# DE-COLONIZING THE FUTURE

## (First draft)

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April 1975

Ontario Educational

Communications Authority

> Philosophers have so far only changed their interpretations of the world.
> The point, however, is to change the world.
>
> Karl Marx

> I think that if we are going to reform the world, and make it a better place to live in, the way to do it is not with talk about relationships of a political nature, which are inevitably dualistic, full of subjects and objects and their relationship to one another; or with programs full of things for other people to do. I think that kind of approach starts it at the end and presumes the end is the beginning. Programs of a political nature are important end products of social quality that can be effective only if the underlying structure of social values are right. The social values are right only if the individual values are right. The place to improve the world is first in one's own heart and head and hands, and then work outward from there. Other people can talk about how to expand the destiny of mankind. I just want to talk about how to fix a motorcycle. I think that what I have to say has more lasting value.
>
> Robert Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance,* p. 297

Nonetheless, I am going to start at "the end," with "talk about relationships of a political nature." This is a call to de-colonize the future. You will see soon enough, I hope, that I fully agree that "personal" reform is as important as "political programs". I just don't believe that we can--or should--start at one "end" and neglect the other. That isn't the way to do it partly, because the relationship is not linear. It is cyclical and symbiotic.

Pirsig himself knows better:

> The real cycle you're working on is a cycle called yourself. The machine that appears to be "out there" and the person that appears to be "in here" are not two separate things. They grow toward Quality or fall away from Quality together. (325)

The cycle I want you to consider here is not a motorcycle. The "cycle" that critically needs maintenance is society, and I am even less an object apart from society than I am an object apart from my motorcycle. I plainly live in this world, embedded within a society which hugely shapes and constrains me, but upon which I--and other

members of it--exert considerable influence. Thus, if I am to "grow toward Quality," I must of course reform myself. But in order effectively to reform myself, I must reform my world--the roles into which I have been socialized, and the institutions which demand my attention. If I attend only to myself, the conventions of the present--which, after all, have largely made me what I am--will continue to offer their far more inviting rewards. It will be difficult, if not impossible, for me to resist them, to be truly "re-formed." Indeed, the most effective way for me to reform myself may be to try to reform my world.

But if, on the other hand, I try to reform the world without reforming myself, my attempts will also fail because the fanaticism inherent in my scientific or ideological "objectivity" will hide from me the humane and humbling lessons which my subjective involvement might otherwise teach.

> In seeking to change society, the revolutionist cannot avoid changes in himself that demand the reconquest of his own being. Like the movement in which he participates, the revolutionist must try to reflect the conditions of the society he is trying to achieve....
>
> The treacheries and failures of the past half-century have made it axiomatic that there can be no separation of the revolutionary process from the revolutionary goal. (Murray Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism,* p. 46)

But while some of us might imagine that we could learn to maintain a motorcycle, and some of us might even be able to imagine that we might learn to design one, few of us have come to see that we can--and must--invent new societies and new social institutions.

Of course, we are not so constrained about purposely re-structuring societies other than our own. Consider the rich literature of "modernization," "social intervention", "planned social change," "wars on poverty," and the like that once poured in a flood from the pens of our social scientists--and political decision-makers--and which still manage to trickle out on occasion. But for ourselves, well, "America, love it or leave it," we say. "My country, right or wrong!"

In addition, while we somehow believe that we must unquestionably accept our own society as it is, we should not uncritically love it: to love an artifact is an act of idolatry. Though we are quite willing to pledge allegiance to a flag that symbolizes our nation, most of us would consider it absurd to pledge allegiance to our Harley-Davidson ElectraGlide in Blue.

Yet, a nation is as much a human invention as is a motorcycle, and while there is considerable merit in the contention that we need to develop more "loving" relations with our hardware, I here want to suggest instead that we need to develop more "design" attitudes and skills towards our societies and the social institutions within them. If we attain a suitable involvement and dedication to this process, then we should see that the social institutions we should be designing are not for others, but rather for ourselves.

> Fortunately, there is no need to discuss ways of initiating change, since change is already in motion. At the same time, however, the pathology of the old culture is accelerating, so that the dangers it produces grow concomitantly with the possible of rescue.... Our task is to optimize the transition from one pattern of culture dominance to another, (Philip Slater, *The Pursuit of Loneliness,* p. 120).

Do I need to convince you that we need better social institutions than the ones we have at present? Most of us, whether "in" power or "out", recognize that some of our institutions are obsolete, They are still able to function as intended, but more and more people either don't want them to perform the function any longer, or else recognize that other functions need to be performed instead.

Many more of our institutions at the present seem to be ineffectual. They seem to be unable to perform functions for which they were intended, and which are still desired.

Evidence for the obsolescence and ineffectualness of the social institutions of society is most powerfully expressed in the well-known "Problematique" of the Club of Rome. While profound disagreements exist over the implications of the problematique for the survival of mankind, or of specified portions of humanity, few people are willing to say that these are trivial problems which can--and will--be easily and promptly solved within existing (or slightly up-dated) social institutions. And fewer still are willing to say that these are not problems at all (though some do believe that these are not *global* problems, or that they mask the more important global problems of exploitation and imperialism).

I am willing to rest my case for social design on its necessity. While the old social science modernizers and missionaries destroyed traditional societies "for their own good," I believe we ourselves live in a crumbling society which permits, if it does not require, new social inventions. In many ways, though not in all, it is not necessary for us to "tear down walls." Many walls are already down, and most people are not prepared for it. Our challenge here is invention, not destruction, and we find that we are not very inventive.

Of course, there are still enough colonizers of the future at work for those of us who require "bad guys" to be able to satisfy our bloodlust. While most of us find ourselves rather powerless to influence the future positively, others irresponsibly wield incredible long-range power in rather narrow fields--building contractors, housing developers, freeway builders, defense manufacturers, resource exploiters, political decision-makers, teachers, parents. The power is "long-ranged" because what people in such positions decide to do lasts for a long time as a fact to be seriously reckoned with by other people. It effectively shapes the future and limits options and alternatives for others. Such power is "irresponsible" because not only can no one from the future hold them accountable for their acts, but few in the present can either because we live by institutions and values which almost totally

discount the future (they are hangovers from the period when powerholders generally could not greatly predetermine the future, and it was not legitimate to question them when they did). Now, even those among us who think we can look ahead with foresight find there are few constituencies and no structural support in the present for the evaluation of our perceptions.

But even if you do not believe that we have any social or personal problems so serious that they cannot satisfactorily be handled by contemporary social institutions (for example, if you believe that there are no "critical problems"; or that our institutions are fully competent; or that it is the present, or perpetual, characteristic of humans that they can never solve their problems satisfactorily) I hope I can enlist your interest in at least *considering* the re-design of social institutions. Even if everything is basically OK, maybe we could do even better.

But if you believe, as I do, that we must invent a better future, I hope you will consider with me a way by which this might be done.

> ... [N]o political system can work because no political system can escape the structural contradictions inherent in the necessity of achieving values in a system which subverts the values themselves. (William Irwin Thompson, *At the Edge of History,* p. 120f)

All known human societies evaluate the world around them and create expectations of patterned human behavior which reflect, proscribe, or enjoin the evaluation. Thus, societies in the human past and present have rules (or values) which, for example, prohibit "murder" or "incest" or "theft;" or which require the care of "children" or "the elderly" or "the sick." All human groups affix differential status designations on certain members; they may differentiate "friends" from "strangers," "males" from "females," "good behavior" from "bad behavior."

All societies have such values and the rules defining them may seem absolute and unchanging to well-socialized members of that society. Usually, such members of a society do not question or seek to modify those rules. They are simply there, and accepted without thought as givens, roughly on a par with the "rising" of the sun and the "going down" of the same.

The structures through which those values are taught and enforced, as well as the ways by which patterned human behavior concerning other functions of society are obtained--such as reproduction, defense, the procurement of food, and the production of goods--are conventionally called "institutions".

While apparently all societies have such values and institutions, and while they may appear to be absolute for members of a given society, what is considered unquestionably "good" in one society may be absolutely "bad" in another, and an institution of considerable prominence in one society may be wholly lacking in another.

Thus, while all humans evaluate, what they value, the value they place on an act or a thing, or the way they teach and enforce the values often differ considerably. If a

member of one society were to move--or be moved--to another, she may find herself in a strange, new world where the old values and institutions no longer apply. She may consider the members of this other society to be "immoral," "barbaric," "demonic," "untrustworthy," "cruel." They may view her the same way.

She may try to learn the new ways, and she may in fact be successful in doing so, but the chances are she will always feel uncomfortable with the new values and institutions, and yearn for the old ways she once knew so well and naturally.

If we extend our consideration beyond that of human groups to other organisms, we may be amazed at the incredible variety of adaptive responses which life has made to similar environmental conditions. If we observe carefully and sample extensively, we may be struck not only by the fact that within a single environment an enormous variety of communities of organisms exist with differently patterned responses, but also by the fact that different communities of the same species may develop different social responses to similar environments--or the same community may alter its social responses as environmental conditions change.

Thus, while specific responses may differ, the fact remains that communities of organisms do respond if they are to survive. In human terms, even if societies differ in values and institutions, as I believe they do, they all do evaluate and institutionalize if they are to survive.

Individuals within a society seem to learn the values and institutional roles of their society in a matter analogous to the way they learn its speech patterns. Indeed, the analogy between speech and other values is quite instructive.

Normal human infants are capable of uttering a very wide variety of similar vocalized sounds in the early months of their lives regardless of where in the world they were born.

Moreover, the initial array of sounds produced by infants throughout the world seems to be very similar and very extensive. Soon, however, each infant comes to utter a progressively restricted array of sounds, and eventually will effectively cease to produce many of the sounds it once made. Apparently through a process of verbal socialization irresistibly acquired by association with speakers who attend to it, each infant, as it develops into a child and a full member of a community, comes to produce--and "hear" only the comparatively small number of phonemes of its language cohort, and becomes unable to utter--or hear--those it once could, some of which are certainly among the phonemes of some other language community.

If a person later in life attempts to learn the language of another group, she may find the process much more difficult than it was for her to learn her earlier language pattern, and, though she may eventually be able to communicate satisfactorily in the new language, she may always have an accent, and may never feel as comfortable with it as she does with her older language.

I think it is helpful to consider the origin and transference of human values and institutions to be similar to the origin and transference of language. It is as impossible for a normal, socialized human to be without values as it is for her to be without language; it is as ordinary for a society to have value-creating and value-

transferring institutions as for it to have a language; it is as ordinary for a human consciously and effortlessly to acquire values and behave within social institutions as it is for her to learn and speak the language (and to be uncomfortable with foreign values and a foreign language); and just as the particular phonemic and syntactical structures of any language are both utterly binding and utterly arbitrary (within the limits of human physiological and psychological capabilities), so also are human values and institutions objectively arbitrary and meaningless, but nonetheless personally and socially binding and necessary for persons socialized into them.

On the basis of this analogy, then, it is likely that there are no "fundamental human values;" no irreducible "human nature" that is significantly different from the behavior of any other organism; and no necessary human institutions that must be preserved at all costs. From this perspective, what may seem to me to be fundamental values and necessary institutions are merely the ones I am most familiar with; their origin was arbitrary and probably accidental; and my allegiance to them and not to others is mostly an accident of my own birth and rearing.

While as far as I can determine no single value is operationally defined (institutionalized) in the same way everywhere in the world, all societies evaluate and institutionalize. That, at least, is "universal."

Human institutions, such as the family, government, the economy, the schools, and the like, exist to teach, enforce, and perpetuate human values. Institutions, then, are one of two major ways--or are a portion of a single way--by which humans pattern their behavior according to certain values. It is helpful then to examine existing social institutions according to the human behavior they facilitate and/or prohibit--that is to say, according to the functions they perform.

Consider the institution designated as "the family." An incomplete list of functions which the family is expected to perform today might be:

- Human reproduction
- Infant protection
- Child rearing and socialization
- Purchase and consumption of many goods and services
- Locus of (especially heterosexual) adult companionship
- Locus of legitimate sexual activity
- Care of the elderly
- The place that, when you go there, they have to let you in.

Consideration of this list should show that these functions are by no means the exclusive prerogative of "the family." Every one of them is performed by other institutions in modern American society, either in addition to or concurrently with "the family." Indeed, some people believe these functions are becoming less and less the primary responsibility of the family, and are being explicitly assigned to (as in the formal creation of the public school to take over most of the socialization functions) or actually performed by (old folks homes) other institutions. Will--should--the

family vanish? Should it be strengthened by reinforcing these--and other--functions? Is it necessary--desirable--for these functions to be performed at all? Do we need--want--them all? Any of them? Something else instead?

Consider other institutions of American society--the government for example. A list of some of its functions might be:

- Collective decision-making
- Administration and enforcement of these decisions
- Adjudication of conflict between members of the society
- Collective leadership identification and selection
- ”The authoritative allocation of values”
- Regulation of communication between this and other societies.

Again, the list is not meant to be complete, but, as with the family, so with government, we can ask whether we want the functions to be performed at all--or in the way they are now actually or supposed to be performed--by any institution, including one called “government.”

> To proclaim a new heaven and earth so vast, so marvelous that the inordinate claims of technical expertise must of necessity withdraw in the presence of such splendor to a marginal status in the lives of men…. We must be prepared to entertain the astonishing claim men like Blake lay before us: that there are eyes which see the world not as commonplace sight or scientific scrutiny sees it; but see it transformed, made lustrous beyond measure, and in seeing the world so, see it as it really is….
> Theodore Roszak, *The Making of the Counterculture*

> We shape our tools, and thereafter our tools shape us.
> Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is the Massage*

Technology is better understood as “how things are commonly done or made … (and) what things are done or made” (Charles Singer, *A History of Technology*) rather than as hardware alone. If Singer’s more generalized definition is adopted, not only may “technology,’ become both hardware and software (and hence the so-called “technological imperative” which states that “anything that can be done technologically will be done” be revealed to be--if it exists at all--a problem inherent in all human action, and not something inherent in tools) but “technology” and “institutions” may be seen to be the same thing. Both “technology” and “institutions” are ways humans get things done. Unless it is a mistake for humans to try to get things done at all--and many religious and philosophical traditions insist that it is a mistake--it makes no necessary difference whether humans get things done by manipulating hardware (“technology”) or by manipulating human beings (“institutions”). One is not more “natural” or “humane” than the other.

From this point of view, it makes no difference whether a chair is produced by an individual craftsman for himself out of material he procured, or by a slave for his master, or by a factory worker (a wage slave?) for his superiors (and eventually for a buyer), or by a fully-automated factory for anyone who wishes for one. It makes a great deal of difference from other points of view, but functionally speaking, they are equivalent.

There is such fear of "technology" today, and such uncritical acceptance of old institutions, that this functional interchangeability needs to be recognized and stressed. It also needs to be recognized that the interchangeability of technology and institutions extends beyond ways of making chairs. It also includes ways of making babies. "Mothers are an invention of necessity" because the only effective way humans can reproduce is by heterosexual intercourse. Advances in modern biomedical science suggest that we may soon be faced with a choice in the matter for the first time in human experience. Do we want to retain or retread the old human institution--especially "mother" as embedded in "the family"--or can we come up with a new institution to fit the new "hardware" better? I suspect that we will choose the older and more familiar rather than try to develop something new because of the reasons outlined above, because of our ignorance of the possibility and techniques of social design, and because we fail to understand the validity of McLuhan's dictum.

And so with other institutions and the whole crumbling society. Faced with all opportunity--if not a necessity--to design a better social system, we seem inclined at present to turn our backs to the challenge; to revert to older "traditional', values and institutions.

Whereas in the 1950s and 1960s we were flooded with exhortations for "development," "progress" and "modernization," so now are we up to our eyeballs in nostalgia and worse. We are being brainwashed into believing that we have reached the limits to growth; that we must achieve a "steady-state" wherein unfortunately-neglected institutions and values once again--or perhaps for the first time truly--prevail.

I do not believe it is necessary to resurrect old ways, and I do not believe it is desirable for us to be so timid. I believe we can grasp this opportunity to try to design a better future, and to use that design to guide our present actions.

For myself, I find it most helpful to assume, as I tried to establish before, that nothing is "natural," nothing is "normal," nothing is "given." There are no "fundamental human needs," There is no obvious place to start from.

So why not start with yourself, and from yourself?

Here is a simple little exercise that I have asked students of mine to engage in for the past eight years or so that I have been teaching introductory courses in futures studies at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and the University of Hawaii. You might try it on yourself. It is not as easy as it seems--nor as difficult.

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Your assignment is to design the best possible real society for some real place thirty to fifty years from now ("real "place" meaning for example the locale of your present community, "a desert isle," an underwater city, a moon colony--anywhere, but "real." "Thirty to fifty years from now" is intended to make it sufficiently "far away" from the present so as to be free from present limitations, and yet close enough that *you* should care--for yourself, or your children, or your children's children. Beyond that, most of us can't seem to care).

Do *not* start by analyzing the present, how it got to be this way, and where it seems to be going. Although it is impossible that the myths and realities of the past and present will not influence you, I ask you to try to minimize them. Rather, start by asking yourself very generally and basically what kind of world you would *like* to live in.

That is (1) *Start by establishing the basic goals or values of your preferred society.* During this period of the design, let your wishes run free. Don't worry about "reality" or constraints--that will come later. Now is the time to be totally free and optimistic.

Take your time. Think about it a tot. Talk to others to get their ideas. When you or others come up with an idea, don't let anyone say, "How are you going to do that? That's impossible. It's contrary to human nature." At this stage, I think we need only our dreams and ideals.

Read fiction--even science fiction (which, for the most part, is very conservative and socially unimaginative. You *might* get an idea for something here, however).

Read anthropology, archeology, mythology (history too, but "history" has so narrow and biased a time/experience span--only the 5,000 to 10,000 years of "civilization"--that it will certainly mislead you about actual human experiences and-- more importantly--human possibilities).

Read ethology--but read widely in it if at all. Don't be fooled into accepting too readily one person's (or school's) statements about animal behavior. Many ethologists have been as blind to sampling procedures and as likely to over-generalize from narrow observations as early anthropologists and sociologists were (are?).

Read philosophy. Talk to freaks (i.e., whomever you usually don't talk to). Meet mystics, spiritualists, initiates. If there is something you can do physically, psychologically, spiritually, chemically, or electronically that can get you into a more expansive, imaginative frame of mind, do it.

Meditate: the system you are working on is yourself.

(You might even want to read the "futuristic" literature in order to get some ideas about new social and technological possibilities, but don't expect too much help here either).

(2) Now that you know basically and generally what kind of a world you want, *operationally define the values.* That is, specify the (desired and/or undesired) behavior which your values are meant to indicate.

For example, let's suppose that you decide you want a society where everyone is equal. OK, but what specifically do you mean by "equal?" Equal in what? In everything? (Really?) In height? In weight? In educational attainment (which itself must be operationally defined)? In income (which must be defined also)?

(3) Now comes a harder part. How are you going to see that the values you want for your society are achieved, and the "bads" avoided? You must *come up with institutions which will assure the functions.*

Take our simple example of "equality." let's assume we mean "equal in height." How can such a society be achieved? It is here that my comments on the relationship between technology and institutions might be helpful. We can imagine a variety of ways in which "a society where everyone is of equal height" could be achieved which would require that certain pieces of hardware technology be used in accordance with certain software rules:

> Everyone over--or under--a certain height (or height range) could be killed.
> People over a certain height could be forced to crouch, or be bound and clothed so as to be reduced appropriately, or live and move in grooves, or live in height-group communities, or....
> People under a certain height could be required to wear high heels, or high hats, or ride horses, or bicycles, or use stilts, or be stretched, or....
> Groups of people who "normally" deviate from the required height--for example, Japanese and Watusis--could be required to intermarry.
> Height-enhancing or inhibiting foods and/or drugs could be prescribed.
> People could undergo lengthening or shortening operations.
> Medical service could be encouraged to discover the "height genes" and manipulate them accordingly.
> Education institutions could develop growth-oriented curricula, and grade people according to their limits to growth,
> Religious organizations would exhort people to "grow right!" and threaten hellfire to those who disobeyed.
> The natural and/or artificial environment could be controlled so that people would be conditioned to "grow right" without freedom and dignity, according to a schedule of reinforcements which would reward activity conducive to achieving and maintaining a proper height, and punish deviance.

(4) It is highly unlikely that we will desire to design a society around only one value. We will probably seek to achieve many values. For example, we may want a society where everyone is "free and equal." And we may invent institutions to assure "freedom" (as defined) and institutions to assure "equality." Are our two sets of institutions compatible? Have we truly designed a society where everyone can be both free and equal? Is such a society possible at all, "in reality"? This requires careful definition and imaginative invention.

Thus, the problem of *systemic integration* is a difficult one, and we may have to optimize over a variety of functions without fully satisfying any of them, or we may decide to satisfy some more than others.

(5) Now (from my experience) comes the hardest task of all. Having constructed your "preferred society" for a real place thirty to fifty years from now" you have to decide on *a transition strategy* which will enable us to move from "here" to "there." Actually, I would prefer to have you think of moving from "there" to "here": design back from your preferred future. Don't try to extrapolate to it from the present. You'll never make it unless you don't plan to go very far.

Nonetheless, I think it is "irresponsible" to be concerned only about "tomorrow" and not try to link tomorrow to today with specific policy recommendations which you also sincerely apply to yourself and your own present life. I think you should try to force yourself to take this step. But I must warn you that I no longer ask my beginning students to be concerned about transition strategies because, almost without exception in my experience, as soon as people try to think through the guided evolution of a complex social or personal system from the present to a desired future thirty years away, they decide to simplify their task by greatly shortening the distance (that is, by minimizing the behavioral and structural differences between the present and the future), or they simplify the social system (they decide they want a future that looks like a small, low technology, extended family in which they play a traditional family role).

Somehow they decide they like "today" better after all, and just want to touch it up a bit. Or else they opt for a romanticized yesterday they read about in the health store as they were waiting to exchange their cow for some organic beans. Wholistic, massive, innovative change becomes too much to manage for thirty to fifty years.

It may be that it is too much. It may be that I need to encourage more conventional modelling techniques for the exercises. Or it may be that I should ask only for a person to work on herself, not on herself in-society. It may be that the problem indicates the essential pathology of the whole exercise--muddling through from day to day with only the vaguest thoughts about the morrow may be the best humans can do.

I think, rather, that it is an indication of our infancy in this essential matter. We should be able to do better as more of us become more experienced in it.

The development of transition strategies requires that we know a very great deal about the present social system, how it got to be the way it is, and what forces are tending it in which directions. That is another reason why the entire enterprise, and especially the transition portion, is so difficult. It expects that we are unusually learned in the natural, biological, and social sciences; are very humane, philosophical, and spiritual--not to say holy--and are able to integrate all of this deeply fragmented and frequently contradictory information into a systemic and dynamic whole. I have not met that person yet, certainly not in my introductory futuristic classes, but not at meetings of the World Future Society or the World Future Studies Federation either.

And to indicate to you just how far I am from being able to practice what I preach, I refer you to a record of an earlier attempt of mine entitled, "Neither there nor then: A eutopian alternative to the development model of future society," in *Human Futures,* edited by the Rome World Special Conference on Futures Research 1973, and published by Futures/IPC Science and Technology Press, Surrey, England, 1974. In this paper I try to describe a preferred world that I term a "Transformational Society."

(6) Finally, assuming we have specified a transition strategy (or a set of alternative transition contingencies), we need to *implement the process and monitor its progress.* Attempts to develop "societal indicators" and on-line social system modeling and monitoring techniques might be helpful here--or might not, depending on the future you desire and the route you choose to get there

(7) Throughout this, I have indicated nothing about the medium through which the image of the future might be expressed. Most of us are restricted to verbal modelling. We must express our image of the future in words-spoken statements or written essays and books. Others of us can construct mathematical and/or dynamic system models. Others still can model visually--on film or tape or canvas or three-dimensionally. Others--certainly not I--might be masters of extrasensory modelling techniques.

I have found. that my students, at the introductory level , do best (less poorly?) with words. Advanced students might be able to do mathematically-based computer models, but, in spite of numerous attempts, visual or other sensory models haven't worked too well yet, in spite of my great expectations in this area. This failure may be due to my limitations rather than those of the modelers, but even if that is so, I believe the fault then lies in the fact that we are all oversocialized into verbal (and to a lesser extent, mathematical) modes while our abilities to model reality by other modes are scarcely developed. I thus see this as a social, and not biological, and hence not necessary, limitation.

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A good example of a concerted attempt to engage in extensive, wholistic, value-directed, and global political design is the World Order Model Project of the Institute for World Order. Since 1968, scholars from Latin America, Africa, India, Japan, Europe, the Middle East, the Soviet Union and North America have met in New Delhi, Bogota, Kampala, Fujiya, Starnberg, Bellagio and Northfield in order to build models of alternative societies for the twenty-first century, and at the same time to describe practical ways of making a transition to those "preferred worlds."

According to Saul Mendlovitz, President of the Institute for World Order, and Professor of International Law at Rutgers University, "We set out to create the basic instructional materials needed for a worldwide educational movement whose ultimate thrust would be global reform." The Project goes well beyond the

conventional analysis of foreign affairs, in my opinion, because it suggests ways of creating a world beyond misery, oppression, and violence by adhering to, and maximizing four human values: social justice, peace, ecological balance, and economic well-being. A series of books by the participants in the project contain the views of scholars from the major regions of the world and reveal that, while they share a commitment to what Mendlovitz calls "World Order Values", they do not agree on specific policy suggestions frequently.

The disparities in views and models enhance rather than detract from the usefulness of the books and the Project, in my opinion. Their major value may lie in the fact that by discussing the possible, and presenting a sophisticated methodology for doing so, "peoples throughout the world can rescue themselves from feelings of despair and hopelessness, and participate in the exalting task of building a better future for themselves." (The above paragraphs are adapted from *Transition*, Vol 2, No 2, March 1975, "a bi-monthly publication of the Institute for World Order Inc." The Project is more fully described in, and the results summarized in, Saul Mendlovitz and Ian Baldwin (eds) *On the Creation of a Just World Order,* New York: Free Press, 1975. Of the book length manuscripts, Rajni Kothari, *Footsteps into the Future--Diaqnosis of the Present Worl*d and a Design for an Alternative, and Richard A. Falk, *A Study of Future Worlds* are out, and Ali A. Mazrui, *A World Federation of Cultures: An African Perspective,* and Johan Galtung, *The True Worlds: A Transnational Perspective* are expected soon, all from Free Press, in English, and from other presses in other languages.)

At the opposite end of the intellectual spectrum, but with very similar intention, have been a number of activities that Alvin Toffler calls "experiments in Anticipatory Democracy." The Hawaii 2000 and Iowa 2000 efforts may be the best known, and appear to differ from some other community-focussed "futuristic" enterprises by being more design-oriented, more citizen-participatory, less "extrapolative," and less a cover for some economic or political interest (though I would not pretend that these were absent in Hawaii or Iowa!)

On yet another plane, I would cal I your attention to the many attempts to create "renewal colonies"--communities formed by people who have given up trying to create or actualize global, or national, or even regional political designs, and are simply trying to ride out the deluge in various forms of the Ark II in the hopes that they will be able to help start all over again, but do it right this time. I am thinking especially in this regard of William Thompson's Lindisfarne Association in Southampton, New York, but there are many others.

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While structurally and institutionally ours is still a "backward-looking" culture, various sectors of American society do seem to be becoming more "futuristic."

The existence of the World Future Society itself is an example. Many futures consulting firms seem to be doing a booming business, and many big corporations

are going heavily into their own futures research. House Resolution 988 of the 93rd Congress now requires that standing committees of the United States House of Representatives "on a continuing basis undertake futures research and forecasting on matters within the jurisdiction of that Committee." The Congressional Reference Service has set up a futures research section. The US Office of Technology Assessment is responsible for advising Congress concerning legislation necessary to anticipate and minimize the negative social consequences of emerging technological developments. The preparation of Environmental Impact Statements has become Standard Operating Procedure for many activities.

Still, it seems to me the ordinary American is relatively uniformed about "the future as a way of life," and when she is informed, motivated, and eager to act, discovers that the society is still structured to respond more easily to yesterday than to tomorrow. I must conclude, then, that in spite of our recent "futuristic" trappings, we really are still a very backward society. Indeed, we seem to be becoming more backward rather than less as existing power structures gain greater control over the future, while "the peasants" remain in ignorance and structural impotency. We discover that we are being colonized in what truly seemed to he "the last frontier: the future".

That belief motivated me to offer this call for de-colonizing activities. It also helps explain why I left the University of Hawaii for a few years to join the Ontario Educational Communications Authority in Toronto to develop a television-based, futures-oriented, education/liberation package. To quote from the "Basic Philosophy" of that Project:

> The crucial difference, then, between a better--or at least livable-future and one of catastrophe and chaos seems to be the ability of people to make appropriate decisions in sufficient time. ... We need people who are motivated, informed, sensitive to the values and perceptions of others, and within political structures which facilitate relevant action. ...
>
> [Thus] we see the basic purpose of the Futures Project to be two fold:
>   1. To alert people to "the future" as an area of necessary and proper concern to themselves; and
>   2. To encourage people to gain greater control over their future by providing them with:
>   - ideas and metaphors;
>   - information;
>   - access to information;
>   - channels of communication;
>   - opportunities to unlock their imagination and creativity concerning desirable and feasible futures; and

    - political structures which facilitate their realizing their desired futures.

I would appreciate your cooperation in that endeavor.

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Published in shortened form in *The Next 25 Years,* ed. Andrew Spekke, World Future Society, 1975.