# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE POST-INDUSTRIAL ERA



[Rephrasing the Third World]

ARTHUR A. NATELLA, JR.

# International Relations in the Post-Industrial Era

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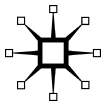
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## Rephrasing the Third World

*Arthur A. Natella, Jr.*

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# Introduction

History tells us that the Industrial Revolution began about two hundred years ago. Like so many facts, we may note this in our minds, believing that this a piece of information that is appropriate for textbooks, but which has little to do with our lives today, yet the truth is just the opposite for this change from an agricultural based society to a society based on large or mass production aided by the presence of new technologies brought about vast changes in our basic patterns of living.

Such an observation is by no means new, rather it has already been the subject of countless studies by philosophers, sociologists, historians, and just about any other interested observer of the social scene. Therefore, it would be impossible to note all the theories and insights into this great historical development in any one study. We can, however, note some basic changes that began and which developed in the industrial era.

We may begin by noting that the harnessing of natural power in terms of water, coal, wood, and other resources provided the basis for mass production and an increased level of industry. A great division began to appear between life in traditional or indigenous societies that depended since time immemorial upon the balance of nature rather than on machines for their continued existence. This gave evidence of the belief that natural resources were limitless, and they existed to be exploited for financial gain with little or no regard for maintaining harmony with nature.

Along with mass production came of course the development of the factory system. Workers were needed in large numbers. This caused many people to abandon their place of origin, the land of their ancestors, and even their immediate family members to take up jobs in factories.

Naturally, the most obvious result of this transition was the cutting off of large numbers of individuals from their contact with the

land and with traditional beliefs and customs. All of which brought about a change, if not a crisis in personal identity that continues in the industrialized world today. As an example, a religious chaplain at an elite college in the eastern United States stated that he loved his job at first, but eventually he left it because he was overwhelmed by the personal identity crises experienced by an endless number of students.

This is but one small example, yet evidence of alienation and problems of identity can be found almost everywhere in the industrialized world from extremist political movements, including hate groups as well as bizarre cults of every type and the dramatic rise of gang membership. The rebellious youth culture as previously evidenced in the "beatniks" of the 1950s and the "hippies" of the 1960s did not arise out of nowhere. Indeed the search for identity and the meaning of life is an increasingly important theme of Western literature in the twentieth-century.

Even the alienation of the workers from their workplace can be seen in the origin of the very word "sabotage". This term is derived from the French word "sabot" or wooden shoe worn in parts of France where the land tends to be very wet.

When workers became angry over any aspect of their job in an era before the development of unions, they would often try to break the machinery in their factories by throwing wooden shoes at it.

Since workers involved in mass production did not usually complete the whole task but only one single part of the assembly line, boredom became a growing problem with the resulting loss of pride in not having made a finished product. Of course, with large numbers of people moving from the countryside to the location of new factories, massive urban areas began to proliferate.

This did not mean that large cities did not exist before the Industrial Revolution. They did, however, they were generally much smaller than they are today. Three or four hundred years ago, cities such as London or Paris could boast of populations of less then one hundred thousand people. In the United States, Boston had some twenty thousand citizens at the time of the American Revolution, while New York City was only a small town by current standards well into the seventeenth-century.

The result has been a growing alienation of the individual from his fellow man, with loneliness becoming a growing phenomenon. Mother Theresa of India once remarked that the United States could be considered to be the poorest country, not in material but in spiritual terms. She went on to say that she could tend to the needs of a

person living in absolute poverty in India, but the spiritual poverty of the United States went much deeper, and how then could anyone try to alleviate it?

The object of this study, however, is not a criticism of the Industrial Revolution, which of course has brought great benefits to mankind. Before it appeared, some 90 percent of the population of a country in the Western world had to work in agriculture to supply the needs of that same society before the advent of modern technologies. Who among us would prefer to trade in our current manner of living with the need to work in the fields dawn to dusk as was done by innumerable individuals since even before the beginning of recorded history?

Neither is this study intended to be an estimate of the comparative value of industrialized society as against those of more traditional cultures. On the contrary, the author does try to suggest that there are many positive aspects to both ways of life, although in our modern world we may frequently fail to realize that. In addition, we certainly cannot turn back the clock to begin to live just as we did in the preindustrialized world.

Nor are we marching towards some type of technological utopia. We are not improving the quality of our lives every single day and in every single way as some people may believe. On the contrary, as it is often said that there exists a price for every positive aspect of human life for the individual; perhaps, the very same could be said for whole societies or for the whole world itself.

The Industrial Revolution has brought many great improvements in many aspects of life for the majority of humanity without doubt, but we are becoming increasingly aware of the great price that we may have to pay for such developments if we do not act quickly to correct imminent dangers to our environment.

All this may be self-evident at this time in history; however, the models of industrialization still hold sway over our imagination. When we look at our planet we still have the pride to cast what may be the majority of our world into the Third World if not third rate status, implying that such places do not measure up to the standard of other more advanced nations.

This book goes on to study many of the implications of this type of judgment in greater detail. We can say that this study is based on the assumption that mass production and high-level production do not necessarily make for a better quality of life in the total, most complete, and holistic sense, and that material values alone are not the sine qua non of the good life.

We often consider that traditional human values have little or no importance in the total scheme of things, and most of the Third World is not only impoverished in material wealth, but it possess no culture at all—after all, according to the myth, most of the people who live there are victims of dire poverty. They cannot read or write; therefore, there is no art, literature, philosophy, architecture, and also no sensitivity to the finer things of life. They are backward and are completely underdeveloped. They need us in the First World to enlighten them and lead the way toward progress.

We wish to suggest in this study that these stereotypes are often false, and that other human values are extremely important and can actually have more importance to the total human experience than can a growing national product or a robust national economy—vitally important as they are.

The sense of belonging and an allegiance to personal and ancestral roots, a feeling of community and a spiritual awareness of being in contact with nature, and the cosmos itself thus generating a vital belief in the purpose of human life, are just some of the values that will be studied here.

When we come to regard these essential qualities of life as important as material progress, we may in effect be turning a page in history as we leave some aspects of the ethos of the Industrial Revolution behind, not because we reject mass production and assembly line manufacturing, but as we grow and develop a more multifaceted view of the basic aspects of life.

This study suggests that this change or evolution of values may very well lead to maturing viewpoints on the basic structure of education, international business, foreign policy, news reporting, urban development, and even the pace of every daily life. It suggests that a reaction to many of the cultural mores of the Industrial Revolution has already begun, though this does not imply necessarily a reaction against the reality of industrialization itself.

Our contemporary society in the First World that calls Third World countries "developing nations," often does not realize the arbitrary nature of the expression in that it implies the essential superiority of the main tenants of the industrialized way of life and the idea that other patterns of living have little importance. It takes for granted that the future development of our world will lead the Third World to automatically follow the style of living of the First World. This may or may not be the case.

When the European settlers came to the United States they assumed the superiority of European culture, and they tried to exterminate the American Indians. After all they were inferior people it was believed.

As we enter into a post-industrial age, ironically, the pendulum is swinging in the opposite direction. We are coming to embrace the Native American desire to live more in harmony with nature, rather than taming or destroying it.

After all, in spite of all the mechanical and economic advances that have taken place here since the first Europeans came to these shores, we may wonder if the Native Americans in their relative poverty knew of the evils of suicide, child and spouse abuse, teen age delinquency, drug addiction, homelessness, and massive alienation to a degree anything like the levels at which these social problems exist today. We may ask then, who is really more advanced?

The signs of the dawning of a new age are to be found in many places. We are ready for a heady brew of change in our value systems and in our way of life. May we be ready for it with a new awareness of what looks to be the beginning of a new era.

# 1

# Why the Concept of the Third World Is Out-of-Date

It is convenient to use phrases that are in vogue, and often we do so without giving too much thought to the possible validity of common turns of phrase. This undoubtedly is the case with the expression "the Third World." It is used in books, in the print media, and in daily conversation by millions of people throughout the world with little or no reflection on the validity of the expression. We will give careful analysis in this study to the possible validity of these words, asking not only if they accurately describe our world, but also if they are relevant to our contemporary experiences. Lastly, we will ask if such a designation of nation-states has a helpful or a negative impact in today's globalized world.

If, as some observers claim, the expression is a heritage of the cold war when the two superpowers—the Soviet Union and the United States—competed against each other and those nations that were not aligned with these global giants were relegated to the third or Third World status, then clearly this division of nations is a thing of the past.

However, if we are to believe that such a terminology is based on the dichotomy between highly industrialized and semi- or nonindustrialized nations then again we would have to question the current reasonability of this division. For it is obvious that the capacity and technologies for industrial production have spread throughout the world. The United States, formerly considered to be the world leader in industry, has exported so many of its jobs overseas that it is frequently stated that the United States has shifted from an industrial or production-based nation to an information-based country.

We are clearly in an era of transition. With the emphasis on the greening of the world growing with each passing day, traditional yardsticks used for measuring social values are in flux. It may seem that we are entering into a new age—an era in which the values of the Industrial Revolution with its gospel of the use and control of nature for the betterment of industrial power, are being replaced by what we might consider to be post-industrialized values.

Such a revolution or evolution, as one might wish to describe it, does already and will continue to have vast implications not only for the way in which we live, but for the way in which we look at our world in general. This is a big statement that may appear to be much too ambitious at first glance. Yet it may be reasonable to suggest that such a realization may be justified, since these changes will inevitably impact the long-standing tendency to divide the world into categories in the realm of what is first and what is third, not just in name only but also in global importance.

The very need to look again at other nations of the world, to reconsider the importance of their traditional and even indigenous values, will become more important as time goes on. We will have to look again at the facile assumptions that say that the thinking and living patterns of the Third World are tolerable for now, but when these people become developed and better educated, like us they will begin to see and do things our way.

Such attitudes, like those of some American tourists who have gone to Mexico and, when receiving Mexican currency, asked: "How much is that in real money?", express the idea that only what is theirs, and belongs to their society, and their way of life is real and is worthy of serious intention. Such views will increasingly be seen as arbitrary, unenlightened and patronizing.

If such changes in attitudes do occur and this book suggests that they are already happening, this will inevitably have an impact on many aspects of life, especially in the First World. This will have an effect on attitudes relating to international business, communications, education, foreign policy, and interpersonal relations, to mention only a few areas of life.

The impact of this change will be great and it will be widespread. It will have an effect on interpersonal relations, as mentioned above, simply because we will have to come to a greater realization that the formation of an image of an individual or a group of persons as being "Third World" is patronizing. This negative intention may not exist at all since the speaker or writer in most cases repeats this phrase,

which is in common currency, without thinking about why the term exists in the first place or about its full implications.

Nevertheless, it constitutes nothing more than a stereotype, and like all negative stereotypes it should be examined in the clear light of day. We will later explore some of these generalizations about the Third World, for though they do exist without doubt, as in the case of most stereotypes, the very term is misleading because it expresses in itself a kind of finality—all the nations of the world, which may actually include the majority of our globe, are Third World, are all underdeveloped; their citizens are uneducated if not illiterate; and they are incapable of neither creating nor understanding the finer qualities of human life such as art, music, literature, and grand architecture, to mention only some aspects of existence in which they are inadequate.

If this is true, may we not wonder why such great attention is given today to racial prejudice, as of course it should be, while a consideration of the negative stereotyping of vast sections of our world receives little or no attention?

We may even wonder why the traditional measuring stick for the pecking order of nations is itself so arbitrary and so out-of-date. We are often the victims of gross exaggerations. Is there always such a vast difference between all the nations of the First World and those of the Third World? For example, the United States has long been considered the leader of the First World; therefore, the idea has been propagated throughout the globe that everyone in the United States is rich. If this is so then why have we recently gone through a financial crisis? Why is ours a debtor nation, and why are there tens of millions of people living below the poverty line? First World nations have traditionally been proud of their superior technology, which has allowed them to be superior in the scope of their manufacturing base. Now, however, it is commonly said that the United States, the leader of the First World nations, is no longer primarily a manufacturing-based society; rather, it is a service-oriented or an information-gathering nation, with its advanced technology often more geared up for the collection of data than for the use of raw material in the manufacturing process.

Clearly these are important questions that ask us to reconsider our traditional views of countries along with the overly facile description of some nations and whole parts of the globe as "underdeveloped," "developing," or as having "developing markets." We may well ask what they are developing to as we may ask if the markets in the First

World nations are always developing in a positive direction—if so then why is the stock market and the financial sector or our economy so volatile?

## He Who Seeks Finds

There is much wisdom in this old saying, and it has been said that if a customer brings a car to a mechanic to be checked out, he often feels that the more the mechanic looks the car over, the more likely he is to find something wrong. The same sinking feeling may accompany a person who is examined by a doctor during a routine checkup. Does he not often hope that the doctor makes a short examination, thinking that the longer the doctor looks at him the greater the chance that he will find something wrong?

This study will suggest that the longer we look at change this whole idea that the world can or should be divided into segments we will find that it is not only out-of-date, its implications are highly negative, for in this turbulent world, greatly divided by political and religious ideologies, is it not the truth that the phraseology that we use to describe ourselves would better serve us if it were expressed in terms of our common humanity, if it were expressed in words that foster togetherness and greater understanding, rather than the divisions that stand in the way of peace and harmony?

# 2

# Post-Industrialism and the Third World

A new consideration of the value and meaning of the concept of the Third World brings with it a new look at the culture of industrialism in today's world, for the division of the globe into advanced and semi- or non-advanced countries has been largely a heritage of the Industrial Revolution. The countries of Western Europe that became the main colonial powers in the last two hundred years were precisely those nations that could boast of the most advanced industrial production and the most modern technology. Thus, the British Empire was so vast that it circled the globe so that the sun never set on its domain. France and Belgium were among other nations of Western Europe that founded colonies in Asia and Africa. Much of the boldness of these nation-states in terms of political expansion was an extension of the supposed supremacy of scientific knowledge that formed the basis for technological advances. Those countries that were in the forefront of scientific experimentation were, therefore, considered to be more advanced in every sphere of life. It was the resultant pride stemming from this belief that led such societies to be convinced not only of their own superiority politically but also of the superiority of their lifestyle and their culture in the most complete sense of the word. After all colonizing countries made manifest their obvious conviction that "inferior" nation-states did not have the ability to rule themselves. They were too backward. They needed an infusion of Western European learning and high culture to become civilized.

The thesis of this study is that as industrialization continues to spread to countries that heretofore have not been very industrialized or that have been slow in acquiring the capacity for mass machine-made production, ironically the values of the industrialized First World are increasingly being questioned as never before to the point

that it is likely that we are slowly or even rapidly (depending on how one wishes to see it) moving into a post-industrial age. Thus the belief, which grew as the Industrial Revolution itself developed, that scientific knowledge, beneficial as it is, can solve all human problems, is increasingly showing its shortcomings .Contemporary events in the world in general are making us aware that, as in so many aspects of human life, there is a flip side, a basic counterpart, or perhaps a yang to some basic ying in human life. They are showing us in a very dramatic way that the culture of the Industrial Revolution that has had a formative influence on so much of modern life, must be looked at once again before our increasing lack of balance and harmony with the natural world may lead us, as President Obama has declared so clearly, into a global disaster.

We need hardly be reminded of the urgency of our collective attempts to save the planet from the dangers of greenhouse gases and global warming. Just in the United States alone in recent days the unthinkable has occurred. Two giant automakers have gone bankrupt or are on the verge of bankruptcy, at least in part, because a new awareness of the dangers of pollution has made the gas-guzzlers they have been producing increasingly unpopular in the current market.

Those who may be skeptical about the reality of the social changes that we are describing here might do well to consider how rapidly these permutations in popular attitudes have occurred, since they are only part of a series of changing values that are developing right before our eyes.

Sometimes alterations in patterns of living and thinking do happen rapidly. However, there are other times when they really do go through an evolutionary process—not one taking millions of years as with biological growth, but rather one that can take years or more likely decades to form themselves. As this change of perspective takes hold in our society along with it comes an increased regard for the wisdom of non-industrialized and indigenous societies that characterize much of the so-called Third World. Increasingly, for example, a holistic view of human health care such as has been held in oriental societies for thousands of years has made inroads into Western thinking.

There has been a growing disregard for a mechanistic concept of human life and for the human body. Medical experts have come to realize that there really is a "mind-body connection," that a human being does not only function as a machine or as a simple conglomerate of component parts, rather that thought and emotion play an

integral part in the way in which human life develops. An interest in nutrition, often regarded as "food faddism" or "food fanaticism" has also increasingly become a subject of interest to the medical and scientific establishment as, lo and behold, experts finally have come to realize that nutrients are made of chemicals and so is the human body. An earlier view of health and medicine often held that, as in the case of the wires and hoses in an automobile, if we may be allowed to make a rough analogy, the functioning of the individual mechanisms of the body was what was at stake, not the ingredients that we poured inside the working parts of the machine.

Along these lines has come a new appreciation of holistic medicine and a new consideration of modalities of healing that have long existed outside of the Western tradition, with new interest in the value of meditation, Reiki, acupuncture, and acupressure treatments, to mention only a few so-called alternative therapies. For example, a recent study has found that 3.1 million adults and 150,000 children in the world had access to acupuncture treatments in 2007.[1]

Industrialization not only made factory and mass production appear where it didn't exist before, but also the full force of the Industrial Revolution brought about a series of social forces that radically changed basic aspects of life. Many of these alterations were not really understood fully, since they were never voiced as philosophies or value systems; rather, they grew up exponentially, rearing their heads in ways that much of society did not fully come to understand except in hindsight. This was true of the growing alienation of the individual from his traditional environment. Four hundred years ago, large cities as we know them today did not exist, since at that time most major cities had less than one hundred thousand citizens. The existence of monster cities with tens of millions of inhabitants was unknown.

Along with the obvious benefits of urbanization have come a whole host of negative social realities including loneliness and alienation well attested to in the literature of the Western world since the beginning of the nineteenth century. As the distinguished literary critic Lionel Trilling once commented, the search for personal and emotional salvation has never been as dramatic in the Western world as it has been since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.[2]

One of the by-products of industrialization has been a lessening of the importance of religion and spirituality in the urbanized world with an attending new importance given to the production and acquisition of material goods. What we are seeing now, however, is the

beginning of a reaction against such values as the ultimate goal of human life with a new interest in many quarters in techniques to achieve spiritual enlightenment, in a renewed appreciation of the wisdom of traditional cultures that have long undergone a decreased degree of serious validation in Western society. Just in the case of two such Third World societies, we are seeing a tremendous increase in books, articles, and documentaries about indigenous groups such as the Mayan and Aztec Indians in prehistoric Mexico. And one wonders, with all the talk about the possible validity of the predictions of the Mayan calendar about the end of the world in a few years, if such attention would have been given even a few decades ago to forecasts made by ancient people.[3]

The break with a rationalist view of the human personality has led to a strong antirationalist tendency in modern literature since the early days of the twentieth century as seen in movements such as the development of abstract and surrealist art and literature.[4]

Increasingly important as well is the development of what has been called the "new age movement." Although many observers may consider this tendency to be simply a fad, it may also be regarded as part of a growing trend to believe that, as the bible tells us, man does not live by bread alone. It manifests a growing belief that material production alone is not enough to satisfy the deepest needs of the human personality. Accordingly, we have seen in recent years a tremendous growth in the number of books and articles about such phenomenon as astral projection, psychic predictions, reincarnation, and past life regression, along with a plethora of national and local magazines dealing with paranormal topics.

Although many social commentators would choose to call this a new age movement, perhaps more astute observers may be moved to call this a type of "old age movement," since for better or worse as one may see it, it really brings Western culture more in line with the mainstream of human values as they have existed on this planet since the beginning of human civilization and that have always existed and which still exist in the Third World. A case in point might be the renewed study of shamanistic healing that is now taught in workshops and lectures right in the midst of our highly industrialized society. Far from this being a wild-eyed aberration from the norms of human society in its larger perspective, shamanistic healing has been and still is being practiced on every continent of the world including the Western Hemisphere. It is and has been the oldest and most widespread form of healing known to man, since undoubtedly people in the days of

Fred Flintstone did not have access to MDs to heal their maladies, rather he and his peers went to local folk healers or shamans.[5]

## Time Is Money

The growing belief that production is achieved in a certain period of time and therefore to waste time is to waste money has been a long-standing cliché, and another old saying tells us that the business of the United States is business. Therefore, a highly pragmatic or practical view of the activities of human life has increasingly taken hold in what we might call the "First World" in recent times. Not surprisingly a reaction against what many might consider to be the mechanization and the dehumanization of life is occurring in the so-called slow down movement, more noticeable in Europe than in the United States, by which individuals are reacting against the growing pressure to haste and rapidity in the pace of daily life.

Perhaps one of the hallmarks of the rapid approach to the business of life has been the proliferation of fast-food restaurants throughout the world in recent decades. As mentioned above, often social changes suggest a series of values that are implied rather than stated, and this is certainly the case with fast foods. Although, highly practical and often relatively inexpensive, fast foods convey a philosophy that food is not, and need not be an aspect of life that is important in and of itself; rather it is a necessity that should be dispensed with as simply and as quickly as possible so that individuals can get back to the main and really important activities in life that are business and production.

The enjoyment of food for its own sake and the enjoyment of the company of others in lengthy conversations over a meal are not really to be given as much importance as the business of business. Reportedly created by Geir Berthelsen and his World Institute of Slowness in 1999, there now exists a growing global community of people who claim to espouse the values of a slower pace of life. At times boasting of a logo of a snail, the organization claims to have some 83,000 members worldwide (although one wonders, as in the case of The Procrastinators Society in which many members never got around to sending in their membership, if there may not be other members who have also been slow in expressing interest in membership).[6]

This development is buttressed by the so-called "Cittaslow" movement that claims that the quality of life is more important than many

other considerations relating to urban existence. The initiative was created in 1995 at a meeting of city administrators held in Orvieto, Italy.[7] This group has been closely linked with the so-called "slow food movement" that began as a protest against the building of a fast-food restaurant in Piazza di Spagna, Rome.[8] Closely related to similar initiatives such as the slow travel, slow shopping, and slow design movements in the United States, Alice Waters, author of the book "The Art of Simple Food," believes that this trend is gathering strength all across the United States.

These developments go hand in hand with the growing interest in organic produce and foods with less additives and preservatives. Such a development is of course in large part a by-product of new information about the dangers of certain chemicals as well as a growing recognition, as mentioned before, of the importance of good nutrition.

Above and beyond particular aspects of the values that we have largely inherited from the Industrial Revolution, there is a growing recognition of the increasing complexity of our lives and of the often maddening intricacy of our social structures such as found in all levels of government, health care, education, and just about any social entity in which we are treated as a number rather than as individuals. Such a realization has resulted in the growing importance of, not only slow down movements, but also a desire to find strategies to simplify our lives. The very existence of a new national magazine called "Real Simple-Life Made Easier" is an important case in point. There exists a growing recognition that as we "simplify" life with new inventions, technological devices, and machines of every kind; we are at the same, increasing the difficulty of life in its most elemental forms. To delve into such issues in a complete way would be an exercise in philosophical as well as sociological and technical scholarship. Suffice to say that the reaction against such increasing complexity has already begun to appear in the simple life movement that advocates voluntary simplicity in many aspects of living. The philosophy of this movement puts it at odds with many of the main tenants of the culture of the industrialized world in which bigger is often considered to be better, and the desire for the accumulation of material possessions is one of the basic motivations for social action. Taking their cue from the words of economist E. F. Schumacher, the followers of this movement appear to agree with his statement that, "any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex and more violent. It takes a touch of genius—and a lot of courage to move in the opposite direction."[9] We are increasingly being made aware of

one of the most basic paradoxes of the industrial age—namely that as machines make our live easier, at the same time life is becoming much more complicated all the time. More and more, we function on the basis of I.D. numbers, passwords, and complicated social systems. We have turned away from the patterns of living of native or natural societies in which the basics of food and shelter were the main concerns of human life to a social environment where an overwhelming number of details from multiple insurance policies, piles of bills to be paid, medical forms to be filled out, and complicated documents at work and at school must be completed, and we must keep up not only with phone calls at home but also with those coming through on our cell phones. We not only must read mail that comes in paper form, but also we must read and respond to electronic messages. This list of complications goes on and on, and they seem to grow almost on a daily basis. Is it any wonder that "Margaritaville," a fantasy world where we just sit on the beach all day and sip, margaritas as described by a recently popular song, is a view of life which so many of us can identify with more and more.

One of the many aspects of the cultural basis of industrialism is the increasing interest in what is being produced here and now and a loss of real respect for tradition. Such a trend is broadly seen in American education today where the main events of American history appear to be increasingly ignored as important subject matter to be mastered by students. At the same time, however, the twentieth-century has witnessed and our present world continues to give evidence of a growing respect and interest for artifacts from a simpler time, generally known as "antiques."

Along with this change in taste has been the increasing value given to historic restoration both of individual buildings and whole sections of urban communities. Indeed a cursory view of the much of the eastern seaboard of the United States including parts of the Washington D.C. area, Baltimore, the South Sea Port of New York City, New Port Rhode Island, areas of Boston on up to Portsmouth, and many other cities and towns in New Hampshire give evidence of the desire to preserve the best of the past and pass it along to future generations.

The same could be said of the environmental movement aimed at saving our forests and protecting endangered species of flora and fauna as represented by such organizations as the Defenders of Wildlife and The Natural Resources Defense Council among others. Could this not in part be evidence of a return or rediscovery of the age old belief of indigenous and Third World peoples that we human

beings share the planet equally with all of creation. That not only human life is sacred, but so are all forms of life, and in our brotherhood with animals they often can act as our protective spirits, and their lives should not be taken in the name of "sport" but only in case of real necessity.

At the same time, the development of urban gardens gives evidence that more and more people, at least in the United States, are looking toward a limited personal growth of their food supplies as opposed to depending only on giant mega agro-businesses that have up to now held a stranglehold on much of the food market in this country. At present there are some six hundred urban gardens in the United States that have produced enough food for some 280,000 individuals.[10]

Perhaps, most telling of all has been a change in perspective which has received relatively little comment although it signifies the beginning of a new globalized view of life on this planet. This is the growth in a worldwide consciousness by which we are constantly receiving exhortation to do our part, not only to help our country, but also to help save our world by reducing pollution, greenhouse gases by increasing our efforts at recycling materials. We are urged to basically think "outside the box" of our own little world to consider the repercussions that actions that we all take in daily life may have on the lives of countless billions of human beings in our planet.

This truly is an example of a post-industrialized or neo-organic conception of life in which the aftershocks caused by one or more machines are not considered by themselves in isolation from the rest of the world, and the actions of each human being are considered in tandem with the lifestyle of each and every other living person.

For too long the worldview of industrialization has taught us that we are superior to the natural world around us. We can use it and dispose of it for our own purposes for we are not part and parcel of the natural environment. Now, however, we are beginning more than ever to realize, along with many Third World citizens, that we are not really very different than other species of animals that survive on the basis of their relationship to their habit—their environment. Nor do we still believe nearly as much that our relationship with the world around us should be immutable.

On the contrary, we are truly in the midst of a great learning experience. Nevertheless, the complete assessment of the impact of the values of industrialization as well as the changes and harbingers of

post-industrialism that we see around us is clearly an ambitious task that is beyond the scope of any one volume.

But we can make a start in sensitizing ourselves to the changes that are happening all around us, not only in our own lives but throughout many parts of the globe. It is important that we open our eyes and our hearts to basic mutations in ways of thinking and living for truly these are ideas whose time has come.

# 3

# Good-Bye Third World

The great American writer O. Henry found himself walking in an unpaved street after a heavy rain. Walking along with a friend, he saw that a great deal of mud was sticking to his shoes.

> "This is hell isn't it?" he asked his friend.
> "No. It's much worse," was the other man's reply.
> "Why is that?" asked O. Henry.
> "That's because at least the road to hell is paved with good intentions."[1]

And so it is that our desire to divide the world into different sections commonly called the First and the Third World is undoubtedly the result of our good intentions; yet, as in the story, this road or in our case—our way of thinking, can lead us astray.

The division of the world into two parts—the First and the Third World is fine, at least at first glance. Rarely do we stop to consider the validity of this view of the globe, nor do we stop to wonder how precise this classification of nations may be in reality. If we carefully consider this terminology, especially in light of globalization, the first question that may come to mind is—where is the Second World? Does it exist, and if so where is it? Then again, if it doesn't exist, we may ask—why not? What happened to it? Why do we jump from the First to the Third World without considering the possible existence of an intermediate reality? Going further, we might wonder if it is true at all that the division of our globe stops at the Third World. Is there a possible Fourth or even a Fifth World, and if there are such other realms of nation-states, where and when do these divisions stop, if they do end at all?

Even a cursory consideration of these terms indicates that they are highly arbitrary, and so it must surprise us, on due consideration, that most people do not stop to consider their essential validity when these divisions of political entities are glibly referred to in daily conversation. This of course is most unfortunate, since we are dealing here with nothing less than our basic conception of our world, and such classifications relate to and form the basis for our dealings with countless millions and even billions of human beings on our planet.

Such a statement may appear to be overly broad and ambitious. Indeed it may appear to be a gross exaggeration. We may wonder how a simple differentiation of nations can imply basic value judgments about philosophies of life and a hierarchy of values. Nevertheless, this supposedly bland demarcation of different sections of the world actually carries with it certain implicit value judgments. After all, the First World is generally seen as the world with the highest degree of industrialization. This relative ranking of countries also stems from the tendency of citizens of First World countries to believe that they are in the forefront of human development while everyone else is lagging behind. So it is that the ranking of nations by number is associated with another classification of "developed" and "developing nations," often referred to as countries with "developed" or "developing markets" or "developing economies." Rarely do we ask what these countries are developing toward, although the assumption is that these unfortunate realms of national life lag behind so-called developed nations because their industrial output is negligible.

A great problem arises at this point, for here is where a gigantic leap of faith (or perhaps a lack of faith) begins; since a belief comes into existence on either the conscious or the subconscious level (or both perhaps), that, because industrial production in such nations is inferior, therefore, these countries themselves are inferior in just about every way. After all the division of blocks of geography into first and third status cannot escape the division of first and third in many other aspects of life itself from a horse race in which one horse comes in first, and some other less speedy nag comes in third, to an athlete who wins the gold medal as opposed to a bronze medal. And so it is that the classification by numbers is basic to life itself.

Most important is the underlying implication that the industrialized world is therefore superior to the semi- or non-industrialized world in every way. This belief has been instrumental in the creation of the modern world, since higher technology and the use of machines has been an elemental foundation for the colonialism of such Western

European powers as England and France who believed for the last two hundreds years, since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, that they were superior to non-industrialized areas of the world. They had the right to direct other nation-states and tell them how to go about the business of governing themselves. Equally important is the heightened importance, given not so much to industrialism itself, but to the resulting philosophy and culture of industrialization that has had a decisive impact on the formation of the modern world. It will be the thesis of this study that a disillusionment with this culture of industrialism is taking hold in many parts of our world as we begin to move from an industrial age to a post-industrial world. The reasons why this is happening, and the impact this will have on our future, will be the subject of this study so that it will become increasingly important for us all to reconsider terms like First and Third World as we reflect on, not industrialization but rather, the dominance of the culture of industrialization itself. As Vine Delorian Jr. has stated in his study "God is Red," "The very essence of Western European identity involves the assumption that time proceeds in a linear fashion; further it assumes that at a particular point in the unraveling of this sequence, the people of Western Europe became the guardians of the world . . . [which includes] . . . the affirmation that time is peculiarly related to the destiny of all the people of Western Europe. And later, of course, the United States."[2]

What we can state at the outset of such a study is that, to put it bluntly, these terms are patronizing as already mentioned. To say that other countries and whole parts of the world must evolve in the same way that so-called "developed nations" have, is to implicitly undervalue the traditions of such countries. We are often tempted to believe that culture itself cannot exist in non-progressive or non-industrialized nations. There is no room for art, literature, music, learning, scholarship, or any other of the products of civilization. After all, are we not told that most citizens of the Third World have no access to education, and that most people that live there are illiterate?

A number of years ago, an educational journal displayed a cover that showed a very poorly dressed young child standing in front of an abysmal slum. The caption above the picture promised that the magazine would feature one or more articles on EDUCATION IN THE THIRD WORLD.

Of course, it is often said that one picture is worth a thousand words. The implications in this case spoke volumes—the magazine cover implied that everyone in the so-called Third World lives in abject

poverty without educational opportunities although nothing could be further from the truth, since schools, colleges, and universities as well as millions of educated individuals make up the Third World just as is the case in the First World. At the same time it is important to question the basic assumption that non-industrialized nations or underdeveloped or developing nations must of necessity acquire greater industrialization to become more acceptable to the world community. The results of such a belief are rarely questioned, yet the highly industrialized United States with 5 percent of the world's population has created some 50 percent of the world's pollution. A quick consideration of this reality must lead us to the see that even if a few other countries developed their industrial power to the same extent, which is to say that they also became "highly developed," perhaps, life would no longer continue to be possible on this planet because of an ecological disaster.

## Where Is the Third World?

To understand this whole concept we must define or at least isolate the countries that make up the third section of our planet. This may seem easy to do at first glance, but when we look closer it becomes, as a character said in "Alice in Wonderland," "curioser and curioser."

We may consider that Latin America is a hemisphere that falls into Third World status, yet at least several nations, Chile, and Argentina; were formerly listed as two of the richest nation-states in the world in terms of per capita income, and who is to say that they could not or will not become wealthy countries again? Still almost everyone considers Latin America, with its more than 300 million citizens, as comprising a Third World landmass.

It is fair to say that Africa is generally considered to be another continent that would fall in the third echelon of geographical areas, yet on closer examination, there are countries in that continent that would immediately stand out as clear exceptions.

Then as we continue our examination without any clear guidance as to what groups of countries would fall into this subordinate classification, we may wonder if the whole of the Middle East outside of a handful of oil rich nations is generally considered to be Third World territory. What then of the nations of Eastern Europe? Have they recovered from the excesses of communism to be considered as members of a more favorable status in the world community? We may even ask such question about Russia and China. The latter is

proclaimed a country rich enough to loan vast sums of money to the United States, yet in a nation with some one billion peasant farmers earning an estimated average income of a meager thirty dollars a month, this may appear to be the state in which everyone is equal but some people are more equal than others—so much for a supposedly classless society.

In light of these and other questions, does not our concept of First and Third World status become foggy, if not at least arbitrary indeed? After all, don't most observers assume that Asia, with the notable exception of Japan, would definitely fall into third class status? As a surprising result, even with the caveats mentioned above, is it not abundantly clear that *most* of the world in terms of landmass and population falls clearly into the Third World category? This is most interesting, since the First World's ethnocentric view of reality often makes us believe that only the highly industrialized nations are those who should be taken seriously. They constitute the hallmark of what is enlightened and progressive, and little if any notice should be given to those backward nations who do not measure up to their standards. Indeed, it is often assumed that the First World IS the world. Yet could it not be said, on the basis of our observations above, that actually the Third World is the world, and that First World states are nothing but an exception from the norm rather than the other way around. Or to put it another way, is not the tail wagging the dog rather than the dog wagging the tail?

It may be similar to the story of the mother who was watching her son's regiment march in a parade. Then on seeing that her son was marching out of step, she commented to a person standing next to her, "Isn't it too bad that all the soldiers are out of step except my Johnny?" And then again, if our basic assumptions are incorrect should we not try to acquire a whole new way of looking at our world?

Such questions are much more than theoretical ones, fit only for the world of dry ivory tower academics. On the contrary, they play a vital part of our contemporary trade and political policies. They amount to nothing less than our estimation of the kind of world in which we all live. In our haste to cast other nations "in outer darkness," to use a biblical term, may we not be in danger of repeating the concept of ethnocentricity that characterized the ancient Egyptians as described by historian John A. Wilson, "that the Egyptians were self-centered and had their own satisfied kind of isolationism. We have said that they used the word "humans" to apply to Egyptians in distinction from foreigners. The concept that Egypt was the focal centre

of the universe set the standard for what was right and normal in the universe in terms of what was normal in Egypt."[3]

Just in recent memory a great hue and cry arose in the United States over the passage of the NAFTA treaty—the North American Free Trade Agreement—designed to eliminate most if not all tariffs among the countries of North America—the United States, Mexico, and Canada—as this agreement caused a great deal of controversy; not in relation to Canada, which after all is generally considered to be a First World nation, but in relation to our neighbor to the south, Mexico, a supposedly Third World nation. A whole host of suspicions about this Latin neighbor were trotted out for public view along with a wide variety of long-standing negative stereotypes.

Many political leaders opposed this agreement because, among other reasons, Mexico underpaid its workers, and we did not want to subsidize such an injustice. Few observers took the time to mention that from a global standpoint the going wage in Mexico at that time was also the going wage in at least 95 percent of the world. This included of course a vast number of countries with which the United States already had trade relations. So why should we point a finger at one of our major trade partners? Well among other obvious reasons, Mexico is supposed to be a part of the Third World, and Canada is not.

But what should we say about the classification of other landmasses such as Australia and New Zealand? Not to mention India, which possesses one-seventh of the world's combined population. Are these third or Third Worlds states? If so, why; and if not, why not? Do any of us really know? And if we are not sure what comprises the Third World and what does not, may not our conception of these sections of the world be rather arbitrary indeed? Then again how do we rank a country like Iceland? If we really stop to think about these classifications, the questions can go on and on showing just how arbitrary our standards really may be.

Once again, we go back to the picture of a poor child in a slum in a Third World country? If education is substandard could there possibly be anything of worth in such nations? Could literature, art, and music let alone education on all levels have any validity? The question is far from theoretical. When we were students, we were told by one supposedly very cultured Ph.D. in English literature that it made no sense to study the literature of the Spanish-speaking world, since there was no literature there at all, except for the great classic of Spanish literature, "Don Quixote." This idea is much more prevalent

than we might think in spite of the almost infinite supply of literary works in the Spanish language. This superabundance prompted at least one author to title a reference book on the subject—"A Guide to Ten Thousand Latin American Authors." The great authority on Latin American literature, Enrique Anderson Imbert, late professor of Spanish at Harvard University, stated in the introduction to his classic study—*Spanish-American Literature, A History*—that he did not read all the works that he cites in his study. To do so, he states in his introduction, an entire lifetime would not be enough.[4]

We may suggest that the superiority of one nation over another, and of one modality of life over another, will undergo a revision in future years. As it stands now it smacks all too often of the Darwinist concept of the survival of the fittest, which in itself has been the subject of gross misunderstanding and exaggeration. All too often has the fittest and the best been synonymous with economic power and industrial production that shows itself in military power, at the possible expense of other values. However, as the Russian thinker Petr Kropotkin has stated in his book "*Mutual Aid*," if we follow the Darwinist model and ask which species are fittest, we would have to consider, "those who are always at war with each other,"[5] and of course the question is especially important today, since in our modern world the superpowers are generally those countries that boast of superior armaments.

## The Third World in Our Imagination

Unfortunately, we often tend to automatically confuse our ignorance with reality. If we do not know or hear about something, it must not exist at all. But the blindsided approach to the value of the cultures and societies of the Third World unfortunately goes far beyond the field of literature itself. It often perpetuates the view that only the values of industrialism and industrial societies alone are worthy of our attention. An analogy may be made of our estimation of one great person—is it not true that what is the case of one individual may often be true of countries as a whole? If we are to say that Abraham Lincoln or George Washington were great men in the history of the United States, does that mean that they were great in all the areas of human life? Were they great dancers, great athletes, great scientists, or great musicians, to mention only a few fields of human endeavor? Likewise, when one says that a certain country is great or that the First World itself contains many great nations, that does not mean that all aspects of human life have been developed to a greatest degree

or that there may not be problems and defects in that same so-called great society.

Do we not often fall into the temptation of thinking or even saying that greatness in one country or part of the globe means greatness in every measure of human life? If not, why do we have these arbitrary and glib classifications of different parts of our world as first and third? As comic character Archie Bunker once said—the United States is great because, "it has the grossest national product." But does any country have a monopoly on achievements or distinction in any field or in any concept?

Still our very concept of richness itself is one which is often bound to production—a production of large quantities or money for an individual or for a country, and much of the colonial domination of large parts of the world by Western nations was based on the supposed production of goods and services—and, therefore, money itself was a hallmark of advancement of superiority. Other qualities were cast by the wayside or simply disregarded.

Commenting on the dehumanizing aspects of modern industrialized society, Leo Marx notes in his study *The Machine in the Garden, Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* that Thoreau thought of the clock as the quintessential machine of modern economy because, "its function is decisive because it links the industrial apparatus with consciousness. The laboring man becomes a machine in the sense that his life becomes more closely geared to an impersonal and seemingly autonomous system."[6]

In a similar vein, there is a story of a photographer who visited a very poor African village in search of material for a photographic essay. He was invited to stay the night in the village with local people explaining to him that they felt sorry for him because he was so poor. The photographer in turn motioned to the equipment he carried with him and stated that he was shocked by their statement for he was bringing with him thousands of dollars of modern technological equipment. He was not poor at all, rather he believed that he was richer than the whole village itself. "No. You are poor," was the reply "You are poor because you are alone."

There may be many forms of richness and poverty. Though inhabitants of the First World may often say this, do we actually believe it? On the contrary, do we not express in our comparison of nations that one country ranks behind other countries *in the industrialized world*, thus implying that non-industrialized nations are not even worthy of mention? In our common parlance, we express the belief

that no aspects of life could possibly be developed there, nor could they ever come close to the standards of the industrialized or First World. These nations are completely backward in every essential component of the life experience. Education could not really exist outside the industrialized world, to take one example. After all we tend to think that the access to swimming pools, computers, air conditioned rooms, and expensive athletic facilities are the essentials of real education. At the same time such intangible qualities as respect for learning, for teachers and professors, true motivation, and the ability to work hard and persevere in one's studies are not hallmarks of a good learning. On the contrary, we believe that comfort and extensive educational technology are more essential. To think back to the lives of some of the great figures of American history, isn't it a wonder that Lincoln and Washington were able to learn at all without these modern luxuries? And yet it is a fact that many fine students in non-industrialized nations actually manage to learn without them in great abundance.

One would even be tempted to suppose that by modern standards those educational systems that prevailed throughout human history before our modern technological age had little value, since they were not based on these modern yardsticks to which we tend to adhere so rigidly. Or to put it another way, does not the term "the First World" express the inherent belief that the nations that have the highest standard of living in material terms must be the best countries in terms of education, heath care, longevity, or whatever human values we may wish to consider?

In terms of a conception of a reversal of industrialized values that this study suggests is coming during the rest of this new century, we would suggest that this simplistic and arbitrary rule of thumb will be increasingly questioned and will no longer be accepted blindly, nor absolutely.

## What's New?

Traditional ways of looking at the world can also have a great deal to do with our concept of what constitutes the news. And these views themselves have the potential to greatly affect public policy, for if we don't hear about certain parts of the world they couldn't be important, could they?

In the area of culture, does not the very term "Third World" often cause us to suspect without any real evidence that, let us say, a play

written in the United States is automatically better than one written in Nigeria? Is a scientist in Ceylon now Sri Lanka inferior in knowledge and scientific acumen than a fellow scientist from England just because of his place of birth? Is a work of art produced in Chile inferior and less worthy of our attention than a similar work of art completed in France or Germany? We may say no to these questions, but we may ask ourselves at the same time how often we have perhaps jumped to the conclusion that anything or everything of any importance to human life was either discovered or produced in First World countries.

The results of this attitude of casting whole portions of our world into secondary or third-rate status have been long-standing. The Anglo Saxon's traditional antipathy for the Hispanic world, which may actually go back to the rivalry between Spain and England centuries ago, has resulted in a traditional condescension toward Spanish-speaking nations that continues to this day. In light of what Hispanic historians called the "Black Legend," a series of accusations made by countries that were political and economic rivals of Spain, that Spain was the most backward, fanatical, and cruel country in Europe; the French author Prosper Merimee, could say years ago that "Europe starts with the Pyrenees."

Perhaps, because of this historical condescension on the part of the Anglo-Saxon world and other countries, U.S. politics toward Spain and much of Latin America has existed on a knee-jerk basis. Mexico was invaded by the United States one hundred and fifty years ago because of what has been called Manifest Destiny that was nothing more than another name for raw imperialism. According to some churchmen, at that time the United States had the right and responsibility to rescue Mexico from the Catholic religion and from its dictatorial form of government. Therefore, our invasion was justified just as similar invasions of supposedly Third World countries have been justified.

After an explosion of the battleship Maine, the United States entered into a war against Spain often known as the Spanish-American War, by which the United States took away Spanish colonies not only in Latin America but also in Asia as well. Historians have never found any proof that a Spanish terrorist caused the explosion, although the United States jumped to that conclusion, not reasoning that if a lone terrorist did commit that crime he did not necessarily do it on orders from the Spanish government. Such an intervention in Latin America has of course led the way to numerous other political manipulations

of the nation-states of such countries as Chile, Nicaragua, and Guatemala among others.

A sense of superiority was a motivating impulse in the United State's invasion of Mexico in the middle of the nineteenth century, after which Mexico lost a major part of its national territory, and the United States gained areas such as New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Racial, religious, and political prejudice were behind this push to invade a neighboring country as unitarian minister in Boston, Theodore Parker, declared his contempt of the Mexican people whom he described as, "a wretched people, wretched in their origin, history and character,"[7] while a congressman Delano from Ohio was opposed to the war with Mexico because he was afraid to mix American blood with that of what he considered to be inferior people. At the same time senator H.V. Johnson saw this invasion as an instrument of a wise Providence as a means of the great goal of "accomplishing the great end of human elevation and human happiness."[8]

Such cultural myopia often leads to an undervaluing of the richness of other cultures. During the 2008 presidential campaign, one person attending a political rally accused presidential candidate Obama of not being a good person because he was supposedly "an Arab." Not only is such a designation of the people who constitute a major part of this world completely absurd, it reflects a monumental ignorance of great contributions of the Arabic-speaking world to world civilization, contributions that historians have credited with being an important influence in the creation of the modern world.

Truly this is time for us to reconsider the pecking order of nations and the automatic assumption that the nations with the most advanced technology and the greatest production power are necessarily leading the way for the rest of the world to follow. They are "developed nations," and other countries are simply "developing countries" with "developing markets." This may amount to nothing more than the expansion and generalization of the saying expressed by president of the United States Calvin Coolidge that "the business of the United States is business," and therefore all nations and cultures of the world should be judged by our own yardstick. This is a time for us to rethink and reevaluate such assumption in light of new and changing realities.

# 4

# The Culture of Industrialism and the Third World

## No Time Like the Present

When we consider the regard that much of the Western world has had for the so-called Third World, it is important to realize that differences do not lie only in the amount of industrialization and technology that some countries have at their disposal. But rather we must keep in mind that basic patterns of thinking and behavior form many social variations that cause deep divisions between societies. A consideration of at least some of the values of industrialism may help us comprehend where a change in social mores may lead us in the future.

Of course, some of these social realities are immediately obvious such as the increase in mass production and the growth of gigantic urban areas. Other tendencies, however, have often been more implicit than explicit. They have altered our way of looking at life, often without our even realizing it. Of course, we must understand that the full extent of the cultural perspectives of the Industrial Revolution is a vast topic. We cannot hope to encompass this issue totally in a brief consideration of the contemporary business of life; however, we can focus on some of these attitudes, especially those that may not be as apparent as some others. This is true, since the cultural patterns of life have been compared to an invisible skin that covers not our body but our mind. It is there, a kind of filter through which we see reality, usually without our knowing that such a skin really exists in the first place. In fact, the very concept of "culture" usually elicits a kind of mental yawn. It may seem to be a boring topic, since in the First World we usually consider that only people in exotic locales and far away

places have culture. Little do we realize that many of the attributes of an industrialized world are themselves cultural traits—somewhat arbitrary conclusions about life and the best way to live it.

One of these variables has to do with time. The relative value of punctuality varies from most First World countries, which generally aspire to a nearly absolute temporal precision, to a more flexible conception of the need for punctuality in many other parts of the world. This is hardly a new discovery, since even a cursory glance at differentials in customs shows this to be almost a well-accepted cliché.[1] Less obvious perhaps is the differing valuation of the present and the future, as opposed to the past, and opposed to the regard for historical precedent itself.

We may not be going very far to state that highly industrialized societies tend to focus on the present and the future, since these are the time periods in which production does and will take place. Also the future is where it is usually hoped that increased production and greater profits will ensue.

The logic of such an assumption may appear to be unassailable at first glance, since technology improves over time, and small businesses can also become large ones over a span of time, so that the mind-set may be that the future will always be better than the present. Nevertheless, we all know, in spite of the almost knee-jerk belief in greater prosperity in the future, that this idea is not necessarily correct. Nevertheless, hope does spring eternal and industrial society tends to look forward to better economic times, improved production, and generally a better style of life in the years to come.[2]

An alternative concept of progress does and has existed since time immemorial among indigenous people and in non-Western societies in their belief that progress lies not so much in the future as it does in the imitation of great events in the past. Therefore, the closer one can come to a correct repetition of these achievements, the more one may have succeeded in a quest for an alternate view of progress. As Mircea Eliade has stated of traditional or indigenous societies in his classic study *Cosmos and History*, "Any meaningful act performed by archaic man . . . abolishes profane time . . . . Archaic man acknowledges no act which has not been previously . . . lived by someone else."[3]

As one oriental observer, No Young-Park, has commented on the United States, "This forward-looking frame of mind . . . is one of the essential differences between the Occidental and the Oriental, particularly between the American and the old Chinese. The former always looks forward while the latter looks backwards."[4]

In addition, many societies do not look at time in a linear or chronological sense, rather they believe in a cyclic time sequence. Among the Aztec Indians of Mexico, for example, the Katuns, or time periods of fifty-two years, repeated themselves, and as the cycles came to an end, the Aztecs believed that they were in grave danger of experiencing the end of the world. When this did not happen they were of course relieved until they approached the end of another Katun at which time their fears were regenerated once again.[5]

## What's in It for Me?

One of the hallmarks of the study of comparative cultures is the idea that our world is divided into societies and cultures that tend to emphasize the individual and those which give greater importance to the group.[6] This may be interpreted as referring to one's family, one's city, state, country or even one's place of work, amidst other possible definitions of this term.

The division between highly industrialized and non or minimally industrialized societies does not encompass this distinction in every way, since there are industrialized societies and those which are rapidly becoming more industrialized that have a strong group culture such as in the case of much of Asia. In Japan in recent decades companies have begun to lay off workers in a way that was never seen before. Traditionally the dedication that a worker was supposed to have for his company was thought to be mutual in that a group spirit of loyalty was believed to exist between the two parts of the equation and the company would always take care of its employees.

Nevertheless, it is at the same time a hallmark of industrialism that the rise of factory and mass production has led countless workers to abandon their extended families and their roots to move from rural to urban areas with the loss of identity and community, which was the result of this transition. As the pioneer of modern sociology, Emile Durkheim, has noted, the modern city is a mass grouping of strangers.[7]

The result of this tendency and the rise in the prestige and importance of manufactured as opposed to handmade goods has been the increased dependence of workers on jobs as opposed to indigenous society's greater ability to be self-sustaining and to live off the land. Naturally, the dependence on the work given by the social machinery of the modern state leads to a transposition of traditional family values in which a worker may have the option to live in a

rural environment and reject a job in a factory or mass production facility.

At present, many companies routinely transfer employees from one part of a country to another or from their home country to relocate abroad. Such staff members are usually expected to leave at short notice with little or no regard for the human implications of such uprooting on themselves and their families. This is a notable consequence of the adoption of the new values of a mass production-based social reality. Yet these decisions made by many modern businesses imply that such alterations of life are almost an afterthought of little consequence, for only money and business are of central importance.

The result of these often abrupt changes is a growing lack of a sense of attachment to both family and place of origin in highly industrialized environments—an inversion of traditional values by which roots, family, and tradition are often of paramount importance. One frequently reads articles in the media that tell the reader which city has the best standard of living, which is most prosperous and most beautiful as a desired residence for retirement or just for living in general, implying that one should or might consider relocating thousands of miles away because the climate is more pleasant or because a certain location has a lower crime rate.

This is fine, of course, but perhaps few citizens of the modern industrial state may stop to consider that other cultures do not automatically share this footloose way of looking at life. In one Third World nation, some observers asked the inhabitants of one town where they would like to move to if they could go anywhere they might want. The people that were questioned not only did not want to move anywhere else; they did not even understand the concept of relocation in the first place. They couldn't understand the question for they could not conceive of leaving their place of origin—in many cases for them it was the place where their ancestors had lived for countless generations. They did not have even the remotest desire to move to an unknown location.

## A New Information Culture

Along with machine production comes a great respect for technical knowledge. After all the modern sense of progress, as we have noted, implies life will or should get better and better as production and material benefits improve as the result of more advanced technology.

What is most important in life then appears to be higher levels of production, greater material comfort, and well-being, while formerly in Europe the social ideal for many centuries was to be an aristocrat whose wealth did not require an individual to work at any occupation or any type of commerce, for work, especially manual work, was often seen as degrading.

Hundreds of years ago medical operations were performed by barbers, not doctors, as it was considered beneath the dignity of professionals to work with their hands and do what was considered to be manual labor.

In our modern world those individuals who administer commerce and industry—the executives—are often looked on as a kind of new nobility. For this reason, many products are dubbed to be "executive style," "executive luggage," or hotel rooms may be called "executive suites," and the use of the term "executive" as an added attraction to the benefits of just about any product on the market is usually seen as a plus. Indeed, traditionally in Europe, centuries ago, it is arguable whether or not the social and economic distance between the nobles and the commoners was any greater than the distance between the average worker and the CEO of large multinational companies today. The founding fathers of the United States did not want to establish a heredity aristocracy, but have we not created our own modern version of aristocracy including our executives and our celebrities?

As mentioned before, among the aristocracy of Europe, however, before the Industrial Revolution, the ideal of life was not to be associated with commerce even on a high level of authority, but rather to be rich enough to not have to work at all. Indeed, it was for that reason that many noblemen of former centuries were in the habit of wearing clothes that very clearly showed that they were not going to use their hands in labor. Long sleeves often topped off with lace would hardly be a benefit in the area of production especially when one's clothing could easily get caught in the inner workings of machines.

Along with the enhanced value of work and production comes an increased value given to youth itself. As opposed to more traditional societies, which give great reverence for the experience and wisdom that comes with age, the energy of youth is especially prized in industrial culture. One issue piggy backs on another very often, and the traditional regard for the land and the spirit of one's ancestors has increasingly lost its importance in areas of the globe where what is being produced now is most important, not what one's forebears did or said long ago. After all it is the young who can work the most and

can produce the best. Rather than harboring a great respect for age and wisdom, age discrimination has become an unfortunate aspect of modern industrialized life.

Of course, along with the information that modern technology makes available to commerce, graphs statistics and any type of technical information come to have special importance. As anthropologist Phillip Kottak notes in his book *Prime Time Society*, Americans have a real obsession with numbers, as he comments on a definite statistical basis for contemporary American culture.[8]

Also the young are so highly prized in the world of commerce, as they are also the ones who have grown up with the new mechanisms for storing and transmitting data. Today we may have found a new meaning for the famous statement of the poet Wordsworth that "the child is father to the man." Or it may be likened to the story of the man who bought a gift for his son that had to be assembled. On expressing his fear that the job of putting the toy together would be very difficult, the clerk in the store told him that even a child could do it. On finding it impossible to complete the job of assembly, the father returned the toy to the store, complaining that the clerk has told him that even a child could put it together. Unfazed by this comment, the same clerk told him "Yes that's right. I told you that a child could do it, but I never said that an adult could."

## Sacred and Profane

One of the great concerns for European society during the late nineteenth century was the perceived loss of interest in religion and the quest for spirituality as the modern industrialized world developed. The trend increased during the past century with what has been called an almost radical secularization of much of Western society. This is a natural phenomenon perhaps when material goods increasingly become the goal of social organization. Materialism implies not only a greater emphasis on production of goods itself but also an actual implied philosophy of life that expresses the belief that material objects are themselves the highest good. As the comedian Joey Adams once commented, money can't buy happiness but at least it can allow us to travel to more places to look for it.

It is for these reasons that undoubtedly one of the effects of this trend has been not only the decreased sense of the importance of organized religion but more basically a decrease also in the sense of the sacred nature of life itself. We may be tempted to speculate that

in the confusion of modern urban life the quest for the sacred, which predates human civilization, appears to be filled in daily life with the experience of what is the opposite of the sacred—that which is profane.

This comes in marked contrast to one of the hallmarks of traditional societies in which the concept of the sacred often permeates almost every aspect, not only of ceremonial life, but of daily life as well. In many traditional societies the moon, the sun, water, trees, and other common aspects of nature are reflections not only of divine powers, but these and many other common objects are actually deities themselves.

While such beliefs come across to Western man as being directly opposed for example to our Judeo-Christian tradition, in addition to the obvious concern over whether or not such beliefs correspond to reality, there is also the basic consideration of whether or not they create a radically different quality of life in the sense of a more spiritual view of the world around us.

Whether or not this is desirable of course is a matter of personal opinion. It is only sufficient, however, to note that this difference does exist. In Italy during World War II, that country's dictator decided to put one of its foremost writers in internal exile, and so Carlo Levi was sent to live in the extreme south of his native country.

In his book *Christ Stopped at Eboli,* he reflects that he almost felt that he had been sent to live in a foreign nation, since he discovered the culture of that part of Italy to be radically different. He describes the people there as often not being very religious in the formal sense, but he did discover that they were very spiritual—often rather than believing they could make contact with what is sacred in a church alone, they believed that ALL of reality itself was sacred. As Colin Wilson has observed, in our modern world we have often lost the belief that all of creation is alive and is therefore sacred.[9]

Evidence of this same ability to find the presence of sacredness and spirituality in a common object of nature such as a tree, was experienced by American anthropologist Wade Davis in his trip to Haiti. He looked at a tree and saw nothing but a tree, but a boy standing near him began to describe a rich panoply of supernatural powers within the tree that apparently left him amazed. In his book *The Serpent and the Rainbow* he observes that we pay a price for our technological development. According to this author, we can travel faster than ever before, yet, "in acquiring such dexterity, we have forfeited other skills like the ability to see Venus, to smell animals, to

hear the weather change."[10] It may be worthy of note that such traditional beliefs and attitudes are traditional because they are shared by large numbers of individuals within a given society or among many cultures. For better or worse there is a common philosophy of life—a common belief system. This is markedly different from our industrial world where elemental ideologies are fragmented from person to person especially in terms of religion. Such a tendency to see all of life in a religious perspective, which is common to indigenous people, has lead the great scholar of comparative religions Mircea Eliade to call such people "religious man." In their ability to see all of creation as basically sacred he states in his book *The Sacred and the Profane* that for them, "The cosmos is a divine creation. . . . The gods did more; they manifested the different modalities of the sacred in the very structure of the world and of cosmic phenomena."[11]

Also in more group-oriented societies, the "what's in it for me" attitude characteristic of individualist cultures has its impact on, not only the business of life, but on business itself, since workers in group-oriented societies often believe that they are working for the benefit of their country and for their company just as much as for their own welfare.

And of course the consideration of the most basic of group value ideals—family values themselves—are inevitably weakened as the commitment to group values itself becomes weakened on many levels. Individualism tends to take over a sense of commitment to others with the inevitable result that, as religious beliefs lessen and marriage as a sacred bond weakens its hold on society, the desire for individual satisfaction tends to override dedication to the welfare of others in this most basic social unit.

## Mass Production–Mass Culture

One of the hallmarks of society since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution with its dependence on mass production has been the inevitable development of mass tastes in the arts as well as in so many other aspects of life. This is hardly a new concept; however, the ramifications of this trend may be more extreme than is often believed to be the case. Just as a tailor would formerly custom-make a suit of clothes for one client, whereas now a similar article of clothing can be mass produced in the millions, so tastes in everything from popular music, books, movies, and just about any other aspect of life tend to be homogenized and mass-produced.

The results can be often dramatic. Many years ago, the Spanish writer Julio Camba mentioned that on coming to America he was not surprised to find a great deal of organized crime. After all, said Camba, the United States was the country of assembly line, mass production, so it was only logical that just about all aspects of social life in that highly industrialized country were going to be mass-produced sooner or later; so it was only a question of time before crime itself became mass-produced.

The alternative, of course, is still to be found in areas of the world where mass production and industrialization, or rather the culture of industrialization, has not taken hold as much as in such highly developed nations to use the popular terminology.

This other way of producing goods and of maintaining local identity is to be found in places where small-scale work and the integrity of place is still maintained. Such is the case in much of the so-called Third World where basic aspects of life such as clothing, food, art, music, and handicrafts can vary greatly from one section of a country to another. This includes language itself, of course. It has been said that before the advent of radio and television some athletes that came from rural parts of the United States to play on the national level could not speak English that could be readily understood by other players, since their patterns of speech were so full of localism that they did not appear to actually be speaking the same English language.

This could indeed happen, since a basic principle of linguistics holds that the more isolated a geographical area is, the more antiquated the speech of whatever language is spoken there will be. In northern New Mexico, for example, author Carey McWilliams in his book *North from Mexico* claims that little or no U.S. mail was delivered to the northern part of the state until after World War II, and as a result many people living there have been found to be speaking the Spanish of five hundred years ago.[12]

In the United States one century ago, there existed hundreds, if not thousands, of local brands of beer just as in Italy for centuries; each town has made its own local wine. The supposed history of the Italian wine "Est!Est!Est!, which is still sold today, may be a case in point. A figure of a man in the clothing of hundreds of years ago, seated on a horse, adorns the front of the bottle of this wine. According to one explanation for this trademark, at one time a bishop in Italy made it a point to only visit towns that produced good wine. He would send a servant ahead of his travels to report on the quality of the wine in each locale he was planning to visit. This individual was supposed to

write back with the word "Est" in Latin, which means "It is," or the wine here is good if that was the case. Legend says that in one town this liquid was so delicious that the servant accorded three exclamations, "Est! Est! Est!" The bishop then became so excited that when he came to the town he actually drank himself to death.

Along with mass and assembly-line production has come a renewed respect for machinery and technology in general along with any advances that promote greater production. Nevertheless, many animal species have disappeared throughout time because they became over adapted to their environments. Later those same environments changed to the extent that some animal species could not adapt quickly enough to these variables in order to survive. Could not man himself face a similar type of danger if he becomes too used to or too dependent on one way of living or even one technology that may eventually become overspecialized to a changing environment?

Even at the present time it is common to ask a question of a certain business only to not receive an answer because the "computers are down," indicating that apparently the employees are no longer capable of performing even basic work functions or finding the most elemental pieces of information without the computer. This leaves the author to wonder what human beings did to form these same commercial functions for thousands of years before the coming of the computer.

One of the tendencies of the modern world has been to increase our feeling that we are in control of our environment through new developments in science and technology, and that in itself differentiates us from other animal species. The risk of potentially overspecializing ourselves to one particular mode of living, one environment, or even one type of technology or way of life became apparent on the eve of the new millennium when there existed a widespread fear that vast numbers of computers through the world would stop functioning in the new century because they were not properly programmed to do so.

Of course, this fear fortunately never turned into reality; however, it did highlight the dangers of being over specific in our approach to our survival in an increasingly complex world.

Other questions did come to mind, such as—what would happen if a group of terrorists took control of one central computer terminal if at some future time all such systems did connect to one central–worldwide "brain" as is the case in the human body? Even as some blackouts have blanketed areas of the United States, serious

speculation existed that malicious "hackers" in a country hostile to the interests of the United States may have sabotaged our utilities.

Indeed, there will and always have been dangers associated with any advances in human history, especially since the advent of gun powder; yet on a less dramatic level we may also recognize that many educators have already expressed a fear that new generations brought up on calculators are losing the ability to do arithmetic, just as English teachers express a fear that young students may lessen their interest in learning spelling when they have a spelling checker on hand on their personal computer.

Likewise, many educators already are aware that their students have lost interest in reading books when information is readily available on the computer by the click of a button.

Would it be going too far to wonder in some future world human thinking will become obsolete and even basic reasoning will be the function of machines like computers?

Likewise, there is a growing realization that the individual and private nature of computer use can be and has already been seen as a danger for those individuals who may increasingly tend to isolate themselves from society in favor of solitary meetings with the PC. Many people also have already expressed alarm over the tendency of many individuals, especially young people, perhaps, to communicate through the texting of messages rather than through human speech.

This may indeed be the continual story of human history. For all we know, when the wheel was first invented some cavemen may have complained that this new fangled invention would make life too easy and people would stop getting the exercise their legs and arms really needed! As the old saying goes, "The more things change the more they stay the same."

Nevertheless, we may ask ourselves perhaps if the dramatic increase in many aspects of the quality of life at least on the material level, has not often made societies in the First World develop a blind spot for the possible disadvantages and dangers brought on by at least some aspects of rapidly advancing science and technology. It is only recently that we as a collective group have come to see more clearly than ever that the knowledge given to us by science and the powers to control the natural world through technology, wonderful though all of this is, must be combined with deep wisdom and good judgment if we are to survive.

This study, therefore, asks if all of this has not increased our tendency to look down on societies that are not as technologically

advanced, as the issue has been presented in our study of the concept of the Third World.

## Big Man–Tall Man

This is to in no way try to indicate that all of the elements of the psychology or the values of industrialization have had a basically negative influence on human society. This is far from the truth; however, many of the developments in the arena of changing social values may have appeared to have been written in stone as absolute mandates for the continuing development of human society, when in fact these simply may have been as a series of choices for better or worse, choices which in many cases may have turned out to be a composite of both positive and negative effects of human life depending on one's point of view.

The psychology of bigness may be a case in point. We hear advertisements for clothing in sizes appropriate for the big and tall man, but we may not always be aware that the psychology of bigness is also with us as a basic function of modern life. Not only is production often based on a mass scale, but our highways are big—they are often superhighways; our cities are often very large as are our skyscrapers. Likewise, our shopping centers, which began their climb to popularity shortly after the end of World War II, and even many of our stores themselves, including many supermarkets, which have largely taken over the place of grocery stories, are supersized. This is particularly true of many of our chain stores such as Walmart and K Mart.

Naturally, the psychology of bigness follows reality as it exists on many levels. Corporations are bigger than ever as multinational companies, by definition, span the globe often with yearly budgets bigger than those of many countries.[13]

With money comes power and it is naïve to believe that giant corporations and international financial institutions do not have a major influence on political realities in this country and throughout the world.

The culture of bigness also affects our collective view of the quality of the products that surround us. We live in the midst of a society of exaggeration—bigger is better we are led to think—and in a consumer-driven world we are continually told through advertising that "big" names are better than products from brand X. They are supposed to be better because of their bigger, more prevalent image.

We hear about them countless times during our lives. We are told that products by leading manufacturers can do the job better than those items sold by the competition. Then these same companies often tell us that their new version of their own product is even better than ever. They are new and improved, but as one commentator has observed, if their product was as great as they told us it was originally, why in heaven's name did they have to improve it in the first place?

Even our image of certain select individuals is inflated in our celebrity-worshipping culture. Their image is bigger and better so the public is encouraged by sensational tabloids to follow even trivial details of their lives. One is tempted to believe that in our society of exaggerated marketing of people and products, almost nothing is really taken to be what it really is on its basic level. We live in the midst of a constant state of glorification of products and certain select people to the point that it is often difficult to tell where reality stops and blatant hype begins.

The result is that we live in a culture of constant exaggeration, yet we are so used to this that we hardly ever notice it. If we are constantly bombarded with messages telling us that many products are supersized and supereffective and certain rich and famous individuals live super lives; may this not contribute to our own sense of inferiority, as we perhaps wonder why our own lives are often "non-super."

One may wonder if all of this does not attempt to make up for some vague underlying sense of unworthiness by comparison in the face of supposed greatness. Do we try to compensate for our own insecurity by indulging in a well-known pattern of American living—keeping up with the Joneses? This may turn out to be a deceptive goal; however, as one American said that he tried all his life to keep up with the Joneses only to find during the recent recession that the Joneses actually went bankrupt.

Still this culture of bigness can frequently inflate our own egos as well. Everybody wants to live in a super-big house, since that will tell the world that we are bigger in our social importance. So it has been claimed that an executive working on the top floor of a company that occupies a seven story office building often is tempted to believe that he or she is actually seven stories tall. This may remind us of a statement made by Latin American essayist and poet Ernesto Cardenal in his book *To Live Is to Love*, that a driver in a large Cadillac car often identifies so much with the automobile that he or she is tempted to think that they themselves are the Cadillac.[14]

## The Culture of Speed

Along with the increased size of production comes the increased speed of machines as opposed to the tedious labor of handmade goods. Of course, this is a great benefit to mankind; however, this in turn has bred a new culture of speed by which many aspects of life have developed with increased rapidity, and the very pace of daily life has evolved to the point that many citizens of highly technologically oriented nations frequently complain about stress not only from the mental point of view but in term of the obvious toll that it takes on the human body.

Some one hundred years ago, a budding cardiologist told another physician that he wanted to study to be a heart specialist. The other physician asked him how he would ever make a living, since at that time so few people had heart problems. It is hardly worthwhile to mention the great difference in our world in terms of the frequency of this health condition in the intervening years.

Many theories may exist as to why this change has taken place: however, it is no secret that medical authorities are in agreement that stress is definitely a killer and that it does have a tremendously negative effect on human health.

In our own day, communications have speeded up by way of the computer along with other new technologies, and news travels around the world literally in seconds. Because of that what used to be normal mail delivery is often called "snail mail."

We are used to see our world change right before our eyes, as new developments are broadcast immediately. We may contrast this with a story from the so-called Third World in which a man was walking by a newspaper vendor, who asked him if he wanted to buy a copy of the daily newspaper. The man answered in bewilderment, that it was not important to buy that day's newspaper, since he had just bought a newspaper the day before.

So it is that we have become accustomed to speed in our human interactions. As the Spanish writer Damaso Alonso has commented, we live in an age of abbreviations in our daily speech so that we are beginning to use initials rather than complete words in order to make our communication as brief as possible.[15] So it is that we refer to the VIP, the CEO, the CFO, the DEA, the FBI, the VP, and a whole host of other shortened forms of classification as even our popular cinema now presents much more fast-paced action and briefer dialogues than was common in movies of past decades.

In our popular fiction, long descriptive passages are indeed passé, and it has become an unwritten law that fiction writers of today must include descriptions along with presentations of actions of the characters they portray rather than writing long descriptions, as was common in the 1800s.

We have already commented on the growth of a culture of bigness as a social reality that has developed from the size of production itself. Could it not be true that at some level the individual finds his own identity threatened by such a scale of life? If not, how then can we account for the celebrity-obsessed nature of our society? Are we not collectively interested in identifying vicariously with people with famous names, since we know that they are real in the sense that their personalities resonate throughout the world? Do we not tend to deify them even though we are told in our tabloid newspapers and in other tabloid-oriented media outlets that they often have more than their share of human weaknesses and shortcomings?

Are we ourselves not robbed of some token of our human individuality in societies that increasingly rely almost obsessively on polls or "group think" that try to quantify our likes, tastes, and dislikes in the millions, not in individual terms? The use of statistics of course is facilitated by the speed and the increased capacity of our machines of modern technology, and there is nothing wrong with speed, increased communication, or the greater ability to collect and store information on whatever level it may be; however, we may ask ourselves if we ourselves as individuals have ever been polled as to the popularity of a political candidate or a commercial product, and if not, may we not wonder if our opinions are really important or whether our preferences are drowned out in the national media by those of countless millions of other citizens?

It is indeed not possible to contact every citizen among the hundreds of millions of people that live in the United States alone, yet does our mind react rationally in this or in every other case in all circumstances, and is not the alienation that characterizes much of modern society not at least in part to our realization of the decreased importance of the individual in our society of mass tastes, mass attitudes, and massive social structures?

## New City States?

Our megacities, which in some cases such as Tokyo and Mexico City have grown to more than 20 million inhabitants, have multiplied

maddening realities such as incredibly dense traffic, pollution, and noise to an extreme degree. Nevertheless, urban life tends to justify the growth of these negative qualities, as the city increasingly becomes an end in itself. Its rituals of daily labor and commerce do not exist to lead us to spiritual transcendence as do the rituals of indigenous societies, rather the "business" of life is taken to be the highest order of human activity, and in our almost religious respect for commerce and industry it may almost appear sacrilegious to question the necessity to extend such activities into ever larger playing field, as it is commonly said of the United States, as mentioned before, that "the business of the United States is business." Would it not be fair to say that nowadays we work hard only to be able to continue to work hard as our industrialized lives become a series of cycles that feed on themselves?

Rarely do we stop to reflect on the primacy that we give to production and to the interchange of goods and services. We do not realize that other values could very possibly have great importance also such as the development of harmony with our higher selves and with nature.

On due reflection, we can clearly see that the hustle and bustle as well as the rapidity of modern urban life gives us little time to see what stares us right in the face—namely that our scale of social values is highly arbitrary in terms not only of those of other cultures, including some of those of the contemporary Third World, but also those of prior ages. In medieval Europe, the knight was esteemed for his bold qualities, whereas in medieval Japan those engaged in commerce occupied an inferior place in society not only to nobles but also to warrior classes. Even in more recent history Napoleon expressed disdain for his English neighbors by referring to them as a nation of shopkeepers.

This is not to suggest that such systems of values are preferable, or that we should necessarily change our way of living and our scale of attribution of the relative importance of human activity, but we may at least realize that there are other possible modes of existence, and the values of First World industrialization are not necessarily written in stone table that have come down from heaven. Or as Thomas Merton has stated, perhaps we may come to realize that the rain does have an importance in and of itself, not only as an annoyance or an interruption of the modern concept of the "business" of living, and maybe trees and plants have a right to live in places other than where modern town planners and developers believe that can permit them to flourish.

Time passes by and we may be entering into a new era. Are we really ready to really understand it?

## How Does All of This Really Matter?

Traditionally, members of First World societies have simply smiled at the differences between the values of the modern industrialized state and those perspectives of living that we have presented in this part of our study. They have simply believed that people who are not developed or who are in the process of developing, to use the commonly accepted term nowadays, have traditional value systems that are not really practical and which are not suited to modern culture. But they often believe that these attitudes will change as globalism increases and makes the world more uniform.

Such a view may seem reasonable at first glance just as the glib term "the Third World" has seemed acceptable to countless millions of people who have not usually perhaps given the phrase much reflection. However, the blind acceptance of the modern industrialized social values of the Western and the First World implies a rejection of traditional mores of large sections of the world that have had and continue to make great contributions to human civilization as previously commented on in this study. This would include but would not be limited to traditional societies of China, India, and the Middle Eastern countries.

As we enter into a new age that is increasingly questioning the wisdom of many of the social assumptions, it is no longer reasonable to assume that as other parts of the world become more sophisticated in their dealing with First World nations, they will increasingly adopt and imitate other perspectives on the experience of life itself. What is more reasonable may be the opposite conclusion—namely that a sensitivity to the perceptions of life in so-called Third World societies is not only worthwhile, it is immensely practical, since they are rapidly becoming an increasingly important part of the post-industrial world that we all live in.

# 5

# Whither Goes Globalism?

Like the term "the Third World," the word "globalism" is used so often in speech and in print that it is taken to be a truism, an obvious fact whose basic implications can neither be seriously questioned nor doubted. Like the expression, "the Third World," it also is used glibly with little if any thought as to the validity, or to the implications of the concept in the first place, and its connotations are most often implied rather than expressed in absolute terms. They usually convey the idea that the values of the modern industrialized world are spreading throughout the globe to the point that many if not most cultures and social systems are becoming almost identical. It is true, as we are frequently reminded by our media outlets, that financial systems and whole national economies are more intertwined than ever before. This reality indeed is abetted by increased communication brought on in large part by the vast computerization of our planet.

This is undoubtedly true; however, we may wonder if the interlocking of financial systems is really as extensive as it appears to be, or may the result of this tendency be a general mind-set by which the stock market crashes in one country because investors are already conditioned to believe that an event ten thousands miles away will devastate their own finances. If one man catches a cold in Mongolia with the resulting panic over the possibility that everyone in the country or in Asia as a whole will get sick, does this really have a direct impact on the financial health of companies like General Electric or IBM, or are the investors conditioned by the culture of globalism to react and perhaps overact?

We will leave it to the financial experts to decide if such a possibility exists just as the economists can also tell us if American news media reporting on the start of a recession naturally causes businesses

to contract and not hire new employees, thus fomenting such a recession ever further as a kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Whether globalism has the potential to cause such overreactions or not, may be the subject of much debate; however, the implications of globalism at the present time are such that they suggest that not only industrialization but also the culture of industrialization will automatically spread throughout the world. Developing countries will act and look more like we do in the First World; After all, what are they developing toward? Are they not supposed to evolve to be in lockstep with the giant economies of the First World? When they do so, they will have the same attitudes and the same methods of doing business as we do, and the world will be, as some already wish to call it, a culturally flat world with few local variables of attitude or behavior.

These concepts are largely based on the supposed superiority of the First World, which was the basis for the expansion of the colonialist powers of Europe in the first place. In his book *The Globalization Myth, Why the Protestors Have It Wrong*, Alan Shipman goes so far as to state that, "much current globalization is thinly veiled Americanization."[1]

Actually we may consider that the term in question contains more than a few derogatory connotations, since "developing countries" are usually not categorized in relation to exactly what is being developed unless the clarifications of "developing markets" or "developing economies" are employed. But even this can appear to imply some basic myopia on the part of the most powerful nations of the First World, since it automatically assumes that countries want the responsibilities that come with being a world power, be this economical or political. However, during the Vietnam War President Lyndon Johnson commented that perhaps Americans would be better off living in a country such as Costa Rica, a historically peaceful nation that abolished its army years ago.

If we refer to a person as being underdeveloped, this categorization may extend to just about any and every facet of that person's being. Is this not true of countries as well? Is this then another way of referring to them as simply inferior nations in what may be called the Third or a supposed inferior part of the world?

Nevertheless, as we have suggested that the value systems of the Industrial Revolution will come more and more into question in the future, the supposition that he who produces more or who consumes more and is more developed in every single way may be increasingly debated.

Along with the assumption that globalism entails the automatic importation and acceptance of First World values around the world, it might be wise to consider at least some of the paradoxes inherent in the process of globalization itself.

Just as technology and the industrialized lifestyle bring many parts of the world in line with each other, they serve to divide large blocks of humanity at the same time. There was an epoch when most people in the global community were agriculturally oriented. A great gap between that way of life and industrial production occurred during the Industrial Revolution. Current trends only make that distinction more dramatic. Those individuals who can afford and who are savvy about the newest technologies in computers and modern means of communication are increasingly out of step with those individuals and whole societies who have not acquired these facets of modern life.

After all as we continue to travel through the twenty-first century and send rockets to other planets, there are still people who exist at the level of the Stone Age. In their simple lifestyle perhaps they are generally more happy than we are for as Thoreau said, there is no guarantee that the New England farmer in his big farmhouse is any happier than the Indian in his tepee.

Furthermore, there is already evidence that far from extending wealth and the abundance of goods usually associated with industrial production, globalization, at least up to the present, gives evidence of separating peoples into the haves and the have-nots. For although globalization is usually associated with economic growth and prosperity, as Martin J. Gannon has noted in his volume *Paradoxes of Culture and Globalization*, it is also associated with growing economic inequality even within a given society itself. He notes, for example, not only in the United States has unemployment grown, as scores of businesses relocate to foreign countries to find cheap labor, but he also observes that rising inequality in the financial sector is found in, "varying degrees of intensity in developed and developing nations, including Canada, Australia, and China. Fully 20 or the 21 developed nations that are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have experienced rising inequality as globalization has proceeded."[2]

Another assumption tells us that as globalism extends its reaches around the world, a new planetary consciousness will increasingly take hold. No longer will we tend to think as much in local or national terms, rather whole groups of nations will increasingly form themselves

as economic blocks such as found in the European Common Market, Union Mercosur, and Nafta as well as the European Union that has adopted one single currency—the Eurodollar.

This trend has and does continue to exist; however, here again, paradoxes abound. Suggestions have already been put forward that the entire Western Hemisphere adopt one single currency, while rumors have been repeated that North American leaders have already explored the possibility of the formation of one currency for the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Despite the very obvious realization that the linking of national currencies can bring about major problems, as a financial crisis in one nation can easily spread like wildfire to drag down other economies, similar to the great fear in Western Europe after the financial panic in Greece at the time of the writing of this text, voices are still heard advocating the globalization of even more currencies.

The paradox is that, at least in some cases, more regional and national characteristics are submerged into a transnational identity, at the same time it may appear to keen observers that at least sometimes localized cultures and identities rear their heads in more dramatic ways than ever. In many places there now exists an international move toward the reevaluation of local languages, cultures, and political identities. This is true in Spain where the Basque region's search for its own independence culturally and politically has even led to the violence of The Basque Fatherland and Liberty terrorist group. The same, although much less violent search for the legitimization of language and culture has taken place in Cataluna, the Spanish province that is home to one of Spain's major cities, Barcelona. In Italy, the dramatic cultural differences between the north and southern regions of that country, already mentioned in this study, have engendered a real discussion of whether or not that nation should split into two distinct countries.

As American diplomat Peter W. Galbraith notes in his book *Unintended Consequences: How War in Iraq Strengthened America's Enemies*, there are at least twenty independence movements in the world today, while he comments that far from a growing sense of internationalism or globalism, actually, "nationalism and separatism have produced most of the recent conflicts in the Eastern Hemisphere and are likely to do so in the coming decades." He goes on to conclude from this reality that "ethnic nationalism and separatism are likely to dominate the headlines for the next twenty years as they have the last twenty."[3]

In France, the people of Brittany have a new desire to maintain and preserve their own local language at the time when the Corsican movement for independence continues to work toward its stated goals. The same is true for the Puerto Rican independence movement in its desire to politically separate that island from the United States. In Mexico, the growing belief in the southeastern part of that nation that it has been ignored on a national scale has at times reached the level of violence in recent years. The movement for the independence of French-speaking Canada is long-standing; however, the expression of the sentiment that Texas should secede from the United States may not be taken seriously; nevertheless, this may express the opinion of many Americans that Texas is truly a world unto itself.

But such developments exist not only on the political level but in the cultural sphere as well. Recent attempts to revive and stimulate traditional languages much as the many forms of the Mayan language in Mexico and Guatemala, and Quechua in Peru, the language of the Inca civilization, appear to be the products of a growing concern that concerted efforts must be made to preserve aspects of local culture least they, like many animal species, run the risk of extinction.

## Familiarity Can Breed Contempt

The wisdom of proverbs can itself be paradoxical. So we are told that "out of sight out of mind" and then that "familiarity breeds contempt," while our common experience tells us at the same time that closeness between people can and should bring about a special bond that cannot be produced by the very lack of communication itself.

Is not our world itself subject to the same paradoxes? Enhanced contact between nations and cultures can bring about greater understanding and harmony, yet it can heighten tension and differences to a very dangerous degree.

Although many social scientists even a few decades ago thought that religion would continue to have less and less importance in world events, just the opposite has occurred, and by now it is conventional wisdom to proclaim that the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East is at least in part a reaction against the increased social and cultural pressure felt in many parts of the world to mimic the habits and mores of the Western world. Or as one pundit commented—during the cold war—materialism was preached in the communist block countries, but it was actually practiced in the West.

This is not to say that religious attitudes are actually the complete cause for this growing and highly dangerous gulf between two very different parts of the world. It must also be obvious, to even the casual observer, that sinister forces have tried to take advantage of these potentially abrasive differences to use them for their own ends.

Also it is not difficult to see that the enmity that often exists between the West and the Middle East is not based solely on political motives but also on basic cultural differences, since religion is a basic aspect of culture. Many in the Middle East claim to take offense at the extreme secularization of Western society. May it be that they also are offended by the First World nations of the West's assumption that changes in the world must bring about a great denial of the traditional values anywhere and everywhere along with a belief that such trends tend to deny the legitimacy of their own way of life.

Contemporary theorists, such as Kenichi Ohmae in his book *The Borderless World*, speak of the weakening of nation-states in the onslaught of globalism. Ohmae writes of the emergence of groups of nations in trade pacts such as Mercosur in Latin American and the countries of the North American Free Trade Agreement as harbingers of growing regional as opposed to single nation powers. This is true, of course, and yet students of the new global power structures presented by giant corporations such as Richard J. Barnet and John Cavanagh, while noting that the annual budget of the Philip Morris corporation is greater than the budget of a country like New Zealand, go on to state that as globalism continues unabated, the nation-state is alive and well. They add their perception that the end of the cold war brought on, if anything, an increased sense of nationalism. They go on to say that "as the processes of globalization accelerate, the more conscious we become of the pull of localism in all its forms. For most people across the world, place and rootnedness are as important as ever. Their very identity is tied to a place, and they cannot conceive of living anywhere else."[4]Additional evidence leading to the conclusion that the push toward a supposedly neutral global production-oriented society actually can stimulate the desire to at least maintain, if not increase, local cultural identity is noted by Prof. Nancy Adler. In her now classic study *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior*, she asks, "Does organizational culture erase or at least diminish national culture? Surprisingly, the answer is no." She goes on to quote the research of Andre Laurent stating that he, "assumed that managers working for the same multinational corporation would be more similar than their domestically employed colleagues, but

instead he found the managers maintaining and even strengthening their cultural differences."[5]

There may be many who would still question whether or not cultural values have any place in business and production in the first place. After all, their thinking may be that "business is business" and human variables may have little to do with the process of commercial transactions. It is after all a pretty cut-and-dry affair.

Such may have been the traditional attitude toward the business, especially in the First World in nations like the United States. Furthermore, the obvious economic and political power of that nation led many people to feel that our way of doing things was the only way—the rest of the world must bend to our manner of thinking and acting. When they succeed in doing this they will be "developed" and sophisticated.

Even in recent years one Latin American executive was heard complaining that Americans came down to his country, not so much to conduct business as to colonize his country in the sense that they felt that they had to educate the locals in the proper way to conduct business so that they could follow the American models.

We are intelligent, educated people, think many in the First World. We act and think in the way we do simply because it is logical, and it makes sense. If there were a better way to live we would have heard about it by now, and we would have adopted it as our creed long ago so that there is no need for us to learn or be sensitive to other cultures. We do not act in cultural terms. We act in logical terms that make sense. After all culture is fine in the textbooks, they often believe, but it is not a factor in the real world. They think that their actions and thoughts are not affected by cultural values at all. Those only relate to people living in exotic countries who dress in strange ways, who eat what seem to them to be strange food while they listen to a very foreign type of music.

Actually as Edmund Hall, a noted pioneer in the field of cultural sensitivity, noted in a lecture at the University of Ottawa in Canada at an international meeting of the Society for International Education and Research, just about all aspects of human life do have or can have cultural connotations and variables, and of course that is true for citizens of the First as well as the Third World.

This reality has been increasingly noted in the field of business education, as more and more colleges and universities include classes on the cultural basis of international business in their business curriculum. Still many American companies, even multinational

corporations, provide their employees with little or no training in the variables pertaining to the business practices in other countries, even in this era of globalization. May this not be a holdover from the previous attitude which maintained that differences between societies were really minimal, and any such differences that existed could be dealt with on the basis of common sense and good intentions (although as already mentioned—those same good intentions can lead one to a very nasty place)? Furthermore, when foreign business counterparts really become modernized and educated they will adopt the American ways of communication, thinking, and of doing business in general.

## It's Greek to Me

It is of course our basic thesis in this study that, in addition to the aforementioned consideration of some of the paradoxes of globalism, many of the mainstay principles of the industrialized world are being increasingly questioned and revalued at the present time. This does include many of the core values of multinational corporations that are largely the product of the First World, although not exclusively so by any means. The world is changing so fast, and many economies are developing at a rate that makes it increasingly difficult to divide the globe into first and third categories. This only serves to buttress the point made earlier that these demarcations are often so arbitrary and unclear that it may not be unfair to state that when we do try to divide the world into these segments we actually do not really know what we are talking about. May this be the same of the concept of globalization, or at least the theory of complete and blind globalization, by which it is seen as a total and unstoppable force that is making the world a place of bland sameness?

Though there appear to be forces that wish to push for what some have called a "New World Order" where nation-states become parts of large economic blocks with the same currency such as is the case of the European Union, despite what may be seen by economists as the advantages of such new trends, recent developments in Europe clearly show the dangers of what we might call economic specialization that we might be bold enough to categorize as possibly economic overspecialization.

This is the situation by which countries no longer have absolute control of their own economies, rather their financial fate is tied to other nations. While this may have its advantages it also presents many

obvious dangers. The failing economy of one or of a number of countries can cause destabilization of other supposedly healthy national economies, or of whole groups of nations, such as recently happened, at the time of this writing, with financial problems of Greece. Not only did fear of an economic downturn spread through other parts of Europe, but it had very negative effects on other financial sectors including the American stock market.

Is this not similar to a case in which a millionaire might have his bank account linked to that of a person who is going bankrupt so that the former has his credit and his fortune adversely affected by the negative financial situation of another person, although he basically should have no connection with that person nor with his finances?

Perhaps this analogy is a gross oversimplification; however, if the trend of globalization of national economies does continue to grow, questions about a nation's control of its own finances will undoubtedly grow with it. And then if group economies are increasingly controlled by ever larger central banks and international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, who then will control these entities, and what checks and balances, such as are built in the American political system, will exist if they should be tempted to abuse their power or work for their own objectives rather than for the common good?

Margaret Thatcher, former prime minister of England, has commented that "it is an illusion to think that fiscal and monetary authority can ever in the long run be politically separated." She notes in her book *Statecraft: Strategies for a Changing World* that former German chancellor Helmut Kohl has stated that "we want political unification of Europe. Without monetary union there cannot be political union," and that another ex-chancellor, Gerhard Schroder, also stated that "monetary union is demanding that we Europeans press ahead resolutely with political integration."[6]

We might be cautioned by Lord Acton's famous saying that tells us that power corrupts, and that absolute power corrupts absolutely. We might ask ourselves if we believe that human nature will change so much in the coming years that this will no longer be true.

## Is Globalism Really Global?

Naturally, as any important worldwide phenomenon there exists a variety of opinions about the advisability of continued globalization

or even about the feasibility of this whole process. Brink Lindsey of the Cato Institute states in his book *Against the Dead Hand* that, "globalization is, consequently, an uncertain and uneven process, and subject to sudden and traumatic reverses and dislocations."

He mentions authors as diverse as Patrick Buchanan and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. who have expressed great concerns about unabated globalism.[7] In fact, he observes that Schlesinger has opined in an article in "Foreign Affairs" that, "the computer turns the untrammeled market into a global juggernaut crashing across frontiers, enfeebling national powers of taxation and regulation…dragging down labor standards, degrading the environment, denying nations the shaping of their own economic destiny…creating a world economy without a world policy."[8]

The basic issue that we address here though is not so much whether or not globalism brings with it all the benefits that its sponsors and supporters claim that it will, as much as our investigation of the truth of the word's basic connotation. Just as the term the Third World in and of itself implies the inferiority of some nations and of their way of life, globalism of course implies in its very name that the transforming power of the concept is global or total. If this is true then the very word itself implies a finality in the very nature of globalization that would appear to justify itself automatically, and which would make any opposition to the process futile indeed.

Our study of some of the paradoxes of globalism indicate that this is not necessarily the case at all, since individual differences in a whole host of institutions and facets of life will remain obstacles to the very totality of the concept. There remain not only economic but legal, cultural, political, and geographical differences, to mention only a few variables that we might want to consider in the midst of a growing element of world society that is questioning, not industrial production itself, but many of the social assumption that form the underpinnings of this phenomenon.

## Was the Elephant an Animal Created by a Committee?

Even as the previous century came to an end, business theorists were quick to say that the coming age would be a time when new models of business operations would become popular, most notably the formation of ad hoc committees made up of international personnel

who are experts in a certain field, and who come together often on a temporary basis, to work on a specific assignment.

Many experts on international business predict the growing importance of collaborative work teams with the development of what has been called a new team culture as the result. Many may question the efficiency of committee rule, as in the sometimes heard statement that an animal as bulky as an elephant was probably made by a committee that decided to put some big ears here, a tail there, and a gigantic trunk right up front. Nevertheless, the increased use of such committees may show that in an increasingly complicated world it may be more and more difficult to find the expertise necessary to complete a certain project within the four or more walls of one organization. It may be wise to pull talent from wherever it may found in the world; hence the logic for a growing number of short-term committees or work teams saddled with the task of completing one specific but important task.

On the surface of such a description of the new work environment it may appear at first that such committees may tend to obliterate local differences that might surface from the combination of workers from various parts of the world. This would be truly a globalized workforce, and they would have to submerge their own cultural differences to work together in harmony to get the job done.

There may be a great deal of truth in this idea. However, let us consider in detail some of the problems facing such a globalized group as they actually get down to work. First—in what language will their meetings be conducted? Will it be a combination of languages? If so, who could understand all these different languages, and if they are spoken at the same time would this not constitute a type of modern Tower of Babel where no one really understood anything? Then again, in what language will the final report of their deliberations be written?

Will they follow a democratic group orientation for their meetings or will one or more persons or part of the group take a kind of dictatorial control? What then will be the group attitude toward time and punctuality? Different parts of the world and different cultures vary greatly or have multiple conceptions of what punctuality really is.

How about the degree or formality in the professional environment? Can people address each other by first names as is common in very informal countries such as the United States or would this cause resentment for those who are used to more formal forms of address?

What of the dress code for men and then for women? How formal should it be? When holidays occur should the committee take off from work, and if so which holidays from which countries require the strictest observance? Are there any legal considerations relating to their work? If so, would these pertain to the legal system of the leader of the group or to that of some other nation-state?

Questions such as these could go on and on, and the supposed universality of the proceedings becomes more questionable the more we consider it in the light of the real world, not in what may exist in theory.

Naturally, other considerations also exist. There are differences in the communication styles of various cultures. Also there are considerations of the dynamics of any given meeting. Can the shape of a meeting table encourage some members of the group to contribute their ideas while possibly discouraging others (after all King Arthur was clever when he had his knights sit at a round table where everyone appeared to be of equal authority)?

As Larry Hirschhorn of the Wharton School states in his study, *Managing in the New Team Environment, Skills, Tools and Methods*, that work in a team environment can be stressful. He notes that in addition to other complications that usually accrue with any human interactions on a professional or business level, there exist adjustments that members of a team must make to each other's work style. Then there are considerations that go with the politics of the organization itself. The list of considerations could go on and on because employees, whether they are part of a temporary or long-standing group structure, are complex human beings not just mindless cogs in a wheel.[9]

The questions regarding globalism may never be answered to everyone's satisfaction. At best, however, many of its basic assumptions may be questionable. Perhaps we in the First World have set out a fishing line with its own lure and its bait, which is the idea that increased production and the increased acquisition of material goods is always the standard for the rest of the world to follow. But it may be that we ourselves have swallowed our own bait in the facile assumption that our way of life is automatically the best and in not only believing that all nations should follow our lead, but that they of necessity would prefer to do so.

Could there even be a possibility that some people might wish to avoid the complications of modern life that they might wish to escape from the psychological ills of modern urbanized industrialized life in terms of crime, pollution, and alienation? Could they possibly wish

to continue to live closer to nature and to the rhythms of the natural world, perhaps preferring ancestral wisdom to computerized data? Must they always "develop" or want to develop as have we?

As Colin Wilson has noted wisely of the American Indian, "We now know that this 'primitiveness' of Native Americans was largely self-chosen. They not only lived close to nature; they believed that they had a symbiotic relationship with nature."[10]

Yes, few of us in the modern world would willingly want to do without the comforts of our modern age, nor is there any reason that we should do without them. Might we not wonder why we cannot wish to reconsider the values of traditional life and attempt to combine the best of the old and the new at the very same time?

Just as the Industrial Revolution has almost automatically shaped many of the value systems of our modern life, often without our even realizing it, could we not start an even greater social revolution in which we, on what may be the verge of a new age, take control of the formation of human values instead of largely mentally and psychology being the end products of our own invention?

# 6

# Post-Industrial Education and the Third World

A story is told about a college graduate who decided to return to his alma mater for an alumni gathering. He took the opportunity to try to look up his old economics professor who he fondly remembered from his student days. He was glad to see that the professor was still teaching, and he decided to visit one of his classes. On that particular day the professor was giving a final exam. The alumnus took one look at the exam, and in his surprise he exclaimed to the professor, "My goodness. I can't believe it. You're still giving the same exam that you gave to me in my class thirty five years ago."

Unfazed by the former student's statement, the professor calmly answered: "Yes. It's the same exam and all the questions are exactly the same, but nowadays all the answers are different."

So it is that education is the product of the society that creates and sustains it, and it therefore expresses the worldview and the values of such a society. In previous centuries in the Western world, education stressed the importance of learning about religion and the inculcation of the importance of philosophy, literature, and history of the ancient worlds of Greece and Rome. Learning and religion were often viewed as one and the same, and in the Middle Ages in Europe, a university graduate was often considered to automatically be a member of the clergy. The first universities in the United States, such as Harvard University, were created in large part as seminaries to educate the clergy. In another famous university, plays were not allowed to be produced as late as the first part of the 1800s because, according to a long-standing puritanical-like tradition, dramas were inherently immoral.[1]

The idea that cultural products of the modern or contemporary world could ever be as important as those created by the ancients

was a hotly debated topic in France in intellectual circles, several centuries ago.[2]

In our modern age with its emphasis on industrial production and pragmatic realities, the culture of the ancient world, once seen as an indispensable basis for education in the Western tradition, has largely gone by the boards. Once again this change can be viewed from a number of points of view, but it definitely is a product of our highly pragmatic contemporary values. So it will be that future basic changes in our system of thinking and evaluations of our world will undoubtedly not only cause educational changes to occur, but also they will actually promote and further these changes in the popular mind.

## Back to Basics

When one speaks about the basics of education there is usually a reference to the three Rs— Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic. Recently, a study showed that a majority of American adults could not find the state of Hawaii on the map, and a candidate for a very high political office was said to not know that Africa was a continent. The author himself has frequently asked college students the name of the capital city of the neighboring country, Canada, and found that almost no one is aware that Ottawa is the capital of that important country; one student even went to the extent of arguing that the whole country to the north of the United States did not really have a capital at all!

If there is great ignorance among the general population relating to North America, it is greatly magnified by a lack of awareness relating to the southern part of this same hemisphere and the Third World in general. Few students or adults in general have any idea about the countries that make up these important parts of the world, nor do they have knowledge of the culture and language of these nations. It has been claimed that as recently as the Reagan administration, the vice president of the United States said that he couldn't go to Latin America because he didn't speak Latin; while a story is told that during the Kennedy administration, a White House official was heard asking about the titles of some books about Latin America because he had just been named White House expert on Latin American affairs, and he wanted to learn more about the place.

If we go outside of our own hemisphere this problem is often magnified, for the scope of thinking often relates mainly to the highly industrialized or the First World. How often do pundits speculate, how the

United States is rated in a field such as education, "in comparison with other nations of the *industrialized* world?" This very comparison may be seen as implying that other nations are not even worth our consideration, because they are too backward to be mentioned in the same breath with an advanced part of the world. Such a mentality only perpetuates the belief that we don't have to bother learning much about such places and therefore, according to the logic we have already suggested, we do not have to learn about the majority of our world.

All of this institutionalized ignorance comes at a time when, as John Naisbitt has commented in his book *Megatrends*, we are experiencing the mass production of education while he states that "in the information society we have systematized the production of knowledge and amplified our brainpower. To use an industrial metaphor, we now mass-produce knowledge and this knowledge is the driving force of our economy."[3]

We may have mass-produced education, but still we have to consider once again exactly what makes up this education—how broad is our basic education after all? If one would ask a group of American college students or a group of college educated adults, who George Washington was, of course everybody would be able to answer the question. If, however, the question should be, "Who was Simon Bolivar?" rarely does any answer come forth, let alone a correct answer. The reason is that the national hero of the independence of North America is taught in schools; but the name of, not the national hero of the independence of one Latin American country alone, but rather the international hero of Latin American independence in general, Simon Bolivar, is rarely recognized. In fact, more than one college student has told this author that it is the name of the president of the watch company. "What company is that?" asked this author. "Why that's the president of the Bulova Watch Company," was the reply.

This happens, since the history of the southern part of this hemisphere is almost, if not completely, ignored by much of traditional American education. This is unfortunate, since the currency of a Latin American country, Venezuela, bears the name of this great historical figure as does one entire Latin American country—Bolivia. We are not dealing though with ignorance of one or two countries, but with ignorance of an entire hemisphere that comprises a basic section of our planet.

The result of course is to amplify the tendency often reflected in mass media news reporting to almost assume that the so-called Third World does not exist, so there is no use learning about it.

Then the question may arise—if university students in Latin America did not know who George Washington was, what would Americans say about their education? But we use this as an example of ignorance of only one area of the Third World. Would we not claim that after all, they did not know much because they were products of Third World education? What could we expect from such an unenlightened part of our world? There exists the tendency to think that if we are the First World then our education is first also—not only first class in some aspects of instruction, but it is first and best in all categories. After all, if this were not so, we would not be the First World at all, would we?

The problem is that we tend to mistake First World status in the world community with First World status in all aspects of life. This compounds one illusion on top of another, and so we believe that superior technological resources will automatically guarantee superior education, not only in some aspects, but in every aspect of the learning experience. There may not be as many Olympic-sized swimming pools in the schools of the Third World nations; but then again, few students ever learned much in swimming pools except how to swim, but we tend to believe that the scarcity of such luxuries means substandard achievement in all aspects of learning, or so our logic tells us.

During the cold war, an iron curtain cut off Soviet block countries from the rest of the free world. It may not be a great exaggeration to say that nowadays, not an iron curtain but an information curtain often cuts off some parts of the world from our field of awareness in news reporting and in our educational system. We need not go far a field in our geographical search to exotic parts of our world to see the effects of this reality. Not only Latin America but also our great and beautiful neighboring country of Canada is barely kept within our frame of reference, whether this be in our daily conversation, our news reports, or in our educational system. When asked by this author why Americans almost never hear any news reports about Canada, one American adult student answered, "that's because nothing ever happens there!"

Despite the author's statement that millions of people live in Canada, and all of them are doing something every day, and that the newspapers and media broadcasts in that nation are full of news about that country, just as our reports are full of information about what happens in this country, the idea persists that our awareness of a country or part of the world is identical with reality. If we don't

know about or don't hear about it, it doesn't exist or it is not important to us.

So it is that the traditional teaching of world history has also given information about the rise of the Western world with of course a respectful nod to the values of the history of ancient Egypt, which is part of Africa. However, it often has been lacking in giving a basic knowledge of the great contributions to world civilization of the Middle and Far East, among other parts of the world. Among many studies of these advances, Gavin Menzies in his book on early Chinese exploration around the globe *1421: The Year China Discovered America* states that "the depth of Chinese culture is as awesome as its width. Three thousand years ago the Chinese had mastered brass moulding and carving with simple yet stunning designs.... By the Tan dynasty...at a time when our European ancestors were clothed in rags, rich Chinese were dining off gold plates adorned with phoenixes and dragons and drinking their wine from silver chalices."[4]

In like manner, the impressive achievements of such civilizations as the Maya city-state in Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize where indigenous people had calculated the rotation of the earth around the sun with greater precision than the Europeans when they first arrived in the new world, are notable. This same civilization also knew of the existence of the planet Venus before it was discovered by European scientists. At the same time, a new generation of historians and archeologists, such as Richard Cremo in his work *Forbidden Archeology,* are challenging traditional views of societies in prerecorded history, to theorize that there is evidence that they were far more advanced in mathematical calculations and a knowledge of astronomy than has been previously believed.

India had universities thousands of years ago as well as ancient works of literature and its sacred language Sanskrit, which formed the basis in large part for ancient Greek and Latin as well as most of the language of the Western world, in what has been called the Indo-European family of languages, which includes modern English.

Indeed the contributions of India to world history are impressive. Evidence of the practice of dentistry in ancient India apparently goes back as far as 2600 B.C. Cotton and sugarcane were harvested, while the world's first docks and furnaces have been dated back to the same period in the history in India. The beginning of modern mapmaking or cartography goes back to ancient times in that nation, while the earliest Indian texts in astronomy with information about eclipses

and seven planets, have been dated to more than 12,000 years before Christ.

In the field of medicine, cataract surgery was practiced by the Indian doctor Sushruta in the sixth century B.C.; and studies of phonetics and morphology, which are central to modern linguistics, were discussed by the Indian scholar Panini; while the mathematician Baudhayana formulated a statement of the Pythagorean theorem for a rectangle, to mention only a handfull of the great cultural contributions of India across the centuries.[5]

With regard to cultural contributions of Islam, as Pat Buchanan has described it, "For many centuries the world of Islam was in the forefront of human civilization and achievement. In the Muslims own perception, Islam itself was indeed synonymous with civilization."[6]

In the contemporary disharmony between Eastern and Western societies, many people forget or never learned of the great cultural advances of the Arab-speaking world that formed an important basis for the development of the Renaissance and the further creation of the modern world in what is known now as the First World. Many of these scientific discoveries came to Western Europe by way of translators and scholars in medieval Spain, a country that maintained close ties with the Middle East through the invasion of Arabs into Spain in the year 711 A.D. In fact, Arabic was the language of high culture in Spain until the thirteenth century, not Spanish itself.[7]

Would it be revolutionary for us to consider that these and other parts of the world are not "developing countries" according to contemporary standards, perhaps in part at least because they have already developed; and is it not ethnocentric of us to consider that important developments throughout human history are of little or no importance if they have not included "developments" according to more contemporary and perhaps more pragmatic standards alone?

The same ignorance applies to Latin America. When educators speak about non-Western societies in their curriculum they frequently refer to Latin America as an example. The traditional thinking in this matter is that the advances of Western civilization traveled from the highly developed United States and trickled down to Latin America over the centuries, while some educators, and many Americans, suspect that civilization never really got to Latin America in the first place.

The truth of the matter is just the opposite: the first universities in the Western Hemisphere were opened at least a century before the formation of the first universities in the United States. The first opera

written in this hemisphere was composed by a Peruvian composer in the early 1700s. The first European-style hospital was built in the Dominican Republic, while the first symphonic orchestra in this hemisphere began to give concerts in Venezuela in 1750. The list of achievements could go on to include mention of the first book written in a European language about the new world. This was an edition of the account of the travels of the Spanish explorer Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, which was written of course, in Spanish.[8]

Not only is it important to increase student's awareness of the great cultural and intellectual traditions of the areas of the world that may currently lie outside the coterie of states generally considered to be the First World, but also other modalities in medicine and healing may be the subject of instruction as well. Certainly the willingness to consider the validity of so called alternative medicine has increased greatly in recent years to the point that major hospitals now offer patients oriental Reiki and acupuncture treatments and recommend that patients engage in meditation, to mention a few alternate modalities for healing.

Nevertheless, the very term "alternative medicine" may be considered to be ethnocentric, since certain types of healing may be alternative in terms of Western medicine, but that does not mean that they may be alternative to hundreds of millions if not billions of people in other parts of the world. On the contrary, they are often mainstream medicine in the majority of the world, and we might be able to realize this if we did not think that our world revolves only along the lines of what is considered acceptable in the First World. In many societies they are simply examples of mainstream, traditional medicine. One example of this is the case of a school of medicine known as homeopathy. Well established in many parts of the world, this school of medicine was once very popular in the United States to the degree that it was an important branch of medicine taught in many medical schools, and homeopathic remedies such as arnica were mainstays of family medicine carried by countless drug stores on a routine basis in the 1800s.

The use of homeopathic remedies is still popular in many parts of the world, since it is not inimical to modern Western medicine.[9] Rather it can be used in conjunction with modern medicine. In France and Germany, for example, many thousands of MDs use homeopathy, yet in the United States even many health professionals are not familiar with the basic tenants, let alone the history of this particular approach to healing. The very same can be said of the Eastern use

of Ayuvedic medicine as well as many other forms of what has been called "alternative medicine."[10]

Similarly, it will be increasingly important for the study of history and culture itself, not to speak of sociology and political science, for American students to gain, through their educational experience, a greater awareness of the relative nature of their own values. It will undoubtedly come as a great shock to many students to realize that large portions of the world conceive of life in vastly different ways than do most Americans as we will learn in other parts of our study. Basic differences between group-based and individualistic cultures account for vast variations in perspective that can have an effect on virtually any and all aspects of life. Differing views of tradition and family life, to mention only a few frames of references, can also create cultural barriers that again not only have an effect on foreign relations and international business but also on interpersonal communication on the most basic level.[11]

Third World areas of the globe are often seen to be of such little importance that even our leaders may be tempted to oversimplify or make generalizations about them—concepts that may ultimately have little justification. Such is often the case when our political leaders try to form "a Latin American policy" or when they try to "deal with what is going on in Africa." Though the term Latin America can legitimately be used, and though there are certain social characteristics that many of the countries in that part of the world share with each other, these twenty or so nations do not live and march in lockstep with each other. On the contrary, there are and have been monumental differences between one nation in that part of the hemisphere and its neighbors. These differences are not only geographical and historical. They are economic, political, and demographic, to mention only a few variables.

The traditional ignorance of the differences between the nations south of the U.S. border even among political leaders, is well illustrated by a story that is told about the U.S. Congress. According to this story, at one time a member of that august body stated that the United States had to send a Spanish-speaking envoy to Brazil to clarify U.S. foreign policy. Then someone advised the representative that the people of that Latin American nation did not speak Spanish. Brazil was a Portuguese-speaking country.

The same is very true of Africa, to mention only one division of the landmass of our planet that often is referred to as a cultural and political unit. Even as we consider African language or religion as one

whole, we are making a gross generalization, since each one of those areas of life is subject to dozens, even hundreds if not thousands, of variations and variables that could easily be the subject of a lifetime of study for anyone.

There can be little doubt that a knowledge of the geography and history, let alone the cultures that make up the Third World have had little place in the modern curriculum of the First World, especially in the case of the United States with which we are most familiar. As mentioned before, education always reflects the society in which it exists, and so in the First—or highly mechanized—world, present and future time often take precedence over considerations of past history and tradition; for what is being manufactured now is much more important that what was fabricated in the past. Perhaps for this reason it has been said that the current generation of college students appears to believe that the world was created when they were born. The authors' experience, after more than forty years as a college professor in small colleges and large universities in various parts of the United States, is that few students are taught or know very much about the main events of American history. Much surprise is given when it is mentioned that the United States invaded Mexico in the nineteenth century, or that the United States fought a war with Spain through which that country lost its last colonies in the new world. The same could be said for other major events. Our educational system in general seems to have forgotten the wisdom of the old adage which states that those who forget history are doomed to repeat it. We may wonder if there may not be a like tendency among many students today to believe that the modern world has been based largely on the contributions of science and technology of the modern world alone, and that the world of premodern technology was not really important at all.

Much the same is true of the study of religion in our schools. As Gilbert K. Chesterton also said in his book *Orthodoxy*, in the modern democracies one is free to speak about anything as long as he does not speak about religion.[12] This is not to speak about inculcating the special prominence or preaching any one set of religious beliefs, but rather teaching the awareness of the importance of religion in human history and in the world today. Because of the tendency of secularism in modern Western society, the trend is to believe that the entire world views life in secular terms as we tend to do even when a cursory understanding of history and of today's world indicates that often this if not and has not been the case at all.

As Oxford University professor John Gray has stated, "a third aspect of the utopian syndrome—one that I shall call 'the religion of humanity' is connected with the almost obsessive secularism of the Western academic class, the almost morbid passion for eliminating every vestige of transcendence and mystery from the human condition."[13]

In spite of the onslaught of innumerable books on education and graduate schools of education, not to mention a plethora of academic journals that grind out theory after theory of approaches to the educational experience, replete with endless statistics and technical data, the truth is that for many observers American education, which has abandoned the fundamentals of education, has deteriorated in recent generations. One commentator, Polo Lionni, the author of the study *The Leipzig Connection*," has noted that a perusal of the debates taking place in the U.S. Congress of the 1880s indicates that our forebears had much greater command of the English language than do most people today. He goes on to say that "the high school graduate of 1900 was an educated person, fluent in his language, history, and culture possessing the skills he needed in order to succeed."[14]

Some study of the world's great religions, other than Christianity, is essential if students and the citizens of future generations are to understand the great importance of religions such as Islam and Buddhism—how they have historically dominated the lives of billions of people, and how important they are in today's world to the point that it may be fair to say that a vast majority of the so-called educated adults in the United States have only a very sketchy idea of the basic tenets of these religions and the way in which they have shaped the rise of civilization since time immemorial.

It is also important that students be taught a new respect for non-industrialized, including indigenous societies, and the wealth of ideas and values that they have brought down to us across the centuries. Such a respect is not presently an important part of the educational system, but it should increasingly become an aspect of education in a post-industrialized world. Likewise, it is important that students learn to appreciate and respect the role of religion in tribal and indigenous societies. It can be said that religious beliefs, though they have and still do vary greatly from one indigenous society to another, usually constitute the very basis for life itself to the extent that to destroy localized religious beliefs, albeit it in the name once again of supposedly good intentions, can lead to the destruction of a society as it has always existed.

It must be considered extremely strange that highly industrialized societies believe they are so superior to people that live close to nature, that they feel they have a right to enter into such cultures and destroy them when they would abhor another culture doing the same to them. This unfortunately has been all too often the history of European colonialism including the European settlement of virtually all of the Western Hemisphere.

At the same time, however, it may be worth noting that even our terminology is out-of-date and is Western European centered, since from the Western Hemisphere itself, Asia lies closest by going to the west, not by going east as it was in the time of an explorer like Marco Polo.

## Still a Lingua Franca?

The rise of the culture of industrialism has also made the English language the lingua franca of much of the world, and the power and influence of the English empire in the nineteenth century, and the power and influence of the American empire in terms of political and financial power in the twentieth century, is a fact of life.

The result has been that the learning of foreign languages has almost been a "foreign" concept in the American educational tradition. It is hardly an exaggeration to state that for many years few Americans have really taken language learning seriously, since it was thought in the back of the mind's of many people that foreigners would always speak English, and there was no reason to learn a foreign language—this belief was further compounded by the idea that's if people did learn a foreign language they would probably never be called on to use it in daily life.

Much has changed in this traditional approach to language learning in recent years with the influx of millions of immigrants, whether legal or illegal, to the point that many observers are now saying that the United States, if not a legally a bilingual society, is at least a de facto bilingual country. The U.S. Census Bureau states that some 45 million Spanish speakers now reside in the United States with a projection that by the year 2050 there will be over 100 million Spanish speakers in this country.[15] Whether this is a desirable outcome is hotly debated. Nevertheless, this reality still stares us in our face.

Even the techniques for learning a new language have been updated. A myriad of modalities and theories about language learning exist at the present time. Much has changed since the prevalence of the old

so-called grammar and translation method of learning a foreign language by which theory of language skill was stressed over practical ability to communicate in another tongue.

Nevertheless, other important trends will have to continue to develop. It is time for the curriculum that served society well for so long to be updated, and so the study of languages such as Spanish, French, and German should be supplemented by the study of such languages as Russian, Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese, to mention only a few of the tongues that are spoken by countless billions of people.

It is true that English has become a type of universal language because of the great power of the British Empire during the nineteenth century and the great economic and political power of the United States in the twentieth century. However, with the end of the hegemony of that former First World power and the economic decline of the United States in an era in which the Eurodollars has become the world's dominant financial standard rather than the U.S. dollar. It may be reasonable to conclude that the dominance of the English language may begin to fade in comparison with other languages. As a result the importance of foreign language learning will undoubtedly grow exponentially in the near future.

In addition, the growth of globalization means that hiring for international organizations no longer takes place on the basis of the local personnel market alone. Companies with international branches can and do hire staff from many countries, and our educators must realize that monolingual American job seekers are increasingly forced to compete with potential employees from countries with much greater traditions of foreign language ability such as is the case with citizens of many European countries where the mastery of two or three languages or more, is extremely common.

One may wonder if the time may come when the ability to speak one or more foreign languages, even in the basic stages of knowledge, may be considered as a positive asset for a person who may wish to run for the position of president of the United States?

Need we say that it will be increasingly important for public officials such as the secretary of state and members of our diplomatic corps?

If foreign language ability is not important for such important officials we may increasingly ask why not? For it is important to remember that language is always a part of the culture of the people that speak that language, and the total concept of culture itself

also includes language as an important component of personal and national cultural identity.

Of course, certain basic issues of culture have been taught as part of the language learning process in this country, but now may be the time for such study to be updated as well to reflect a more basic and holistic view of what constitutes culture in the first place.

All too often the study of foreign culture has been limited to a consideration of certain exotic foods and the names of important artistic and historical personages, and that is fine as far as it goes. However, culture, which is defined by the dictionary as aspects of living, can and should include many other issues that relate to our ability to understand and relate to each other in today's highly complex world. We have already mentioned that one of the basic paradoxes of globalism is that it separates nations and people at the same time that it brings them closer together. In the highly pragmatic societies of the First World the very term "culture" may at first appear to have little to do with what is often called "the real world," and yet as we will find in this study it has extremely basic and vital connections with such important aspects of life.

This has important considerations for international business as well as politics to mention just a few important areas of our lives. Even before the end of the twentieth century, international business experts began to predict a growing unity among trading partners in the new century that was about to dawn on us, stating that the world would increasingly be divided into three sections or globalized markets.[16]

During the Clinton administration, the president sent major auto executives to Japan to try to convince the Japanese to buy more American cars. The results of their visits were negligible to say the least in large part because those involved failed to take cultural matters into consideration. American students are very rarely taught that there are some cultures in the world that try to emphasize harmony in human communication, including business communication, and there are other societies that give higher priority to accuracy of the information even at the cost, sometimes, of total frankness.

In the case mentioned above of Americans visiting Japan to discuss the auto industry, a frank, frontal assault was the initial tactic, and the Americans told their Japanese counterparts that they had to buy American cars or else.... Some days later a tabloid newspaper in one major city ran a blaring headline that said that one high Japanese official wondered, why the United States sent gangsters to do business with us.[17]

It is a fact of life that is being increasingly appreciated that culture, formerly considered to be a vague, abstract concept that has little to do with the practical aspects of life, is really the basis for a great deal of human relations, and in a world in which cultures, including Third World cultures will come in contact with each other more than ever, an awareness of cultural considerations takes on a heightened importance.

Such differences in national perspective are far from obvious. At one time the author spoke about the importance of the hero of Latin American independence Bernando O'Higgins, and the class laughed. On asking why they were laughing, the author was told that this was not the name of a Latin American. It obviously was the name of a person from Ireland. Under the ridiculous belief that all peoples in Latin America have typically Hispanic surnames such as Gomez and Rodriguez, the students were amazed to be told that much of Latin America was as much or a cultural melting pot as the United States. That is why Alberto Fujimori, a man of Japanese descent, was a past president of Peru and Vicente Fox, not Vicente Zorro, which is the Spanish name for fox, was a former president of Mexico.

Such shocking ignorance and a belief in ridiculous stereotypes is compounded on countless government forms in the United States, which ask the racial profile of the person who is filling out the form in question (Martin Luther King's stated dream that we live in a color blind society with no regard to a person's race of course is completely forgotten by our federal government). Even today a question is often found that asks if an individual is Hispanic or is Caucasian. The absurdity of this question is barely worth commenting on, since there exists no exclusivity in race in the Hispanic or Spanish-speaking world any more than there is in the United States. Just taking the example of the two former chief executives of two prominent Latin American nations, Alberto Fujimori of Peru and Vicente Fox of Mexico, both of who are Caucasian, is an example in point.

Further, idiocy on the part of government bureaucrats in the United States is compounded in the common question on government form, as to the last name or surname of the individual who is filling out the questionnaire, asking whether or not the individual has a Hispanic surname. This clearly implies that all persons coming from a Hispanic background must have a typically Hispanic last name—an absurdity that we have already commented on.

The only remedy to cure such monumental mistakes in our national thinking is for our education to broaden itself to deal with basic

stereotypes such as these, not only for the average citizens but for our political leaders as well.

## The God of Our Fathers

The bible speaks of the God of our fathers with the obvious implication that if our father believed in a certain way then we should believe in like manner as well. Such is an expression of a group-based society according to our previous explanation of a basic division of human social units into group- and individual-based societies. Cultural awareness and the instruction in cultural differences, basic as they are to life, has rarely been a basic unit of our Western educational system, at least not in modern times. Perhaps this is true because on the surface such a study may smack of the theoretical and the philosophic that goes against the grain of our ever increasing, pragmatically oriented culture that tends to believe that the humanistic values of a liberal-arts education do not have as much relevant importance in today's world as does business and technical training.

The result has been the creation of glaring blind spots in education, which now have a basic importance more than ever before. One of these issues deals not only with the difference between individual- and group-based cultures but also with the pride with which more group-based societies view their own value systems, their family, their city, and above all their nation.

Once again, it may not be an overstatement to try to divide our world, as students of comparative culture have already done, into blocks or areas of human society that have a greater sense of pride in themselves and their national traditions than do other more individualistic societies. The Far Eastern concept of personal and national pride, a pride in ones self and in one's country, can be so strong that a sense of personal honor can at times even take precedence over the basic instinct for self-preservation. The implications of such a pride are far reaching, since they do have an effect on politics, business, interpersonal relations, and other aspects of life. They literally can be and are issues of life and death, or peace and war; and if our educational system trained our political leaders, in this vast historical difference that separates such an important and basic areas as the Far East, the Middle East, and Latin America from the individualistically oriented Western, generally more industrialized, world, it is possible that tragic occurrences in today's world would have been foreseen or perhaps been avoided.

## The Standard Is Not Always Very Standard

A study in *American Educator* a publication of the American Federation of Teachers has stated that, "there is a growing awareness in this country both that academic performance in our schools in not high enough, and that we need to set 'world class' standards."[18]

The dropping standards in American education have become a cliché that has been repeated in countless articles and books in recent years, at least as far back as the publication in the 1950s of a best-seller that bore the title *Why Johnny Can't Read*. Similar ideas come down to us in more recent times in comedian and social critic Steve Allen's book on the "dumming down" of America, to mention only a few of those individuals who have been alarmed at educational trends in this country. Recently former candidate for president, Patrick Buchanan has noted that, "U.S. primary and secondary education is a disaster area. Test scores have been falling for decades."[19]

The reasons why this has taken place are myriad, yet it is more important than ever that American education not stand alone but rather that it try to measure up to an international standard. Certainly a major indication of falling standards can be found in the obvious tendency toward grade inflation—a fact of life by which even the most elite of our colleges are prone to consider more and more of their students to be honor students.

The cause of this tendency is not purely contained in the educational system itself as much as it may be a product of greater social trends. Just as we have tried to distinguish between industrialization itself and the culture of industrialization, which has made vast changes in human life in the past two centuries, so also we must distinguish between political democracy and social democracy: the latter being a growing sense that one can do what one wants without regard for authority and that social freedom, in contrast to personal and social discipline, reigns supreme.

It has been stated that American higher education is secondary or high school education by world standards. Without quoting facts and figures and a vast array of test scores on standardized tests in one country or another, it can be obvious that this is true when we consider that more than 50 percent of our high school graduates go on to study in college. Although the extension of educational opportunity is undoubtedly a positive aspect of our society, it would be naive to believe the standards that have characterized higher education throughout most of Western civilization could be maintained when

so many millions of people populate our colleges and universities. In an era in which, when a child is born and immediately the first question asked to the parents may be, "How are you going to save for the kid's college education?" rather than the traditional question "Do you think he or she will be qualified to go to college?" speaks of the mass production of education with the inevitable decline of standards.

The author jokingly told one college class in Twentieth-Century Studies that Thomas Edison invented electricity because his children always complained about having to watch color TV by candlelight. "Our eyes are hurting" they complained, "Can't you invent an electric light?"

To this professor's amazement no one laughed or even smiled, and then one student asked in all seriousness, "Is that true or is that a joke?"

Education, especially higher education, has become a commercial commodity sold by the millions to the mass audience. It is mass-produced as are other products in the industrialized civilization and therefore the student is the consumer, and as we all know the customer in a retail operation, is always right. This is the main reason for the rampant grade inflation since the 1960s, when college and university officials in large numbers rushed to compromise educational standards to try to placate an increasingly violence-prone student body. At that time the cry of countless thousands of college students was that the curriculum had to be revised so that it could "be relevant," which was all too often a euphemism for "it has to be easy." All too many administrators were willing to cave in to student pressure, to the detriment of American education.

At the present time not only do instructors rate their students with final grades, but also now students are allowed to rate their professors in their written class evaluations. The plain fact is that education in the true sense is a discipline not entertainment, even though many of the questions found on these evaluation forms indicate that classes are given for the comfort of the student who is now the consumer, rather than for the education of this all powerful consumer population.

It begs common sense to believe that professors can feel free to give the grades they think they should give, especially when they are not tenured, when they are going to be at the mercy of student opinion. After all, for a student who is receiving failing grades in a class to say that the professor is wonderful, is pushing a faith in human a bit too far.

On the contrary, such evaluations eat away at the traditional discipline that has been at the heart of our educational system, and it puts

us at odds with the more rigorous educational standards that still can be found internationally. Far from favoring our students when they enter the international job market, they make the college degree, which is now so common and so relatively easy to get that it is often considered to be the equivalent of a high school diploma decades ago, not nearly as valuable a commodity as it once was. This is true all the while that most students and their families have to go into serious debt to achieve this relatively valuable honor.

Once again in this new era we will have to try to fix our sights on a higher educational standard that will entail not just the spending of vast sums of money which is the typical American way of fixing a problem, but rather also the correction of social views that have also brought about a lessening of respect for education, for real learning and for cultural values in general.

While most Americans have not been watching, the American and basically First World concepts of education have been increasingly questioned as the models for the rest of the world. It is now India and China that are marking the standards. While First Worlder continue to believe all too often that many, if not most people in the Third World suffer from illiteracy reading experts estimate that number of functioning illiterates still rank in the tens of millions in this nation where it has been possible for more than one student to sue his college for giving him a degree when he claimed to be a graduate who was still illiterate.

Attitudes, not the lack of money lie at the heart of the problem. It seems that just about everyone wants higher standards, but the problem all too often is that parents want higher standards for someone else's kid, not their own. Increasing the consumerist mentality has invaded American education with more and more parents telling teachers that they, the parents, pay the teacher's salary, and therefore they have a right to dictate what teachers teach and the way in which they teach. They also have the right not only to second guess the grades that instructors give; all too often they also feel it is alright to actually pressure their children's teachers, and of course if they do not get what they want they often believe they have the right to pressure the school principal, the superintendent of schools, and members of the Board of Education. As one teacher commented—in today's world the teachers are afraid of the principal. The principal is afraid of the superintendent of schools. The superintendent is afraid of the members of the Board of Education, and the Board of Education is afraid of the parents, and the parents all too often are afraid of the children.

While many sectors of the society are calling for higher educational achievement and higher standards in general, all too many families bring pressure on school systems to lower standards in the case of their own children. The basic problem with this is a growing disrespect for education and those who work in the field of the educational experience in general. Teachers are professionals, and they should be treated as professionals. Would these same parents dare to tell their family doctors which medicine to prescribe? Or would they tell their dentist how to fill a cavity? Of course not. These people are professionals after all, and how could a layman with no training in these fields tell a professional how to function in his or her profession? We may well ask such a question in the field of education, and yet many individuals believe that the professionals that teach their children are so unprofessional that they have to be told what to do.

Apparently, it never dawns on them that if they have to tell their dentist how to do dental work, that professional is apparently so incompetent that they wouldn't go to him or her for dental services at all. Then why don't they complain to their local school system if they feel they have hired teachers that are so unprofessional that they have to be instructed by parents who all too often have no educational training in the fields in question? As the distinguished educator Mortimer Adler has stated in his book *Reforming Education: The Opening of the American Mind*, "The pay of teachers must become competitive with that of other equally demanding professions. Above all, money-making and other external indices of social success must become subordinate to the inner attainments of moral and intellectual virtue."[20]

The growing trend toward what has been called a competency-based curriculum will also have to be reexamined. Such a vogue in education has been said to originate in time and motion studies such as those propounded by Frederic Taylor, by which students are trained to achieve preset levels of competency. However, as Chad Hanson has stated so well, "The push toward a competency-based curriculum is not an educational or professional movement, but a managerial movement." And so it has been said that in the quasi-engineering or scientific based approach to education in which students are increasingly taught merely to pass standardized texts the basic thinking mode is left out of the question. This author states again, quoting the work of Michael Apple in *Teachers and Texts*, that "the 'why' question is often left out of the educational experience as students are not taught to think about questions such as what or how the world might be

improved or changed for the better, since the ability to reflect on present realities is often left out of the educational process."[21]

Clearly, this mechanized trend in education as well as the mass production of educational mediocrity can be seen simply as the application of the philosophy of industrialism, or the dominance of First World values over the traditional substance of educational philosophy. Yet as the cultural value of industrialism gives way to post-industrialized value systems, it is reasonable to believe a new era is dawning and substantial changes in the emphasis of our educational system will be called for.

It is time for us to reconsider our education policies in order to bring them in line with worldwide standards, and to enable our graduates to compete in a new era. As John Simpson, president of the University of Buffalo has stated in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, it is time for us to ask ourselves, "what is our considered plan to making sure all those who study here—whether American or not—can compete and excel in a globalized economy?"[22]

# 7

# The Third World and the Popular Imagination

We have already seen that the popular idea of a possible Third World is exceedingly vague. Nevertheless, in the mind of vast numbers of people in the First World there does exist a cohesive concept of what life is like in such areas of the globe. It may not be going too far to say that it approaches the English theorist Hobbes' description of early man living close to nature before the historical rise of civilization, as a being whose life was nasty, short, and brutish.

While historians and archeologists may debate whether or not this sweeping generalization was true of most early human societies or not, we can state that a stereotypical approach to life in vast sections of our present-day world is often arbitrary and simplistic. These considerations that follow do not claim that negative realities such as mentioned here do not exist or have not existed in the Third World as they have in other places, but rather that sweeping generalizations are often very misleading. It is the very totality of negative stereotypes that tend to make them so objectionable when they imply that everybody or every country under consideration must be identical.

The following are some of the negative stereotypes of the Third World as they are often heard in daily conversation. They often imply that little, if any, positive qualities of life can exist there; rather, poverty and corruption flourish to an almost total degree. Nevertheless, we might state that life is neither that simple nor is the world ever that easy to understand.

Do all the people have dirt floors in their houses?

This was an actual question that a supposedly educated American gave to this author when asking about Latin America. It of course reflects the idea that everybody in that section of the world lives in abject poverty even without the barest necessities of our modern age.

This attitude reflects the view of many observers in the First World who see what we have found to be the majority of our world as living in a backward and an unenlightened state of existence. This is a projection of a lasting condescension to non-European and non-Western societies, since American settlers, well up to the end of the nineteenth century, believed that Native Americans were savages without the vestiges of civilization. As a result most nonnative Americans did neither take the time nor the interest to learn to appreciate the values of indigenous civilizations. They stole Indian lands and forced tribes to resettle, not caring to appreciate the native belief in the sacred quality of their homelands as the places where the spirits and physical remains of their ancestor rested in peace.

This has a great relevance to our contemporary view of the world, especially the Third World. The American settler's negative view of Indian societies is a matter of historical record, while many Americans believe that a place like Latin America is composed mainly or totally of Indian or indigenous cultures although this is not true.

As an example of this mentality, we might consider a history of the world published in the United States in 1854 by the author Samuel Mounder. In describing the population of the Spanish missions of that time in California the author stated: "The Indians are naturally filthy and careless, and their understanding is very limited. In the small areas they are not deficient in ideas or imitation but they never will be inventors. Their true character is that of being revengeful and timid, consequently they are very much addicted to treachery."[1]

It may be interesting to note that this volume also earned the approval of no less a personage than Ralph Waldo Emerson, who wrote in the frontispiece of the book that "I have examined the 'History of the World' and I think it is particularly valuable.... So far as I have observed, the author appears impartial."

A new more tolerant understanding of the value of native societies is beginning to emerge as part of a developing post-industrial ethos: however, as this change takes place, numerous negative stereotypes of

the Third World still fill the popular imagination. As an example we have heard many individuals express a concern about food as given in the following statement:

> Don't eat anything there because it's not clean.

Citizens of First World countries have been known to express a fear of any and all food in the Third World because it is not safe to eat. Some people appear to believe that after they take the first mouthful they will come down with some deadly disease. "Don't eat the meat in Mexico. I'm afraid of it," was what more than one American has told us. "After all here we have the FDA—the Food and Drug Association to protect us," said one commentator.

At this point the author pointed out that the FDA was, like so many government institutions, largely controlled by big business interests and according to many muckraking studies in recent years, there is probably more adulteration of meats in the United States, including the legal injection of colorants, hormones, dies, and antibiotics than anywhere else in the world, to the point that we really don't know what we are eating when we decide to consume meat.

Herbert Lay, M.D, former FDA commissioner has stated, "The thing that bugs me is that the people think the FDA is protecting them…what the FDA is doing and what the people think it's doing are as different as night and day."[2] For this reason more than one American tourist who has ventured south of the United States and to other parts of the hemisphere have been known to comment that he or she hadn't really known the natural unadulterated taste of meat until he or she left the home country and traveled abroad.

> He's from Latin America but he seems to be clean.

The comment mentioned above was overheard in a fashionable clothing store in an upscale suburb of a major American metropolis as the manager of the store commented on the visit of a Latin American to his establishment. The shocking ignorance of this point of view stuck in the author's mind for many years because it reflects not only the prejudice and the general view of the Third World of the individual who made this statement, but also the opinion of countless millions of citizens of what are considered to be First World countries.

Once again the view seems to be that Third Worlders not only suffer from absolute ignorance but they also have little or no contact with what we might consider to be civilization in the first place.

Even a cursory awareness of the incredible richness and variety of culture including high culture in a place like Latin America would give the lie to this absurd notion. Yet such ideas are a result of the belief that Latin America and the Spanish-speaking world in general has always occupied a place outside Western civilization.

Perhaps for that same reason traditional American education has given little attention to Spanish settlements, which predated English-speaking colonization in the present-day United States by at least one century. As mentioned, the first book written about this new world in a European language was authored by the Spanish traveler Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca who was shipwrecked near the northern coast of Florida and southern Louisiana. He actually walked all the way to the southwest, a journey in the early 1500s that took him almost a decade.

This author was once lecturing about Hispanic settlements in the early history of the United States, and he was told by one student, a retired teacher of American history, that in more than thirty-five years of experience teaching in that field, he knew nothing about Hispanic contributions to U.S. history.

One early history of the United States published in the 1840s states that yes, there were early Hispanic settlements that predated Anglo-Saxon colonization, but they didn't amount to much, since Hispanics made no contributions to American history or culture although such a statement will not stand up to historical analysis.

In fact, as previously mentioned, a strong case could be made that Western culture, far from being outside of the mainstream of Latin America, actually began in that southern part of this hemisphere and traveled later to North America rather than the other way around.

### Why are their governments so corrupt?

To say that the governments of the Third World are extremely corrupt is a sweeping generalization, just as in the medical field, one may make the unenlightened statement that all "alternative therapies" are worthless; yet for these to be reasonable assertions a study must be made of each particular case rather than accepting a blind stereotype.

Nevertheless, the topic of government corruption itself is a difficult one by its very secret nature. It is a subject that is filled with many

fallacies, since corruption is usually hidden from public view so that few people really know what they are talking about, except in those cases when politicians are caught red-handed, whether it be in this country or in any other.

It is logical to conclude that scandals resulting from corruption that come to the light of day are but the tip of the iceberg, and the total size of the problem of corruption in any nation, must remain hidden.

Many citizens of the Third World, however, believe that there may be something of a double standard in existence when it comes to judgments about such issues. They believe that a prior opinion exists among many Americans that, "It can't and it doesn't happen here."

When the film JFK came out some years ago, many commentators objected that the movie's premise was outrageous in suggesting the President Kennedy was killed as a result of a conspiracy. More than one voice alleged that this was the opinion of extremist conspiracy nuts who were outside of the mainstream of American life. After all, conspiracies just don't happen here. Nobody in the United States could try to stage this type of what has been called a coup d'etat. As Texas attorney Barr McClellan states in *Blood Money & Power, How L.B.J. Killed J.F.K*, "Until now a subtle mental twist has prevented these understandings... assassinations were also misunderstood and too often prejudged.... Traditional advisors to presidents understood assassination to be by loners. In Europe, the view was a power conspiracy did it."

The question of national image was apparently at stake as this author goes on to observe that one member of the Warren Commission stated that it was important not to note a conspiracy at work least we appear to be a banana republic.[3] That is to say that many people thought that conspiracies could take place in small Latin American nations but not here in the United States.

Apparently, largely unheeded was the statement at the end of the JFK film that a committee of the U.S. Congress, hardly a fringe group in our society, stated that President Kennedy was most likely killed as a result of a conspiracy. Nor did critics apparently take the time obviously to read many of the hundreds of books worldwide that have been written about the assassination, most of them scholarly studies completed by authors who dedicated many years of their life to research. The vast majority of these also state that the assassination was the work of a conspiracy. Of course, the mystery behind the Kennedy assassination is still one of the most controversial topics in U.S. history. Yet we may wonder how or why all these serious scholars could be or should be considered to be right-wing conspiracy nuts?

Perhaps the attitude that makes it difficult or impossible to admit that conspiracies can and do operate in these United States, is the same frame of mind, which says that corruption is not widespread in our society. We are too advanced a nation for that to happen here. This may or may not be true as one may wish to see it. However, what is true is that many citizens of Third World countries believe that a blind spot in the national mind makes it difficult for many Americans to see the forest for the trees and to connect the dots in reports of government corruption in the United States, which are a common feature of our local as well as our national news.

Opinions of course will vary greatly on this topic: however, it may be instructive at the very least for First Worlder to be aware that many in the Third World do share this opinion. They are heard to complain that perhaps corruption tends to be more flagrant in their countries, but it is not necessarily more rampant. Some years ago, the federal government put out a report on the economic and political situation in Brazil stating that the country was hampered by widespread corruption. In the past, perhaps such an accusation would have been accepted: however, in this case Brazil shot back claiming that in light of known political corruption in the United States, its neighbor to the north has no right to point a finger at them.

This may be seen as an indication of a new brand of realism in light of the numerous political scandals that have plagued the United States just since Watergate and all the other "gates," which have followed it, simply on the federal level not to speak of corruption at the state and local levels. Just on the national level in recent decades we have seen the "ABSCAM scandal, The Iran-Contra Scandal, the Chinagate scandal, the Clinton–Monica Lewinsky scandal as well as other scandals in the Clinton administration such as the White Watergate Scandal and the Travelgate scandal.

Johnny Chung expressing the way in which China saw the U.S. government stated that "the White House is like a subway. You have to put in coins to open the gates."[4]

According to Melissa Rossi in her enlightening book, *What Every American Should Know about Who's Really Running America and What You Can Do about It*, the political system in this country has become corroded, and she states that in light of the recent Jack Abramoff scandal some two dozen congressmen and staff members may be implicated in wrong doing.[5] At the same time innumerable scandals have broken out around the figures of a large numbers of local and state political figures including governors of Illinois, New

York, and South Carolina as well as mayors of cities; small and large and many other state officials.

Many in Third World countries may wonder, therefore, if perhaps the pot is calling the kettle black.

> They change their governments every ten minutes.

Such was a description of governments in the Third World that has become part of a popular stereotype of politics in those parts of the world. Indeed it does seem that the stability of the state appears to be fragile in some, if not in many, of the countries of the other section of the world under study here.

To classify all of these areas, however, with the same rubric would be en exaggeration. During a devaluation of the Peso in Mexico, one major U.S. newspaper declared that the resulting economic turmoil brought on fears of another Mexican revolution, although it cited no real indication of why such a drastic event might take place. On the contrary, to assume that because Mexico is a part of Latin America, this old stereotype would hold true was a great exaggeration, as recent history has clearly shown and as Mexicans themselves declared—we have already had our revolution in 1910, and we have had stable governments ever since. Just because we have economic problems does not mean that we are going to change our government.

Perhaps the image that some journalists have of Mexico has been derived mainly from old movies about the Mexican Revolution such as "Viva Zapata," and just hearing the name of the country called Mexico also brought images of Pancho Villa and his cohorts riding through the back country of that neighboring nation.

The negative stereotypes about Latin America in general were trotted out in many reports that forecast the demise of all economies in that part of the world as if they were linked together like a series of falling dominoes. Nevertheless, one Brazilian financial expert commented that Brazil should not necessarily be linked economically nor politically with Mexico, since they are two totally different countries that don't even speak the same language. In Mexico, Spanish is spoken while Portuguese is the native language of Brazil. Yet because of the concept of "the Third World," very often countries in a certain part of the world are linked together in the popular imagination as if they were all in lockstep with one another, when often nothing could be further from the truth. Nevertheless, the stereotype remains.

As one American once commented to the author, "Down there they change their governments every ten minutes."

Right-wing totalitarian governments have existed in the Third World; however, they have also taken control in the last century in such First World countries as Germany, Italy, and Spain.

Nevertheless, at the heart of the matter of government and law may be, in the minds of some theorists, a basic difference in the philosophy of the law itself. This has been described as the difference between the Anglo-Saxon or Central Western European concept of the letter of the law as opposed to the spirit of the law. The theory states that some nations possess an ingrained respect for the letter of the law. This means, of course, that the law and the current interpretation of the law and of the legal tradition must be respected in an exact way. In other words, it is necessary to "go by the book." In other nations and other traditions it is necessary to bring about social justice in its most essential form, and a constitution can be rewritten if a prevailing administrative policy needs to be changed.

Even though this latter approach or so-called philosophy of the state can and does bring about social instability, not to speak of possible attending violence and disorder and violations of human rights that should never be excused even on theoretical, philosophic, or any other basis. It may be possible to consider such contrasting concepts of governing a state from a variety of points of view.[6]

> They're not part of Western civilization, so they're not really civilized at all.

Once again, the myth that tends to prevail today tells us that all civilizations or at least the civilizations that are worth mentioning, started in and are concentrated in the First World—roughly speaking the United States and Western Europe. Such a view overlooks the monumental contributions of the rest of the world. In our study, we have already given some consideration to the great contributions to civilizations of such areas as the Middle and Far East and China, not to mention other important areas of the world. As we have just noted, just in our own Western Hemisphere, the idea that Western civilization starts and ends with North America is erroneous.

The list of cultural contributions goes on an on, but how often do we stop to think about this type of chronology when we classify the validity of the cultures in what is sometimes called "the other

America." Even the term "America" itself can be called into question when it refers only to citizens of the United States, since some, but by no means all Latin Americans, infer that Americans imply that only the United States is a worthwhile component of this vast hemisphere known as "America" when of course all of the nations in this part of the world make up the American hemisphere.

> But those people are so uneducated and they are so unsophisticated.

It must strike any thinking observer that it is difficult, if not impossible, to make generalizations about countless millions of human beings in such a way that such concepts will apply to each and every individual, but even on the aggregate level much of the common view of education as it applies to the so-called Third World is patently false. Schools and universities not only abound there today, but they have done so for hundreds and in some cases thousands of years. Just in our own hemisphere in colonial Chile and other nations before that country's independence from Spain, there existed institutions of higher learning and just in the Chilean University of San Felipe, which was comprised of four different faculties or schools, more than three hundred doctoral degrees were awarded in colonial times alone.[7] We may wish to note that universities in India were turning out graduates thousands of years ago.

In this hemisphere Costa Rica has one of the highest literacy rates in the world. Conversely in the United States where education is universally available at least on the elementary and secondary level, estimates of functional illiteracy run as high as 100 million people and at least one graduate of a major university sued that institution for giving him a degree when he was actually illiterate.

Keeping in mind the tendency of American news media to report almost exclusively on happenings in the First World, a case can be made that the sophistication level of those who get their idea of the world from U.S. TV news may in some cases be ironically less sophisticated than that of people in some other parts of the world, including many citizens of the Third World.

As Thomas Merton, one of the great pioneers of Latin American studies in the United States has commented, "If only North Americans had realized after a hundred and fifty years that Latin Americans really existed. That they were really people . . . they have never awoken to the fact that Latin America is by and large culturally superior to the United States, not only on the level of a wealthy minority which

has absorbed more of the sophistication of Europe, but also among their desperately poor indigenous cultures, some of which are rooted in a past that has never yet been surpassed on this continent."[8] It is also true that there is a great tendency for professionals in Third World countries to study abroad especially for advanced degrees. This is not only a new phenomenon, but rather it has been the practice for centuries. This may be due to the awareness among students coming from these nations that education does neither begin nor end in their particular countries, rather it is important for them to both professionally and culturally develop a wide perspective on their own fields and on the world in general.

## Life there is Plagued by Disasters Whether Man-Made or Natural

Perhaps it would not be an exaggeration to state that news reporting in many First World nations generally ignores much of what goes on in Third World unless the events there assume monumental status such as might be indicated in a massive loss of life in an earthquake or other natural disasters. Normal political developments such as the transition of power from one administration to another, of great interest if they were to happen in a handful of countries in Western Europe, are usually ignored when they occur in places like most of Africa, Latin America, or a significant part of Asia. When coverage of the Third World is usually limited to catastrophes, is it is not unreasonable to conclude, therefore, that most Americans view events in the Third World itself as being a catastrophe? Thus further deepening the assumption that life is tragic and unworthy of serious attention in such areas of our globe.

Not only does this view of reality arise from the highly arbitrary selection of our news media, but also it aggravates our myopic view of world events by which we tend to overlook social problems in our own country but put in high focus the social realities of other nations especially Third World countries. "Social conditions are terrible in Mexico," stated one American after visiting that country. "I saw people begging in the street. It's shocking."

What such comments fail to declare is that, taking everything into perspective, it is far more shocking for many citizens of other country's that there are countless thousands of homeless people right in the what is supposedly the richest country in the world; for here at home

we often tend to close our eyes to the millions and growing number of people that live below the poverty line, or who go to be hungry each night as well as the tens of millions of citizens without medical insurance.

Even greater is the shock of countless observers outside of the United States when they reflect that a country that feels that it is so wealthy that it can give away endless billions of dollars in foreign aid to other part of the world, cannot or does not even want to provide basic food and shelter to all Americans. Why is this so? ask many foreigners, and why are you so quick to point the finger of blame at other parts of the world when you have many of the same problems as they do right in your own backyard? Perhaps this paradox points to the wisdom of the old saying: "whether you are rich or poor, it's nice to have money." Perhaps this is as true of nations as much as it is true of individuals.

The greatest danger of sweeping generalizations is not that they may contain some kernel of truth but that we often tend to believe in the complete or total nature of such concepts. Many of us actually do believe that everyone in the Third World cannot read or write, or that most people there live without running water or electricity. We can see the complexity of our own society, but we often develop a blind spot toward the differences in other parts of the world.

This tendency to be blindsided is most dangerous when it extends to our government leaders. If we take a look of government questionnaires that many employers include with their job applications, we often find that they ask whether or not a person is a member of some "minority" or other. The definition of minority of course tells us this is a person or thing that is less than the majority. In an immigrant nation almost everyone is a member of some minority or other, yet our government arrogantly decides who comes from a disadvantaged minority or other when historically many groups, not just one of two, have been the victims of prejudice in American history.

The use and abuse of global stereotypes can and does have an effect on our relations with the rest of the world. Could we develop a foreign policy for all of Africa? Are all of the nations in that continent identical? We would doubt that Israelis and Palestinians would agree with such an idea, to take only one glaring example of the fallacy of such a view.

But to go even further, when we describe a person, a part of the globe or a particular country as "the Third World," does not even a

greater danger exist that we may be tempted to mentally cast all of this reality into the same mould. Are we not tempted to think that not millions but rather billions of individuals are all basically the same—they have the same education, the same level of civilization or lack of civilization, and they possess the same values?

Of course even one minute's reflection on such an idea convinces us that such a concept is manifestly false, yet do we always take time to reflect on our thoughts before we formulate them? Do we always take even a minute to consider our mental judgments before we make them or before we speak about them; and are our political leaders necessarily any more enlightened than the rest of us in this regard?

## A View Toward the Future

It is entirely possible that, as stated before, in light of new post-industrial educational policies many of these stereotypes will undergo a reevaluation on the basis of new information, a broader viewpoint and a growing sophistication about other sections of the globe. Just as we no longer believe, like the sailors that accompanied Christopher Columbus on his journey to the new world, that they would approach the end of the world and then fall off, in time we may increasingly expand our frame of reference to no longer believe that we will approach the mental limits of civilization when we venture outside of what we generally consider to be the First World—we will not culturally fall outside of the limits of existence nor do we have to instinctively fear that which is foreign or different.

The world is no longer flat. It is round—we can travel around it and come back to where we started, none the worse for wear and tear, none the worse for our exposure to cultures and values that formerly appeared to be so foreign and so alien. The list of stereotypes of the so-called Third World could go on and on, but they are all a product of the tendency to judge the group by the particular, of the urge to paint large sections of our globe with broad brushstrokes across the surface of our minds as millions and even billions of individuals live and breath in lockstep with each other without exceptions or distinctions. In effect we tend to judge others by our own limited standards.

And so it is human nature to project our own realities on to others and consider that those whose lifestyle does not match ours exactly are somehow deficient in education, intelligence, or sophistication.

In like manner, we might also consider the experience of an American linguist who specialized in doing research relating to the languages of the people in Greenland. He noted that in that country convicted murderers are not executed or put in prison, rather they are sent into internal exile.

On walking toward his home in an isolated part of Greenland, his neighbor, who was a convicted killer, saw him approaching and yelled out, "I killed somebody so they sent me to live here." Knowing that the scholar was an American very far from home, he assumed that his exile was so extreme that in sending him to what seemed to be the end of the world he must have killed not one person, rather he must have been a mass murderer, so he then added, "I killed one person. How many people did you kill?"

Stereotyping may be perhaps a rather normal function of the human brain that allows us to break down a bewilderingly complex world into compartments of thought that we can easily assimilate, but that does not mean that we have always settled for that which is always the easiest way of thinking and judging others. As intelligent people it is our responsibility, especially as our world becomes smaller and smaller, to mix reason and logic with our reflex modes of imaging our world. We must keep a proper perspective for, as G. K. Chesterton stated, the madman is not the man who has lost his reason. He is the man who has lost everything except his reason—namely his perspective on the world around him.[9]

# 8

# Foreign Policy in a New Era

When we think of foreign policy, which is often called statecraft, naturally we realize that we are dealing with the relations of one nation with another. At the same time, however, we often do not stop to appreciate that this most often comes down to the relations between one person and another, or one specific group of political leaders with another. This is to say that foreign policy is conducted among human beings rather than among blind, abstract entities called nation-states. Therefore, all the dynamics that are important in any interaction between human beings on just about any level become important in the relations between one country and another.

Paradoxically, however, the opposite is also true as well, since the human mind tends to think in generalized terms very often, and so we are tempted to think in vast generalizations about political ideas that can be pertinent to whole continents and to other vast sections of our world. For this reason, we hear often about a "Latin American policy" or our relations with the Third World.

On the first level of direct human relations, we of course realize that the variables in human communication are almost infinitely complicated, and we cannot hope to consider all of them in this study. Nevertheless, there are some considerations that may appear to be obvious, and yet that are rarely mentioned in traditional treatises on the nature of foreign policy especially in the case of U.S. foreign policy.

Of basic importance is a mature understanding of the variables not only of political systems around the world, but also of the basic cultural variables of whole sections of humanity. Too often do we tend to believe that persons living in other countries see life basically the same way, at the same time that they may speak a different language?

As mentioned before, we tend to believe that citizens of "developing countries" are on the way to acting and conceptualizing as we do, especially if they have been educated in the First World; and the better educated they are, the closer they will share our values.

This may or may not be the case. It has been said that the basic problem that many American political officials have in dealing with issues pertaining to the Middle East is that they often believe that everyone that lives there thinks and behaves just like a middle-class American.

In addition to other basic characteristics of societies outlined by experts in comparative cultures studies, one demarcation that can be outlined among nations and whole sections of the world is that of pride in the most positive sense of the word. In some other areas of the world, it is a hallmark of social life to a degree that is hard for most Americans and many Western Europeans to understand.

This is markedly the case in much of Asia where traditionally a pride in one's country, one's self, and one's family can often be more important than life itself. This is often true to the degree that many individuals may be tempted to or may actually commit suicide if they believe that they have failed in their duty to themselves or to others. In Japan, more than one thousand managers and business executives have reportedly committed suicide because they believed that they were not successful in developing their business, and they were then responsible for their employee's loss of their jobs.

We may remember the classic war movie, *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, in which a Japanese army official decided to commit suicide when he was unable to fulfill his responsibility to complete the construction of a bridge across that river as another example of this exalted sense of responsibility and person pride which in that case was seen to be secondary to the value of life itself.

Such pride extends of course to another "Eastern" way of life namely that of the Middle East. Also Spain was occupied for some seven hundred years by Arabs coming from North Africa, and many of the values of that part of the world entered slowly into the Hispanic culture, which now includes most of Latin America.[1] Indeed the classic drama of Spain of the seventeenth century is largely concerned with a code of personal honor, which is based on individual and family pride.

Our diplomats may be aware of these variables, yet in real life these values often can be more subtle than we may think. The author was invited to conduct a graduate seminar in a Mexican University

along with a distinguished American colleague who was an expert in international cultural sensitivity in business. When it was time to ask the class for feedback on the course, the students were uniform in giving this classroom experience high marks in general. However, when asked what was a negative aspect of the experience, the students answered with one voice, "the way in which you handed out the papers."

Nonplussed by this answer, the instructors asked what they meant by that, and the students explained that we had tossed the papers that served as our handouts, in an informal, cavalier manner. When we asked how they wanted us to hand out the papers, they stated that they wanted us to carefully place the handouts in front of each person thus recognizing that student's place in the class.

When the students were told that we handed out the papers in the same way that we did in the United States, they again responded with one voice: "We're not in the United States!!"

Such an experience may seem to be an isolated incident. However, the author related this story to a high-ranking member of the Mexican International Banking Commission, asking him how he would react if someone rather carelessly tossed a pen in his direction during a meeting. He replied immediately that whatever the issue was under discussion, "The deal is off" he explained without the slightest hesitation.

When it was explained to him that it was inconceivable to many in other countries that a deal in the millions, if not in the hundreds of millions of dollars, could be negated because of a simple toss of a pen, this person again repeated the statement above, by saying: "The deal is off nonetheless."

The main point is that respect for others and for their individual dignity is not only the case of what the representative of one country may consider to be the proper manifestation of such respect, rather it also must be a two-sided sensibility.

Gaining a full knowledge of the ways in which such respect should be manifested is often more difficult than it may seem at first glance. Nevertheless, it is basic to the establishment of successful international relations.

Of course, such an awareness exists of many levels and some of it is actually long-standing. It is said that the U.S. State Department already warns new members of the Foreign Service against exporting what might be called American informality, even though most Americans may not realize how informal they are by world standards. Even commenting on such informality smacks most Americans as

very odd. What else could we call our president except "Bill" Clinton or "Jimmy" Carter? Why, they wonder, do people in other countries think it odd that we do not refer to our most important political official as James Carter or William Clinton?

So it is that American diplomats are cautioned against meeting someone in a foreign setting and almost immediately calling them by their first name. After all, don't Americans believe that avoiding such formalities makes them appear just that much more friendly?

The concept of personal respect can be surprisingly subtle and complicated. Mutual respect is of course important in all interpersonal situations, but it is especially significant when the stakes include what may actually be the future of our world and such pride in oneself or one's country can at times reach levels that may be difficult to comprehend in much of the world. It can extend, for example, to a fanatical regard for a country's performance in sports, and at least one person has committed suicide because his nation did not win a World Cup soccer competition.

Negotiation experts Roger Fisher and Daniel Shapiro in their book *Beyond Reason: Using Emotions As You Negotiate*, advise those engaged in the negotiating process, including political officials, to always show respect for those with whom they are negotiating. They state that "even in one-to-one negotiations, people are often sensitive about their social status. Negotiators tend to evaluate where they stand socially in comparison to their counterparts."[2]

Would it not stand to reason then that many international negotiators involved in foreign policy matters would be concerned and would be affected by their view of how their nations also stand in the eyes of the world community. We might ask ourselves if negotiators from a so-called Third World country would tend to approach the conference table with the same confidence on the conscious or subconscious level or both as representatives of First World nations?

In this same volume mentioned above, former president of Ecuador, Jamil Mahuad, gives details of what he considers to be his successful negotiations with Alberto Fujimori, past president of Peru. He remarks significantly that, "in all our meetings, I was very conscientious to respect his autonomy and to ensure my own. It would have been deadly wrong, for example to try to tell President Fujimori what to do."[3]

This issue goes to the heart of political negotiations, not only in terms of the traditional concepts of the Third World but especially also in light of changing realities. We may take special note of new

economic blocks of powers rearing their heads in the worldwide arena. One notable example can be found in the so-called BRIC group of nations—an acronym for the economic association of Brazil, Russia, India, and China, which is a case in point. According to a report published by Goldman Sachs, by the year 2050 the combined economies of these countries will be larger than those of the richest countries at the present time. The report does not state that these nations are intending to form an economic block like the Common Market; however, it notes reports that these nations are giving signs of considering the creation of some form of partnership or alliance in order that the combined countries in question will gain much greater power in world economic community.[4]

Just recently as the United States continues in what it hopes is the tail end of the great recession of 2008, many Latin American economies appear to be enjoying great vitality at the same time. In the current year Mexico's economy is reported to have grown 4.5 percent so far, according to the World Bank. At the same time, Brazil leads the region with a growth rate of 9 percent just in the first quarter of 2010. Mexico's economy, which is forecast to possibly reach a 5 percent growth this year, may outpace the U.S. economy during the same period.[5]

This attention to what might at first blush appear to be trivial aspects of interpersonal and therefore international communication may appear inconsequential to one side of a diplomatic discussion; however, they may appear to be monumental considerations for the other side. This may be true on many levels. President Jimmy (James to you in other nations who are more formal in terms of address) Carter went to Mexico and joked that he would have to be careful about drinking the water. Many Mexicans took offense at his statement that only was meant to inject some levity into the proceedings. When asked, why this was the case, one Mexican said that people in that country knew that foreigners could develop what is often called "Montezuma's Revenge" from drinking the water, but they didn't want to be reminded of that fact.

## Don't Just Say No

Still we must realize that nobody can be aware of the connotation of every word in every language as well as every gesture of body language or of any other form of communication. For this reason perhaps when President Bush Sr. went to Australia and flashed a victory

sign with his fingers, he had no idea that this same gesture could have an obscene meaning in the part of the world.

Nevertheless, there are deeper cultural issues that our diplomats should be aware of, yet they are rarely mentioned in college courses in international studies. In defense of Nancy Reagan's famous advice to young people who are approached by their peers to take illegal drugs (many people will say they "do" drugs, but then again how does one "do drugs?") to just say no, we should realize that there are cultures that give primacy to conveying exact information when it is requested while scholars of international behavior claim that there are other cultures that may be considered as what some have called "non–information specific societies." These are societies in which speakers are taught that interpersonal communication should attempt to create harmony between people even at the expense, at times, of concrete or accurate information. In other words people in those cultures, which includes much of Asia and Latin America to a certain degree, are often hesitant to say "no."

Far from this being a vague, abstract concept fit only for college textbooks this has real immediacy for international political issues. It has been said, for example, that U.S. president Nixon brought up a certain policy issue with the emperor of Japan, asking him if he agreed that it might be a good idea. According to reports of the meeting, the Japanese official thought it was a bad idea, but he did not want to say "no". Instead, he used delaying tactics such as, "I'll think about it," or "perhaps," or "let's think more about it," and as an American, the president took him at this word; however, after waiting many months for a reply the president finally realized that the emperor's real intention was to say "no," although he didn't really want to be so direct.

In countries with such a cultural mindset, it is no exaggeration to state that even on an everyday level, as a tourist may ask someone for directions to get to a certain place, that local individual may be inclined to say "yes, he does know" even though the truth may be just the opposite. It will not always happen, but yes, it definitely has happened.

This is not to say that such will be the case always in certain cultures; however, it can indeed happen, for the person who is asked does not want to intentionally misguide the tourist, rather he is brought up with the idea that conversation should be a pleasant experience as much as possible. It should be a harmonious exchange of ideas, and

it is important not to use conversation to disillusion or disappoint the individual that one is speaking to.

The list of cultural differences that can cause obstacles to international understanding are legion of course. The ones given above are mentioned in addition to much more obvious causes for great differences of opinion, such as different political systems based on varying philosophies as well as geographical and economic interests of each country which are of course only a few basic factors that can cause divisions or even enmity among nations.

We need not mention the language barrier as another possible problematic area, since that is more than obvious. However, the United States does not have a real language learning tradition, and it would be difficult to recall a time when the ability to speak a foreign language was considered to be an important attribute for a major public official of this country such as the president, the vice president, or the secretary of states.

Of course not, think Americans, everyone is supposed to speak our language. We don't have to speak their language. And of course we have translators and interpreters who can help us communicate with representatives of non-English–speaking countries.

Of course, this idea reflects the automatic assumption of the unparalleled importance of the United States and of its official language in world affairs and of the First World in general. Needless to say perhaps, at this point in our conception of the relations between the First and the Third World, that the world is changing rapidly and the supremacy of certain parts of the globe is being challenged not only for economic but for intellectual and cultural reasons as well.

The language issue, nevertheless, is a basic one. One can never know too much about another language. Decades ago the United States informed Panama that it wanted to engage in talks with that nation about the possibility of returning that canal to Panama. One would think that country would be extremely pleased with such a communication; however, it was not. This was because the Americans transmitted to Panama their idea that they wanted to discuss the canal issue, thus rendering it in Spanish as "*discutir el canal*."

This seemed clear enough, since a look at a standard Spanish-English dictionary clearly indicates that "discutir" in Spanish does mean "to discuss." Therefore, to translate this word in this way appeared technically correct. Nevertheless, it was said that Panama

reacted negatively to this communication, immediately wondering why the United States wanted to begin their international negotiations by arguing.

The United States was puzzled by this reaction, since they were sure that their use of the Spanish word for "discuss" was correct as indicated in a standard dictionary of the Spanish language. It turned out that the dictionary did say that the two words in the two different language meant the same; however, the dictionary went on to give a secondary meaning for the Spanish word "discutir" that is "to argue," which is an important connotation that this word very often has in daily communication.

The key to all of this is knowledge and education, and much of that comes from years of experience in interpersonal communication, not from the textbooks. Here we may be getting at the core of the entire issue. Diplomacy, like other aspects of statecraft including other complicated issues, is a job for professionals who not only know their business but are also intelligent and educated enough to be aware of the pitfalls of facile generalizations about other nations, especially those of the Third World.

Is there not perhaps the mindset that tempts our officials to think that some country or another is so unimportant in the grand scheme of things that political officials including ambassadors can be chosen mostly on the basis of their friendship with a president or other top officials, because of political cronyism or because they made very large contributions to a political campaign?

Newscaster Paul Harvey once told the story of a rich American farmer who made a very large contribution to a presidential campaign. As a payback the president named the farmer to the position of U.S. ambassador to a foreign country. According to this newscaster, when the ambassador arrived at his new post he was advised by a professional diplomat at the U.S. Embassy in the particular country that it was important to be careful about relations between North and South Korea. "Do you mean to tell me that there are two Koreas, North and South?" was the question that the new ambassador asked in great surprise.

As shocking as this story may be, it is far from being unique it is sad to say. Would it not be unreasonable to pick ambassadorial staff from those who can speak the language of a country that they will be assigned to if it is not English and those who are familiar with the cultural values of that nation?

We may say that high public officials such as a president of the United States or the secretary of state do not have the time to learn a foreign language well. But would it ever be possible to consider that existing foreign language ability might be a real asset for those that aspire to such lofty positions?

It is not entirely necessary to gain fluency at all. In terms of showing respect it is often said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. It would be a real asset for the president of the United States, or any official in an important position, to be able to at least start a political discussion with foreign counterparts by opening their conversation by saying, "Hello! How are you today?" in their language.

Such a beginning would undoubtedly tend to create a social connection between the two leaders that could be especially important if existing political differences might make it appear at first glance that such rapport would be unlikely. At the same time an official taking the time to learn about the correct body language and other cultural issues that pertain to the country he or she is talking with would also be a worthy investment in time and effort. As an example it is often considered very bad manners in the Middle East to show the bottom of one's shoe to another person when engaging in a conversation, and serving food with the left hand is also a practice that is often looked down upon in that part of the world, just to give a few examples.

Another example that comes immediately to mind is that of physical closeness, which does vary from culture to culture. In certain societies two males who meet each other after a certain period of absence will commonly embrace each other, while in other cultures such gestures are considered to be taboo.

Simple knowledge of the world around us is basic, as we all know. Nevertheless, it has been alleged that when President George W. Bush took office, his designated secretary of state had to sit him down in front of a globe and tell him about the position of different countries in our world. Perhaps it was because of this same type of ignorance that he once referred to "children" as "childrens."

As in other areas of life one problem can multiply into many problems all too easily. The tendency of our new media to make short shrift of information coming from the Third World is a case in point. Unfortunately, tragedies in the First World, which are reported with great care, often pale almost into insignificance in relation to great tragedies in other parts of the world that are given little notice. This is not claim that human life is not sacred in all parts of our globe, and

that we should not learn about tragic development wherever they take place, but when these acts of devastation sometimes affect the lives of not hundreds but thousand and millions of human beings, we may wonder if many of our political officials are enough aware of them to make them issues in our foreign policy. The tragic case of genocide in certain parts of the world in recent history may be a case in point.

Also we have a trade embargo against Cuba in light of that nation's horrible record on human rights. Mainland China, however, enjoys a great trading status with the United States to the point that imports from the country are a very threat to American industry. For some reason our politicians do not seem to be worried enough about that issue to take steps to protect our own manufacturing. Be that as it may, it is only from time to time that some political leader will raise a concern about our close commercial ties with that country in light of the murderous attack of Tianamen Square.

What is much more shocking, however, is that Mainland China, according to the Guiness Book Record, holds the world's record for genocide because that well-known reference work states that China killed some 30 million of its citizens under the Cultural Revolution of its former leader Mao Tse Tung. One must wonder if the knowledge of many of our political leaders extends to this fact, and if it has ever been a factor in our foreign or our commercial policies? If the answer is "yes" then we must also wonder why some of our politicians expressed opposition to the approval of the NAFTA Agreement because Mexico was, in their opinion, not really a democratic country, and therefore supposedly it did not respect human rights as it should.

Once again we go back to not only problems in our news coverage but in our educational system. It has been said that many young people emerging from high school and even college do not even know what a socialist or even a communist state really is. If this is the case, not only will they not understand an important and basic part of the twentieth-century history, but also they will not understand that well over one billion human beings live in communist societies today—these are societies that do not believe in the sacred quality of human life, rather they believe that human beings only exists to serve as pawns for the desire of the state itself. As Senator Edward Kennedy expressed it so well in his book *America Back on Track*, "The quality of American education in comparison to other nations is inadequate, and it varies widely from one community to another."[6]

Least this not appear to be an important consideration, let us remember that our future leaders including future presidents of this

country are and will be products of our educational system, like all the rest of us. Perhaps it might be wise to repeat often the phrase "God Bless America." We may well need such a blessing.

## Globalization Once Again

We must deal with the concept of globalization on many levels. As we have seen there is controversy as to the extent and the wisdom of the extension of the globalization. A belief in global sameness to the extent that nations will identify their needs in harmony with a majority of others is simply not practical. Economic interests themselves will always continue to be paramount in international relationships, and the belief that globalization is bringing prosperity to almost all parts of our world is an illusion, at least at the present time.

As Mort Rosenblum has noted in his volume *Escaping Plato's Cave, How America's Blindness to the Rest of the World Threatens Our Survival*, we are still in the overly familiar situation in which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. In the chapter of his book that he calls, "The World Is in Fact Round," he cites the example of India, a country with a large part of the world's population. He quotes Dr. Vandana Shiva as stating that "the global corporations changed the input economy overnight. Farm saved seeds were replaced by corporate seeds.... A free resource available on the farm becomes a commodity which farmers are forced to buy every year.... As debts increase and become unpayable, farmers are compelled to sell kidneys or even commit suicide." Rosenblum goes on to note that since 1997 some twenty-five thousand peasants in India have committed suicide because of their desperate situation.[7]

As a result we must continue to be alert and sensitive in our international dealings to the profound differences between people and their ways of life that are often much more complicated than they may appear to be on the surface.

We cannot export what has been called "the John Wayne way of doing business," which refers, in business or politics, to the attitude that says to others, you will do it our way or else I'll take out my metaphorical six-shooter.

Nevertheless, it is not always a lack of knowledge and understanding that is at the heart of international differences. It is often just the opposite. Peter W. Galbraith, the first U.S. ambassador to Croatia, comes directly to the point when he states very clearly that "for the most part, people in the Middle East—and much the rest of the

world—take a dim view of the United States.... This is not because they do no understand our policies but rather because they do.... Good public diplomacy is not primarily a matter of explaining America and its policies better; it is a matter of having better policies."[8]

Here we come perhaps to the heart of the issue, if and when we take a new look at the relations between the First and the Third World and see ourselves as approaching a more level-playing field where hopefully greater international respect and cooperation will be the outcome.

Make no mistake however; at present such an idea may sound good but it is radical. Yet what is the alternative? Even common sense should indicate that if a superpower such as the United States or some type of coalition of First World powers continues to intervene in the internal affairs of other nations, as was done in the American invasion of Panama or the overthrow of the Allende government in Chile, to take only two examples among many others, there will also be many, perhaps a majority of citizens in such nations that will resent and oppose such intervention. Not to see this is simply to wear a pair of blinders as we continue perhaps to think that right makes right. But as Senator Edward Kennedy has declared very clearly, "Might cannot make American right. We cannot write our own rules for the modern world. To do so deprives our great nation of the moral legitimacy so necessary to promote our values abroad."[9]

All too often we have taken our own power for granted as we have taken for granted the superiority of industrialism, not only in terms of its production, but also in terms of its basic culture, so much so that we automatically believe that we have the right to force other nations to do what we think they should do. This is sometimes seen not as the divine right of kings but as a kind of divine right of certain ways of life.

The United States invaded Panama during the first Bush administration with the supposition that its president was not worthy to hold that important office. Perhaps that was true, but what would our reaction be if Panama or some other Third World country suddenly became a military superpower, perhaps through some new form of technology, and decided that one of our presidents was unworthy of his post and then invaded us and deposed our president without asking our consent? If we do not think it can't or should not happen here, why then should it happen anywhere else?

We expected that the Iraqis would welcome invading American troops as liberators and heroes. Would we be so sanguine as to receive invaders from another country in this country with open arms?

Let us remember our study of the great pride of a large number of cultures and nation-states in the world. Do we believe that they will swallow this pride forever, or might it someday boil over like the stew heating up inside of a pressure cooker? Or has it perhaps already boiled over?

Let us hope that our changing views of foreign policies and of the value of nations and cultures can grant a greater degree of parity or at least the hope of greater mutual respect among militarily and economically weak and powerful nations in the future that awaits us all.

## The Third World and the Real World

We have already noted the way in which the Third World is often regarded as an unnecessary appendage to the body politic of the world. Important decisions are made, it is often believed, only in the most important countries with the most developed economies.

In terms of foreign policy, it is time for us to open our eyes and bring our perspectives up-to-date. Technology advances are increasing throughout the world, and this includes the technology of destruction. As best-selling author Ron Suskind states in *The Price of Loyalty: George W. Bush, the White House, and the Education of Paul O'Neill*, "The post Cold War liberalization of trade in advanced technology goods and services has made it possible for the poorest nations on earth to rapidly acquire the most destructive military technology ever devised including nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and their means of delivery. We cannot prevent them from doing so."[10]

Least we think that the strategic importance of such nations is new, let us remember that the cold war was fought to a large extent in Third World nations. Remembering once again our national media's reluctance to really give information about much that is going on in these sections of the globe, it should not be surprising that most American citizens know little or nothing about such military activities.

In one televised debate during the presidential campaign between Bill Clinton and Senator Robert Dole, the Senator at one point accused President Clinton of deploying U.S. troops some forty-five times during his previous administration—more than any other American president.

President Clinton's response to this apparently shocking allegation was nonexistent. He simply continued to comment on another subject, yet very few of these military incursions ever made it to the national news.

Nor is this anything new. According to the third edition of *Fielding's the World's Most Dangerous Places*, 18 million people have died in wars between the end of World War II and 1994.[11] It is safe to say that the majority of these wars have taken place in Third World countries so that if we take these numbers into consideration the recent history of our world looks far more tragic than most of our history textbooks may make it appear.

This is true if we accept the idea that the loss of life in the Third World is as much of a tragedy as it is in any other part of the world. But we may ask ourselves if this is always the case? If it is not, then why do we hear reports of the deaths of a few people through terrorists acts in the First World, while of course we definitely should be informed about such tragedies, and yet we are not told about the presence of military activities in countless parts of the Third World with the total impact of vast numbers of human lives that have been taken.

According to L. Fletcher Prouty, chief of special operations for the joint chief of staff during the Kennedy administration, as well as an air force colonel who was in charge of the global system to provide military support to the CIA's secret activities. The Center for Defense Information has stated that during the forty years since the end of World War II, 130 wars have taken place including some forty-one that were on-going at the time of their report in 1985. This includes their estimate that 16 million people have lost their lives in those areas of combat during the period of time.[12]

We can put two and two together and realize that there are not as many as forty-one nations in the First World, which leaves the Third World as the main theater of operations. At the same time there has been a concerted effort since World War II to control the internal politics of many Third World countries.

As Fletcher Prouty has also expressed it, "The formula for the transition of leadership in less developed countries (LDCs) has been used over and over again. In such countries the politics are very simple. It is always 'Us or Them.' The people of those countries have little, if anything to say about it."[13]

He states therefore that "although national sovereignty is considered inviolate, in today's world national sovereignty has become an archaic and unworkable sham."[14]

In the midst of this large-scale intervention into the politics of other countries, often including such secret wars, one side of an internal conflict will inevitably be favored in our foreign policy. As a

result simple common sense alone will indicate that we risk gaining the enmity of a large section of the population of such countries who oppose the political factions that are supported by a country such as the United States. What may have been the feeling of many Chileans after the downfall of the Allende government at the hands of CIA only to have that same country fall into the hands of the murderous Pinochet dictatorship?[15]

During the cold war, law enforcement, military, and quasi-military personnel were often sent from dictatorships such as the one mentioned above to train at military facilities and at the FBI training center in Quantico, Virginia. In addition the United States often supported brutal right-wing governments in the Third World during the cold war considering that such governments were at least stable and anticommunist. Such was the case of the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua and the Marcos government in the Philippines to which the United States turned a blind eye regarding violations of human rights when our foreign policy could have insisted on a better record on human rights as a prerequisite for our political and military support.

## A Small Enemy?

But such policies will probably never change basically unless fundamental attitudes also change. To say that a country is "developing" or is "underdeveloped" does not usually accompany a qualifier that tells the listener or reader in what way this country is underdeveloped. Therefore, the frequent assumption may be that the nation in question is simply deficient in everything. Going one step further in our logical analysis, we may wonder how can we take such a country seriously, since terms like "underdeveloped" or "developing" imply a totality in their very essence.

We often forget that the relative scale of the importance of nations can change quickly. It was said that in Japan at the end of World War II, a person was lucky if he could even place a phone call. A country known as Dubai was unheard of at that time, yet today it is a major economic factor in the economy of Africa. The danger of Islamic fundamentalism did not have an important place in considerations of foreign policy at the end of World War II, and the list of changes could go on and on.

Perhaps more important is the wisdom of the old saying that there is no such thing as a small enemy. This is as much true of international as it is of interpersonal relationships. It was formerly thought

that the United States could tell other small countries or "banana republics," as they are called, what they should or shouldn't do, with the gunboat diplomacy of President Teddy Roosevelt and his "Big Stick" policy. These were simply a manifestation of, the might makes right attitude in foreign relations. After all what could small countries do to us, the United States, which the Nicaraguan writer Ruben Dario one hundred years ago called, "the colossus of the north?"

This attitude continues today when a country like Venezuela takes strong issue to U.S. policy to the point that its president Hugo Chavez has called on a coalition of some thirty countries to oppose U.S. policies in the Non-aligned Nations Movement.

Surprisingly little attention has been given in the U.S. media to the development and the implications of this assembly of nations, perhaps because it is headed by Venezuela, a supposedly Third World country, and it contains membership from many other Third World nations. Nevertheless, the whole rationale for this grouping of nation-states in the first place is that individually they can do little to stem the tide of the political influence of a great world power such as the United States; however, their combined political power can be very formidable.

Not only is this obviously the case, but American attention to Latin American affairs that ranges from little to nonexistent, often fails to notice the dangers of the alliances that such a movement are working to develop. Iran, which has strained relations with the United States, has expressed support for Chavez, hosting a large statue in his honor in one of that country's major cities. That country has in turn a close working relationship with Russia while most alarming of all, that Middle Eastern country has made arrangements to take delivery of vast amounts of military hardware from Russia.

The mutual interests between Iran and Venezuela are even more alarming when we consider allegations that Iran has been supplying oil to the rogue state of North Korea, while few Americans may be aware that in 1993 Iran forged an agreement fostering military as well as economic cooperation with Russia.[16]

The blind spot relating to the attention given to Latin American matters becomes even more significant when we consider that, at the time of this writing, there are reports that Chavez is planning to build a nuclear reactor in Venezuela after his purchase of massive amounts of military material from Russia itself.

Perhaps this type of oversight is a result of a myopia by which many government officials in the First World feel that they live in

"developed" countries with up-to-date communications and a strong central government, and they assume that important issues in the world will be decided by First World nations alone, and that in order to do so all they have to do is direct their foreign policy to the main political leaders in the capitals of such developed nations.

It would be nice if the world were so simple, but as we have already shown, often reality does not correspond to the mental grid that we have made of it in our heads. Likewise, a cultural blind spot often makes our officials believe that in working out agreements with the president or prime minister of a certain country their work is done.

What we often do not realize is that the rest of the world is not necessarily a copy of the United States, rather many nations exist in what we might call a feudal or semifeudal state in which local centers of power, militant, political, or religious groups, and local strongmen (known commonly as "caciques" in Latin America and warlords in other areas) control much of the interior of the country outside of the capital. Much of such countries is remote and communications are spotty at best.

Perhaps this situation is not entirely different from that existing in so-called developed nations where we might consider that multinational corporations have unwittingly developed a new form of modern feudalism. In the Middle Ages peasants worked the land and contributed to the welfare of the nobles that owned the castle nearest to them. The nobility in turn furnished protection for the workers within castle walls in time of war.

The social distance between the peasants and the nobleman was great in terms of power and money, but was it any greater than the distance between the average worker in a large corporation and the CEO? Nowadays the employee also works for the benefit of the company, and the latter in turn does not give military protection as much as economic security in a rapidly changing world. The power of the local aristocracy was a barrier in the development of the modern nation-state just as the modern multicorporations have been seen as challenging the power and sovereignty of many developing nations.

Whether it is for this or for many other reasons, often even the top political leaders of certain nations are not well informed about developments in the interior of their countries. In Brazil, to just take one example, several million people are estimated as living in the lands adjacent to the Amazon river in the remote interior of the nation, but nobody from the outside of those areas is exactly sure

of the numbers because few individuals from large urban areas have ventured into such regions to the degree that they could make an accurate estimate.

Such realities can only complicate the challenges of foreign policy that is a subject which is as complex as political life itself. There are no easy answers to this great challenge; however, greater knowledge and the desire to go behind such generalities as a Latin American, Middle Eastern, or an African foreign policies are called for. We cannot paint with such a broad brush. Neighboring countries often have different policies and historical divisions between one another that are often ignored at a distance. Neither can we continue to patronize Third World countries considering their lack of importance to be written in stone because it has been written in our minds. After all, among other reasons already given here, as we have already shown in this study, the Third World may actually be the majority of our world whether we like it or not.

# 9

# International Business in a New Era

During the Clinton administration the government sent auto executives to Japan to try to convince that country to purchase more American cars. When they returned, one official was asked what they said to the Japanese. This representative of American business responded by saying that in essence they told the Japanese that they had to purchase American cars and if they didn't, the United States would kick their butt, or something to that effect.

Shortly after that, one prominent American tabloid newspaper featured a cover with large letters saying that one high official of the Japanese government said in effect, "Why do the Americans send gangsters over here to do business?"

While an aggressive, forceful approach to business may work in a pragmatic country such as the United States, this attitude cannot always be successfully imported to other parts of the world. In a culture in which conversations are supposed to create harmony out of mutual respect such as in traditionally the case in Japan, obviously this approach, often called the John Wayne approach to business, can be very counterproductive.

Yet we often believe that methods of doing business around the world do not really vary simply because business is brass knuckles reality—hard and fast, down-to-earth and what works, works, and what doesn't work, never will work.

Such may be our traditional view of the basic nature of international business, but the truth is that our comprehension of what it takes to succeed commercially in other parts of the world is becoming more sophisticated as time goes on. The prior attitude that our way is the only way is rapidly going by the boards as we continue to venture into a new century and a new era of business.

We might begin by considering that actually business is conducted by human beings, and we human beings are always a product of our own cultures. In estimating the relative value of different parts of the world, we continue to suggest that a reconsideration of societies outside of the so-called First World is called for. Can it be simply a coincidence that many major American companies send their personnel across the globe while offering little, if any, training in the manner of doing business in the international arena? Could it not be that the powers that be in such corporations often believe that many other cultures are not really significant enough for there to be a need for such training?

But the potential problems that exist in dealing with other societies are not limited to the Third World. One story about an executive of one of the major Fortune 500 companies may serve as a case in point. This official was sent to Europe to fill an important position in that country. Plagued by frustration mounting into desperation, this executive complained to a consultant that his staff was frequently late in handing in reports. "They have no conception of time. They hand everything at least five hours late. They're driving me out of my mind," he complained.

"Well," was the response, "Did your company give you any training in how to do business in what is essentially a Latin country?"

The American executive did not know what was meant by a Latin country. He was surprised by the question, not even realizing that such training might be helpful. He apparently believed that his way of doing things was universal.

"Don't you realize that the Latin sense of time is very different from our time?" was the next question.

"Well what can I do about it?" was the next question which led to an answer that might appear to be obvious but that never occurred to the manager. "Well if they hand in everything five hours late, if you want a report at 5 o'clock in the afternoon tell them the deadline is noon and then they will hand it in on time."

On checking back with the American, the formerly confused executive said that he was amazed how well that technique worked. "Why didn't I think of that?" was his question. "You have changed everything for me and for my office."

It is true that some societies in this world value precise punctuality much more than others. It might not even be going too far to say that the more highly industrialized a nation is the more important accurate time becomes. This may not always be true, but before the

Industrial Revolution agricultural workers were mostly governed by the movements of the sun rather than by the minute hand on a clock.

As comparative culture expert Edmund Hall has defined it—some cultures in the world insist on strict punctuality in business with a tolerance of up to ten minutes or so in tardiness while other cultures such as those traditionally of Latin America and the Middle East will tolerate up to one half an hour or even more in lateness in business matters.

Likewise, the time given to opening small talk before business discussions take place can vary greatly from one area to another. In the United States, especially in northern part of the country, it is customary to speak about matters such as the weather for a few seconds before venturing into a business-oriented conversation. In other parts of the world, perhaps most of the world, the tendency to come up with business-oriented talk almost immediately is considered to be very bad form indeed, and it can actually harm the possibility of concluding a business deal rather than helping it.

In the United States where, as the old saying goes, time is money, people involved in commercial enterprise are very conscious of the importance of not wasting the time of their professional counterparts wherever they may be in the world. In many other societies, however, the development of harmonious business relationships is considered to be most important and that takes time.

The American doing business in many foreign nations often finds that many initial conversations and perhaps a number of social interactions over lunch or dinner may have to take place before the main subject of a business deal can be brought up.

The most important point coming from all this may be that the American overseas must frequently engage in nonbusiness conversation for a protracted period of time with the most obvious question resulting from this situation being, what will you talk about?

Here it is important to consider that the concept of education and culture in many nations of the world can be very different from that in the United States. Not only are many business people in other cultures especially sensitive to the idea that Americans may be trying to tell them how to do business, but also under what terms business will be conducted; furthermore, education in a highly pragmatic society such as the United States is most often considered in terms of college degrees. All too often, foreigners in other parts of the First as well as the Third World complain that many Americans are competent in their particular professional fields, but they are lacking in general

culture referring to a knowledge of history, art, literature, as well as personal manners such as the proper table manners.

To engage in a one-dimensional conversation by talking only about oneself, one's company, or one's country is the clearest way to play into this negative stereotype. To do one's homework and take the time to learn something of the history and culture of the country in which a person wishes to do business and to speak about such matters is a wonderful way to make a fine first impression, always keeping in mind the wisdom that tells that we never get a second chance to make a first impression.

We might illustrate a few of these concepts by way of an imaginary dialogue between a representative of an American company attempting to do business in another part of the world. Of course, social considerations vary from place to place, often as far as regards the differences in customs and attitudes even within a given country. Even in the United States itself it has been observed that the degree of urgency in a business conversation can be a function of geography with the need to get right down to business. Being more pressing in the northeast with more room for so-called small talk increasing as one travels to the south and then to the deep south, with the exception of Florida, which is often considered to culturally be a northern state, since so many people from the north have gone to live there.

Even the very concept that engaging in talk about family, for example, is an example of small talk may be in itself an expression of the keen pragmatism of the American attitude, since in most parts of the world family is as important or is even much more important than business.

Therefore, as we enter into an interpretation of the interchange between business counterparts from different parts of the world, we of course will have to make bold generalizations that may not correspond to each and every place that wishes to do business with the United States; however, our observations may be relevant to many areas of the world including many parts of the Third World.

## The Business of Business

AMERICAN: Hello! My name is Paul Scott. I am here representing XYZ Company of Detroit, Michigan in the United States. I contacted you previously about our product which is bi-spitular wedges, which I understand are used in your production process.

We believe that our wedges are the best in the world, and we offer them at a spectacular price.

FOREIGN COUNTERPART: Hello! How are you? Excuse me. I wasn't really expecting you today. My name is Jose Santiago, I am the head of the purchasing department. Allow me to give you my business card. (He reaches for the card and hands it to the American.)

AMERICAN: Thank you. (He puts the card in his pocket. He opens his wallet and looks for his own card, but he can't seem to find it.) Oh! I'm sorry. It looks like I ran out of my own cards. But I wanted to come right to the point because I believe that the offer that I want to make to you will be so attractive to you and your company that I can't wait to give you the details Jose. I know you will love it.

A secretary comes in and says "Licenciado Santiago there is a phone call for you in the outer office. (He leaves to take the call. In the meantime the American takes the opportunity to remove his jacket, since it is a very warm day. He is not wearing a tie.)

It is worth going back to the aforementioned description of the amount of pride found in different cultures of the world. Not, as said before, in the negative sense of the word, but rather in the justified pride that an individual may have in his own achievements, his work, his family, and in his nation. In societies in which there exists a "group think" or a heightened sense of the group as a social unit, many people also take pride in what they can achieve for their company and for their nation.

A few years ago, a young Asian lady involved in an Olympic skating competition fell on the ice in spite of her generally brilliant performance. This of course ruined her chances to win a medal. When she picked herself up, her first words to the camera were to ask her country to forgive her for having let it down, not an expression of what must have been also a personal trauma.

So it is in parts of Asia, if not in all of Asia, that the presentation of business card is an expression of one's persona. The individual who receives the card is expected to pause to clearly read it, taking proper notice of not only the other person's name but also his or her title in the company in question. Consequently, to not take the time to take full recognition of all these items can and most probably will be considered to be personal insult.

The same is true if a visiting businessman or woman proceeds to be overly informal in conversation right at the beginning of a commercial relationship. In the sample conversation given above the

secretary is well aware of this and addresses her boss as "Licenciado," an important form of address in Latin America. To leave out that title or to call an employer by his or her first name without receiving permission to do so is generally considered in many more formal societies to be an important breach of etiquette. In general, most Americans have no idea of how informal their own culture is in terms of speech and dress in comparison to much of the rest of the world.[1]

This applies not only to the type of appropriate style of business dress but also to color issues. One of the author's former students was a medical doctor who attended a medical convention in the Caribbean. Since this event took place in the tropics, he decided to wear a red jacket that he believed fit in very well with that type of climate.

On going to the first meeting of the convention he found that all of the other doctors from other countries wore suits or jackets with dark colors such as black and navy blue. He claimed that not only did he stand out amongst the crowd, thus making him uncomfortable; but also he got the impression that the other doctors were very surprised by his jacket, and he immediately heard the word "red" bandied about the room with fingers being pointed in his direction.

Finally, it got so bad that one other doctor not only commented on the color of his jacket. He actually went so far as to label him as "a red," which of course during the cold war had a very specific meaning. The doctor in question felt so uncomfortable that he immediately left the convention and made plans to return home right away.

Formal clothing that is acceptable for doing business in many parts of the world means, especially for men, dark or somber colors although styles may be changing as time goes on.[2]

Given American pragmatism by which time is money and the business of the United States is business, many Americans like to get right down to the issue at hand without the luxury of general or introductory conversation such as is the case in the sample dialogue. After all it makes sense to not waste one's time or the time of one's business counterpart. And of course the product that is in question and its price and other important related details are what the business deal is all about. One is not there to sell oneself. That is largely immaterial.

The only problem with this attitude is that business counterparts in many parts of the world do look at business more as a human transaction, and such commerce is greatly aided by good solid personal

relationships. This to say that the foreign business person often likes to feel comfortable working with another person and such a consideration can in some cases take precedence over the quoted price of the product itself. As mentioned before, establishing such personal rapport can take time, and it is very possible that this representative of another culture may wish to have repeated conversations, perhaps over one or more invitation to lunch or supper, even before beginning to speak about business.

This may appear to be highly impractical to a representative of a society that is obsessed with speed and efficiency; however, logic, which we may believe is universal, can actually turn out to be culture bound. What makes sense in one society may be madness in another.

A few years ago, an American sitcom about two young, apparently normal American girls, "Laverne and Shirly," was shown in translation in a country in Southeast Asia. An explanation had to be given at the beginning of the show that these two girls were mentally ill, and they had just been released from an institution, for the audience in that country to accept the story line of that show.

Frequently, when a guest leaves a social engagement in a Latin American home, the host or hostess will say to the person who is leaving that he or she should feel that the host's home is their home as well. Logic might dictate that such a person should be taken at their word. After all why would they say that if they didn't actually mean it? Well, the reason is that such an expression is a traditional expression of hospitality that is never meant to be taken in the first place. It is just a social formality.

With the great importance given to reason and scientifically derived concepts in our society it may be difficult for us to conceive that we actually can be limited by our logical thinking. An example of this may be the scientist's experience in researching the logical abilities of monkeys. It is said that the researcher placed a bunch of bananas high above a hungry monkey's head. Then he placed a group of wooden blocks in random order on the floor, wanting to see if the monkey could reason that if he put one block on top of another he could climb high enough to reach the bananas.

Standing in the animal's cage with a pencil and pad in his hand to note the monkey's reaction, he was surprised to see the animal tug at his pants knowing that the easiest way to have access to the food would not be to climb up to get it, bur rather to ask the man to get it for him.

So it is said that when IBM went into Japan after World War II, they believed that a good way to motivate workers would be to tell them that they would get a bonus for superior performance. The company was surprised, however, to learn that this tactic actually backfired when the employees took offense at this idea, saying that not only some of the workers were capable of doing outstanding work, but all Japanese workers did a superior job, so there was no need to single out some people from the rest of the crowd.

## Sweeping Generalizations May Sweep Us Off Our Feet

Nevertheless, it is important for us to keep in mind that as we have already noted the very concept of the Third World is in itself a sweeping generalization and cultural considerations for one country or part of the world may often be very different from those in other parts of the "other world" so that there is no substitute for a knowledge of the ways of doing business in each and every country.

It is also vital to realize that business is based on human communication so that what is at issue is naturally nothing less than the fine points of interpersonal communication in the broadest sense of the word. This includes not only verbal but also written communication and different considerations of body language, dress, and eye contact among other considerations.

Just as we have noted that the term "developing nations" implies that countries are of courses evolving in the direction of First World sensibilities and values, so a meeting with a foreign counterpart in the Third World may be with a person who has been educated and may have had extensive business experience in the so-called First World. This in turn may indicate that his or her perspectives and method of conducting commercial matters may be the same as the visiting American's approach to a deal.

Still this is not necessarily true for many reasons. One of them is simply that this foreign national may not automatically prefer another way of doing business. He or she may wish to continue to identify with his or her own nation's traditions.

There is no substitute for knowledge and experience. That is why American companies should increasingly invest time and money in training personnel in the methods of doing business in other parts of the globe.

## You and Your Company in a New Environment

Just as there are considerations relating to communication in international business, these issues can of course become compounded when the management of a large number of individuals is involved. Issues of national psychology can pertain to business matters that can literally be of life and death importance to a company.

Some years ago, no less an authority than the *Wall Street Journal* reported that an American company spent millions of dollars building a factory in Mexico. They found that little by little the employees began to leave for no apparent reason. Finally, upon further investigation they found out why. The company gave its workers time to eat lunch at noon while lunch time in Mexico is usually mid-afternoon around 3 p.m.

Why didn't the workers say something? The management of the company wondered. Why didn't they complain?

The answer was buried deep within the culture of the Hispanic world, which traditionally has a much more rigid class system and less of a sense of social democracy. In other words, the workers thought to themselves, we are the workers. It is not our right to tell the managers how to run their company. Rather than to presume that we have that right we prefer to simply leave and go somewhere else.

Another American manager of an international company put up a suggestion box outside his office inviting his staff to make suggestions as to how the workplace could be improved. Working there for years with no suggestions coming forth he assumed that he was doing a great job and the workers believed that everything was just about perfect.

On leaving the company he began to question employees, and he was shocked to find that the truth was just the opposite. There were a mass of complaints even though nobody put any of them in writing. On asking people why they didn't leave any suggestions in the box, even anonymous ones, he was told that workers are workers, and they don't feel that making management decisions is their job. They aren't paid for that.[3]

The sense of democracy even extends to terms of address in the work place. Once when lecturing on this subject to a group of Hispanic professionals, the author asked if they wouldn't like to have a more informal work atmosphere such as exists often in the United

States where bosses are frequently on a first name basis with their employees.

To the author's surprise the audience responded with a resounding "No." When asked why they responded in that way, they all said that this type of American informality was totally false. It gave the impression that managers were on a very friendly basis with workers when actually this type of pleasantness was only skin deep. It masked the basic heartlessness of American commerce where people could be fired for the slightest reason with little or no concern about them or their families. "We prefer to do without that type of falseness and pretense," was their unanimous opinion.

As mentioned before, however, national issues are often at the basis for marked differences in attitudes not only toward management but toward production itself. The great pride that we have noted in many parts of the world extends to a sense of pride in one's company and in one's performance. In Japan, employees in many companies wear uniforms bearing the name of the company and take part in what might be called motivational exercises or pep rallies at the beginning of the work day, which reflect and that further promotes a person's pride in dong a job well and a real interest in the quality of the products being made by that company. This contrasts greatly from the attitude found in many workers in other societies who are often categorized as maintaining a feeling of "what's in it for me?"

One former worker in an auto plant once asked the author if he ever heard of a straw that was six feet long. On receiving a negative answer he said that there were workers on an assembly line that had their hands above their heads as they worked on a part of the car that was above them, yet at the same time they had an extra long straw running from an open bottle of whisky up to their mouth so they could drink and work at the same time.

This pride does also have its implications for direct interpersonal communication between management and the work force personnel. In a society in which time is money, pragmatism often holds supreme. Interpersonnel communication can often be blunt especially between labor and management. Sometimes it can reach the point of being brutally negative.

If a person is called into a supervisor's office because there have been complaints about his or her performance, the most normal approach to the subject on the part of the manager would be to begin the conversation by addressing the errors committed by the employee, perhaps even ending the tirade against the worker by giving some type

of warning about what might happen if the problem is not taken care of right away.

This can be devastating to the employee, ruining morale not only on the immediate basis but also for a long time. Not only that but such management techniques are often like throwing a pebble right into a pond. The ripple effects go on and on.

The manager is mistaken in thinking that the employee being scolded keeps this experience to himself or herself. It almost immediately spreads through the workforce to affect the morale of many employees in a negative way, especially in cultures in which workers take what might be considered an extraordinary pride in their work. As a result, it is unrealistic for managers to assume, as they often do, that critical comments given to an employee will stay with that individual alone. Since it usually will not, a more positive approach to a worker's performance might be more advisable and would tend to support company morale much more.

Such an approach does not have to be composed of lies or exaggeration, nor would it fail to make the point in question, rather it would take a more holistic view of that worker's contribution to a particular organization. If that person has done a good job for the last ten years and only now he or she has made some errors, rather than the supervisors starting his conversation with a long list of critical comments, could not the employee be thanked for years of faithful service (which may never have been expressed to the employee) saying that the work done is much appreciated but that there are certain areas of performance that could be improved. As one wise man once commented, tact is the ability to tell a man to go to hell in such a way that he actually looks forward to the trip.

The question of local and personal pride comes up in many other ways in international management even though many business people may still believe that business is cut and dry and the rules of the game are really universal.

A manager in another country may read a guide book to that nation noting the national holidays, and yet it is possible that local staff members may want to have time off to celebrate local holidays not listed in any book. Should they be allowed to take time off? This can be a question of importance, and it could be wise for that manager to realize that pride in local holidays may be much more of an issue to residents of that part of a country than he or she might imagine.

This is especially true, since in many parts of the world, local pride and "nationalism" are so strong that dozens of countries are

experiencing hostility or even civil wars between one region of a country and another, and a concept of one unified country as exists in Western Europe and the United States may be a fragile reality with the possibility that one province or state may break away from the main center of power existing as a reality that can be ever present.

Also workers in societies that are group-based may claim the right to take time off from work because of an illness of a relative outside of the immediate family. The tendency of many foreign administrators may be to say "no." However, as one manager in a country that has a wider sense of the immediate family commented to a worker, "to you people a cousin is just like a brother."

To reply in the negative to such a request may, in line with what was just stated about communications between workers and management, may cause greater morale loss among the mass of the workforce that might be imagined at first glance.

The great artists Michelangelo once commented that perfection is made of trifles but perfection is no trifle. And so it is that pitfalls in international business may consist of considerations many business professionals consider to be trifles, yet to lose out on a deal that may include the possibility of huge amounts of money in profit simply because of what one considers to be a matter of very small importance is still a great loss. What may be a trifle in one culture may be a matter of great importance in another.

We must avoid the temptation to think that broad geographical terms like Africa, Asia, or Latin America mean that just because one name is given to vast areas of the world—all the countries in such places are alike, just as we must avoid the temptation of thinking that all of the countries in the Third World resemble each other. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Perhaps it would be much wiser for us all to remember that all life is based on change and growth whether this be biological growth and differentiation as with a single cell multiplying into millions of cells, or with human nature itself and with the people that make up the citizens of any particular nation or any group of countries in a continent.

As someone said very wisely, if we were all the same it would be a very boring world indeed.

Lastly, we must address the objection that is often raised when such concepts are raised. Many will ask why it is always the American who must be careful about avoiding the cultural pitfalls relating to the philosophy and manner of conducting of business overseas? Of

course this is not the case although it may appear that we are implying such a perspective. And it is true that for a long time Americans may have often thought that their way of doing things is the only way (although this in itself is a great generalization, of course). But today, in a world that may not be totally globalized as indicated earlier, but which is certainly showing many signs of moving in that direction, it is important for all people to heighten their awareness of other ways of living and of looking at life.

Furthermore, we must remember that business in the widest sense of the word is a basic part of daily life. When we make a plane reservation, we are conducting business, which we also are doing when we take a cab or purchase an item in a store or in thousands of experiences of daily life.

In that sense we all are business people whether we realize it not.

# 10

# Doing What Comes Naturally—A Consideration of Our Relation with the Land

A headline in one newspaper recently announced that experts in the field of energy have decided that wind power has real potential for our future. This is an ironic "discovery," since wind has been used as a source of energy since time immemorial.

Perhaps this is a symbolic "break through," for there exists a tendency in today's world to embrace an earlier type of wisdom—to tout the values of going back to nature, to respecting our natural environment, to stopping pollution, and recycling all types of materials while generally showing a greater concern for our planet.[1] The evidence of this change in thinking is everywhere, from the new emphasis on the importance of recycling trash, paper, and just about anything or everything else; and in the dramatic growth of our realization that the protection of the world's environment is a matter of our own human survival.

Just to mention a very few of the many thousands of reports of this new trend, *USA Today* recently offered a front-page headline reporting on "Green 'I do's,' " where organic food and rings from recycled gold are part of weddings that are environmentally sound. *The New York Times* reported also that Google is about to announce that it wishes to embark on a venture to develop digital technologies that will reduce energy consumption. The same newspaper also reported that the United States has the ability to manufacture cellulosic ethanol that has the potential to supply one-third of the gas needs by the year 2030.[2]

A part of this growing trend is the mounting concern over the preservation of plant and animal life—the flora and fauna, which

populate our world—it is often said that nature abhors a vacuum that accounts for the great abundance of all forms of life on this planet.

In a television interview, the noted American thinker Eric Hoffer stated that he believes that Western man's historical treatment of nature may be traced back to the book of Genesis in the Bible, which tells us that the Creator gave man dominion over all other creatures in the world.

Hoffer went on to speculate that the Eastern world, which has been greatly influenced by Buddhist respect for life, has not been as much dominated by such ideas and perhaps for that reason it has tried to live more in harmony with nature rather than by conquering it.

Whether Hoffer's theory is correct or not, it is a truism of the basic values of the industrialized world that nature has existed in order to be used and even conquered, very often, with little regard for the end results of the harnessing and ensuing destruction of the natural world.

This has often put the ethos of industrial society at odds with the worldview of indigenous or traditional social units. Before now the benefits of industrialization were seen to be so obvious and there was little room for voices of opposition to this utilitarian viewpoint. The early European settlers in what now is the United States often believed that the forests contained untold dangers, not only because it was the realm of wild animals, but also because it was the dwelling place of the American Indians as well. The resultant attitude was that the natural world and the forests themselves should be controlled if not actually destroyed.

This hostile approach to nature was well expressed by the American historian Francis Parkman when he wrote that for the early American settlers, "the forest was everywhere, rolled over hill and valley in billows of interminable green, a leafy maze, a mystery of shade, a universal hiding-place, where murder might lurk unseen at its victim's side and Nature seemed formed to nurse the mind with wild dark imaginings. The detail of blood is set down in the untutored words of those who saw and felt it. But there was a suffering that had no record—the mortal fear of women and children in the solitude of their wilderness homes, haunted, waking, and sleeping, with nightmares of horror that were but the forecast of an imminent reality."[3]

The result of such attitudes continued well into the nineteenth century with the wholesale slaughter of animal species including the virtual extinction of the grizzly bear, the grey wolf, and the puma in the eastern part of this nation.

The almost complete destruction of buffalo herds on the Great Plains, the mainstay of the American Plains Indians, was therefore no coincidence, rather it was part of an American genocide. Countless buffaloes were slaughtered without any regard for the value of their lives to the point that some of the rifles that were used to kill those animals became so hot that those men that did the shooting could no longer hold the weapons in their hands.

The first real attempt at any conservation came later at the beginning of the twentieth century during the administration of naturalist Teddy Roosevelt (himself the inspiration for a still popular toy known as the Teddy Bear). In recent decades it is arguably the case that a real awareness of the importance of developing a growing respect for our natural world came with the epoch-making publication of Rachel Carlson's book *The Silent Spring*. In the 1960s the first "Earth Day" was proclaimed which, by hindsight, may be seen as leading the way to our current proclamation that we are entering into a green revolution.

This so called green revolution hails itself as a new awareness of the need for human society to respect the natural world and live in harmony with it. Again, as in the case of wind energy, perhaps we go forward by going backwards, since indigenous societies, so often looked down upon by Western civilization, have lived in harmony with nature for eons.

A new respect for indigenous communities is slowly evolving since we are grudgingly beginning to realize perhaps that they were right about man's place in the world all along. Perhaps for this reason it is no coincidence that the government of Canada has given new importance to the territorial rights of the Intuit Indians and the government of Australia has seriously considered giving back large tracts of a land taken by the European settlers to native peoples of that country. After all, a map of the United States of the 1850s clearly shows a large part of the center of this country being marked as "Indian territory." By what right did anyone take that land away from them? They had occupied that territory since long before recorded history.

Although the loss of Indian territories to European settlers and the conquest of Spanish-speaking Latin America by Columbus and other explorers has heretofore usually been considered to have been a process of enlightenment by traditional historians, in recent years, a growing number of revisionist scholars have begun to look at the discovery of Columbus and other European incursions in the New World as the beginning of perhaps one of the greatest devastations in human history.[4]

What is often overlooked in the consideration of these various views of the discovery and settlement of the New World can in themselves be seen as products of a changing value system that gives greater emphasis to the worth of indigenous societies themselves.

This is an overturning of the traditional European-industrialist scale of assumptions by which native societies were considered to be manifestations of savage social realities devoid of any culture, desperately in need of the help of Europeans to bring them up to the level of civilized human life.

In the midwest of the United States nineteenth-century settlers could not bring themselves to believe that the numerous mounds that they found there, perhaps local versions of pyramidal structures found in other parts of the New World, were actually built by Native Americans. The Indians were too barbaric and too savage to build anything, was the prevailing attitude, when of course these structures, which many settlers set about to destroy, were indeed built by Native Americans.

Even the very idea that Columbus "discovered" America is now being questioned. For as former president of Peru Alan Garcia stated in a televised interview, by what right can we say that Columbus "discovered" America? thereby implying that no society worth mentioning existed in this hemisphere before that time.[5]

There were vibrant civilizations living here for eons before the European age of discovery. They were the people that discovered America, said Garcia, and no distortion of the historical record can prove otherwise. For all too often the European settlers both in North and South America believed their machine-based culture gave them great superiority. They could destroy other traditionally based cultures and take lands by force.

In the brilliant comic novel in which Native Americans rise up to take their land back from the usurpers, *Sweet Medicine* by David Seals, one Native American comments:

> "Well, this here is Indian land."
> "Yep" they agreed....
> "These white People ain't got no real right to be here."
> "You bet."
> "I mean we welcomed them like visitors and they don't care. They spit on us, killed everything in sight."[6]

It may be interesting to consider that as post-industrial attitudes begin to change, there already exists a difference in the way Native

Americans are depicted in the American cinema. In the days of John Wayne, in films such as *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, the army's fight against the Indians was rarely, if ever, questioned. After all the white man had a right to steal Indian lands and kill them so that civilization could take hold in their world—at least that was often the implication. Yet a far different and more sympathetic view of native life was given decades later in such a work as *Dances with Wolves* with Kevin Costner.

The past is the past, however, and our main concern is analyzing current trends along with the portents they may have for the future. It may not be unreasonable to believe that an increasing respect for the natural environment, which carries with it a respect for the basic wisdom of the forces of nature, may lead to a different view of our relation not only with this environment in its elemental forms but also in our respect for other forms of life as it exists on our planet.

As Eric Hoffer has stated, the history of the modern Western world often shows a cavalier regard for the rights of other species of life. A list of animals that have become extinct since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution would be alarming. This would include the extinction of the passenger pigeon. One early nineteenth-century observer remarked that so many of these birds that once filled the sky that it took literally hours for a large flock of these creatures to pass overhead, with the result that the sky appeared to be completely blackened for a large part of the day. Before the end of the 1800s, however, this bird was extinct. We might wonder what blind instinct lies deep within the human heart that leads man to kill members of other species for no apparent reason.

We have already commented on the fate of the American buffalo, which accompanied the total extinction of the grey wolf and the mountain lion from the eastern part of the United States, as well as the mass slaughter of beavers during the nineteenth century for the sake of making fashionable beaver skin hats.

The concern over wildlife in Africa has grown to the point that special game reserves have been set up to help endangered species. The number of tigers in the wild, for instance, has diminished sharply in recent decades due largely to poaching, but the same could be said of the fate of many other exotic creatures to the point that special care is being taken by wildlife specialists to ensure the future population of such animals in other than wildlife settings.

It is for this reason that big game hunting as engaged in by such high-profile individuals as President Teddy Roosevelt and writer

Ernest Hemingway is no longer looked on as a manly enterprise that can be considered as a cause for sportsman-like admiration. Even the previously common custom of using animal fur to make up or at least line the collars of women's coats and jackets has come under increasing disapproval from many sectors of the society, not only ardent animal rights activists.

Projecting this tendency even further, we may indeed see the beginning of a completely new relationship between human and animal species. This in turn may bring us more in line with the traditional wisdom of indigenous societies formerly held in low regard by inhabitants of the industrialized world.

In contrast with the early European settlers in this country, Native Americans often looked up to animals species with admiration, not with hostility. They did not believe that they had the right to play God and pick and choose which species should survive and which should not. American Indians did live in large part from hunting but they killed other animal species out of necessity, not just for the sake of taking a life in what is called today subsistence hunting.

Many Native Americans often believed that if they had to kill an animal they could ask for permission from the spirit of the animal, and it would be given if killing was a real necessity. Western settlers, as mentioned before, all but exterminated wolf populations from the eastern part of the United States while Indians showed great respect for wolves as an integral part of the natural world. They regarded them as noble animals whose prowess in surviving in the wild caused admiration, not fear and loathing.[7]

The shamanistic traditions of indigenous people (as opposed to what are often called "primitive people") including Native Americans, is based on a shaman's ability to commune with beings or spirits that reside in other dimensions to ask for their help and their advice. Very often these are the spirits of animals, and native populations did and still do believe that each of us has a protective animal spirit that can guide and protect us. They often believe that our ability to recognize such spirits often comes in our recognition of our innate attraction that we feel for certain animals.

How different this belief is from current practices by which man himself tries to manipulate animal populations. For example, recently the government of Alaska engaged in the barbaric, wholesale killing of wolves by helicopters. This was done supposedly because the wolf poses a threat to other animal species such as the moose. A desire to live closer to nature will entail a greater respect for the wisdom

of nature better known by the word "ecology" and on the basis of the most recent reports, the moose population of Alaska is doing just fine without human help with an estimated one moose for every five people in that beautiful state.

We so often criticize the wolf for doing what we humans do all the time—they live from the meat of dead animals as we do. The difference is that we buy the meat in the supermarket. They find it in their own habitat.

What is perhaps lost in this type of controversy is the awareness that our Western attitude toward nature and the balance of nature is already evolving toward that of native societies as our respect for the values of traditional societies grows at the same time. We are evolving a new respect for the wisdom of nature, not only because we want to but because we have to, if we want to survive as a civilization.

More basic then, as animal species inspire increasing protectionist policies by national governments throughout the world, is a greater awareness of the implied but also arbitrary philosophy that said that man has the right to do whatever he wants to the natural environment. This is based in large part in the very name "homo sapien"—wise or knowing man—the creature that is usually supposed to be by his very essence superior to all other creatures.

It may do us well to remember that we ourselves have given ourselves that name. If other creatures in the natural world were to describe us, in light of human history, they might very well give us a name such as "Man the Killer" or "Man the Warrior," since we certainly are the most violent animals on this planet. In speculating about the possibility of intelligent life on other planets, in consideration of the incredible number of wars in human history, one wise person once commented that the main question is not whether or not there are intelligent beings on other planets. The big question is, "is there any intelligent life on this planet?"[8]

If we consider the number of humans killed by wolves in the history of the United States, the estimates might vary from one or two humans to perhaps none at all, but if we calculate the number of people killed in this country by other human beings the number would be staggering indeed.

The claim to superiority addresses the ability of the human brain to deal with the world around us, which goes hand in glove with the essence of the Western or First World's desire to control and harness the environment rather than to live in harmony with it.

Taking the wolf again as an example, if we consider other abilities such as the resistance to cold (the prehistoric wolf survived the Ice Age just with the fur on its body), the speed at which it runs, its sense of smell and hearing, its eye sight, the ability to survive in the wild along with other abilities; the human animal would definitely come up short, and as we develop a post-industrial series of value judgments not only about ourselves but about the world around us, we may develop an awareness that mental power, important as it is, is but one power to earn our respect in our total view of our world community.

As R. D. Lawrence reminds us in *In Praise of Wolves*, "wolves eat to survive as do we, yet they do not prey on their own kind while we often do."[9]

As Thoreau stated so well in the last chapter of his classic of American literature, *Walden and Other Writings*, "How long, pray, would a man hunt giraffes if he could? Snipes and woodcocks also may afford rare sport; but I trust it would be nobler game to shoot one's self."[10]

## Urban Planning in a Post-Industrial Age

During the 1970s, torrential rains along the East Coast of the United States caused a great deal of damage. Most of this occurred in the strip of urban development made up of interlocking cities and suburbs along this East Coast—a vast urban area stretching hundreds of miles in what has been called a megalopolis. It became obvious that as both large and small cities and their suburbs developed during the continuing urban sprawl beginning in the post–World War II years, massive numbers of trees had been destroyed. Countless thousands, if not millions of these trees, disappeared along with their roots, thus eliminating a fibrous factor for the absorption of liquids in a large part of the eastern seaboard.

Obviously, the profit factor on the part of many land developers and construction companies had dominated. Of course, there is nothing wrong with companies seeking their own profit. That is why they exist in the first place; however, regulations do exist in the zoning laws of just about every community, and construction cannot take place without some control and consideration of the impact that new buildings will have on the community in question as a whole.

Nevertheless, up to now little attention has been given to the impact that new buildings would have, not only on neighborhoods,

but also on the landscape and the environment as a whole. It is our belief however that such attitudes will have to come under scrutiny, and attitudes will have to be revised as we develop a more holistic view of land use and commercial and residential development in this new age that is dawning upon us.

Indeed it may be that even the basic concept of urbanization may undergo a post-industrialist revision in the years to come. As in the case of the flooding of the East Coast of the United States mentioned above, rarely has modern American society cared to develop a total awareness of the full implications of new land use. Up to now building new homes and businesses has been called "development of the land," which, as in the case of terms such as "developed " and "developing countries" implies a social bias in favor of industrialized viewpoints, although we rarely, if ever, stop to realize the full implications of such categories.

This concept is far from new. For example, the idea that landscape should have similar composition to that of landscaping in a painting is centuries old. Theorist Nikolaus Pevsner has advocated that approach to land development in modern times, and Ian McHarg recommended in his book *Design with Nature* that landscaping should include the greatest possible harmony with the natural environment, while Kenneth Framton advocated this context theory as what he described as Critical Regionalism.

At the same time Jonathan Watts has written in *The Guardian* that China has developed into a country of 1,000 nearly identical urban areas in its rush to embrace modern architectural and land development trends. It would appear that the threat that most of the world may well follow suit may well be implied by such analyses.[11]

This comment is most significant even in what has been called "modern architecture," which most often is based on the model of geometric forms or sharply defined squares and rectangles, a direct heritage of the twentieth-century cubist school of modern art. In much of modern furniture and construction, the straight line has replaced the more gentle lines of the curve, which tended to predominate in the 1800s. Most significant of all has been the tendency of these modernistic forms in construction to be mass-produced, since they have spread virtually throughout the world often replacing traditional architectural styles more in harmony with the geography and artistic history of local societies. It truly has been a case of "one size fits all" in terms of building and social planning often resulting in a disharmony or a jarring juxtaposition of old and new and of a bizarre combination of building styles.

The modern concept of "land development" of course implies that flora and fauna have little or no value for they are just waiting to be replaced by man-made developments. As Thomas Merton has observed so well, the structures that exist in urban centers make us generally believe that only the city itself is important not the natural environment. Commenting on the natural forces that exist in the urbanized world, this writer observes that wind and rain are usually seen by city dwellers as annoyances that interrupt the real or what is supposedly the real business of city life, which is human business after all.

In the modern city this author states that, "All 'reality' will remain somewhere inside those walls, counting itself and selling itself with fantastically complex determination." Therefore the writer concludes that, "Naturally no one can believe the things they say about the rain. It all implies one basic lie: only the city is real."[12]

What Merton is saying here is that in our modern world, business is considered to be the most transcendent aspect of life. It has become so dominant a value that we have become blind to other realities such as those of the natural world around us. We have lost the sensitivity and appreciation of the forces of nature. Merton goes on to say in the essay that city dwellers will decide when and where to plant a tree—this is a very simple and natural act, and yet it has transcendent value for it shows that man rather than nature will decide where plant life will grow—this is a small consideration in terms of only one tree, but when this type of thinking is extended to man's desire to control nature in general this becomes a significant attitude of the greatest importance.

We have lost our sense of harmony with nature in the most elemental ways. Native Americans greatly prized the ability to hear the slightest sound in the forest and to recognize the calls of many species of birds and animals. These skills were important, since they enable a person to live and survive in the natural world. To know what was going on at a distance, Native Americans would often literally put their ear to the ground to pick up vibrations of noise emanating from the distance. Today in our modern urban world we often try to escape noise pollution by blocking out noise rather than by listening to it.

It is well known that since our urban environments are far from nature, pollution exists on many levels, not only in the air that we breathe, but it is also present in the chemical additives in our food and in the materials that comprise our living and working space. Of course. the danger of asbestos in building materials is well known.

But not as well known is the indoor pollutant formaldehyde that is very prevalent, since at least 8 billion pounds of that chemical are produced in the United States per year. In the decade of the 1970s architectural styles of office buildings favored the construction of windowless enclosed structures. The result of course was the enhancement of pollutants as well as moulds, fungi, and other microorganisms that could not escape.[13]

How far we have come from the world of our ancestors, and yet it is highly possible that the technology already exists for the vast majority of the society that resides in urban areas or close to urbanized areas to live noise and air pollution free if existing technologies were used, not mainly for production, but for the betterment of human life.

To know how much such technologies can be used more for the improvement of human life in its most holistic, not only in its materialistic sense, is of course one of the greatest questions and one of the greatest challenges for the future.

## The Bigger the Better?

The structure of urban life shows the commercialized and mechanized emphasis of industrialized existence in many other ways. Our large cities are circled by major, multilaned highways such as the famous Beltway around Washington D.C. and the Periferico highway that circles Mexico City, a megalopolis in itself with some 25 million people within its city limits with an estimated 35 million inhabitants in its greater metropolitan area. When one mentions a highway-based culture, the example of southern California generally comes to mind. Outside of the obvious problem of air pollution and noise, not to speak of the stress of traffic jams, the modern industrial culture has become to a large extent a culture of movement. This in turn has had a great impact on urban planning, since centers of commerce as well as other social units have become more spread out since the development of the automobile. So it is today that far from the often heard expression that Americans have "a love affair with the automobile," a car is no longer a luxury, but it is often a necessity of life, for the automobile has had a great impact on the basic concept of urban planning, since basic institutions are frequently no longer easily accessible as they once were by use of more traditional transportation.

Today in so many communities, the stores, the schools, and the church, to take some examples, as well as the shopping mall itself, are

often accessible to many millions of American only by way of car or bus travel. Previously much commerce was centered in the downtown of a city itself. Now our cities have often grown into dual areas of urbanization—the original downtown and an outer fringe of chain and franchise businesses that are often no longer within walking distance from the downtown itself, nor from the suburbs. The result has been the commercial decline of countless urban or downtown areas and the creation of what has been called "Strip Mall America."

Although chain and franchise businesses of course provide necessary goods and services, at the same time they have changed the face of America. Lamenting this change in America's landscape, the website "roadboys travels" states: "Anyone who travels though out America as much as I do can't help but conclude that modern American city planning…has been a complete unmitigated failure" since, in the opinion of this observer, "our new suburban cities have no heart and no core."[14]

Mario Livio in his book *The Equation That Couldn't Be Solved: How Mathematical Genius Discovered the Language of Symmetry* states that symmetry "permeates objects and concepts ranging from Persian carpets to the molecules of life, from the Sistine Chapel to the sought-after 'Theory of Everything.' "[15] Could it be that we have lost some basic symmetry in our modern living spaces, some primordial sense of how and where buildings and roads should be constructed. Perhaps only a group of experts in many fields could answer that question. This might include town planners, sociologists, psychologists, and perhaps other individuals from many fields, and that is precisely the point. In the future a variety of viewpoints should be taken into consideration when construction is planned, including perhaps the oriental sense of the innate flow of energy around us, not just what might be most profitable and what might be most expedient. After all, we are talking about nothing less than the environment that shapes and forms the basis for our lives.

In the case of our fast-food restaurants, a type of restaurant that we have exported throughout the world, Dr. Kelly Brownell, speaking at the Annual Convention of the APA in 2001 has stated that a "toxic food environment" has been created with endless numbers of fast-food establishments. And of course the very concept of fast food is the product of an industrialized approach to nourishment. It assumes that traditional meals of one, two, or even three hours, with plenty of time for conversation is not practical, since food (although this concept is rarely ever stated so bluntly) is simply a means to an end rather than

an end in itself. We must eat quickly to get back to the real business of life, which is "business," rather than taking the time to enjoy food for its own sake, which was undoubtedly one of the basic attitudes of life before industrialism, as it still is in areas of the world where the inroads of industrialized values have not been as deep. At the present time it is estimated that school children get up to 40 percent of their food from fast-food restaurants, while fast-food outlets are present in at least 13 percent of our nation's schools.[16]

Changes in modes of transportation have brought about basic social mutations in our urban centers themselves. Through most of the history of the Western world, the center of large urban areas was considered to be the center of learning and culture. Now, however, we are experiencing the reversal of traditional concepts of urban life with the term "the inner city" being almost synonymous with poverty and crime; while describing a person as being "street smart" or designating conventional or current knowledge in the community as "the word on the street" often refers to the wisdom of a criminal-like mentality, not a greater cognizance of high culture that was formerly thought to be the essence of urban life.

Many small and local based businesses have suffered in their competition with large chain or franchised stores, restaurants, and hotels on the fringe of urban centers. This has brought about other social changes as well. Thus greater mobility has occurred with the inevitable weakening of community and family ties along with the demise of many local businesses.

Increasingly, we live in a highly impersonal society on many levels. Neither is life based on a human scale nor is it based on an organic harmony with basic social units—the family, the neighborhood, and the community in general—rather we live increasingly in large social entities that give little or no importance to these values or to the traditional scale of life as it existed before the Industrial Revolution.

Is it any wonder then that an individual such as the author or the reader of this text can live in modern-day America with little or no contact with other members of the community. In our modern shopping-mall culture few vendors know our name, know our family, or care what happens to us, nor do we care about the employees and owners of such large-scale businesses. Life has become cold and impersonal—as cold and impersonal as the machines that increasingly dominate our lives, for how easy is it for us to go to a drug store, shoe store, a hardware store, or any other type of locally based and not nationally owned business establishment? Can we find them?

Is it any wonder that crime statistics are said to be the products of a breakdown of family and of the community itself? Social ills abound and many like President Ronald Reagan, speaking in Russia of the life of Native Americans on reservations, referred to them as living in a primitive state. Yet now we might ask ourselves if these Native Americans were primitive when they were living in their ancestral communities before the advent of their contact with Western society? Were they primitive in their ignorance of many of the social ills that beset us at the recent time? Were they primitive or deficient in child abuse, spouse abuse, or debilitating drug abuse? Did they experience teenage suicide and massive alienation from their social reality, or did they most often believe that their social units served their needs and that their view of creation and nature was a coherent one that gave them an overriding purpose in life? Did they live in the type of society that we have today where all knowledge is fragmented; where the family unit is being further weakened all the time; where divorce, mental illness and drug addiction, and the alienation that lies at the base of such addiction is rampant.

## The Third World Is No Longer Third—It May Now Be in the Forefront of Future Developments

It is most important for us to realize that the social mores described here are by-products of a system of values that have put us at odds with many of the societies in the Third World, which still cling to more traditional social and urban units. As we increasingly begin to question the wisdom of the industrialized state, not in terms of industrial development itself, but in terms of the attending changes in psychology and value patterns that have taken hold in the last two hundred years, we may begin to wonder—who is primitive after all?

## Human Scale

The increasing mechanization of life and the primacy of the clock began to take hold with the Industrial Revolution.[17] Before that, exact time was not nearly as important to most people as it is today and in an agricultural society, work was often regulated by the cycles of day and night. In many towns in Europe before the Industrial Revolution

even clocks in town squares and on churches were so inexact as to give little more than an estimate of what the exact time was. With the advent of machine-based production the need for more accurate measurements of time increased dramatically.

At the same time the need to form large masses of people grew as well and mass production drew large numbers of workers and their families away from rural areas and into rapidly growing urban centers. With this growth came the loss of what might be called an organic view of social entities by which the needs—the goods and services of individual communities—were largely supplied internally by the community itself just as a biological organism such as a plant can draw its much needed nutrients from its immediate environment.

Formerly, for example, if one wanted to buy a new pair of shoes, one went to a shoemaker who literally was a "shoemaker" in the sense that he made the shoes rather than ordering them from some manufacturer hundreds or thousands of miles away. In light of the impersonality of our modern superlarge urban communities, calls have already been made for social units to be scaled down into what has been called "Human Scale." Such has been the subject of the study *Human Scale* by Kirkpatrick Sale and *Small is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered*, by E. F Schumacher.

In this work the author speaks of "the idolatry of gigantism" adding that in the industrialized era millions of people started moving about, deserting the rural areas and the smaller towns to go to the big city thus causing what this author calls, "a pathological growth." In contrast to this, Schumacher suggests that the ideal or maximum size of urban areas should be about 500,000 people. This in itself is much in line with the ideas of William Morris, who spoke prophetically in one of his lectures stating that, "the house shall be like a natural growth of the meadow and the city a necessary fulfillment of the valley."[18]

The construction of urbanity along such lines would be a radical departure from the tendencies of growth of social units since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, as Schumacher states in his book. Could such a trend actually take place? We believe that a development toward the establishment and the growth of smaller urban areas, and the attending expansion of rural communities may be one of the results of new technologies that increasingly allow people to perform business and professional functions far from the great urban

masses of population; not only far from big cities but also far from what has been called Strip Mall America—a garish jungle of fast-food establishments and other chain business.

Perhaps the growing concern over diet and nutrition may in itself decrease the popularity of what many observers consider to be a blight on the American landscape. Recently the newly developed Strip Mall of America stretches across 90 straight miles covering no less than one-sixth of the state of North Dakota.[19]

The tendency to construct smaller social units or at least commercial conglomerates more in line with what has been called human scale, may well be a logical growth of a post-industrial view of the land and its use if we take seriously the imperative to live closer to nature. As one car bumper sticker maintains—the suburbs are places where the builders destroy all the trees before they construct a house; then they charge their customers to put the trees back in the earth once again. Supposedly it all makes sense, but it is hard to figure out how and why.

At the present time, large masses of people live where the conditions of life in its most elemental biological form are often the least favorable. This is true in terms of the air, water, and noise pollution of our giant metropolises, but on a less visible and less apparent level, city life, especially big city life exists and persists, not in accordance with the rhythms of nature, but rather in accordance with the rhythms and desires of man. Just as Thomas Merton explains that the simple act of planting a tree in a city is a manifestation of man's belief that he should determine where and when nature can show itself, so the sounds of the city are also opposed to the harmony of nature. It is for this reason that Alejo Carpentier in his symbolic presentation of modern urban man, *The Lost Steps*, shows that his protagonist has to use a mask in order to go to sleep at night while he is in New York City. Yet when he moves to the jungles of Venezuela his first act is to throw away his watch because he has already begun to live by the rhythms of nature. He is no longer a slave to the clock.

As a work that symbolizes man's alienation from the modern world dominated by machines and technology, British author J. B. Priestley notes in his introduction to the English translation of Carpentier's novel, which he describes as "a work of genius, a genuine masterpiece," that this remarkable novel shows clearly the way in which, "Our society's substitution of new secondary satisfactions for old primary ones is now proving disastrous. There is an increasing sense of frustration; too many people find no meaning in their existence."[20]

The stresses of urban life are undeniable and hardly need to be detailed by graphs, facts, and figures. It is for this reason that for years one prominent New York psychiatrist maintained a second office in rural Connecticut, requiring that his patients from New York City travel to this second location, since he believed that the trip to the country would in itself be essential as an important part of their therapy.

Although the stresses of modern urban life are obvious, not so obvious is the alienation that often lies at the base of the social tendency to group large masses of people into one urban area as opposed to organic social units. As the size of cities grows the sense of strength of community spirit does not grow with it. On the contrary, it is common for the city dweller to not know his or her next door neighbor let alone the person that lives two or three doors down the street. We can magnify this reality with a basic assumption of industrialized society that puts it at odds with the overwhelming majority of human history in the belief that family and roots are of prime importance.

A basic implied principle of modern technological life is that a job is more important than such basic attachments. Such an attitude is taken for granted by modern corporations when it orders the breadwinner in a family to pick up and move, perhaps large distances, or even to another country, upon short notice.

The company assumes that work is also more important than other human values. Such a belief system is radically different from that of indigenous, non-industrialized society, which often considers the land itself to be sacred as the residence and the resting place of their ancestors. For example, Native American authors Sun Bear and Wabun Wind speak of the Indian ceremony of Earth Renewal in which Father Sun returns and brings with him the blessings of Mother Earth, commenting that this growth cycle is "a very sacred thing because if Father Sun doesn't return, we're all out of business."[21]

Societies have basically, in terms of human history, been family, tribe, and clan based and have been such for eons. Indeed, if we were to imagine human life on this planet in terms of sixty minutes, life as it is lived today in increasingly impersonal large cities would account for much less than one minute of human history.

The ensuing rootless quality of much of modern life has a devastating effect on family life and the lack of stability and communication that traditionally has accompanied it. Just in terms of communication, a recent study found that the average American father speaks with his children on an average of two minutes a day. At the same

time the predominance of the frivolous values of the popular media is also enormous. Some estimate that by the time an American student graduates from high school he has watched some twenty thousand hours of television while he has listened to his teachers for only thirteen thousand hours.

Another study done more than a decade ago found that fewer Americans were trying to get divorces because the characters in American TV sitcoms were tending to get fewer divorces than was the case in previous years. Even as far back as the 1960s, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 50 percent of Americans lived in different dwellings than the one that they lived in only five years previous.[22]

Many experts blame the break down in the stability, of community, and the very breakdown of the family unit itself as the cause of many of the social ills of our society. As sociologist George A. Pettit of the University of California states in his book *Prisoners of Culture*, the problem is a very basic one indeed as he notes that, "the nuclear family no longer has the manpower, facilities, knowledge, or time to function as a microcosm of society demonstrating a full range of cultural behavior and beliefs for the younger generation."[23]

People now live in mass numbers near the centers of business and production. In the future if the predicted trend toward life in greater harmony with nature rather than in its domination takes hold, a different scale of human values may increase in their importance while at the present time, as we have noted, progress in the case of "developed nations" is classified most often in terms of materialism and production.

In accordance with such a tendency, assuming that this trend continues, it may be reasonable to envision the cities of the future as smaller units in which actual urban constructions, dwellings, factories, and places of business may hold as much claim to the occupation of the land that comprises the city as will parks and other areas that are separated from business. Our urban areas can be destined as much to nurture the human psyche in ways that cannot only be devised by the hand of man rather than being centers designed mainly to foment business and professional life alone.

This may seem to be nothing more than utopian, wishful thinking, but already steps are being taken in that direction. One city in Canada already devotes a large part of its operating budget to creating and maintaining park areas, while during a recent administration the Mexican national government asked citizens of Mexico City, perhaps

the largest urban center in the world, to plant one tree per family for a short period of time. It has been estimated that at least 20 million trees were planted in Mexico during little more than a week.

In Boston, the current mayor also publicly proclaimed his intention to see that a vast number of trees be planted in that city to the extent that it might be called a kind of reforestation of that urban area, not only for esthetics, but in order to improve the quality of air that the citizens of that fair city have to breath each and every day.

Once again such changes are more than just cosmetic. They may hark to a new vision of what life is or what it should be. It has always been said that "the business of the United States is business," perhaps it will one day be possible to say confidently that "the business of the United States is living well." So we might ask, is it unreasonable to believe that in a post-industrialized society there may exist a growing tendency to construct new urban and expanding cosmopolitan areas in consideration of what is a fitting environment for human habitation not just what is most conducive to production and commerce?

After all our buildings reflect our values and our patterns of living. In the Middle Ages in Europe the highest structures were the cathedrals. They towered above people's heads for a definite reason—to inspire them to think in terms of spiritual transcendence—to make them think of heaven. As we have noted, the famous Latin American artist Diego Rivera once pointed out in a lecture—today our biggest buildings in our cities are office buildings, since they reflect our modern view of what brings transcendence in our lives, which is money and commerce. Nothing speaks more clearly about the current ascendancy of industrialized and commercial values in our modern world.

As we look back on history, we can see that one civilization has been replaced by another time and time again, and animal species have disappeared because they were too closely attuned to one type of biological environment. They were not able to adapt to changing realities. The pride that we now have with our industrialized world, most especially the First World, by which we tend to believe that we are the culmination of the developments in human history in technology and production, may turn out to be overly optimistic if we fail to realize that our basic values will also eventually be overturned in the wake of a changing world and changing values as has always happened in human history.

As Tom Crockett states in his perceptive study *Stone Age Wisdom*, "We know what it feels like to be out of balance. It may begin as a

nagging sense of dis-ease or discomfort—a lack of energy or enthusiasm for life. We should be happy, but we don't feel happy.... This blindness to spirit, to the animated conscious, dynamic interconnected, and responsive nature of the world around us, is the fundamental imbalance that we face as we enter the third millennium."[24]

As Australian medical intuitive Robyn Elizabeth Welch has expressed it in her thought-provoking study *Exploring Dimensions with the Body*, "We can look forward to a time when our energy is produced in harmony with the natural heartbeat of Earth. Stress would be eliminated in every living thing, and nature would be happy again, especially if we stop cutting down so many trees.... Mother Nature is in distress, to say the least. You cannot go against the grain of nature without consequence."[25]

Need we say more?

# 11

# Communications and the Third World

It should be obvious that international news reporting, which structures our view of what is happening in our world, is a product and a reflection of the society that produces it. It has even been stated that journalism is not so much an exercise in informing the public about developments in the world as it is in reflecting the view of reality that filters news and events, and then talks or writes about those issues and events that fit comfortably into a preexisting view of what is real.

For this reason, large numbers of paranormal or even supposedly abnormal happenings fail to make it to the pages of our newspapers, or our radio and television reports simply because they supposedly do not reflect the prevailing view of what is possible as it exists in our culture. An example would be countless thousands of reported sightings of UFOs in the United States and throughout the world. Even though statistics have shown that large numbers, perhaps even a majority of Americans, do believe that flying saucers are real and many actually do believe that they may be interplanetary in their origin; still the "establishment" mentality such as is evidenced in our major media outlets is that such phenomena do not exist, and if they do exist on some level they should not be taken seriously.

This may pose interesting questions for our legal system when a criminal conviction can be based solely or largely on the testimony of an eye witness. Do people know what they see or don't they? However, it also can structure an inquiry into exactly what comprises a newsworthy event and what does not.

Certainly the strangeness or unlikely nature of a news item can, in other circumstances, make it newsworthy unless it appears to be in opposition to a conscious or subconscious vision of what is real in the

dominant culture. According to the old saying, if a dog bites a man, it is not news, but if a man bites a dog, it is so unusual that it is news. Such considerations have much to do with the view of our world, which is usually given in national news reports.

Let us consider the typical international news report on a major American television network. Within one half hour there are perhaps three or four commercial breaks. Each one may vary from one to two minutes in length.

This will limit actual news reporting to an average of twenty minutes. Many networks like to end their reportage of somber world events with a human-interest story, especially one that is lighthearted. This is fine, and it certainly is welcome after listening and watching the reporting of news that is often tragic in nature.

Of course, networks realize that their viewers or listeners find it difficult to identify with generalizations made about millions of people so they often report on some development in society by focusing on how this story has impacted one person or one family. This is too fine, however, such news often repeats the obvious, such as the frequent interviews with a worker about how he feels about his factory or business closing. He is of course going to state that this is terrible. Did we expect him to say that he is delighted to lose his job?

If we subtract such repetitions of the obvious from what is considered to be world news, and if we subtract purely human-interest stories such as reportage about dog in Oklahoma that has learned to play the piano to one degree or another, we are left with perhaps fifteen minutes of actual news coverage. How often do we in the public reflect on the really awesome responsibility that the networks have of summing-up everything that happens in the world—the activities of billions of human beings—in such a short period of time?

The result of course is that they don't really tell us about what is happening in the world as a whole at all, even though we are tempted to believe that they do. Rather they most often show and tell what is happening or what is believed to be happening in segments of our globe that already have been deemed to be of importance. This usually reflects back on the basic vision of what countries actually constitute the real world—which are the sections of the globe that we should take seriously?

As Robert Goldberg and Gerald Jay Goldberg state in their book, *Anchors: Brokaw, Jennings, Rather and the Evening News*, "Most people of the world are not discussed in the evening news. Name one

thing that's happened recently in Scandinavia, or Australia, or India, or anywhere in the entire continent of Africa."

This excellent study of current international news reporting also points out that information from the world of culture—books, plays, and the visual arts is almost completely lacking in national news reporting as are most new development in the world of science with the exception of some important medical discoveries.[1]

We often also forget that conveying news is a business just like any other commercial enterprise, whether it be in the print or in the electronic form. Therefore, the bottom line of course is most important—the organization presenting information must make a profit. Also like any other business, news delivery must give its audience the "product" they want and the common supposition up to now has been, although it rarely if ever has been stated explicitly, that the vicissitudes of life in the Third World are rarely of interest to the mass audience in the First World.

This is a great generalization, however; even a quick consideration of what mass media presents as international news can be seen to reflect this attitude. Naturally, with the hundreds of countries in our world the news cannot cover developments in every single one of them at one time. However, even among so-called First World or Western European countries, information is so scarce that a viewer may easily forget that many of these nations really do exist. We hear often about England, Germany, and France but what is happening and has happened in Sweden, Switzerland, Holland, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Portugal, or even Spain, to mention only a few? Western nation-states in which the average news consumer may be tempted to believe that most of the citizens of these countries may actually be asleep most of the time—nothing newsworthy ever seems to go on there.

The activities of the British royal family are covered in great detail, but we usually have to watch news reporting on a Spanish-speaking television network to learn about the royal family in Spain; or to even learn that there is a royal family in that nation, which is the cultural and linguistic forebear of some 40 millions Spanish-speakers in the United States, according to the U.S. Bureau of Census.

As mentioned before, there exists a virtual news iron curtain that separates the United States from its neighbors in North America—Canada and Mexico. Few Americans could name the most prominent political parties in either nation, or the name of the prime minister of Canada or the president of Mexico. This is not because of general lack of astuteness on the part of the American public, rather it is because

such information is rarely, if ever mentioned, in our national news broadcasts.

Once again we would have to add our sources of information about current events to the list of mass cultural aspects of our contemporary society along with mass pop music, mass television programming, and so many other aspects of a mass generated or mental assembly lined system of oral and visual communication. The result is what might be called "pop news broadcasting," an extremely brief, arbitrary view of world events that usually focuses on a small handful of nations, most generally those in the First World. But even then, it generally only features reporting of a small numbers of Western European countries that could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

The result is a mixture of human-interest stories, interviews, commercials, and a smattering of reportage of actual worldwide happenings—a shallow presentation of the ups and downs in the world community, while giving the average viewer the impression that he or she actually has a mental grip on the actual state of this planet when this is most often nothing but an illusion. Such an impression may be likened to the view of the world society of the ancient Romans who thought they had conquered the whole world when their very limited geographical knowledge of the globe only made it seem that way.

It is also human nature to tend to believe that if we don't hear or know about a certain subject it either does not exist or if it does, it isn't very important, otherwise we certainly would have already heard about it.

This is especially true of the coverage of news from the Third World. If we receive little or no information about what we have found to be really the vast majority of our planet, are we not tempted to forget about large segments of human civilization, and are we not likewise tempted to think that theses sections of world do not have any relevance to our lives?

It is true that we do receive information about certain African, Latin American, and Asian nations outside of Japan and China, countries whose economies can have a direct effect on our own because we have already made a decision that events, especially economic developments in those countries, can effect us. Events in other nations will not and cannot affect us, we often believe. Our interests develop then along the lines of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The mention of Third World nations is usually made when U.S. political and economic interests are seriously at stake. Is there any

attempt to focus on conditions in these nations and the problems of citizens there for their own sake?

Then again, we may ask who ultimately makes the decision as to what constitutes the news? It is certainly no secret that our major news networks are generally controlled by the interests of large corporations.

Best-selling historian and social critic, Jim Marrs, has noted that CBS has some two hundred affiliates including United International Pictures, Blockbuster, Nickelodeon Movies, and many other companies. The Walt Disney Company, owner of ABC, has become one of the largest entertainment entities anywhere. We might say that it is so large that it could even be observed underwater with anybody's periscope. This same author goes on to state that "in America today there are thousands of persons…all under the command of their corporate owners—toiling unceasingly to present the corporate worldview to their viewers."[2]

It has been stated that in the 1800s newspapers were often propagandists for various political parties with "little pretense to neutral authority or ownership of the facts," according to Nicholas Lemann writing in *The New Yorker*. In our time serious doubts arise as to the accuracy or even the neutrality of mass media due to their ownership by superlarge corporations. Perhaps this may be one of the reasons that America's confidence in the accuracy of news reporting has reached its lowest level in more than twenty years according to a Pew Research study with only 29 percent of Americans feeling that their news media is giving them accurate information.[3]

All too often, coverage of the Third World in our news is restricted to focusing on disasters—whether natural or political. The result of this perspective can only be to feed into the unfortunate stereotypes of these so-called underdeveloped or developing countries that encompasses the notion that life is most often a disaster in these parts of the world. As we have noted before, the common concept is all too often that human progress has not and cannot exist there, since these nations are plagued *only* by dire poverty, corruption, and illiteracy.

Many Americans, therefore, are greatly surprised to learn that Nobel Prize winning authors have lived in Africa and Latin America, to use only one example. Others rebel at the notion that it is a documented historical fact, as we have already noted, that many aspects of Western civilizations began first in Latin America and traveled to North America rather than the other way around. Likewise, many others will hold fast to the idea that the first European settlers in what is now the United States came from England, when the historical reality is that Spanish explorers and settlers in California and the

southwest arrived in those areas almost a full century before Captain John Smith and the pilgrims arrived on American shores.

As a result why would our national news tell about developments in Chad, Algeria, Morocco, Bolivia, Peru, the Philippines, Malaysia, or any number of other so-called Third World countries? There can be many answers to that question. First, we should know about such areas because they are part of our world and the people that live in these countries are as human as we are.

Another perspective informs us that our own country is increasingly a social, ethnic, and racial melting pot with representatives of all parts of the globe. Therefore, it is no longer valid for the news media to work on the assumption that their information consumers are all or are mostly of the Anglo-Saxon backgrounds. With an estimated 40 million Hispanics in the United States alone at the present time along with people of wide varieties of national backgrounds, news of every conceivable section of the globe is of interest to one group of news consumers or another. In other words, in an age when the watchword is globalism, it is time for us to begin to literally embrace a globalized view of news reporting.

Political crises may be included in the national news if they present a danger to American interests whether these be political or commercial. When a Marxist government took over in Nicaragua under the administration of Daniel Ortega this could not have been good news to American corporations such as the United Fruit Company. At the same time, during the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union, the presence of what appeared to be a Russian satellite nation in our hemisphere gave the appearance of a real danger to the interests of the United States, especially during the Republican administration of Ronald Reagan. Yet up to that time little if any national news had been forthcoming about that small Central American country before these alarming conditions came to the fore.

Nevertheless, the swing into the boiling political pot of Marxism did not come out of nowhere, rather it was one country's answer to the brutality of the Somoza dictatorship, which many citizens of that country saw as having been supported by the United States.

They believed that this North American country turned a blind eye to repeated violations of human rights because, after all, Nicaragua was a politically stable, anticommunist nation during the cold war.

As several political commentators observed at the time, it was highly questionable whether or not many Americans even knew where Nicaragua was on the map.

Just to give one small example of the value of human life in such a dictatorship at that time, on traveling to Nicaragua during the Somoza administration and on seeing a government soldier standing in a field with a large rifle in his hands, we were informed by a Nicaraguan that the regard for human life was so weak at that time in that country, if someone wanted that soldier to kill anybody he would probably do it for only ten dollars. After that he would not bother to ask why the murder was desired in the first place. Furthermore, nobody would investigate the crime because the soldier worked for the government.

Our real awareness of what is really happening in the vast majority of our globe has traditionally been so incomplete that we are able to ignore political situations that have festered for years without garnering any real attention until they boil over into a crisis and then we, and apparently high governmental officials themselves, begin to wonder why problems have risen suddenly to such a desperate level.

## A New World Order

It is true that the relative assessment of the value of nations has been regulated during the last two hundred years of the Industrial Revolution to a large extent by consideration of the growth of industrial production in any given society. Now, however, it is time that we begin to realize, as this study suggests, that we are living in an era in which we are experiencing the beginnings of a heightened appreciation of post-industrial values. At the same time, the United States itself, long regarded as the most industrialized country in the world, is increasingly being considered to be an information-based society. Our production-oriented economy is increasingly being replaced by one that boasts of an ability to create, store, and access information formulated on our real or supposed superiority in the field of technology. Increasingly our consumer goods are being imported from Third World nations where labor costs are less than they are here at home.

As a result, we should reexamine the traditional pecking order of national importance as well as the importance of learning about Third World nations, even if we are still really serious about using industrialism not as a measure of a man, but of a nation.

## Have You Heard from Bolivia Lately?

Important events and trends actually do occur in nations that usually do not generate much news reporting. Nevertheless, the supposition

of many recipients of traditional international news is that little or nothing of importance occurs in such places. This is true not only of international but also of aspects of national reportage.

Of course, we learn a great deal about political events taking place in Washington D.C. but relatively little about what is taking place in the state known by the very same name. On a broader scope just in this hemisphere alone we rarely if ever learn about political or any other happenings in countries such as Belize or British or French Guyana, Surinam, Paraguay, or Ecuador. This is true to the point that one must wonder if the average American has ever heard of such nations or even knows that they are there on the map right in front of their eyes.

This rather arbitrary selection of news worthiness extends to the United States, as just mentioned. How often has the average consumer of news reporting heard about development in states such as Delaware or North Dakota? How often have we heard a news broadcast begin with statement such "the governor of Delaware stated today that…." How many indeed heard much about a state like Arkansas before Bill Clinton put it "on the map?"

The same could probably be said about the nation called Bolivia, perhaps best known to the movie going audience because of the well known film *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* with Robert Redford and Paul Newman. This popular film contains scenes in the latter part of that movie that take place in that distant nation.

Link this blind spot in the general public's mental grid of the hemisphere with a lack of reporting about Latin America in general and it may be fair to say that the average American is not kept up-to-date about the southern part of our hemisphere. Therefore, the news consumer would most likely be surprised to learn that the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, as already mentioned, heads up a thirty nations group of nonaligned nations that have united in spirit and in political sympathy to collectively combat the power of the great world power known as the United States.[4]

Although Chavez has tried to institute a Marxist-style government in his own country, forming alliances with Cuba and Nicaragua, he has also found a staunch ally in the president of the small country known as Bolivia—Evo Morales.

Scant reporting energy was given to a thirty nation nonaligned nations summit held in Cuba not long ago. Neither is it generally reported that this large block of countries have in turn found sympathetic supporters in Iran where a large statue of Chavez adorns the

capital city of that country.[5] Nor is it generally known that Iran in turn has found a supporter in the person of soviet leader Putin, who recently agreed to send a large quantity of missiles to that aforementioned Middle Eastern country.

All put together such alliances, which are rarely if ever mentioned in the American press coverage, have the makings of what some astute political observers have called a potential new cold war. This concept is supported by the announcement that Russia is intending to send long-range missiles to Cuba once again.

If such a selective tendency of news reporting can and does have an effect on the average viewer and reader of newspapers as well as news-oriented magazines, we may wonder all the more about how it affects the judgments of our national political leaders?

Could our leaders suddenly become all knowing where foreign policies are formed if they are the product of society's aforementioned prejudices in news reporting?

It was reported that many years ago a member of the U.S. Congress was greatly surprised, on seeing a coin from Nicaragua, to find that that country contained many volcanoes. As a result, he suggested to other congress members that the proposed canal through Nicaragua actually be changed so that it would go through Panama instead—hence the making of the Panama canal even though the United States had already paid Nicaragua a substantial sum for the right to make a canal in that Central American country.

One recent American president spoke of an axis of evil including such nations as Sadam Hussein's Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. How did the president pick out these nations among many other dictatorial regimes in the world where basic human rights are violated on a routine basis? We may ask for example, why he did not include Cuba or other communist totalitarian states in this axis of evil? Could it be because that they are not known for their oil production?

## A Bid for a Grid

The famous "grid" iron in sports may make us think about another "grid," which is the mental template that is created each and every time we see or read a report on international news. As German author Herman Hesse commented in one of his essays, when the average citizen puts down the daily newspaper after having read it thoroughly, he usually has the satisfaction of believing that he is up-to-date with what is happening in the world although this is far from the truth.

Actually his newspaper gives only the barest hint relating to what billions of human beings and hundreds of nations have done in the last twenty-four hours, yet perhaps we all, at one point or other, fall prey to the illusion of total knowledge.

The news reports create a mental template or grid that transposes itself into our mind, implying that events in our world actually do limit themselves to that news model because that is all that we have been informed about. If anything else of importance had taken place, we reason on the conscious or the subconscious level, we certainly would have been informed about it.

A recent article in the *National Review* told the readers about very important protest movements in Cuba, which are increasingly giving opposition to the Marxist government of that country. The article ended with the question asking how often these protest to that dictatorial government had been reported in the national media, to give only one example of the myopia of our traditional mass audience news coverage.

We often forget, as mentioned before, that the news is a commercial product just as is any other product presented to the consumer market in order to make a profit for those that "manufacture" this information. Therefore, they believe that the consumers who watch and read the news will continue to watch, will only listen and read the news that relates to areas of the world in which they already have an interest. But how is an interest created in the first place if not through the presentation of news items to remind readers, listeners, and viewers that the Third World areas of the globe really do exist in the first place, and that events in those countries really can have a dramatic impact on the whole world. Is this not a vicious cycle that feeds on itself?

We tend to close our minds and our hearts to the plights of those people involved in many tragedies in the world, while we can shift our attention to violence occurring in the First World even though far fewer people may be affected. More than a decade ago, an article in *TV Guide* reported on of the state of communication in northern Africa after a protracted war between two neighboring nations in which some two million people had been killed. This shocking item of news was mentioned almost in passing, leaving readers wondering why this tragedy has not been trumpeted to the world at large? Why was it kept a local secret? Could it have been because it took place in Africa?

One may say that they believe that news reporting today is filled with an obsessive interest with terrorism and other events in the

Middle East. However, this change in the center of political and news-making gravity did begin to take place after the events of 9/11—after a major tragedy occurred after decades of mental isolationism in regard to many of the countries in that part of the world, with the notable exception of Israel and the Palestinian state.

American news reporting is highly controversial as it is because of the traditional rivalry between conservative and liberal points of view. These philosophical differences are of course highly significant to the point that consumers of news are often led to believe that this rift in present-day thinking represents that totality of the controversy that exists regarding American policies. Nothing could be further from truth though American news recipients have had these conservative-liberal viewpoints ringing in their ears for so many years that they may be tempted to think that other viewpoints, especially those held by citizens of the Third World, cannot really exist or cannot be truly valid.

When a person is brought up in any one culture, that individual is so used to his or her own area of the world that such a person usually does not acquire the perspective that may exists for a visitor from another land. One person from a foreign country explained to us that a notable feature of the United States was that bus drivers would not generally pick up customers who did not wait exactly where a bus stop sign was displayed in the street, while in another nation that bus driver would generally be more flexible and would pick up a customer who is standing somewhere near the bus stop sign.

To this foreign visitor this apparently trivial difference was an indication of the rigidity of the American mind. This may be debatable, yet it is doubtful that an American who had lived an entire lifetime in the country would have such a perspective, especially in regard to such an apparently small matter, although the implications, if they are correctly interpreted, can be of real significance for the understanding of the American character.

In other countries, including Third World states, questions are asked that are of great moment—questions that might not occur to those who do not view this nation from a distance. These are questions such as, you are supposedly the richest country in the world. You send billions of dollars to other countries in foreign aid but charity begins at home. Why don't you take care of your own people first? Why do you let millions of your citizens go hungry? Or to go further, you are trillions of dollars in debt. Why do you persist in sending vast amounts to other countries? Why don't you pay off your own debt first? That is your main obligation. You are like a man going

bankrupt, giving away tens of thousands of dollars to his neighbors. Does this make sense?

These are only a few of the real questions asked by many around the world. If our news reporting would actually include developments *around the world* and also perspectives that reflect the thinking of many cultures, including those that are not as industrialized as our own, it is arguable that not only would we acquire a more globalized view of current events, but we would also acquire a variety of interpretations of the present state of our own country. This is especially important at the present time as Leonard Downes Jr., an executive editor of the *Washington Post* and Michael Schudson, professor of journalism at Columbia University, have reported in their study *The Reconstruction of American Journalism*, that "fewer journalists are reporting less news in fewer pages."[6]

We have already explored some of the paradoxes of globalism to the point that it may be obvious that such a worldwide phenomenon is much more complex than is usually believed. When we use the phrase in daily conversation without stopping, think whether one term can really describe developments that are going on in all parts of the world. Likewise, we have seen that the term "the Third World" implies a vision of our globe that appears absolute and uniform as if the phrase had some logical finality in and of itself. It doesn't. Rather it implies many basic assumptions that this study suggests, do not really stand up to closer inspection.

In the 1980s, Van Gordon Sauter, former president of CBS News, defended what he called the tabloidization of television with the proliferation of talk and reality shows coming of age at that time. May we not wonder if the superficiality and oversimplification of international news, as mentioned above, does not constitute another type of journalistic tabloidization?[7]

As Robert Young Pelton states so well, "people watch the pain and suffering of total strangers interrupted every eight minutes by commercials selling toothpaste and new cars…television zooms in with nice clean images of blood, explosions, screaming and 'you are there action'…television makes it seem more distant and less painful."[8]

Is this not especially true of much of the reporting of Third World states? If you think it is not, consider that Colombia in South America has experienced a civil war for decades, and millions of people have gotten killed. whereas in Sudan the civil war has killed at least an estimated 500,000 people and has left another 4.5 million people without

their homes, just to mention a few dramatic examples of what is really been happening in our world.

Have you learned about all of this and similar tragedies in Third World countries on the evening news? If not, why not? Is not human life apparently more important in some countries than it is in others as far as American news reporting is concerned?

So it is that our news reporting often does not keep up with this changing world for it all too often reflects the prism with which the European powers saw the rest of the world when colonizing nations took over the governments of countries such as Vietnam, British Honduras, South Africa, India, the Belgian Congo, and so many other sections of the world. We may really wonder if our journalistic perspective has really kept up with the times or is it more a case of the truth of the old saying that the more things change the more they are the same?

Yet time marches on and the world continues to change. Will our view of it change as well?

# 12

# Industrialism and the Quality of Life

Years ago an observer of the contemporary scene commented that it was already possible for the industrialized world to create a nearly perfect habitat for human beings, since the technology already exists to continue and expand our industrial production while eliminating virtually all noise and chemical pollution that produces dangers that are still not completely understood by our society.

This prediction contains a radical concept—namely that the urban landscape, let alone the rural and the suburban areas should and could be places most conducive to the highest quality of life. Increasing importance will be given not to the size of our skyscrapers, but rather to the quality of the air that we breathe and of the water that we drink. As mentioned, Mexican artist Diego Rivera stated many years ago in a lecture at Columbia University that the size of large buildings gives evidence of the primary goals of each society. In a brilliant observation he noted that in the Middle Ages the tallest buildings were the cathedrals, since in that age of faith the worship of God was considered to be the primary object of human life. In our modern world, the artist noted, our tallest structures are office buildings, since the acquisition of money tends to be our modern god.

Still technological advances, noble and as helpful as they are, may increasingly be seen as having their limits in the benefits that they can bring us with their new inventions. Much new technology tends to be made more for the increased profits of the manufacturer although they are portrayed as being brought out to the market mainly for the benefit of the consumer, and it is logical to assume that possible technological advances have been ignored or purposely delayed because of the profit motive in and of itself. If this is not the case, we may wonder why the technology of air travel has developed incredibly since

the first flight by the Wright brothers to the point that we now have rockets going into outer space. Why then has the technology of the automobile motor been frozen to where it was eighty or one hundred years ago? Why did we not have a new, cheaper, and cleaner way to move about many years ago or at least a gas-operated motor that could give 500 or 100 miles a gallon? There are plenty or reports that such technologies existed but were not allowed on the market.

There is a classic English film *The Man in the White Suit*, starring the great actor Alec Guiness. This is the story of a man who invents a fabric that will never wear out. He believes that he is a great benefactor of mankind; however, one day, as he is walking in his house, someone attempts to kill him. The reason of course is that a fabric that will never wear out has the potential to ruin the clothing industry.

Perhaps our scientific developments could be not only aimed at greater profits for the individuals and the companies that make them but also at improving the quality of life for the greatest number of people. This would entail aiming technology at the elimination rather than the creation of pollution whether this be noise or the chemical impoverishment of our environment.

The permutations of human life from two million B.C. to one million B.C. were negligible at best, yet change is now speeding up to an amazing degree. Just in the last one hundred years lifestyles have changed in First World nations at an incredible pace leading us to wonder if change itself is not multiplying as a geometric progression. Will we not in the future begin to wonder if the rapidity of change may get out of control in the sense that if it continues to accelerate at an even greater rate, the human personality may increasingly not have enough time to accommodate such variations in a changing lifestyle?

A totality of human perspectives may be called for to assess whether or not the dizzying pace of change may soon become negative to the human psyche as it tries in vain to keep up with an evermore complicated world. Thoreau's cry for simplicity in life, a basic theme of his classic *Walden*, up to now has gone largely unheeded.

Such considerations may be considered to be foolish or unwise in light of our current obsession with gadgetry; however, the citizens of the future may have a very different perspective. After all, how many people twenty years ago could have foreseen the present-day concern over global warming and the need to "go green"?

Along with rapidly developing technology with all the increasing complication that goes with it, comes a complex social structure of ever-proliferating bureaucracy. This does not refer, as most people

might assume, to government offices alone, but rather to any component of society that has developed multilevel layers of authority. One of the most important reasons that life is becoming more complex is simply that social units themselves are becoming larger and more confusing to deal with.

Undoubtedly, one of the most difficult and most frustrating aspects of modern life is the almost constant necessity of interacting with such organizations—any kind of multilayered human social unit, where it is difficult to find out who is in charge of what or which office deals with which matters. These are often places in which it is often hard to get a straight answer to a question, let alone any answer at all.

As we all know, such organizations are everywhere. Although there is nothing pernicious about their existence in and of themselves, there may be few among us in the modern world that cannot tell horror stories about the monumental frustrations that we have experienced in trying to deal with such large social units.

There was a movie about a man who tried to deal with a confusing government bureaucracy, going from one office to another without success. Finally, in one office an official put his name in the computer and came up with information saying that the man's name was "Maria" and that he was born in 1840. After the man screamed that this was totally incorrect, the bureaucrat insisted that the computer was always right, and that the citizen must be wrong.

This is undoubtedly one of the hallmarks of modern life in a highly industrialized society. The complete presentation of the whys and the wherefores of this growing tendency to pile on bureaucratic functions on top of another is beyond the limits of this study, rather we will deal with this topic in a subsequent volume. However, there is evidence to support the idea that the growth of proliferating offices within one single bureaucracy is a natural function of biological growth just as one microorganism multiples into many others. If there is any truth to this perception, then this acceleration of size will have to be stopped intentionally not by any innate sense of proportion of the organization itself, as citizens often are tempted to believe.

These perceptions are extremely important, for as these offices grow in size and complexity the average citizen is increasingly outclassed and out "gunned" by them as expressed in the old saying that "you can't beat City Hall."

Such observations not only pertain to the size of many social components of society, they also relate to the concept of law itself. As Philip K. Howard has noted in his important study The *Death of*

*Common Sense: How Law is Suffocating America*, with the increasing number of laws and regulations, "laws often cause us to feel that we are its victims," adding that, "new rules are looked upon with resignation,.... Are we at a point... when law is too dense to be known, too detailed to be sensible, and it is always tripping us up, why should we respect it?"[1]

Once again the alternative to spiraling social mystification, if we may be allowed to use that term, may be in the revival of the preindustrial scale of basic human life on the local community scale rather than on the megacity—the megalopolis or the mega-organization scale. May we have the wisdom to realize this before our social framework gets completely out of hand. Whether we will or not, only time will tell.

As already noted, the coming of the industrial age brought much more than the development of new technologies for production. It changed man's relationships with the land and with his fellow human beings. Increasingly society began to believe that it could control nature and that the possibilities for progress were unlimited. After all it seemed that nature had been tamed and the frontier in America alone had succumbed to the advances of civilization. The gold spike had been driven into the ground and the two sides of the United States—East and West—were finally united by railroad tracks. No longer did ocean-going travelers in the days before the canal have to travel from the East Coast of the United States to the opposite end of the nation by sailing around the bottom of South America. New inventions were radically changing methods of communication, and new medical discoveries were greatly helping mankind in its eternal fight against disease.

The result was that the Industrial Revolution and the related advance in technology and scientific knowledge gave us a new kind of pride in our own achievements and in our potential for unlimited development. But few ideas persist without the modifications brought about by time. One of the hallmarks of our evolution from an industrial to a post-industrial era is the realization that many of these concepts have been overly optimistic. Far from being masters of nature, we are now coming to realize that we are a part of nature just as the plants and animals, and that we must live with and respect nature as a whole. If not, we may not only doom other creatures to extinction, but we ourselves may sooner or later bring about our own demise as a species.

The new tendency toward the greening of our world that we hear so much about nowadays is no fad, rather it represents a basic pole

shift in our perception of our place in our planet. We finally have learned that we cannot use and abuse our natural world, rather we have to respect the delicate balance of nature itself and/or our relationship with existing ecosystems.

We can just hope that we are not too late in assessing the importance of this change in attitude. We are now witnessing the beginning of a radically new attitude that will undoubtedly grow and become much more important as time goes on.

Already much has changed. In the last century, Teddy Roosevelt was the president who began the American national park system. All too often before his time the natural world was considered to be simply an annoyance that had to be tamed or eliminated in the name of "progress." Roosevelt himself was an explorer, a naturalist, and a big game hunter, yet the increasing realization of the finite nature of our natural world has already made African big game hunting appear less of a manly sport as it did in the days of men like Roosevelt himself and Ernest Hemingway. Now large game preserves exist in Africa where animals are protected from illegal hunting, and ecotourism is increasingly replacing hunting expeditions into exotic, far-off lands, and the concern for the protection of natural species of flora and fauna will undoubtedly become more pronounced as time goes on.

The so-called sport of hunting itself with its uneven playing field in which a hunter with a high-powered rifle is matched against a relatively defenseless animal, may well be reexamined and viewed with new eyes in the future as our values change rapidly, perhaps more rapidly than we can even imagine.

## Irrational Man

As William Barrett suggested in his insightful and previously mentioned study *Irrational Man*, a reaction against this prevailing optimism began to set in early in the twentieth century with many avant garde artistic developments such as abstract art and surrealism. Clearly a major shift has continued to develop in much of Western society in general with the coming of the so-called New Age. This new ethos is more significant than it may appear. Although the author has heard some observers of the social scene refer to the New Age movement as simply "a bunch of hippies playing around with crystals," it actually is far more significant than that. It appears to have all the hallmarks of a reaction against the eighteenth-century idea that human nature is

a mechanistic phenomenon and in a solely mechanistic universe there was no room for speculation about what might be considered to be paranormal or supernatural.

It also postulated that man was dominated by reason—an extension of Descartes famous statement that "I think therefore I am" (some wag suggested that he should have said the opposite—"I am therefore I think"— but another observer commented that this would not be correct because it would put, "de cart before de horse")—and therefore, with enough education and intelligence, people would ultimately do what is right.

This mechanistic view or the human personality has stayed with us as a result, and though human beings are of course rational, it appears that a new interest in the paranormal in many new television shows, books, magazines, and movies give evidence of a growing pole shift away from such sheer rationalism. Psychic ability is not necessarily paranormal, as many scientific studies have already shown, although it traditionally has been considered to be so. Because of that fifty years ago the practice of consulting a psychic was, at least in the United States, not a subject for polite conversation, but rather it was considered to be an activity fit for persons who lived or thought on what might have been considered the fringe of society. Nowadays, the practice is much more common and ads for psychic readings appear almost everywhere in our society.

Accordingly new attention is being given also to the intimate connection between physical and mental health. Yet according to previous thinking, to believe that there was a mind-body connection in terms of health would be like saying that the mental attitude of a driver has a relation to the proper functioning of the motor of a car.

Such modern approaches to health care represent a new view of the human person and of the life experience itself, and it is most likely that we will continue to see a growing reappraisal of this rationalistic approach to life in the coming years.

Along with such developments it is logical to believe that the respect for other cultures and other philosophies of life, many of which are products of Third World societies, will also continue to grow and develop.

The need for a basic ideology or a system of belief that can give coherence and meaning to what may appear to be the random events in any person's life is a basic human need that predates the beginning of civilization. Through human history and even before history was ever written, ideologies have usually been religious or political systems or

a combination of both. Of course, a canon of belief can enlighten and improve life, or it can be abused and can lead to destructive behavior as history clearly shows. It can be, but is not necessarily employed in positive ways. Also it may have noble characteristics such as the quality known as patriotism that can be pushed to the extreme of blind or fanatical nationalism by which wars and great destruction have been caused throughout history.

The faith in the power of reason has become the basis for an encompassing belief system called "positivism" that held that scientific methodologies of investigation could and would ultimately solve all the problems of society as proposed by such thinkers as Auguste Comte.

As noted before, the current concerns over the excesses of industrial production and pollution that endanger our planet, not to mention, the dangers of nuclear weapons, both the results of scientific advances, indicate a reversal of such blind optimism about the role of pure reasons in a scientific form to solve all the world's problems.

As Jeffrey Scheuer states in his study, *The Sound Bite Society*, "While all technologies empower someone, they may empower the few to harm exploit and dominate the many. Anyone who thinks technology as such will bring harmony to the world is innocent of the unprecedented misery and mortality it has made possible in the disastrous century now ending."[2]

Nevertheless, in a world, which is in the midst of a gigantic knowledge explosion, is becoming an evermore complicated place to live, at a time when the average person can hardly keep up his awareness of technological advances that are taking place all the time, and in which increased news coverage bombards us with a myriad of political and natural developments, not to say disasters all over the globe on almost a constant basis, the need to make sense of it all increases all the time.

The search for meaning in an evermore complicated world will continue, and it will most likely take new forms as the years march ahead. In the twentieth-century we have seen numerous secular "religions" such as political movements that promised that paradise would not be attained in the next world but in this world when justice and order are established. The fanaticism that often accompanied these and other political movements is what Thomas Merton has described as the true opiate of the masses.

Likewise, in our own day a belief in a positive social goal can be pushed to an extreme that can make its supporters believe that a true paradise will exist in the world itself when the objective of

the movement is totally met. So it may be that some people may be tempted to believe, to take one example among many others, that when the environment returns to its pristine state we will have established a new paradise—a perfect world.

Since the goals of such partisanship are usually noble in themselves, sans the extremism that some followers bring to their cause, which can at times lead to violence, anyone who would raise a voice of caution in light of their extreme views or tactics can easily be branded as an obstructionist who wants the evils that they protest against to continue into the future.

# 13

# Looking Ahead to the Future

The coming of the industrial age brought much more than the development of new technologies for production and mass production itself. As we have noted, it changed man's relationship with the land as well as his relationship with his fellow human beings. Increasingly human society began to believe that it could control nature, and that the possibilities for progress were unlimited. After all it seemed that nature had been tamed and the frontier in America alone had succumbed to the advance of civilization.

As often mentioned in this study, often the result was that the Industrial Revolution and the related advances in technology and science gave us a new kind of pride in our own achievements and in our potential for unlimited development. But few ideas persist without the modifications brought about by time. As noted before, one of the hallmarks of our evolution from an industrial to a post-industrial era is the realization that many of these concepts were overly optimistic. As we have also noted, far from being masters of nature or of our own planet we are now coming to realize that we are a part of nature just as the plants and animals, and we must realize that we are a part of nature also. If not, we may not only doom other creatures to extinction, but we ourselves may sooner or later bring about our own demise as a species.

The new tendency toward the greening of our world that we hear so much about nowadays also represents a basic pole shift in our perception of our place in our planet. We finally have learned that we cannot use and abuse our natural world, rather we have to respect the delicate balance of nature itself and of our relationship with existing ecosystems. We just hope that we are not too late in developing this change in attitude. We are now witnessing the beginning of a

radically new attitude that will undoubtedly grow and become much more important as time goes on.

## In God We Trust (Others Must Pay Cash)

The need for a basic ideology or a system of beliefs that can give coherence and meaning to what may appear to be the random events of any person's life is a basic human need that predates the beginning of civilization. Many people may not realize however that a belief in the power of reason and a blind belief in the progress that can be derived from human reason can become a type of religion in and of itself. At the time of the French Revolution the traditional calendar with its dates of B.C. and A.D. were replaced by what was supposed to be YEAR ONE in the new world in the Age of Reason. Now, however, we have noted that the rationality recommended by the eighteenth-century thinkers appears to be undergoing a major revision as we enter into what may well be a watershed in history.

It has been theorized that even the construction of many modern cities appears to manifest a "reasonable" structure with streets following a logical and geometrically clear pattern. Some older cities such as Washington, D.C., designed by French planner Pierre Dupont still appear to be more circular or at least less logical in their formation (anyone who has tried to drive through the capital city for the first time could easily attest to that). In contrast, it has been stated that the road around castles and palaces in former centuries often took a circular form simply because the nobles that lived there wanted to discourage visitors, and they did not want roads to follow any logical pattern. In fact, the famous French writer Voltaire complained once that Don Quixote thought that inns were palaces, but that he had so many guests at his estate that it seemed that his visitors thought that his castle was an inn.

We may suggest the hypothesis that a questioning of the composition and purpose of urban areas especially gigantic ones like Mexico City, may undergo the scrutiny of revisionist thinking in the future, near or far, as the case may be. A new frame of mind may suggest that cities that now exist as places in which to conduct the business of life may develop into a belief that they should most basically be places in which the quality of human life in the fullest sense is of paramount importance. At present business activities, production, and the providing of goods and services take a place on the top of the

list, as of course they are extremely important. Nevertheless, as areas in which people can meet their complex social needs and can live in harmony with their environment, our urban areas most often come across as giving low priorities to such considerations. Now they are simply places in which people are usually stacked one upon another in high-rise buildings, often with little contact with each other and with the outside world.

Could it be possible that in some remote or even relatively near future other human needs could assume greater recognition as worthy aims of life and of our urban areas worldwide? These might include such considerations as follows:

1. Greater social interaction, and the creation of a real sense of community.
2. Greater emphasis on seeking personal transcendence or the search for a basic meaning in life above and beyond a search for simply the accumulation of material wealth and objects of consumer consumption. In other words, we may come to realize that we don't have to live just to supply the needs of living thus creating a cycle that feeds on itself. Perhaps we can aim at some higher goal.
3. Greater harmony with and understanding of the nature world.

The list is not meant to be all inclusive, but rather a suggestion that alternate values may assume greater importance in a world in which the underpinnings of industrialism undergo a revision. Certainly any reader who wishes to give some thought to the above list can come up with additional suggestions that may be more accurate and more meaningful to one person or another.

It has been stated that modern inflation may have actually begun in the great age of discovery, when European sailors were venturing out to new lands, and in which the colonial powers like England and Spain were enriching their coffers with money derived from their foreign possession. This may indeed have been the case while it is also obvious that the population of the world has been increasing since that time. People need money in order to live, and the law of supply and demand tells us that the more abundant an item is the lesser its value in any market. As a result we do not have to be geniuses in the field of economics to know that the supply of money in circulation is always increasing—it literally becomes a cheaper quantity while inflation is increasing all the time.

Just a quick consideration of an important part of American history will illustrate this reality. Some two hundred years ago the United

States bought approximately one-third of the present United States from France for 15 million dollars.

The hue and cry at the time was that the price was too high, and that the federal government couldn't afford such a huge sum. Today our federal government speaks most often not about millions of dollars in expenditures but billions and even trillions with the word "a quadrillion" having been heard most recently. With inflation and the devaluation of our currency, the price of this Louisiana Purchase might barely be enough money now to put up a large building, let alone purchase a major part of our country.

Although we might be tempted to think of alternative goals for our society as simply an exercise in wishful thinking, we might wish to stop to consider the implications of the current situation regarding the acquisition of goods in our consumer-based society. Thanks to the overabundance of advertising that reaches us at every level of our lives, we naturally become addicted to the desire to have and to buy more and more. At the same time the ability to buy these same goods becomes more difficult with each passing generation simply because of the reality of inflation.

It is for that reason that we frequently read or hear the observation that just in the United States alone the standard of living is going down, and the current generation is finding it more and more difficult to attain the quality of life living that their parents enjoyed.

How could this not be true when a traditional three bedroom house in a good suburb cost around $30,000 forty years ago while in many parts of the country that same house will cost at least ten times as much today? Where does all that extra money come from for the average consumer?

Is not the goal of material acquisitiveness an important quality of our celebrity-worshipping society as has been seen in the television program *Life Styles of the Rich and Famous*? Do we not tend to "worship" those who are rich and famous? Yet no matter how famous these stars might be, would we be equally celebrity-obsessed as a society if we learned that our favorite actor or sports hero was making only hundred dollars a week?

Is not this vicarious identification with what might be called "heroic" personalities an attempt for the average citizen in a mass society of hundreds of millions of people to seek an identification with those few select individuals, as celebrities, who do have a very definable personality, which entails an importance that is immediately recognized by millions.

Indeed it has been said that certain personalities who appear often on television come to be better known and more recognizable to many viewers than some members of their own families.

A number of writers have commented on present-day American society as exhibiting what might be called the culture of narcissism. In his work *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, Christopher Lasch has commented that "the narcissist admires and identifies himself with 'winners' out of his fear of being labeled a loser. He seeks to warm himself in their reflected glow; but his feelings contains a strong admixture of envy."[1]

Social observers frequently comment that it is significant that in the United States when a person meets someone new, often the first question that is asked is, "what type of work do you do?" thus implying that life itself is defined most accurately by the work experience.

Indeed, work is extremely important and is basic to life itself; however, the consequences of such an attitude can be seen perhaps in the prevailing ideas pertaining to large blocks of our society. The elderly, often referred to as senior citizens, often do not enjoy, in a production-based society, the admiration and respect given to persons of a certain age because of their accumulated experience and wisdom as is the case in other types of civilization. On the contrary, since they are considered to be outside of the age of real production, old age is often seen as a time in which to vegetate and simply let the time go by without benefiting from it in any definable way. Only work is worthy of our attention one may be led to believe.

In a nonproduction–based way of thinking, an organization like the Elderhostel Foundation of Boston that organizes study trips to all parts of the country and to many foreign countries for persons of at least sixty years of age, implies a more positive attitude toward the later years. It offers those of a certain age the ability to travel and study at the same time and enjoy cultural presentations without the pressures of study for a recognized degree.

Although they may not say it in so many words, their attitude might be considered as expressing a contrarian view in that the working years are so busy and so full of responsibility that they often deprive people of the time and the opportunity to really enjoy life while the retirement years can and should be the time to learn new skills, to develop intellectual, and cultural awareness and should entail the opportunity to visit new parts of this country and new places in the world.

## Land Ahoy

The statement that the suburbs are the places where the forest is cut down to build houses all in a row, and then after the houses are built on bare land, the builders go ahead and plant a few trees to cover the ground, and then charge the buyer of the house for them, is of course true. It is a very perceptive comment at the same time, since it expresses the almost automatic disregard for the integrity of the land itself.

The concern over the quality of life itself over quantity and production will continue to grow. This will include the increased importance given to the air that we breathe and the very respect for the land itself. Greater concern will be given to the development of a sense of community within our urban living spaces.

Even now there is a growing reaction to the blind construction of strip malls and overlarge shopping centers that have doomed the downtown sections of many cities and towns in the United States. The sameness of these shopping centers, not only in their general appearance but in the stores that inhabit them, contributes to the blandness and dehumanization of modern life. They also tend to wear away at the traditional pride that individuals may have in their particular place of living, their state or the culture of their particular part of the country. Worst of all perhaps, they tend to limit opportunity for countless small business men and women who might wish to compete against these giant complexes and the large chain-retail stores that they contain, but how can they after all?

The great Latin American poet Alfonsina Storni once wrote a work about houses that are all in a row. She claimed in that work that she saw house after house built in identical rows in a rectangular shape, and then as a result she began to cry with a tear that was rectangular. Perhaps there is more wisdom than beauty in this work of literature, since the dehumanized structure of much of our lives today have a much deeper effect on our psyche than is usually imagined or realized.

Nevertheless, a reaction has already begun to appear in the new attempt to revitalize the downtowns of many cities, while there is a reconsideration going on relating to the automatic construction of new urban shopping malls. The very terminology for sprawling urbanization is undergoing a new scrutiny, since formerly, as buildings were being constructed, this was automatically called the development of the land, indicating the blind acceptance of the underlying

assumptions given to us by the Industrial Revolution. Now it is more likely that at least someone will say that the land was already developed by nature in its basic habitat for the flora and fauna that live there.

But this is hardly a question of a change of terminology. It is a basic revision of the perspective on life itself in the realization that human existence is not the only form of life on this planet that has the right to live and to develop what it considered to be an acceptable habitat for itself alone.

## All in the Family

Historians tell us that the family is the basic for human society. This is not to say that it would be a good idea if strong family life formed the basis for strong societies and for strong human connections, rather it is to say that the family IS the basis for society whether we like it or not. Scholars show us innumerable studies that indicate that when the strength of the family, in its power for human bonding as well as in its power for the formation of human life, begins to wane, the very fabric of institutions begin to lose the formative fiber of their being.

The very perceptive psychologist Eric Fromm has noted in his book *The Sane Society* that the consumerist values have taken hold so strongly in modern industrial life that they extend to human relations also. He contends that all too often, in a country like the United States where statistically one half of the marriages end up in divorce, this formerly sacred union has often been transformed into a consumerist transaction where one partner believes that he or she is taking on a commitment to another person as long as it works or as long as it produces positive results.

This is much like the purchase of a car that is owned just as long as it works well. As soon as it develops major problems the owner is tempted to get rid of it. So much for love. So much for commitment.

If we accept the judgment that marriage and family are the basis for society, and if this consumerist model continues to spread, then society itself, especially modern industrialized society, is headed for greater problems as time goes on.

What is the answer to this issue? This study is not intended to be a moralistic treatise that neither tells people what to do nor how to do it, rather it attempts to study already existing social patterns and the implications they may have for all of us—First and Third World alike—in the future.

It is of course impossible to predict whether or not there will be a reaction against what might be called the increasing dehumanization of relationships between people, or whether these be simply bonds of friendships or familial relations. However, history does show that societies can alter the importance they give to responsibility and interpersonal ethics over time as empires and social structures rise and fall.

The only thing that is changeless is change itself, we might be tempted to say. Yet if a reaction against the values of industrialization does increasingly take hold, even as a manifestation of a slow evolution, then to take one example, perhaps individuals may begin to think as agricultural and traditional-based societies have always believed, that one's connection with place, with the land, with tradition, and with family is at least as important as one's affiliation with a commercial entity that likes to move people from place to place like pieces on a chess board.

Likewise, as cities and areas of the country recover from the blandness and uniformity cast upon them by the same gigantic chain businesses and the same type of malls and large shopping centers, along with the same super highways and the same housing developments, we may be less likely to find millions of families that are disjointed by geography.

The loneliness and alienation caused by this pattern of living is now largely considered to be a fact of life. What can be done about it? That is the way life, we usually think. Rarely do we stop to reflect that, yes that is just the way that life is, if we blindly accept the implied values of industrialization that tell us that production is more important than the quality of life in its total human perspective. But if we collectively decide to determine the quality of our lives rather than having it decided for us, things may change.

It has been claimed that it takes a village to raise a child, thus expressing that the social formative powers of the whole community are important in imparting a sense of mature responsibility of right and wrong. What then is the role of community in an age when the very structures of community life are endangered by the increasing size of megacities and of the megalopolis itself?

As we have noted already, in the eastern seaboard of the United States that from New Hampshire down to Virginia and perhaps even down to North Carolina, a traveler often finds one urban or suburban area after another to the point that it is almost impossible on first sight to tell where one community ends and another one begins. It

often appears to be one vast urban conglomeration. As one traveler commented, it is like a vast sprawling urban world in which the names of each place change but the reality in front of our eyes does not.

The sameness of modern industrial life, therefore, exists on many levels from town planning to mass tastes in all the arts, to work itself. Many of the evils of modern life such as boredom, loneliness, and alienation will not go away automatically as social realities change; however, they may become alleviated and much less common. After all, much of the boredom of modern industrial life is the result of the mass production in which a worker repeats the same process on the assembly line without varying his or her tasks.

The resulting loss of pride in the making of a finished product is the inevitable result as was predicted by the English Victorian social critic William Morris. Attempts to revive the pride in one's work have been attempted in Japan with the development of what has been called the Japanese quality circle. In this form of production, a group of workers takes the responsibility for the manufacturing of a commercial item through various stages of its development, rather than taking part in the completion of one isolated task in itself.

Along with this has come the advent of a growing number of cottage industries with handicrafts produced by an individual on a very limited scale that give evidence of considerable personal skill on the part of the creator rather than on the sophistication of machinery alone.

A growing cottage industry movement in the United States and in other countries marks a greatly increased interest in local and handmade crafts. As a recent study entitled *The Cottage Industry in the 21st Century and the Internet: A Case Study* states that the advent of the internet has played a major role in permitting a great increase in cottage and local industries all over the world.[2]

A reaction has already begun to develop against the standardization of life that has heretofore held sway over not only production but lifestyles. The so called youth culture or what is often called the counterculture is a very real example of the growing desperation over the sameness of industrialized life and the desire for a renewed identity. Formerly, all too often the statement of European social commentator Richard Muller-Freienfels was right on target when he stated that "Quantity in America, is not a fact, as with us; it is a value. To say that something is large, massive, gigantic is in America not a mere statement of fact, but the highest commendation.... The mathematization and technicalization of life is connected inextricably with a further trait of Americanism—the standardization of life."[3]

At the same time, there now exists a renewed interest in storytelling or the oral transmission of stories outside of the electronic media. Commenting on the storytelling movement in the United States, Jo Radner states that the young storytelling movement in the United States is already thirty years old, and it has already made substantial progress. It is worthy of note that the University of Glamorgan in the United Kingdom has created a George Ewart Evans Center for Storytelling.[4]

At the same time, greater attention has been given in recent times to regional musical styles such as Cajun and Tex Mex music and the blues. Country and Western music itself, which formerly was largely limited to an audience representing something of a musical subcultures from a limited geographical area of the United States, has been commercialized in the extreme to become a phenomenon well in the mainstream of American music.

In the arena of literary styles, cowboy poetry has been said to be the best-selling aspect of contemporary American verse, while one student of this type of literary expression referred to a colleague as the finest of the cowboy poets or the "poet lariat."

It is most likely that the two opposing tendencies—the mass production of tastes in all these fields will continue to vie with the growing interest in localized and non mass-produced products and artistic styles.

## Societies of Being Vs. Becoming

A common belief in the Western world and in the First World specifically is that the desire to make more money and to attain more material possessions is basic to human nature. Of course, the need and desire to provide for the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter are important for all human beings. However, materialism and the belief that ultimate fulfillment depends on the amount of money and the amount of possessions that one accumulates may be to a large extent learned traits, although this might seem to be an absurd concept at face value.

Surely we might object that everybody wants to get rich and every human being wants to accumulate more money. Certainly the attainment of a comfortable lifestyle is a fine objective for both an individual and for a society as a whole, and these observations are never meant to be a blind criticism of materialism. Certainly this author

believes that it would be highly hypocritical of him to make any such negative comments. After all he is aware that as he is writing these words by computer, this is one of the advances of modern technology, which are a materialistic benefit to countless people.

What many citizens in the Third World countries claim is that yes, materialism is as prevalent as it is in the First World: however, it is often a question of degree. They say, yes, we do want to get rich but that desire is often balanced by the importance that we give to cultural experiences and the association with friends and family that provide another type of richness in our lives, whereas in much of the First World the desire for material riches can be so blind that it outstrips the importance that many people give to these human values.

This may or may not be true depending on our point of view; however, there may also be a more basic distinction between materialist and not so materialist societies, often expressed as the distinction between societies of being versus societies of becoming.

These paradigms are well expressed by Erich Fromm in his book *To Have Or to Be?* where he delineates the differences between acquisitive or materialist societies and those that are mostly concerned with simply meeting the basic needs of life. The materialist society is always concerned with change and development, not only financial, but also the purchase of a bigger house or a bigger car and other material changes, while more traditional-based societies see life as a continuum whereby what works and meets basic human needs does not necessarily have to be changed or modified. The concept of keeping with the Joneses is basically unknown.

It may be hard for inhabitants of the First World to believe that such patterns of life actually exist today, not just in the Stone Age; however, the following story that is based on fact, illustrates that this manner of looking at life can and does exist. This story and others like it have been repeated in many parts of our globe.

It has been said that an American company employing local workers in another part of the world decided to give all their employees a 10 percent raise as of a certain Friday afternoon. The following Monday company officials were amazed to find that not one of their workers came to work. On checking with them they found that the employees themselves were amazed when they were asked why they did not report for work. After all, they said, since you are paying us more, all we have to do to make what we need to live is work only

four days a week, not five. What would be the purpose of making more money? We don't need it.

This story is by no means unique, rather it is and has been repeated in many areas of the world since time immemorial up to this day.

And so with the myopia of our consumer society, business persons of the First World have approached small-time manufacturers of goods in the Third World about expanding their production to meet very large orders that could make these artisans a great deal of money. Assuming the materialist mentality of their own societies they believe that all people all over the world would jump at such a possibility only to find in many cases that producers of limited numbers of goods actually would prefer to stay small. They are not necessarily looking for the big bucks.

## East Meets West

In the last fifty years, a great expansion in the interest in many aspects of oriental culture has occurred in the United States and in the Western world in general. In that time martial arts have grown immensely in popularity along with a much greater interest in oriental methods of healing including acupuncture, acupressure, and meditation have developed as well as much greater respect for the religion and the philosophic wisdom of the Orient.

It may be likely that a growing respect and appreciation of the value of a more stable approach to the living experience such as found in some Oriental cultures of being rather than those of becoming may also grow in popularity in the West in the coming years as an example of a post-industrial ethos.

This may indeed be the case; however, Erich Fromm states wisely: "The difference between being and having is not essentially that between East and West. The difference is rather between a society centered around persons and one centered around things. The having orientation is characteristic of Western industrial society.... Modern Man cannot understand the spirit of a society that is not centered in property and greed."[5]

Perhaps even more importantly, Fromm goes on to say in his same study that a revision in industrialized thinking may have to occur, since we appear to be living in the age in which the "dreams" of the industrialism appear to be coming to an end. The promise of unending progress, technological development, of complete mastery over nature, and an ever-increasing material possession for an even greater

number of people may be ending; and modern industrialized society may well have to adopt a different view of its place in the world.

No longer can the former colonialist powers feel smug in their assumed superiority to alternate and nonmaterialist views of the living experience. This was the same blind arrogance that made European settlers in the United States try to wipe out indigenous Indian natives and sometimes try to make them wear European clothes so that they might be "civilized." As Brazilian poet Osvaldo de Andrade commented, the Portuguese colonists tried to make Brazilians wear European clothes when they came to the new world, but it might have been much better if the Indians tried to make the European abandon their continental dress and look just like the Indians.

This was the same arrogance that made imperialist nations believe that countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America could not and should not govern themselves. The people that lived there would become civilized to the degree that they adopted the religions of the European colonizers, that they began to speak European languages, and studied in European-style schools.

As we come to see what Fromm and others call the end of this industrialized dream, we are experiencing a major reversal of a mentality, emerging now from a culture and a mind-set that has in large part formed the modern world.

# Conclusion

Monday morning quarterbacking is an easy exercise. It does not take great ability to see after the fact what should have taken place. Another way to put it is that hindsight is better than foresight. Both statements express an obvious truth. Before the advent of airplanes, futurists of the 1800s thought that existing balloon travel might simply be developed with the production of bigger and better balloons. It was hard to foresee the development brought on by the Wright brothers with their flight at Kitty Hawk in North Carolina.

So it is that as we often look forward toward the future, and being bereft of clairvoyant ability, we imagine that the problems and developments of our contemporary society will simply continue to exist, although perhaps in modern visible and dramatic forms. This may be true of course; yet we, like out ancestors, cannot have foreknowledge of inventions and technologies as well as world events that may change our existence in some dramatic and completely unforeseen ways.

In the optimism of Western society, we instinctively believe that the future will be brighter with an increasing standard of living brought on by bigger and better technology. An alternate and extremely provocative point of view has been put forth by Jeremy Rifkin in his brilliant book *Entropy* in which he claims that historical epochs change not so much by progress and new technologies as much as by the exhaustion of resources at the end of an era. There may be a great deal of truth in this claim; however, any one explanation of historical change must probably include a combination of reasons for any transformation of the patterns of life.

In our present era, we are experiencing a tremendous birth of new technologies that appear to forecast an almost unlimited horizon for human inventiveness, yet at the same time we are realizing more than ever that our natural resources, especially oil, exist in purely finite

quantities. As Jeremy Rifkin also states in his book, *Algeny,* "The end of the era of fossil fuels presages the end of the Industrial Age.... The great Industrial Age is already passing from view."[1]

Perhaps most significant in terms of the present study, we have considered how the Industrial Revolution has brought with it vast changes in human society while many of these alterations have brought with them new assumptions about what life is and should be. It is not the thesis of this study that industrialization is not increasing and spreading throughout the world, but rather that the philosophical roots of the industrial movement, many of them implied rather than stated as truisms, are and will increasingly be subject to critical revision in today's world and in the years to come.

Value systems that have come about over the past two hundreds years have established themselves to the point that they are largely taken for granted in highly industrialized nations, as to be considered as a given, while we often forget that there may be alternative ways of organizing ourselves, our living spaces, and our societies.

If we believe that we are at the beginning of a new age it is important that we look at the evidence as presented here in order to make up our minds rather than blindly accepting stereotypical perceptions. We may be heading toward the end of an era that believes that production is the most important by-product of the living experience. We may be in a time that is questioning more and more the optimism that claims that we are getting bigger and better with each passing day, and that our way of life has to be imitated all over the world in order for us to consider so-called some other parts of our globe as enlightened or progressive.

We are entering a time when the rationalistic optimism of the thinkers of another day is merging with new social viewpoints. Along with these changes we are experiencing a growing concern over our environment. This may well bring with it a new evaluation of not only nature itself, but the composition of our cities, not simply as the proper areas for production and human services, but we may focus on them increasingly as places in which human beings live so that the quality of life may become a much greater consideration in the planning of urban areas.

It is likely that the small is beautiful movement as described in such works already mentioned as *Small is Beautiful* and Kirkpatrick Sale's book *Human Scale* will increasingly appear to be prophetic.[2] The subtitle of the first mentioned volume may turn out to be more important than it may appear at first glance—*Economics As If People Mattered*.

At present the ideal of material progress with its religion of rapidity, ease, and vastness of production is a primary value in the design of human habitat. Even much of the modern architecture of the twentieth century, influenced as it has been by the Cubist art movement, gives obvious preference for simple geometric shapes with little or no additional ornamentation as was much more common in the nineteenth century. It may not be an exaggeration to state that the curve was dominant in furnishings and in architecture in the nineteenth century, while the straight line came to dominate design in the twentieth century. These new styles may be seen as being sleek and stylish, but with a different optical lens they can be also seen as being marked by a great poverty of design, depending on one's artistic taste.

In any case the obvious result has been the construction of buildings that have been put up as rapidly as possible in as cost-efficient a way as possible. Simplicity itself has been the watchword of the twentieth century in many aspects of life from the styles of furniture and architecture, to fashion and literary style, but not to the patterns of life itself in industrial society. For vast numbers of people life has become much more stressful and much more complicated. Not only has modern architecture placed itself at the pinnacle of urban design often without leaving room for a questioning of its primacy especially in the second half of the past century; its establishment has also often created a very jarring and disturbing contrast with adjacent structures often reflecting building styles of past eras that often reflected a vastly different palette of tastes.

Along with our pride in our development of new technologies we may also consider taking a long and comprehensive view to realize that to a large degree our inventions have controlled us rather than the other way around. We generally have not taken the effort to fit new inventions into what we may believe is a proper lifestyle, rather we have allowed our lifestyles to be altered, and often changed very radically, by new technologies without giving the matter much thought.

Just a consideration of the impact of the automobile is a case in point. The increased mobility brought about by the "horseless carriage" has altered the shape of our urban areas often breaking up a preexisting sense of community.

It has changed our landscape with the addition of massive and complex highway systems, and it has increasingly "fueled" our fears for the future of the world's environment as well. The automobile is of course a great boon to mankind in giving us greater and more accessible mobility; but the social changes that have occurred at the time

when cars appeared on the social scene were largely unforeseen, since we generally give little attention to the holistic impact of new inventions on human life. We show little or no concern as to how they may change our lives not only from a technical but also from the point of view of the basic patterns of life.

Will they allow us to communicate more easily? Will they allow us to travel more quickly? Perhaps this is all well and good, but will new technologies also separate people from one another? Will they tend to create alienation and confusion, or will they enable us to increasingly make sense of the mass of information and the commercial barrage of advertisements that characterize our lives today?

For example, the invention of the cell phone obviously encourages large numbers of people to spend much more time talking to others by phone than was the case before. Will this have any overall impact on the quality of human communication? Only time will tell. On a biological level some concerns have already been raised about possible health dangers related to the use and the overuse of such devices. Are such concerns grounded in reality or are they just scare tactics? Most likely we will only know in time. Our new drugs are often composed on a technological level, in many cases taking substances that are found in nature, which can be bought at nominal prices in some parts of the world. Drug companies add substances with names nobody can pronounce, then call it their drug, and then charge astronomical prices for the "new" substance. It is great business, and our pharmaceutical companies are some of the most profitable entities in our society.

We do not give much thought to the increasing rapidity of change and to the increasing complication of life itself. Will new developments loosen human bonds, and will they tend to quicken the pace of daily life until it achieves such a maddening rhythm that stress and mental aberrations become more rampant than ever?

This is neither to suggest that a halt, nor a ban be put on certain types of mechanical development, but rather that we consider more encompassing human factors in the impact of new technologies and of technology in general, least we run the risk of creating an overwhelmingly dehumanization of our mechanized society.

If we give increasing attention to developing a total view of the quality of life we may ironically go backward to seek inspiration from indigenous societies such as are found in the Third World. As we go forward we would do well to consider that the individualism, which

is a basic part of life in the First World, especially the United States, is a basic feature of urban modern life.

As the values systems of industrialism have come to be considered as the norm, this individualism itself, now seen as completely inescapable in many First World cultures, may begin to appear for what it really is—very radical in terms of history itself.

This is also true of the radical secularization of much of the First World, especially perhaps on the part of young people who have been brought up by thousands of commercial advertisements that tell us over and over again that happiness consists in purchasing a certain brand of new car or by having fewer cavities by using a certain tooth paste. The smiles on the faces of the actors who broadcast these messages are after all broader and more dramatic than most of the other smiles that we encounter in our own daily life, so we often believe that they must be doing something right.

Nevertheless, human life has developed over countless millenniums on the basis of extended family life, clans, and tribal societies. Fred Flintstone knew his neighbors well as do indigenous people in the so-called Third World sections of our world. Could they be leading the way for a new modality of life? If so then this may have to entail a reconsideration of the wisdom of tribal groups that still live largely outside the perimeters of industrialized society.

Much of our life in the modern era is the product of our determination to eschew basic historical patterns of life and modernize or industrialize our lives to make them fit the patters of production, mass living patterns, and hyperactivity themselves. This departure from basic scheme of living is true on a number of different levels.

As time goes on, more and more information is gained about the value of returning to natural and organically grown goods while health experts continually warn us about our tendency to depend on manufactured foods with the additives and preservatives that they often contain, not to speak about large doses of sugar and salt among other ingredients.

As health researchers claim in their book *The Paleolithic Prescription: A Program of Diet & Exercise and a Design for Living*, that the human body has developed after thousands if not millions of years on the basis of a natural and comparatively limited diet, and our modern tendency to ask that same body to adopt rather arbitrarily and quickly to a more modern, often manufactured diet, brings with it, its own special dangers.

This volume notes that the Paleolithic diet contained five times less salt than the average modern diet in industrialized societies, and it states that the people of those remote times included much more fiber and complex carbohydrates in their food than we do today.

This enlightening study also states that the background noise of daily living was far less than it is today in our urbanized world to the point that experts in the field of hearing believe that the noise, often to the degree of what might be considered noise pollution, accounts for much hearing loss among the elderly in today's world.[3]

Again, we must come back to our consideration of the basic wisdom of many Third World societies. Perhaps we should wonder if in terms of the traditional pride of the First World in its condescending attitudes to much of the rest of the planet, we do not have a situation in which the tail is wagging the dog.

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