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## WORLD FUTURES

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## Unity with Diversity: Toward Social Policies for a Future World Order\*

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### THE PRESENT AS A UNIQUE ERA

It has become a common observation that change is the keynote of the recent past, the present, and the expected future for most of the world's population. Much less common, but possibly more important, is the observation that the *nature* of change currently in process may in retrospect well prove to have been more fundamental and far reaching for the majority of mankind than has been experienced for centuries or even millenia. In discussing today's topic, "Problems of Human Unity," I can think of nothing more relevant to contribute than a brief analysis of why pervasive change is required in our time, a particular type of change which seems most needful for the future, and some social policies through which it might be fostered.

From the perspective of recorded history, the present era appears to be unique in at least two ways. First, it is a period in which the so-called "developed" nations (and increasingly the "developing" nations as well) are living off the legacy of virtually non-replenishable minerals and fossil fuels of this planet.<sup>1</sup> Simultaneous with this depletion has been a despoiling of an increasing fraction of the yet renewable portions of the ecology on which human survival depends.<sup>2</sup> The excesses of the present were

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preceded by millenia during which man's consumption from the ecological reservoir was small and his impact on the planetary environment minor. It must be followed by a period of indefinite duration in which human activity fits some new set of ecological relationships which will likely be antithetical to many of the basic values and norms on which industrialized societies of the present are based. How to limit excessive consumption of these resources by the more affluent nations, while not preventing less affluent nations from getting their fair share, is one of the fundamental problems facing the world today.

Second, the present era is unique in that the processes and products of the industrial revolution have led to the creation of intra- and transnational institutions that have become increasingly specialized, complex, and "close-coupled": a change in one sector of a society quickly and strongly affects other sectors, often in unanticipated ways that are difficult to manage. As Sir Geoffrey Vickers has noted,<sup>3</sup> this complex of institutions has "displaced, though not replaced, the natural world as the immediate environment of man in our more industrialized societies." We have become dependent on the functioning of such institutional systems for the production and distribution of essential goods and services; hence our collective survival depends on their continued *systemic* integrity.

Human systems, however, depend on trust, agreement, and political law rather than on unchanging "natural" law, hence they are inherently less stable in times of rapid cultural change than are "natural" systems. They are particularly sensitive to breakdowns caused by war, terrorism, and simplistic attempts at reform. The hope of avoiding such breakdowns and an intensification of the systemically related problems of the world seems dim indeed, however, given: 1) the present tendency of individual institutions (both national and subnational) to "suboptimize"—that is, to secure an advantage for one part of the system at the cost of poorer system performance overall; and 2) the present political inability to create a workable world mechanism to adequately govern these institutional systems.

From this perspective, then, "human unity" seems more a

necessity than an abstract ideal. Of course, a variety of problems must be overcome if this ideal is to be realized. Rather than list such problems, however, it may be more illuminating to construct a wider context for studying them.

#### A NEW PERSPECTIVE FOR VIEWING SOCIETAL PROBLEMS AND POLICIES<sup>4</sup>

To understand the diversity of societal problems in an overall perspective, it may be useful to think of four roughly defined types or levels of problems.

- 1) *Substantive* problems lie at an applied or operational level, and are usually identified as immediate targets for corrective attention or increased allocation of money or other resources.
- 2) *Procedural* problems are those that impede the process of collectively setting priorities and strategies to solve the substantive problems.
- 3) *Normative* problems concern the appropriateness and effectiveness of a people's values, preferences, goals, and so forth, that are the basis of planning and priority setting.
- 4) *Conceptual* problems are difficulties that seem to be intrinsic to the way we think, the words we use—in short, to the particular vision or understanding of reality that is dominant in a culture—thus affecting our ways of perceiving and doing, and also the formation of our normative values.

These four categories can be thought of as referring to the levels of: 1) action; 2) communication and decision; 3) ideals; and 4) ideas.

The importance of distinguishing the above four levels is evidenced by the fact that most informed persons agree on what the crucial substantive problems of our time are. Most of the visible disagreement—and at least in the United States, most of the policy

analysis supported by government funds—occurs at the procedural level, in the assignment of priorities and the choice of strategies. Explicit analysis of normative values and of alternative conceptions or Gestalt understandings of the total situation are, however, almost totally left out of scientifically or politically oriented policy analysis and problem solving. Thus, by addressing ourselves to the normative and conceptual levels of inquiry, we may create new understandings through which societal problems that previously looked irresolvable may become tractable.

### THE INDUSTRIAL-STATE PARADIGM AND ITS LIMITATIONS

A useful way of thinking about problems at the conceptual level has been provided by the historian of science, T. S. Kuhn.<sup>5</sup> He uses the term “dominant paradigm” to refer to the basic ways of perceiving, thinking, and doing that are associated with a particular vision of reality, largely embodied in unquestioned, tacit understandings transmitted primarily through outward behavior, and only secondarily through written codes and explanations. Although Kuhn used the concept mainly in connection with the evolutionary transformations in science (e.g., from Newtonian mechanics to quantum mechanics and relativity) the idea of dominant paradigms is equally useful in considering cultural transformations.<sup>6</sup>

In historical retrospect, we can infer the existence of a cultural paradigm which began its climb to dominance several centuries ago in Western Europe, has since influenced all aspects of Western culture, and is now influencing all cultures of the world. For convenience we may call it the “industrial-state” paradigm. This paradigm, sharply differing from the dominant paradigm of the pre-industrial Middle Ages and early Renaissance periods, is characterized by:

- Development and application of scientific method
- Wedding of scientific and technological development

- Industrialization through division of labor
- Progress defined as technological and economic growth
- Acquisitive materialism, the economic-man image and work ethic
- Man seeking control over nature through a positivistic theory of knowledge

Although the industrial-state paradigm has been strikingly successful, there are reasons for suspecting that it is gradually breaking down. The beginning of breakdown of the paradigm can be inferred by the fact that its successes underlie so many serious social problems of our day. Table 1 illustrates this point. The left hand column lists some of the achievements of the highly industrialized nation-state system; the right hand column shows the corresponding problems to which these have led.

A less obvious effect of the industrial state paradigm has to do with sources of new values. The development of science within this paradigm has eroded—and almost replaced—religion and other types of subjective experience as a giver of objective knowledge. In so doing, however, it has also eroded—but *not* replaced—these modes of experience as givers of basic positive values.

The industrial-state paradigm, then, was an ideal way to increase man's standard of living and to bring problems of physical survival under control. It was admirably suited for the transition, guided by earlier values, from a world made up of low-technology agrarian endeavors and city-states to one dominated by high-technology nation-states. It now appears ill-suited for the further transition to a planetary society that would (or at least could) distribute its affluence equitably and regulate itself humanely. Our present societal problems, particularly at the normative and conceptual levels, appear to be ultimately unsolvable in the industrial-state paradigm precisely because their origins are in the success of that paradigm and because its institutions of science and governance have no adequate source of new values to continuously guide themselves out of the dilemmas they have largely created.

Of course the assertion that the industrial-state paradigm is probably breaking down cannot be proved at this time. Nor does

Table 1 Selected Successes and Associated Problems of  
the Technological/Industrial Era

"Successes"	Problems Resulting from Being "Too Successful"
Prolonging the life span	Overpopulation; problems of the aged
Weapons for national defense	Hazard of mass destruction through nuclear and biological weapons
Machine replacement of manual and routine labor	Exacerbated unemployment, urbaniza- tion
Advances in communication and transportation	Increasing air, noise, and land pollu- tion; information overload; vulnera- bility of a complex society to break- down
Efficient production systems	Dehumanization of ordinary work
Affluence	Increased per capita consumption of energy and goods, leading to pollution and depletion of the earth's resources
Satisfaction of basic needs	Worldwide revolutions of "rising expectations"; rebellion against nonmeaningful work; unrest among affluent students
Expanded power of human choice	Inability or unwillingness to assume responsibility for the consequences of technological applications
Expanded wealth of developed nations	Increasing gap between "have" and "have-not" nations; frustration of the "revolutions of rising expectations"

it represent a view that is currently endorsed by the majority of policy planners who work in established institutions. Such planners typically view the future as a relatively linear extrapolation of the past and present, expecting new technological innovations to be adequate (as in the past) to solve the problems of the future; structural change in societal institutions and cultural values therefore are assumed to be unnecessary. For the reasons that have been presented, however, it would seem that a profound

transformation of what I have termed the industrial-state paradigm is, in fact, necessary. At the very least, such a transformational view of our era is in urgent need of exploration and analysis, for it may provide a pathway to a better future for all mankind.

#### POLICIES FOR INCREMENTAL TRANSFORMATION

Assuming that the influential "industrial-state" paradigm has become dangerously obsolescent and is in the process of breaking down, how might we seek to obtain a constructive replacement? (I assume that violent revolution is not a desirable alternative.)

Although not initially obvious, it is likely impossible to think out or to "invent" a replacement paradigm within the framework of the present one (as, for example, a new national foreign policy might be constructed). Paradigms, like what Rokeach has termed "basic values,"<sup>7</sup> are so deep and fundamental to human experience that they cannot be directly observed, but rather must be inferred by observing the behaviors we believe they lead to; and while the replacement of a dominant paradigm occurs by means of one or a series of integrating insights "whose time has come," premature attempts to force transformation are either ignored or, if forced, become counter-productive in that they actually delay the acceptance of the new.<sup>8</sup>

Thus rational planning of the precise substance of a new paradigm and the processes through which it could be constructed seems unfeasible. This is perhaps fortunate, because we—at least those of us in the highly industrialized nations—are the products of the very paradigm we must transform, and our rational thought processes are but a reflection of this paradigm. As in the process of psychotherapy, the very things that the patient thinks will get him out of his difficulties so often turn out to make the situation worse.

A preferable strategy is that of contacting our creative potential in ways that transcend the limitations of rationality, and of integrating the creative or suprarational with the other levels of human

thought and feeling. Only then, I believe, are we likely to obtain the new conceptions and actions that our era and the future demand. By directing such creative functioning to disciplined synthesis and integrative thinking at various levels in society, it should be possible to foster the occurrence of a series of increasingly *related* insights and applications from various sciences, from various religious-philosophical-therapeutic movements, and from various national and transnational institutions of commerce and governance—which as their relationship is recognized, would lead to the *emergence* of a new cultural paradigm for a planetary society.

Therefore, it would seem desirable to devise social policies that lead to actions which, though imbedded in and accepting present realities, lead through incremental short-run steps in the directions required for constructive long-run transformation and human unity. A relatively sudden coalescence of related insights from diverse fields of inquiry and institutions *may* come at some time in the future and *may* lead to a new world science-economics-religious-governance paradigm, but I believe it would be a mistake to make a “grand plan” with a well-fixed end in mind.

The discussion below is thus an attempt to create a framework for thinking about actions and policies that would contribute to such a transformation and to an eventual realization of human unity, world political order, and a dynamic ecological stability for the planet. It assumes the need for and the likelihood of:

- 1) Increasing attention to the normative and conceptual levels in institutionalized policy-planning processes; and
- 2) The development and legitimization of creative processes at all levels in society—both for individuals and for groups—through which the needed new insights and motivations may be realized.

To deal coherently with such a broad range of concerns, the discussion follows the matrix shown in Figure 1, where five tasks are presented in terms of various approaches to their accomplishment—a) creative processes, b) planning and research, c) economics, d) education, and e) institutions.

Required Tasks	(a) Creative Processes	(b) Planning and Research	(c) Economics	(d) Education	(e) Institutions
1. Establish new sense of world purpose	131*	131	132	133	134
2. Obtain and use new conceptualizations	135	136	137	138	138
3. Alter values, perceptions, premises	140	141	141	141	142
4. Guide/regulate technological development and application	143	144	144	144	145
5. Serve the varied needs of differing peoples	146	146	147	147	147

\*Note: The number in each matrix section refers to the page number of this article where the section is discussed.

**Figure 1** Matrix for discussing incremental policies for transformation.

### Establish a new sense of world purpose

A number of thinkers throughout history have recognized the importance of the "guiding image" or "dominant purpose." Johann Andrea, a German Utopian writing in the early seventeenth century, noted in his book entitled *Christianopolis*, "that in order to live wisely, men must have a sense of participation in a uniting purpose understandable to all, vital enough and noble enough to be the object of a common sense of dedication."<sup>9</sup> More recently the Dutch sociologist, Fred Polak, in his book, *The Image of the Future*,<sup>10</sup> deduced from a study of history that the ability of an ideology (or, I would add, a paradigm) to mobilize society depends in large part on the optimistic or pessimistic quality of its images of the future, and on whether it holds that the future can be changed by human activity in the ways that are desired. The general systems theorist Ludwig von Bertalanffy has surmised that a unification of world political systems is impossible without some type of universal symbolism that would appeal to man's unconscious mental processes.<sup>11</sup>

The creative vision of the great persons and the guiding images of the great cultures of history have played a crucial role in the development of our several societies. Many of these guiding images have an as yet unrealized potential for developing a universal sense of world purpose and unification; they have common elements not usually recognized, and may not be as mutually contradictory as is commonly believed. Hence it may be useful to seek out and make visible those common elements in the guiding images of different societies which point in the direction of commonly sensed world purpose. For example, consider: 1) the Marxist-Leninist vision of the two stages for the Russian Revolution (first a state-dominated socialism and then—with a withering away of the state as a result of increased citizen awareness,—a transition to a "true communism" in which the ideal "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs" would be realized;<sup>12</sup> 2) the two-level concept of *swaraj* (freedom, both political and spiritual) with which Sri Aurobindo helped inspire India's national freedom movement;<sup>13</sup> and 3) the twin mottos *E Pluribus Unum*

(unity out of diversity) and *Novus Ordo Seclorum* (a new order for the ages), which appear with the unfinished pyramid and transcendental eye on the Great Seal of the United States. Although the political doctrines that accompany such guiding images often seem to conflict at one level, note that each contains a second level of unfinished business which are not all that different from: 1) each other; or 2) more transcendent images such as Chardin's "Noosphere"<sup>14</sup>—or Aurobindo's "Supermind."<sup>15</sup> If better understood and publicized, such "second level" commonalities and complementarities intrinsic to images such as these might well contribute to a new sense of common world purpose.

*Creative processes* — In the *Bhagavad-Gita* Krishna (God) asserts: "in every age I came back to deliver the good, to destroy the sin of the sinner, to establish righteousness." This metaphor of the Gita has been amply documented by the anthropologist A. F. C. Wallace<sup>16</sup> who derived a series of stages through which many "revitalization movements" of the past have proceeded. Typical in one of these stages is an illuminating dream or revelation—a suprarational creative episode—that both inspires the recipient to become a charismatic leader of the social reform movement he is to create, and gives him the directions with which to proceed. Although movements with a "charismatic leader" and with "true believers" as followers may have been adequate in the past, the complexities of the modern world would seem to dictate that such creative experiences and the possibility of a raised level of awareness must now be brought within the reach of many.

Thus, in addition to attempts to revitalize past guiding images and unrealized purposes of various societies and culture, we need to develop and to make socially legitimate a variety of creative processes through which a substantial fraction of world citizens could participate in a work vision for world reform and order.

*Planning and research* — While many of the goals of various nations and institutions, of course, differ, this should not prevent the inclusion of planetary concerns from being considered as well. As this is not typically the case, however, methods need to be developed that would help legitimize the consideration of larger

purposes in planning, research, and development at all levels throughout society. John Platt has suggested a way in which this might be accomplished.<sup>17</sup> He has advocated the formation of “councils of urgent studies” whose task it would be to: 1) survey contemporary societal problems and capabilities; and 2) make recommendations regarding high priority areas for research whose exploration is imperative.

*Economics* – As noted above, many of the problems and issues facing us arise not so much from the failures but from the successes of the industrial-state paradigm. This is particularly true in the economic sector of the developed nations. As the great British economist, John M. Keynes succinctly stated:<sup>18</sup>

... the economic problem, the struggle for subsistence, always has been hitherto the primary, most pressing problem of the human race. . . . Thus we have been expressly evolved by nature—with all our impulses and deepest instincts—for the purpose of solving the economic problem. If the economic problem is solved, mankind will be deprived of its traditional purpose. Thus for the first time since his creation man will be faced with his real, his permanent problem—how to use his freedom from pressing economic cares, how to occupy the leisure, which science will have won for him . . . Yet there is no country and no people, I think, who can look forward to the age of leisure and of abundance without a dread. For we have been trained too long to strive and not to enjoy.

The development of the industrial nations of the world and their institutions have been largely guided by economic considerations, and only now are we learning the central weakness of the market system: the market has no inherent direction other than to satisfy the forces of supply and demand. But we have learned to create demand by advertising and image manipulation through such media as movies. “Thus, the danger exists that the market system, in an environment of genuine abundance, may become an instrument which liberates man from *real* want only to enslave him to purposes for which it is increasingly difficult to find social and moral justification.<sup>19</sup>

Although few people realize it, the present level of affluence enjoyed by our most developed nations may be impossible to

extend to all the peoples of the world. Many of the vital minerals on which highly developed technology depends, if drawn upon by even the present world population at a per capita rate equal to that of the United States, would be depleted within fifty years. The United States with only 6 per cent of the world population, consumes some 40 per cent of world resources—not, I think, because of any selfishness of the American people, but because of the *karma* intrinsic to what I have termed the industrial-state paradigm. And this pattern is growing rather than diminishing in our time.

Gigantic multi-national corporations are now rapidly being developed that are in large part designed to profit from the wage-price differentials between nations at different levels of economic development. Unless the operative values of such corporations are changed, their growth is sure to increase, rather than to ameliorate, the growing strain on the resources of the planet and the discrepancy between industrialized and poor nations.

Can we afford these costs, even though such corporations bring with them an opportunity for increased world order and an increased standard of living for developing nations? I think not. As the former Prime Minister of Canada, Lester Pearson, observed: "No planet can survive half slave, half free; half engulfed in misery, half careening along toward the supposed joys of an almost unlimited consumption . . . Neither our ecology nor our morality could survive such contrasts."<sup>20</sup> And neither could world political stability.

It is therefore evident that a new sense of world purpose relating to economics—the management of resources, the modification of incentives for distribution and consumption—is of crucial importance. It must harken back to one of the root meanings of the very word economics—that of "home management." We must come to see the planet as the home of the one family of man and to act accordingly.

*Education* — Clearly the role of education is crucial to the establishment of a new sense of world purpose. Most educational systems have promulgated the need for national unity and acceptance of the current national purposes as part of the socialization

process children are brought through. Too often, however, students are taught only the differences that divide the major ideologies and systems of the world; more emphasis needs to be placed on the similarities as well, and on the possibilities for synthesis. Thus, a sense of responsibility for and participation in the future of the human race and of the planet could be instilled in the children of all cultures.

*Institutions* – Vital to the emergence of a replacement cultural paradigm that would support a new world order and human unity is the fostering of a sensed world purpose for the institutions that significantly affect national policy making (e.g. defense). For this to happen it is necessary to first raise the overall level of ethical awareness of mankind, because nations cannot be expected to willingly forego defensive social policies without an increase in the level of trust that is shared among nations. The creation of transnational institutions which are governed by representative participants is one way to foster such a sense of trust. Another way would be to develop methods of negotiation which are not based on a force/counter-force strategy. The Japanese martial art of Aikido might prove a useful model to explore in this regard.

### **Obtain and use new conceptualizations**

Lewis Mumford has noted that there have probably been not more than about half a dozen profound transformations of Western society since primitive man, each of which was accompanied by a change in the *dominant underlying metaphysic*—the basic, implicit, taken-as-given vision of reality.<sup>21</sup> The interrelatedness of the underlying metaphysic and the dominant paradigm of the culture is suggested by Kenneth Boulding's<sup>22</sup> observation that the transformation to the present paradigm of science-based technological and industrial development was not possible until the metaphysic of animism was replaced by one in which will was considered essentially and solely a property of the minds and souls of men, and not of inanimate natural objects. (We note parenthetically that there may be growing a new, scientifically

based metaphysic which will once again find conscious intelligence and feeling in lower life forms. The work of various investigators indicate that plants, eggs, and other lower life forms may, in fact, exhibit telepathic awareness and “emotional” responsiveness.)<sup>23</sup>

The point here is that the dominant industrial-state paradigm of Western culture can in all likelihood be adequately replaced only if there is a transformation to an underlying metaphysic that could unite all cultures—and thus a transformation far more profound than other changes that are revolutionary only in a social or political sense. We might well apply to this type of reconceptualization, as did Pearce, the Greek word for religious conversion, *metanoia*: “a fundamental transformation of mind.”<sup>24</sup>

*Creative processes* — What should the characteristics of such a transformed metaphysic be, and through what creative processes could it be discovered or emerge?

Victor Ferkiss, addressing just this question, identified three basic elements that a “new” metaphysic to replace that which underlay the industrial-state paradigm should contain.<sup>25</sup> The first is a “new naturalism,” which affirms that man is absolutely a part of nature, of a universe that is always in the process of becoming. The second element, a “new holism,” is the perception or basic premise that “no part can be defined or understood save in relation to the whole.” The third, a “new immanentism,” is the understanding that the whole is “determined not from outside, but from within.” That such a metaphysic would not, in fact, be new, is attested by the scholarship of Aldous Huxley who showed in *The Perennial Philosophy*<sup>26</sup> that the “highest common denominator” of all major world religions places man’s final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being through which all is seen as interrelated. Although typically not realized in practice by many persons at any given point in time, the “perennial philosophy” is the source of inspiration and substance that has recurred time and again throughout history. What would be new indeed would be the realization of Sri Aurobindo’s guiding vision—namely, the bringing of a “supramind” process down to the mundane level of human concerns and activities, such

that the reality of the “perennial philosophy” could become consciously operational in world policy.

A variety of old and new creative processes exist through which (it is claimed) metanoia can be experienced—some typically leading to breakthroughs of vivid suddenness, some acting much more slowly. Various forms of prayer,<sup>27</sup> traditional yoga,<sup>28</sup> integral yoga,<sup>29</sup> Psychosynthesis,<sup>30</sup> psychedelic drugs,<sup>31</sup> Scientology processes<sup>32</sup>—these and various other techniques, when used with appropriate “set and setting”<sup>33</sup> are currently being applied to precipitate a “crack in the cosmic egg” that leads to a radical alteration in one’s personally held metaphysic.

*Planning and research* — Most of the techniques noted immediately above are oriented to essentially *individual* experience. If cultural and individual differences are to be transcended, however, it would help to also have a variety of techniques that might foster *group* metanoia—processes that could open up participants to simultaneous, shared insight among group members who in this way could transcend the limitations of individual experience and ordinary verbal communication. Although this goal may seem unrealistic from the viewpoint of conventional psychological thought, numerous mystic and occult writings, and at least one laboratory experiment<sup>34</sup> indicate that this is a feasible avenue for research.

Although a variety of processes are believed by partisans to be useful in catalyzing the metanoic experience, virtually no systematic research is being conducted which would either test the claimed efficacy of various techniques or compare the characteristics of differing techniques so that the newcomer to such exploration could more wisely choose which approach to seek out and attempt. Such *evaluative research* is needed, both regarding the metanoic processes discussed above, and the processes to change values and perceptions discussed later.

If metanoic processes are to become at all commonplace, and if the new conceptions (to which they will surely lead) are to be integrated into the policy process, there is a need for applied *policy research* that would seek better ways to accommodate new

conceptions and strategies, while yet proceeding with the “scientific” methods that have grown with an older paradigm. An approach that may promote this type of integration has been suggested by Edgar Dunn. He recommends what he terms an evolutionary “*process teleology*” in which “human beings . . . establish the process of human development as the goal of the process of social evolution, both the process and the goal (being) understood to be open to further transformation as we advance in the practice and understanding of them.”<sup>35</sup>

A high priority among theoretical tasks—given the lack of normative values in science—should be the development of what might be termed a new “moral science.” I use this term to indicate the possibility and desirability of developing an overall paradigm for scientific inquiry, technological application, and the conduct of both that would serve the needs of a “process teleology” as defined above. Such a new paradigm might render the questions of the nature of the good life and the good society amenable to empirical inquiry somewhat as questions about wholesome (holy) diet were earlier transferred from the realm of religion to that of science. If such a moral science were to materialize, its survival value could be extraordinarily high given the problems associated with the industrial-state paradigm noted above. It could revolutionize the nature of man’s existence and significantly contribute to the cause of human unity.

*Economics* – The economist Robert Heilbroner has noted that “. . . the central problem which is likely to confront the societies of tomorrow is nothing less than the creation of a *new relationship between the economic aspect of existence and human life in its totality.*”<sup>19</sup> The economic models of industrial societies—like those of their science and its application—have no rationale with which to reflect post-industrial values. Although there is now a crucial need to limit consumption in the highly industrialized societies and to redistribute material resources to those that are less affluent, our present economics systems make this difficult if not impossible. Thus, just as we need new conceptions for a “moral science,” we also need new conceptions and models

for a “moral economics”—an economics that would embrace the best characteristics of free enterprise and of socialism, and provide a world economic order while yet offering different incentives to societies that are at different levels of material development.

*Education* – The role of education is crucial both in the creation of new conceptualizations and in the propagation of new conceptualizations to new generations of students. But formal education itself needs reconceptualization if it is to serve these functions. The late anthropologist Margaret Mead used the term “prefigurative” to denote the ways in which the culture of the United States is increasingly following the leadership of youth<sup>36</sup> – young people who in greater numbers than their elders are turning to systematic disciplines through which they might raise their level of consciousness and thereby “preadapt” to change. The institutions of formal education, however, have not kept pace.

The word “educate” stems from the Latin word *educere*, “to bring forth, as something latent.” This conception of education, like the “perennial philosophy” discussed above is not new at all, but needs to be revived in our time. The present dominant mode of “education” (the teacher/textbook/classroom approach), like the industrial-state paradigm from which it grew and which it serves, was an ideal way to mold students into good servants of industry, but it is of questionable value for a post-industrial future.

*Institutions* – The resistance of institutions to change is one of the most difficult problems of social policy research. As Donald Michael has shown,<sup>37</sup> there is an almost universal unwillingness to acknowledge changes in society, which, if recognized, would imply a need for drastic shifts in the functional priorities and in the operating structure of organizations, and for the replacement or modification of peoples’ roles in those organizations. Furthermore, most political institutions currently operate from a conventional wisdom that sees error, like sin, as something not only to be avoided, but to be hidden as well. However, “error signals” or discrepancies between desired and actual results need to be regarded more as necessary data for social management than as evidence of failure (hence to be hidden from view).

These are difficult problems which will not be easy to work out, but new conceptualizations of the proper role and function of institutions in society (of which Dunn's thinking noted above and Michael's provide but two examples) should go far in making these problems more tractable.

#### **Alter values, perceptions, and premises**

Just as the industrial-state paradigm may be breaking down and is in need of replacement, so too are the attitudes, values, perceptions, and premises that have been associated with it. In fact it is very unlikely that a replacement paradigm is even possible until a substantial shift in attitudes and values has occurred, such that the old paradigm is clearly seen as obsolete and in conflict with present ideas and desires. Among the premises that appear in particular need of alteration, the following seem of special importance:<sup>38</sup>

- That the pride of families, the power of nations, and the survival of the human species all are to be-furthered (as in the past) by population increase.
- (The "technological imperative") that any technology that can be developed, and any knowledge than can be applied, should be.
- That the summed knowledge of experts constitutes wisdom.
- That rationality and reductionism in scientific thinking are the approaches to knowledge most to be trusted.
- That men are essentially separate, so that little intrinsic responsibility is felt for the effects of present actions or remote individuals or future generations.
- That man is separate from nature, and hence that nature is to be exploited and controlled rather than cooperated with.
- That quality of life is furthered by a system of economics based on ever-increasing consumption.
- That the future of the planet can safely be left to autonomous nation-states, operating essentially independently.
- That "what ought to be" is not a meaningful concept because it is not achievable.

In particular, a new sense of emotional and intellectual awareness is needed of the ineluctable facts that we are of one species, on one planet, with total responsibility for the future of both; that (as in nature) our potential for continued survival is enhanced through diversity of form rather than sameness, and hence that the "developed" nations must leave the "developing" nations free to develop alternative economic and social systems if they choose.

However, specific changes in basic values, perceptions, and premises, although needed, should not be attempted by "top-down" control. Nor is this type of control likely to be needed. Already we see signs in America that a substantial proportion of youth elites are shifting away from desiring material affluence and consumption toward social service and the kind of cultural transformation being discussed here.<sup>39</sup> Thus social policies that will keep pace with such changing perceptions and values may well be more appropriate than direct attempts to manipulate changes in such attitudes and values.

*Creative processes* — Although top-down control is undesirable, a variety of creative processes which foster change in attitudes and perceptions do appear necessary and useful. Several spiritual disciplines and psychological processes have already been noted as useful to hasten the experience of "metanoia"—the holistic mental transformation that brings a reconceptualization of reality. Not all persons will have this type of experience and, for those who do, there follows the need to communicate, to modify, and to harmonize their newly found conceptions with those of others. If the cause of human unity is to be significantly advanced, we must find acceptable techniques which help persons of differing backgrounds and conceptions to synthesize from their differences a unified point of view. Such techniques as Synectics,<sup>40</sup> "group dynamics"<sup>41</sup> and "behavior modification"<sup>42</sup> have been found effective aids toward these ends in the United States and some other nations. They need to be tried with diverse groups in task-oriented situations—such as the recent Stockholm Conference on the environment. In general, however, not only social-psychological processes but also cultural customs are needed that foster openness, authenticity, free exploration, and willingness to

risk and that are supportive of the individual while he reexamines deeply-held values, perceptions, and premises—whether he be by himself or in a task-oriented group.

*Planning and research* — Much of the discussion presented above regarding the planning and research needed to obtain and use new conceptions applies equally here to the task of altering values and perceptions. A somewhat different, but equally important approach to new conceptions and changed premises is the study, development, and application of *general systems theory*. An alternate way of viewing Table 1 is as a list of some rather simplistically phrased examples where the fulfillment of limited system goals—the larger system needs and goals being either misunderstood or ignored—has led to difficulties which will remain unresolvable until application of multi-level systems management concepts become feasible. Thus this area of investigation warrants a high priority. (An excellent non-technical exploration of the importance of and problems in general systems thinking is described by Mary Bateson's *Our Own Metaphor—A Personal Account of a Conference on the Effects of Conscious Purpose on Human Adaptation*.<sup>43</sup>

*Economics* — Given the enormous vested interests in, and inertia of, the economic systems of the present, it is unlikely that significant economic reform will be feasible without strong pressure for change from the citizenry of our various nations. Such demands for change are unlikely, however, unless we: 1) come to see that the long-range prospects for humanity are disastrous if we continue current economic premises and values that hinder full employment, equitable distribution, and regulation of consumption within reasonable limits; and 2) come to feel responsible for the welfare of all mankind—both present and future—such that we are more willing to forego a portion of our own desires for the larger good.

*Education* — If we are convinced that the various aspects of the industrial-state paradigm and its associated values, perceptions, and premises are enormous obstacles to the achievement of a balanced ecology, a world order, and human unity, then it follows

that education toward changing those premises is the paramount educational task in all nations which embrace it. Such education should be directed toward responsible stewardship of life on earth with the associated changes in values and premises that are required; and such education will have to offer—and have applied to it—the kinds of person-changing techniques noted above.

*Institutions* — Sir Winston Churchill once noted: “We shape our buildings, thereafter they shape us.” So too, our institutions. As the guiding values, purposes, and functions of our major societal institutions are based on nation-state ideals, it is obviously necessary to alter them if the cause of human unity is to be advanced.

One of the more effective ways that altered perceptions of obsolescent institutions come about is through the folk arts—arts whose contribution to change is often seen by those in power as being seditious. While not suggesting that governments utilize the folk arts to influence attitudes, they could at least not place obstacles in the way of folk artists and their followers who “dance to a new drummer.”

In addition to what has been said earlier, there is need for wide-ranging experimentation with alternative institutional forms that are based on differing premises and values. Auroville is a good example of a profound experiment, but many more are needed. Only if such experimentation takes place can be contrast, compare, and synthesize the best aspects of each for widespread use throughout our various societies. While it is useful for some of these ventures to be self-supporting, it is of vital importance that others receive support from public funds, for institutional experimentation is very costly and difficult to conduct.

#### **Guide/regulate technological development and application**

One of the most pernicious of the premises I have listed is the “technological imperative”—the premise that any technology that can be developed, and any knowledge that can be applied, should be. Like most of the others, this premise was very useful during an earlier era, but man’s technological capability is now outrunning

his capacity to deal wisely with the tools he has created. Although the most appropriate means for doing so are not yet clear, it is evident that some form of control must be exercised over technological development and application. Furthermore, this control, to be equitable and effective, must include at least the entire developed world.

*Creative processes* – The above sections dealing with creative or supra-rational processes dealt only with their positive potential for mankind, but their negative potential must be reckoned with as well. Coincident with the rise of interest in meditation and exercises for spiritual development and creativity, we find an increase in interest in the occult and various “psychic” skills, such as telepathy, clairvoyance, and psychokinesis.

While dependable information is far too sparse as yet, it appears that recent breakthroughs in learning theory, electronic instrumentation, and hypnosis—when appropriately combined—make it possible to train “normals” to acquire these skills. At least one journalistic<sup>44</sup> source indicates that these kinds of skills are being developed for military applications, and several research reports indicate that external manipulation of mental phenomena is possible by very high frequency electro-magnetic means.<sup>45</sup> Obviously much of this work is being kept secret, but there does appear to be reasonable evidence that man’s propensity for war and manipulation has now progressed from the making of physical, chemical, and biological weapons to psychological and psychic ones as well.

Various types of psychic knowledge and skills, assuming they are valid, hold enormous and potentially constructive implications for mankind but consider the following question:

Would you like to live in a world in which a substantial fraction of the population had well-developed skills of telepathy, psychokinesis, etc., *given the present levels of moral and ethical development that exist in our several societies?*

A crucial choice faces researchers in the new “psychic” sciences—a choice that was not available to the inventors of atomic and nuclear weaponry. The choice is whether psychic training

processes should be devised that would lead to skills and technologies that are likely to be applied in a "value-free" fashion (the responsibility for the use of these skills and technologies thereby residing in the traditional institutions of power); or instead, should those training processes be developed which would couple the development of psychic abilities with the simultaneous gaining of a holistic moral sensibility (the psychic practitioners so trained then being more able to act with responsibility for the good of all life forms with whom we interact).

Because conventional scientific research methods and ideals so clearly lead to the (possibly unwitting) making of the first choice, the opportunity confronts us to develop a new type of science—one that would opt for the second choice by replacing the traditional experimenter-subject dichotomy with procedures in which the researcher actively promotes the ability of the "subject" (human and/or non-human) to be his colleague; to act in a way that leads to open communication and agreement how best to proceed, such that the concerns of both parties can more nearly be fulfilled.<sup>46</sup>

Clearly the development of a "moral science," mentioned earlier, is becoming urgent. But in its absence, concrete plans should be explored for assessment and possible regulation of psychic technologies in addition to the physical ones now attracting attention.

*Planning and research* — Cooperative efforts among policy researchers of various nations, leading to alternative ways of guiding and regulating technology joins the development of a "moral science" and a "moral economics" as an especially urgent need.

*Economics* — There is little to add beyond what is said above in "Planning and research" and "Education" later, but it may be emphasized that regulation of economic institutions would probably be most appropriately achieved by some new economic model that would embrace the best characteristics of both the free-enterprise and the socialist models.

*Education* — If stringent "top-down" regulation (and the reduction in the freedom it would bring) is to be avoided, widely shared

ideals of what is desirable are necessary. Furthermore, indeed, control from the top down would not be effective unless there is also a widely shared belief in the desirability of such control. Neither of these conditions exists at present. Only after we have educated ourselves to appreciate the necessity for either self-imposed or collaborative control will it become a reality. Thus, here also education has an important role to play.

*Institutions* – The problems created by the industrial-state paradigm and the technological imperative demand new concepts of supra-national organizations for environmental control, coordinated industrial development and alleviation of poverty, and control of technological developments that threaten individual well-being or world stability. Here most of all it seems apparent that nationalism has to be supplanted by new concepts of planetary organization for guidance, a central aim of which should be to foster the use of technology and industrialization in the service of a higher quality of life for all mankind and the continued evolution of the human venture.

#### **Serve the varied needs of differing peoples**

The final required “task” that I will briefly address is that of serving the varied needs of differing peoples. A procedural problem that must be resolved if human unity is to be realized concerns the difficulty of adequately representing the interests of divergent peoples in international policy. In most developed capitalist nations, and internationally as well, “power” (wealth, influence, status, choice) is perceived as being increasingly concentrated, and increasingly used to serve the interests of those in power. The “poor” (both persons and nations) are thus understandably unwilling to invest in the solution of environmental problems, until they get their fair share of the affluence whose production led to these problems. Robert Theobald has summarized the situation concisely:<sup>47</sup>

Our choice between global development or global breakdown depends on whether we learn to understand the real differences in priorities between

the developed and developing nations of the world. Those nations which already have sufficient food, clothing, shelter, and services often forget the immediate needs of the poor. Those nations which must still solve the priority problems of production do not fully accept the concerns of the more developed countries will necessarily move from the quantity of goods produced to the quality of life. . . . The climatic conditions, the basic resources, the cultural traditions, the hopes of the population will mean that different strategies of growth are both necessary and valuable.

*Creative processes* – The discussion of the “Creative processes” and “Economics” above seem very relevant here. It is useful, however, to remind ourselves of the necessity of *actual* trans-cultural contact and *valid* knowledge of differences in new conceptions, plans, and policies are to be based on fact rather than imagination.

*Planning and research* – In addition to what has been said about the need for multinational policy research and experimentation with novel institutional forms, there is a need for research into more holistic conceptions of the human motivation and need-fulfillment.

The late Abraham Maslow,<sup>48</sup> and more recently Clare Graves,<sup>49</sup> have theorized about a hierarchy of needs in which the various goals and desires of mankind can be ordered. The theory states that only as man is able to satisfy “lower” needs (such as hunger, thirst, sleep, and safety) are the “higher” needs (such as belongingness in a group, love, and esteem of self and others) able to emerge. If all of these are relatively satisfied, then man naturally seeks to “actualize himself,” that is, to seek self-fulfillment in ways that promote growth rather than only satisfy deficiencies. Parsons and others<sup>50</sup> have entertained similar theories for whole societies. Although the research evidence on the validity of these theories is pitifully small, they appear as the only way in which the goal of human unity—with natural diversity—might be rendered operational. That is, only by meeting the felt needs—both of individuals and of societies—can we expect them to endorse a world order which deals with differences with different, but equitable, policies.

*Economics* – On the topic of economics there is very little to add to what has previously been said.

*Education* – One of the potential benefits of highly technologized mass media (first the transistor radio and now satellite television broadcasting and re-recordable video cassettes) is to vastly increase the availability of education for mankind. Not only do these techniques make feasible the combining of locally-oriented educational goals with those of a planetary orientation, they also may make it feasible to individualize the *type* of education offered, such that it can more adequately meet the needs of different types of learners. This is an area needing much exploration because, while there are many problems to be overcome—such as the potential for cross-national propaganda, the amortization of large initial investments, and other problems of systems management—so too there are many benefits that would be difficult to realize with other methods.

*Institutions* – The prospect of obtaining institutions—either national or transnational—that serve the varied needs of differing peoples seems dim indeed unless the types of changes discussed above can come about. The United Nations, with all its ideals and noble purposes remains a victim of the nationalistic agendas of its participants and their drive for competitive advantage. Even in the United States such institutionalized programs as “Education for the Disadvantaged” and other attempts to meet the needs of sub-cultural peoples are widely viewed as failures. It is, of course, difficult and often threatening to one’s view of reality to openly comprehend and respect the differing views of others. The design of new institutions which would more adequately meet differing needs by encompassing different approaches, however, seems impossible unless this kind of openness and understanding is achieved.

### **Concluding remarks**

I want to emphasize again that the views expressed here are significantly different than those held by the majority of Western policy

analysts and scholars, and that what I have tried to contribute is more of a framework for exploration of wholesome policies than a prescription for "human unity." Also they fail to adequately consider present conceptual and institutional systems that do not embrace what I have called the "industrial-state paradigm." Nevertheless if the foregoing analysis is at all accurate, we must prepare ourselves to face and to foster a fundamental change in the way we view ourselves and other responsibilities, or else expect to live in a planet that will increasingly become a fouled and dangerous nest.

It is worthwhile to note that virtually all of the problems discussed above are man-made, and that the future is dependent on the choices man makes to an extent never dreamed possible in times past. Thus, the future is predominantly management-limited rather than resource-limited; it depends more on the level of awareness, trust, and cooperative effort of the world's citizens and its leaders than on any other single factor. As the early American patriot and statesman Benjamin Franklin was reported to have said at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, "Gentlemen, we must all hang together, or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately."

#### AFTERWORD FOR *WORLD FUTURES*

It is striking how the foregoing discussion seems relevant now in 1981, almost a decade after it was written. Although much has changed in the world since then, many essentials have remained the same ("plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose").

It may be of interest to some readers that this article was written in 1972 when the author was working at the Center for the Study of Social Policy, Stanford Research Institute (now SRI International) with Willis W. Harman and others, on a project to chart, insofar as possible, what changes in the conceptual premises underlying "Western" culture would lead to a more desirable future for all of humankind. *Changing Images of Man*,

the final report of this project which was released by SRI in 1974, is to be made available this year by Pergamon Press as part of its *Innovation in Systems Science* Series edited by Ervin Laszlo.

Although a number of books with a point of view similar to that taken here have come out since 1972, three are especially noteworthy due to the way in which they contribute to this specific line of thought. They are:

1. Willis W. Harman, *An Incomplete Guide to the Future*, Norton, 1976 (both a layperson's summary of *Changing Images of Man* and an exposition of Harman's vision of the future).
2. Dennis Pirages, *Global Ecopolitics: The New Context for International Relations*, Duxbury Press, 1978 (an exploration of how needed changes in the dominant social paradigm of Western culture might look when applied at the global level).
3. Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, St. Martins Press, 1980 (a collection of facts, theories, and gossip about how the cultural transformation discussed above may, in fact, be coming about—but in ways that few social scientists would have predicted a decade ago).

If this paper were to be rewritten with the benefit of hindsight, the only major change I would make is the way in which the concept of a dominant paradigm is discussed. Donald N. Michael has argued that it is inappropriate to apply Kuhn's concept of paradigmatic revolutions to the level of society (or culture) at large—if for no other reason than the fact that at this system level it is virtually impossible to get widespread agreement on what should constitute an "anomaly." I find Michael's arguments convincing, but am frankly not sure how best to theorize about cultural transformation until we have more advanced models of social change than are now available.

Finally, inasmuch as this paper was originally written as part of a *Feschrift* for Sri Aurobindo, it is appropriate to now end it with a prediction made by this great prophet and sage of India: a prediction that has become extraordinarily relevant since 1972

to a world now entering the throes of an energy crisis that may, more than any other physical factor, be driving all nations into a cultural transformation for better or for worse.

[There is] a rather strange conversation which Sri Aurobindo had in 1926, a little before his retirement, with a French scientist. The remarks made by Sri Aurobindo, which could then have appeared enigmatic, throw a very curious light on the orientation of his experiences. It was a question of "modern" science:

*There are two statements of modern science that would stir up deeper ranges in an occultist:*

- 1) *Atoms are whirling systems like the solar system.*
- 2) *The atoms of all the elements are made out of the same constituents.*

*A different arrangement is the only cause of different properties. If these statements were considered under their true aspect, they could lead science to new discoveries of which it has no idea at present and in comparison with which the present knowledge is poor. This was in 1926.*

And Sri Aurobindo continued: *According to the experience of ancient Yogis . . . Agni is threefold:*

- 1) *ordinary fire, jada Agni*
- 2) *electric fire, vaïdyuta Agni*
- 3) *solar fire, saura Agni*

*Science has only entered upon the first and second of these fires. The fact that the atom is like the solar system could lead it to the knowledge of the third.*

What was Sri Aurobindo hinting at, and first, how was it that he had been able to know before all our laboratories (not to consider the rishis of six thousand years ago) that the solar heat—Saura Agni—had a different origin from what we call fire or electricity, that it is produced by nuclear fusion and the power of solar energy resembles that enclosed in our atoms? Here is something perhaps disconcerting for science which judges only from "concrete realities", this fact that all our physical realities, of whatever kind, are lined with an inner reality which is their cause and foundation; there is not the least material element which has not its inner lining, beginning from our own physical organs which are only the material counterpart or the support of the centres of consciousness. Everything down here is the projected shadow or the symbolic translation of a light or a force which is behind, on another plane. This whole world is a vast symbol. Science analyses phenomena, finds the equation of gravitation, weight, fission of atoms, etc. but it only touches the effect, never the real cause. The yogi sees the cause before the effect.

The scientist may be able to deduce the cause from the effect; the yogi deduces the effects from the cause; he may even deduce effects yet in-existent from the cause which already exists, the accident that will occur tomorrow from the force of the accident which is already there behind. The scientist manipulates the effect and sometimes brings about catastrophes, the yogi manipulates the cause or rather identifies himself with the Cause and he can change the effects or, as Sri Aurobindo says, the "habits" which we call laws. For indeed all our physical effects which we have codified under the form of laws are nothing more than a convenient *support* for the manifestation of forces which are behind, exactly as in a magic operation where one needs certain ritualistic diagrams, certain ingredients, certain formulae to enable the invoked forces to manifest. The whole world is a tremendous magical process, a continuous magic. But the terrestrial diagram and all the ingredients we have carefully and unchangeably codified, our infallible formulae are simply a convention—the terrestrial ritual can change if, instead of being hypnotised by the effects we pass to the cause which is behind, to the side of the Magician . . . Behind our phenomena of gravitation . . . there is what the ancient yogis called *Vayu*, the cause of gravitation and of the magnetic fields (as Sri Aurobindo also pointed out in the conversation of 1926) and it is thus the yogi can eventually defy gravity. Behind the solar or nuclear fire there is the fundamental *Agni*, that spiritual *Agni* which is everywhere . . . And it is because Sri Aurobindo and the rishis had seen this spiritual *Agni* in Matter, this "sun in the darkness", that they could have the knowledge of its material, atomic effect and of the solar fusions, long before our laboratories. This is also why, knowing the cause, they have dared to speak of transformation.<sup>51</sup>

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