

51

Sb

Antimony

121.75

Money and Its Opposite

What a funny language English is! The opposite of matter is antimatter, and the opposite of macassar is antimacassar. But the opposite of money drops the letter "e" and is spelled "antimony."

Antimony makes the world go the other way round. Too much money in the bank? Too much furniture? Too big a house? Antimony can take care of that.

Next to money, antimony is the most useful substance in the world. It is the great universal solvent. It rids us of obnoxious billionaires and blowhard politicians. It humbles the mighty and silences the proud. It proves the moral superiority of the poor, for the rich hoard all their wealth to themselves while the poor are willing to share their largesse of antimony with anybody.

A good government will keep equal amounts of money and antimony in circulation. It's important that neither one dominates the economy. Too much antimony results in a depression. Too much money results in a celebrity culture. Both are alternatives devoutly to be avoided. So once a month the government sends modest sums of money to your retired parents. Once a year it sends an immodest lump of antimony to you. In this way balance is preserved.

The whole world knows that everything King Midas touched turned to gold.

Very few realize that he had a twin brother who was as antiwealthy in antimony as Midas was?well, you get the idea. Where Midas had servants, luxury, a palace, he had nobody, squalor, a cardboard box.

I'd blush to tell you what everything King Antimidias touched turned to.

# Michael Swanwick's Periodic Table of Science Fiction

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## Money and Its Opposite

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