

'In this satire, a summit on preserving the capitalist order comes to some disturbing conclusions as it follows the logic of capitalism ad infinitum.'

--Washington Post

'With acid wit and somber truths, The Lugano Report brilliantly portrays, through the eyes of its imagined but all too realistic planners, a world that may be heading for deep trouble.'

--Noam Chomsky

'A brilliant, terrifying book which should be on the beside table of every policy maker in the West.'

--Victoria Brittain

'Susan George's intimate knowledge of the bureaucratic mindset means that the book works superbly as a satire - following the example of Swift's Modest Proposal - but her greater aim is to show that there are viable alternatives to this nightmare.'

--New Internationalist

A scenic view of a mountain range with a building in the foreground. The mountains are covered in snow and the sky is a pale blue. The building is a large, multi-story structure with a prominent tower or spire. The foreground shows some trees and a road.

The Lugano Report

THE LUGANO REPORT

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1 EXT. A RUBBISH DUMP - DAY 1

ASPHODEL is standing on a rubbish dump site in a squalor-filled ghetto. It is clear he is a foreigner. He stands with a camera and notebook. Only the youngest workers notice him and stop and smile as they scurry through a newly-dumped load. He snaps a few shots and then stops. He is expressionless. His hands soon fall to his side. It is clear he doesn't have the will to document the desperate events.

2 EXT. TRAWLERS BOAT - DAY 2

SNOWBELL stands on the deck of a fishing trawler in the deep Antarctic. She is surveying the broken sea ice and is surrounded by a group of hard looking Russian fishermen who are panicked describing the deterioration in the environment. Their vessel is in a stand-off with another trawler. This is relayed back to Snowbell through a broken English translation. She wears a look of determination and fury on her face.

3 INT. DESERT HUT - DAY 3

PENNYCRESS is standing in a desert hut surrounded by militia men. He is watching a recruitment drive for young boys.

4 EXT. BEACH RESORT - DAY 4

FOXGLOVE is lying next to a sunny swimming pool with his head in a book.

5 INT. MANSION MAIN HALL - DAY 5

An old room is being prepared in a huge elegant house. There is a matter of urgency demonstrated by the cleaning staff who are efficient and dressed in the formal uniform of servants of an indeterminate era. There are old style painted portraits looming in large baroque frames around the room. A large cloth is removed to reveal a huge oak table that intimidates rather than welcomes.

6 INT. LARGE OFFICE - DAY 6

EDELWEISS sits in the middle of a business agreement between two firms. All eyes are on him as he advises about some finer detail and gathers his next thoughts as a translator translates.

7 INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY 7

DILL is in a large lecture hall presenting a lecture to a half empty room.

- 8 EXT. STREET - EVENING 8
- CINQUEFOIL is in the midst of a violent riot in a modern city. She is a spectator watching the events unfold in a running battle between police and rioters. A detail of the rioters turning on and attacking a smaller group of rioters catches her attention.
- 9 INT. CAFE - EVENING 9
- HAWKWEED is having a coffee outside an artisan bakery cafe. He is reading a newspaper as a dog on a lead sleeps beside him. The sleepy sunny weather completes the picture.
- 10 EXT. FARMERS FIELD - DAY 10
- BURDOCK is shown the failed crop of wheat in a field by a stricken South American farmer and his family. He appears detached as he takes notes and avoids eye contact despite their pleading.
- 11 INT. VARIOUS HOTELS - DAY 11
- These are the WORKING PARTY MEMBERS. They pack their luggage, efficiently, methodically as they all prepare their own independent journeys. They all appear deep in thought about something as they go through more motor-responses of packing, addressing hotel workers, checking out etc.
- 12 EXT. HOTEL DROP-OFF AREA - DAY 12
- A leather-gloved hand opens the rear door. Hawkweed exits the car and pauses. He is holding a suave briefcase. He rubs his hands in a gesture unique to Hawkweed. A man removes two large suitcases from the trunk of the car and places them at the side of the pavement. Another man arrives and loads the cases onto a trolley he reaches for the briefcase but is rebuffed in a fashion more dismissive than dramatic.
- 13 EXT. AIRPORT - DAY 13
- We see the back of HAWKWEED as he enters the airport.
- 14 INT. MANSION MAIN HALL - DAY 14
- Mr. MALLOW is at the large table. He is putting place names upon the table. He distributes the names cautiously like a poker player as an aide tests computer connections to a powerpoint in the background.

1. ASPHODEL.

2. BURDOCK.
3. CINQUEFOIL.
4. DILL.
5. EDELWEISS.
6. FOXGLOVE.
7. HAWKWEED.
8. PENNYCRESS.
9. SNOWBELL.

- 15 INT. AIRPORT 2 - DAY 15
- Foxglove enters the door holding a different briefcase. He is accompanied by a different man and trolley. They bypass the first-class queue and go straight to the front. We see the back of Foxglove as the lackey loads the suitcases on to the conveyer belt.
- 16 EXT. MANSION GROUNDS - DAY 16
- Mr. Mallow receives a phone call. He listens intently. He looks out at the idyllic site of Lake Lugano and the surrounding mountains beneath him.
- 17 INT. AIRPORT 3 - DAY 17
- POV of Airport Check-in Clerk looking at a passport. It is the passport of Cinquefoil whose back we watch as she progresses effortlessly through security alongside the airline staff.
- 18 INT. AIRPORT 4 - DAY 18
- Dill sits in a departure lounge waiting to board the plane. He finishes a call on his mobile in a cheery fashion. His facial expression changes to something more serious when he hangs up. He turns off the mobile, removes the sim card and reaches to pack both phone and sim away in separate compartments of his luggage.
- 19 INT. AIRPLANE - EVENING 19
- ASPHODEL is seated in the first class section of an aircraft. There is a sudden jolt of turbulence and a smiling waitress almost falls on him. She composes herself and offers him a cocktail that he declines.

He forces his head back into the headrest and turns to look out the window at a strange cloud formation and storm in the distance. This becomes hypnotic for a moment.

- 20 EXT. AIRPORT RUNWAY - EVENING 20
 Pennycress arrives at the destination airport and departs the plane.
- 21 EXT. AIRPORT 5 - EVENING 21
 Edelweiss exits the airport and crosses to a waiting Black Mercedes Benz. The driver opens the rear door and the trunk is popped. The airport lackey loads his cases into the trunk and closes the trunk and retreats back to the airport without soliciting a tip. They enter the car and pull away. He looks somewhat flustered as he is unable to make a connecting phonecall.
- 22 INT. MERCEDES BENZ - EVENING 22
 Asphodel sways from side to side in the back seat of the car as it drives around bends at great speed. He stares ahead blankly, undisturbed by the movement.
- 23 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - EVENING 23
 An aerial view of a black Mercedes Benz weaving its way through the countryside. The car is accompanied by a motorcade and we see it in operation as the car passes effortlessly, at speed, through a small but busy village. We can see a second car coming from a different direction driving at great speed into lane behind it. We then see a third car. It resembles an abstract choreography as they all fall into line on the one road with motorbikes swarming around them.
- 24 EXT. MANSION GROUNDS - EVENING 24
 A car pulls up outside the imposing large mansion. Mr. Mallow and an aide stand outside waiting. The Driver walks around and opens the rear door and Edelweiss emerges from the car. A second car pulls up almost instantaneously. Edelweiss stands and views the house for a second before approaching the entrance. The second driver retrieves the suitcases from the trunk, and gives them to a member of the staff who has a hotel suitcase trolley to transport the cases. A third car and then a fourth car pull up. Mr. Mallow nods agreeably then walks forward to greet Edelweiss and Cinquefoil who has emerged from the second car. It is an operation of force done with military precision.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: THE LUGANO REPORT

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INT. MANSION RECEPTION AREA - DAY

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MR. MALLOW sits at an ornate table in the hallway. There is a medical bag in front of him. He is wearing surgical gloves. Eight of the nine Working Party Members stand in the hallway. There is a strange atmosphere in the crowded hallway as servants mill about taking coats, offering hor d'oeuvres and glasses of champagne. Some of the Working Party have their shirt sleeves rolled up and have cotton wool taped to their arms. There is a mixture of hollow laughs, silence and whispers of anticipation in the air. Mr. Mallow sits with a syringe in hand and appears quite capable and happy to multi-task by maintaining polite conversation with the group while taking bloods. Burdock sits opposite Mallow and rolls up his sleeve. He hands him a small silver USB data key that Mr. Mallow puts next to the other keys and vials of blood. All of these are itemized by a simple letter 'B' or 'H' etc. Burdock tries to distract himself from the syringe and looks up to see they are sitting under a small but well presented painting on the wall.

BURDOCK

That's new eh? (nodding to picture)

Mr. Mallow continues with the blood test without even looking up to acknowledge what Burdock might be referring to.

MR. MALLOW

Oh no! Not new at all Mr. Burdock!
Not new at all! That's been here
for a very long time.

Mr. Mallow looks up deliberately and eyeballs each of them while saying the next line.

MR. MALLOW (CONT'D)

A very, very long time indeed.
Pride of place that has. A very
important work. Do you recognise
it?

The others gathered all turn and take notice. They all seem to wear a perplexed expression as if they are pretending to remember but are quite sure Mallow is lying. Cinquefoil recognises the piece and breaks this silence that is awkward to everyone except Mr. Mallow.

CINQUEFOIL

That's a copy of a painting by Max
Ernst isn't it?

MR. MALLOW

No not a copy, not a copy. It is
indeed by Max Ernst. This is the
original. Very good!

(MORE)

MR. MALLOW (CONT'D)
 How very perceptive of you. You seem to know your art history no?

CINQUEFOIL (PERPLEXED)
 I know some...but this hangs in New York?

Mr. Mallow looks up to acknowledge Cinquefoil with a smile before removing the syringe from Burdock and giving him a plaster.

MR. MALLOW
 My my! How clever you are. Very perceptive indeed.

Mr. Mallow ushers Burdock from the chair, labels the blood vial and proceeds to deliver a speech on the painting. The camera tracks from Mallow to a close-up, forensic detail of the painting then back to Mallow again.

MR. MALLOW (CONT'D)
 This picture comes with a very interesting story. For those of you who don't know it, it is called 'Two Children are Threatened by a Nightingale'. Mr. Ernst arrived at this quiet surrealist masterpiece following some sudden and uncomfortable personal life experiences. This fine piece of Dada art from one of the founders of surrealism arrived here through a complex arrangement of friendships and business deals. This caused quite a stir in bohemian circles at the time and appeared to aggrieve and damage the reputation of Mr. Ernst, hence, it was decided that a duplicate copy of the piece was reproduced and sent for public show arriving where it is now, in New York. It is understood that Mr. Ernst grew quite enamored by this well-kept, high profile deception that I now impart in great faith to all of you. It seemed to sit with his idea of 'fun' as it were. And now it rests here.

CINQUEFOIL
 That's an incredible story.

Mallow gestures for Asphodel to sit opposite him.

MR. MALLOW
 Incredible indeed. A wonderful specimen of early surrealism.
 (MORE)

MR. MALLOW (CONT'D)

Mr. Ernst was known to refer to his work as 'the exploitation of the chance meeting of two remote realities on a plane unsuitable to them'. I must admit, I do quite like that explanation. However, personally, I think all the great future artworks will be maths equations. Wouldn't you all agree?

Mr. Mallow holds up and twirls one of the USB data keys and it shimmers in the pale light.

MR. MALLOW (CONT'D)

Now. Aha! Mr. Asphodel. (Writing)
A.S.P.H.O.D.E.L. How are you sir?
Are you enjoying your bank account?

The group laugh in a dark, hollow manner. Asphodel sits sheepish, presenting his arm to Mallow and placing his USB data key in front of him.

MR. MALLOW (FOR ALL TO HEAR) (CONT'D)

There's no need to worry with these tests, they are all simply a straight-forward procedure like last time. Your commissioners understand the scale of your job and have simply decided it best to insure their investment. This is one such formality, clerical if you will, simply for admin purposes, for me to 'push the pen' as it were. No reason to worry at all nor for me to be too particular.
(Concentrating, inserting needle)

Mallow looks up to engage Asphodel in eye contact. We cut to a close up of needle moving in his arm.

MALLOW

So. Long. As. All. The bloods.
Come. Back. Clean. I'm sure you understand? Now how was that?

Mallow has finished the blood tests and stares at Asphodel smiling. Asphodel is clearly disturbed by the whole procedure and sits rubbing his arm.

MR. MALLOW

I am sure everyone is quite tired following their respective journeys so I suggest you all rest for the evening and enjoy some aperitifs and a nice meal before recommencing again tomorrow in the noon yes?

(MORE)

MR. MALLOW (CONT'D)

Also, it seems Ms. Snowbell has been delayed on her return to the group. A combination of weather and traffic has caused her to miss a connecting flight. I cannot clarify as to when we can expect her but (nodding to Dill) I'm sure we can continue as expected and monitor the situation as we go yes?

Dill nods dutifully in agreement. Mallow stands and ushers them all from the hallway through a large door into an eloquent living room.

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INT. MANSION CORRIDOR - EVENING

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Asphodel moves along the corridor trying not to look behind him. The others can be heard chatting below. He finds his room, enters and locks the door behind him. He moves about slowly, scanning the room. He walks to the bathroom and turns the taps on. He studies the water in the sink, then in a glass. It is unsure what he is looking for or if he is happy with his findings. He leaves the taps running on full and leaves the bathroom. He walks to the bedroom window and looks out. He sees some suited security out on a perimeter fence of the property. There is a golf course between him and them. He picks up his luggage and places some files on the large study desk. He sits down at the desk and opens the drawer looking for something. He removes a bed linen, takes out the large drawer and overturns it and feels the manically scrawled words carved into the wood beneath. EVERYTHING TAKES FOREVER. He sighs, gets up, moves across the room and lies down on the bed and exhales. He resembles a picked flower beginning to wilt. He smells the bedclothes and stares off. We can hear the taps running in the background.