to articulate themselves, but they can compensate that by talking not so often. It is also interesting to talk to people like Chuck. They have thoughts and questions that often surprise others. They are the sorts of people the world should be made of. They are always critical about our old-fashioned ways of life. They can help us to change the world.

By Mario Zehr

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## A Metaphor



Proud City is a metaphor for a City, somewhere between recession and hope - economic growth. A society which has all the necessary for living, but which is not really futuristic. Everything is organized and rationalized – contrary to the Brave New World: there is a law for any detail in life.

In chapter 3 a lost bullet hits Charles Brown. The bullet comes out of the gun of a young robber by accident. His wife, Elizabeth goes with Alex to the hospital. After a few researches for Charles, Elizabeth collapses, hit her head and is immediately admitted in the hospital as a case number 99. Ninety-nine means cardiac arrest. After Alex is driven away by the hospital staff, he meets his wife and son in the mensa. Martin, Alex's son, is complaining about the world he lives in makes theories about the distribution of headache pills.

This chapter describes how bad a patient can feel if his doctor only considers him as a number. And it tells a little about the possible consequences of such conduct.. For example, Elizabeth is brought to the psychiatric department a different station in the hospital. She has nothing to do there but spends the night there. It is bad to have a person's identity reduced to a cardinal value. But in huge hospitals with many busy doctors and even more busy nurses it may be the only alternative to chaos. I prefer a doctor who ignores the name of the patient he is saving to the one who knows every detail of the patient dying in front of him.

The children are our future and this book should teach us how to enlarge our future of another 2000 years. This works only if everybody, since childhood, learns to be responsible and to evaluate the consequences before acting.

Martin is the caricature of a modern horrible brat, nourished with fast food and raised by the Teletubbies. Even his teacher would not understand all the things he talks about. But through his constant criticism he shows how impossible it is to write a law that does justice to everybody in every situation.

Simon.Stettler@gmx.ch

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## A Fictitious World



“Proud City” shows us a fictitious world where society is divided into three parts. In fact, life in real cities like Zürich or New York can be compared to Proud City, they share similar problems.

The book gives some good ideas, helps us to recognize problems in our world. But in my opinion, the author goes to far, sometimes. I agree with his point of view, that we can't change the world with conventional methods. Drastic measures must be applied, but this is impossible at this time. Mankind has to be changed and a single man can't change anything. People should recognize that one is responsible for his actions and one can't hide behind a lot of money.

All in all an interesting, but challenging book, the author lets the reader feel his own conviction.

Michael Morandi

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Comments and Reviews of Proud City from the following persons:

[Article from The Caribbean Camera](#)

## 'LET THE CHILDREN RULE THE WORLD'



**THROUGH  
OUR EYES  
Gerald Paul**

**S**o you think that young people are the leaders of the future?

Well, think again. Guyana-born and Switzerland-based author Amo Sulaiman has written an erudite work in which he posits that it is about time that young people revise society and law.

Let the youth rule the world!

*Proud City* waxes philosophical and it could be any city in the world. It could be a hospital, a family. And it could be a person. The low spirit of *Proud City* is about social problems, human relations, personal problems and conflict.

However the high spirit of *Proud City* is rising everywhere and gaining momentum to reshape human reality. It's the revo-

lution of revolutions in which young adults are overcoming possible world situations, and actual ones, too. The inhabitants of this Proud City are mostly young adults and children, today. They live in the actual world. From their hopes, wishes, dreams and actions, they will transform social reality to a new order.

Sulaiman completed his Master's degree in Philosophy in Montreal and eventually his Doctorate in Philosophy at the University of Bern.

*Proud City* is his first novel, though he has published two books on philosophy, one on English literature, and several academic articles.

However, the Picasso publications production enlightens the readers with insights: "My friend, everything is economics, not politics. Economists make politicians crawl like little babies without diapers.... Economists make us their attitude-reality. How to live a successful financial life and how to be happy doing it. This isn't hard to do. Look at ourselves, we're just teenagers. And we are gearing up for our careers by studying job trends. Our schools have done it for us....our parents are making

the mold."

Indeed, the author seeks to get the reader outside of the box from the mundane to the horizons and streets yet to be explored.

This book is thought provoking and is highly recommended.

It's available at A Different Booklist and other stores.