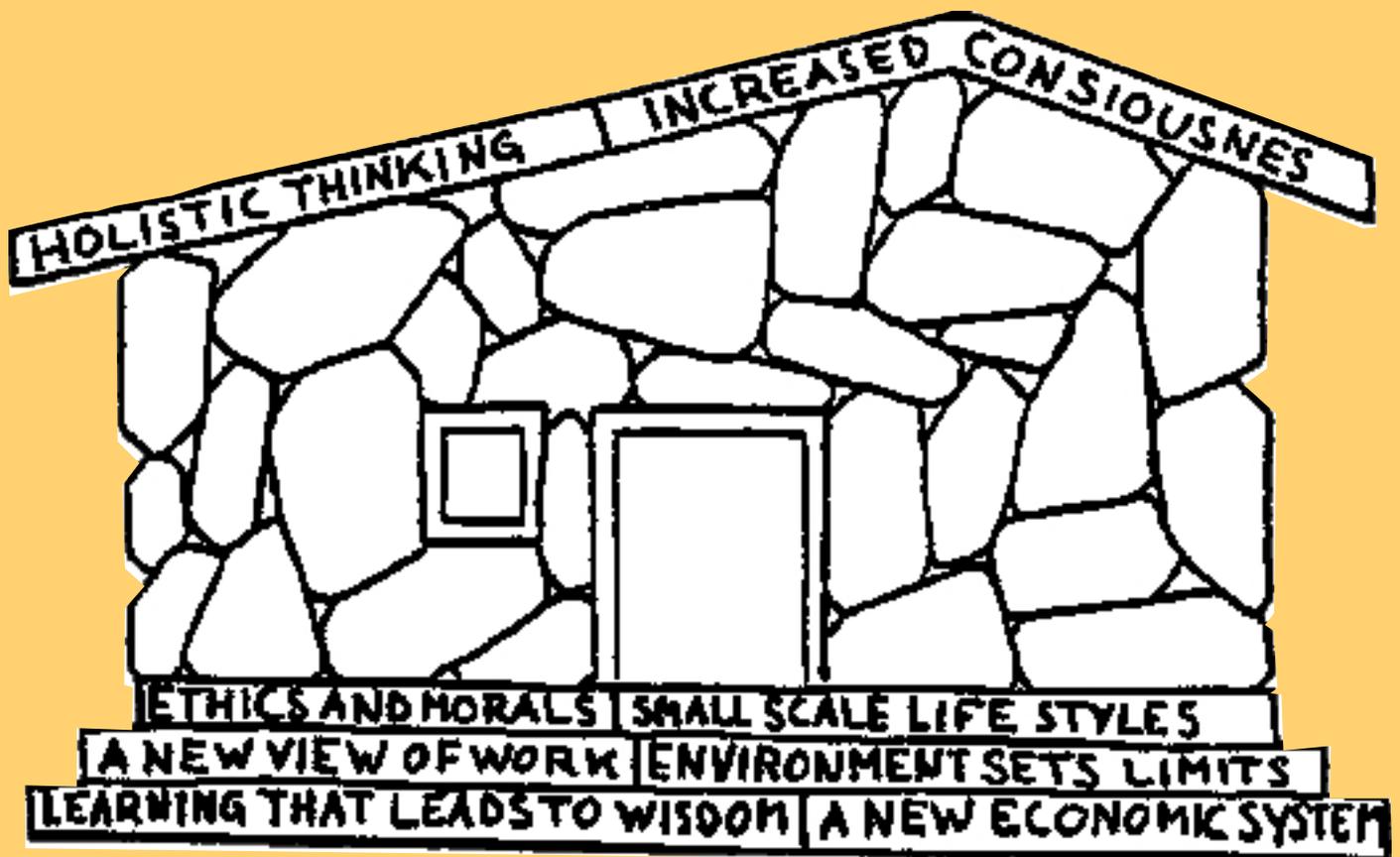


A TALE OF THE FUTURE



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The Vision Center for Futures Creation

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A Vision of a Desired Future Society

This book is a story of the future played out in Sweden in the year 2021. The story is based on a vision of the future that a group of young adults have created in a project called “Framtidsbygget”, Building the Future.

The reader gets to follow a number of people during several days of their lives. Through the story, the reader gets an insight into how society looks; how they live, work, and communicate with each other. The story includes both a calm stroll through the characters daily activities and the excitement of several dramatic episodes.

The young people chose to present their vision in the form of a story in the hope that their message would be more accessible to the general public, compared with a vision presented as an everyday report. It should be said that in using the idea of writing the material in a novel like style did not mean that they meant to author a novel. Rather, the book should be read as a contribution to town meeting, activist or, community planning discussions when discussing desirable futures. Futures stories of this type make up their own field of literature, at least internationally.

The reader should not expect a highly technical, science fiction society, in line with many futures films and stories that have been produced during the latest several hundred years. In the first place, we aren't talking about the far future, but the nearer future. In the second place Future Builders work is more about values, social changes and human relations than about technical victories. Actually, they carefully monitored technical development and did special studies on, for example, material techniques, transportation, energy technology and information technology, but the weight of their work was on social innovations.

The project participants put in a lot of time studying the world around them from many different aspects, they have identified trends and analyzed them. Out of these analyses and with the help of other futures studies tools, for example scenario technique, they have then visualized pictures of a society where most of the conditions they saw as unjust have been eliminated. The result has been a type of settlement with our present society, at the same time it is a hope giving and creative alternative to the present, in the form of a society that is both sustainable and a positive outlook on life.

For an experienced critic of society it might be easy to reject such a vision of a desired future as a naive utopia and point to similar dreams of the future that have come from long ago. We think that this says something important about people and their eternal longing to build heaven on earth. Maybe there is a natural instinct in us to search for a deeper spirit of community with each other and live in harmony with our selves and nature, even if we today often work against that instinct.

Now, in all honesty, we admit that not all the Future Builders were equally optimistic and that there were other views about the story. Some felt that in order to be realistic, the book should contain more of traces of the negative developments that the Future Builders saw in their environmental scanning. Since the task was to create a vision, a picture of the future that is worth fighting for, the result has been a description of a society that contains quite a lot of what we today call quality of life. For all that, the road is lined with dramatic occurrences.

We project leaders think that it is refreshing that most of these young people, in spite of everything maintain a belief in the idea that it is possible to create a better society, if only more people take the time to think and reflect and listen to their inner voice. This is how Future Builders expressed their view of the powers in a vision:

“ All creation starts with a vision. Trying to solve problems and undo mistakes can sometimes take an overly large part of both our thoughts and our actions. A part of the problem is those large black holes. They draw and consume all human energy to themselves. People that empty out their energy on such problems, experience, in the end, burnout. If we always work with such problems, the risk is big that we only see problems and never have time over to creating the type of society we would like to have. So, those who want to work for their ideas must create mental pictures, or visions that take us to new goals and act as a driving power. The inner pictures we create in this way become inspiring instead of

depressing.

One only starts with the vision and then moves into something concrete. Our visions drive our actions and our choices in the present. In that way it is the future which decides, not the opposite, as we are used to thinking.

Our way toward the future can be compared with a canoe traveler on an irregular river going down to the sea. The river has provided the conditions and the direction. The canoeist knows where he is going but he has to overcome the rapids, falls and other difficulties that can pop up along the way. It is then involvement, knowledge, and foresight that decides how quickly and propitiously we reach the goal we have placed in front of us.

Everyone thinking about the future is placed before the apparent paradoxical contradiction that no sure knowledge can forecast the future, at the same time, everything that happens in the present is dependent on more or less clear pictures of the future. The need for futures studies has increased rather than decreased due to the increased complexity of society. It is also necessary to have conceptions about the future in spite of the fact that it is actually impossible to anticipate it.”

THE PROJECT “BUILDING THE FUTURE”

Building the Future was a pilot project in Future Studies that ran in Gothenburg during the period between the 10th of January, 1994 to the 30th of June 1995, with unemployed youth as participants. The point of departure for the project was that Futures Studies can help in creating an active relationship in participants to, both their own and others future.

The young adults had in the beginning the task of building a vision the future of work and jobs. The basic idea was that the participants would make a contribution to the community, while at the same time they developed their knowledge of themselves, their general knowledge base, their networks and most important their social competence.

The participants worked deeply, in the beginning, with their values, their consciousness and their innermost dreams about the future and discovered their own potential. From that platform they studied the world around them by performing studies in eighteen specially chosen areas. They read newspapers, magazines and books, watched TV and listened to the radio, did interviews and made educational visits, created questionnaires and dug in data bases, (some of which was done on Internet), in order to build an understanding of where development was headed.

After that, they examined the material, analyzed, discussed, valued and took positions for or against different paths of development. In the end they wrote alternative scenarios and agreed on a vision that, instead for describing the future of work life and jobs, described the sustainable society where they would like to live in 25 years. They had actually, during the life of the project come to the point that in the future one will not be able to separate work life from the rest of live. Everything hangs together and what it is about in the long run is how one uses his/her time.

Through the fact that the young people got to work with a project that is of use to the community and also to spread their message to decision makers and others on the future of work life, many of them have developed into change agents and community debaters.

The project won a prize as “The Year’s Personnel Visionaries” in 1994. Several of the youth became, even after the project, fluent, sought after lecturers and about half of them have been employed for short and long assignments by The Swedish Institute for Futures Studies under Bi Puranen.

(For more details on the project “Building the Future” please see the project description in the Appendix of this book.)

THE WRITING PROCESS

The book is divided into two parts. The first part is partially about a middle aged woman whose name is Sara, partly about a young man who’s name is Axel. The scene is Sweden in the year 2021. Axel and Sara live in the same city and have a project together, that is to plan and carry out a seminar series.

The other part is built on a report which came from group work that is done in this series. The participants in the seminar series have studied the remains of the writings and notes left by the project “Building the Future” and comment on the societal vision the participants created in the middle of the 1990’s and compare it with the community they themselves live in.

The Appendix contains a detailed project description of Framtidsbygget “Building the Future”, and a presentation of the participants.

The actual process of developing a final manuscript for the book has been long and complicated. We realized at an early stage that 20 people could hardly author a book together. Instead, two of the projects best writers, Maria van der Wiej and Johannes Svensson, got the task of writing their own stories, one for each of the main characters, that lived in the 2020’s. It is these two stories that became the beginning of the story of Sara and Axel. Johannes and Maria have also been responsible for the actual framework in the story, but the rest of the Future Builders have (in different contributed ways) to the concept.

The description of the community that Axel and Sara live in is accordingly, the result of a thorough information collection, information gleaned from tons of books, hundreds of discussions, visualizations and scenario writings that the Future Builders contributed during the project.

The next step in the writing process was that we left the texts to the multi-talented Kjell Scherlund, whose gift for language we very much appreciated. Kjell has followed Building the Future with interest as an external person and a sympathizer in many ways with the participants message. He was given the assignment to first read all the Future Builder’s texts and then meet with the young people in groups and individually for discussions and interviews. After that he has functioned as a representative voice for the participants thoughts and ideas. Kjell has done a fantastic job by working over the material and broadening the basic story and by pulling together many loose texts into a coherent story in Part II.

In the end, the finishing of this book has been our job as Project Leaders. We have taken responsibility for, with the groundwork we have had available, to try to create a readable and interesting book that does justice to the work that the Future Builders put into the project. We have, consequently, taken upon ourselves the task of working over the manuscript both when it comes to content and language. We have written the text to Parts II and III and sent out the results of our work to the participants for comments several times. In summary, we can, without exaggeration, state that this book has truly been the work of a team.

Christel Nilsson

Natalie Dian

THE VISION CENTER FOR FUTURES CREATION
Project Leaders and the creators of Framtidsbygget

PART I

A Tale of the Future

1. Looking back at the Turning Point

*The scene: A beautiful woodlands area a number of miles away from a large city. It is night and dark. A "car" drives slowly on a road that leads to an isolated cabin up on a mountain. The year is 2021.
Lead character: Sara.*

Sara is driving the Road Frog slowly up the hill. It has become completely dark during her journey. She cannot see further than a road sign a few meters ahead thoughtfully advising of the next turn. The air is dense and she has a mild headache. A thunderstorm is on its way.

She is almost there. She has great respect for this part of the road. She keeps one eye on the rise to the left and one eye on the steep drop on the right. Her attention is fully focused. Now and then she hears a swishing sound beside her right leg and knee. It is the road sensors warning her when she is too close on the right edge of the road.

She is now close to the cabin on the mountain. She drives the last stretch of the road faster and parks as close as possible to the cabin. Just as the Frog opens its exit ramp and she puts her foot on the ground there is a loud crack of thunder. She has arrived at the cabin the second before the storm breaks.

She gathers some of the bags from the back seat of the road frog and runs up the steps. She quickly unlocks the door and throws it shut behind her. The rain comes suddenly in a powerful surge and pounds on the shingles on the roof. There is another loud crack of thunder. The echo reverberates long and powerfully between the walls of the valley. Sara feels a primitive wave of fear run through her body.

She makes a quick round about the house grabbing a couple of blankets on the way. They land on the armchair by the window. She snaps up some dried fruit and a bag of nuts and brings them to the armchair. Curled up, with one end of a blanket tucked around her feet and the other pulled up to her nose, she settles in to wait out the storm.

Sara loses herself in thought:

How amazing that these blankets smell the same as they did in my childhood! Despite the fact that I have washed them so many times. They aren't especially beautiful and have gotten burlled over the years; They must be made of some synthetic mix. But they are whole and warm so they will still do. Besides they go well with all the other odds and ends in this house, inherited from my childhood home.

**"I can imagine that it must be
like being ahead in a game of Monopoly when
someone wants to change the rules."**

How a smell can awaken so many memories! It almost feels as if I were back in the 1970s, when I was a little girl. But so much has changed since then. A lot.. Sometimes I have actually thought that the changes have been a bit too much and most of them have been for the better. Sure life on earth is better today. No doubt a lot better. And not only for us in Europe but also for most of the earth's people.

If there is something I sometimes miss, it's that feeling of security that I experienced when I was young. Even if that feeling was illusory. I counted on tomorrow to be just about the same as yesterday, that everything would move along without any major changes. It made me feel secure.

But I am not an opponent of change, on the contrary. I know that it was the inertia in the old industrial society that for many years was one of the greatest threats to our existence. It must have been difficult, of course, for the people that had successfully established themselves in society, such as my own parents, to understand that the rules had to be changed. I can imagine that it must be like being ahead in a game of Monopoly when someone wants to change the rules. No, for those who had good positions it must have been important that the backbones of society remained the same. That the rules didn't change in the middle of the game.

At the same time, I can understand more easily the ones who wanted to change the old game. In that game the

**“The development of consciousness!
It took off with an incredible speed when we
abandoned the focus on the material..”**

goal was the so called “material security“. It boiled down to building a world from mainly physical attributes. People engaged their thoughts with material security without a comprehensive view of the whole system. I suppose that's why the thinking of the old time had that heavy air around it. And here I am among all the odds and ends from the 20th century and I almost miss that “secure“ inertia!

Today I can't find anybody with “material security“ as their primary goal, even if I look with a magnifying glass. Today development and joy of life is what counts. Most people want to be present, conscious, and genuine.

The development of consciousness! It took off with an incredible speed when we abandoned the focus on the material. It really started with my generation. Suddenly we were masses of young people who valued experiences above all else. We were faster and more flexible in our thinking. Maybe because experiences aren't physical and inert. Experiences can't be locked in or guarded. They are fleeting and unpredictable, which means that your thinking has to be fast if you want to be a part of it.

In our generation we continued our parents' busy lifestyles. We rushed about just the way they did, except we were chasing experiences rather than things. But today this has changed. Our generation has grown a lot, and we have stopped the chasing. Over time we have discovered that rushing is a hindrance rather than a help for the experiences of life. We have discovered that we can make more things happen when we slow down and take the time to give something our attention. However small it is.

A couple of quick cracks of thunder and Sara's heart jumps. She pulls up the blanket a bit further over her nose. She realizes that she is tired but she can't sleep. She might as well sit here and meditate.

She remembers the feeling she had when she came up here to the cabin the first time, many years ago. She had been out in nature before but never in a place so peaceful and quiet. She felt as if the wind had stopped the rustling of the leaves in the trees, the animals had stopped breathing, and the currents in the river refused to show themselves on the surface of the water.

This is how it must be to step right into paradise, she had thought. When she had spent a moment sitting on a rock to take in the scenery, she had noticed that the valley really wasn't quiet at all. The quietness was instead a contrast to the city noise she had just left. Back then, the city emitted a constant deep hum, like a double-bass. Out here that sound was missing.

The more time she took to listen, the more nature seemed to want to share its secrets. Instead of silence and stillness she could see a slew of different types of life. Since that time she had many times been dumbfounded when she came to Silver Valley. Each time she experiences the fantastic adventures of nature in new ways. She discovers things that are new to her. Not only as far as nature goes, but also things about herself.

Today Sara has come for a special reason. In a few weeks a seminar series on the Knowledge Net will begin, and Sara is responsible for its content. She is planning to use her time here to prepare. Sara considers herself a self-learned person, not without a certain pride. She grew up in the 1970s and 1980s and is part of the many people from the old school system that had difficulties absorbing anything useful during her youth. She suffered from school fatigue and cut class frequently.

Once out of school Sara was hit by a consuming interest for global issues and societal development. She began to study on

her own. She started to keep a close watch on her favorite issues in every conceivable way; in carefully selected TV shows, on the radio, in movies, and in all types of newspapers. She learned to make discoveries by observing various everyday events. One of the things she observed was the use of language. She found it especially educational to see how the language changed over the years. She thought it was fun to keep a watch on issues like fashion, entertainment, layout and design, and men's and women's patterns of socializing inside and outside of couples' relationships. She was looking everywhere for signs, searching for changes, and asking herself how these changes related to the larger process of change that mankind was undergoing.

One issue interested her in particular. It had to do with mankind's development towards a world in balance; man for earth - pro tellus - as it was generally called.

In this way she had built a rather cohesive and useful perspective over the years, without ever thinking of the process as "education". She simply had a consuming interest. Today Sara is an appreciated resource and sounding board on the Knowledge Net, where she works as a knowledge guide. She works both with advanced studies in thought models of the past and with future studies. Together with other researchers and knowledge brokers on the Knowledge Net, she satisfies the public's widespread need for context and for an overview of all the information that's being disseminated at an incredible and increasingly fast pace. She has now come to the cabin in the mountains for some peace and quiet. She is to spend her precious time alone to contemplate the complex weave of issues that is to be covered in this fall's seminar series.

That was some thundering introduction to her quiet and peaceful stay! Outside the rain is hitting the ground with a force that makes the water bounce high in the puddles and the cracks of thunder keep breaking the night at short intervals. The lightning bolts are sharp and colorful.

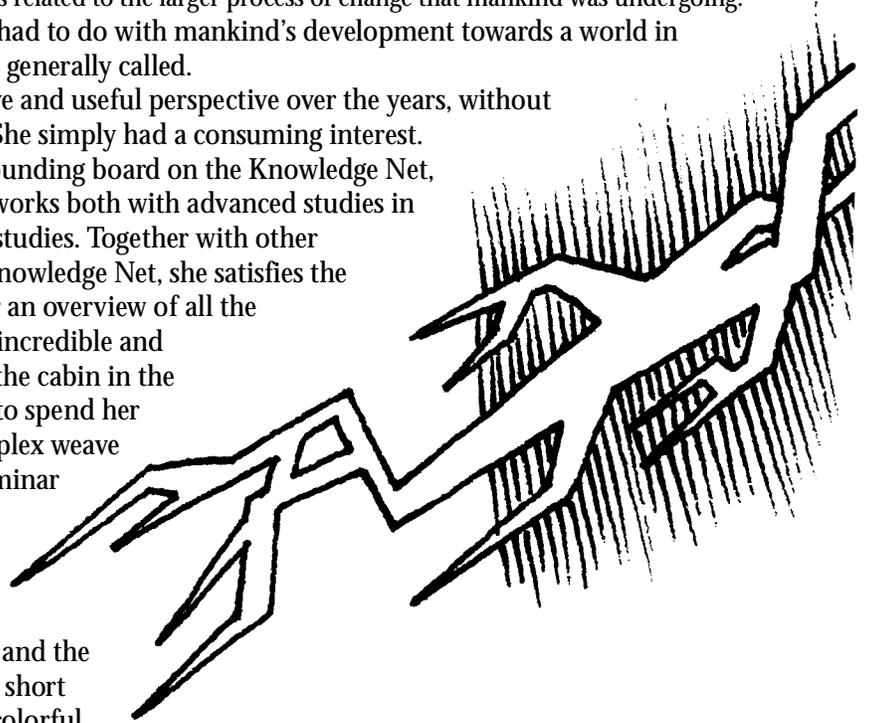
The whole thing resembles a well orchestrated performance by a skilled pyrotechnical engineer, except even more beautiful. Sara feels small:

How come that we humans, for so long, felt so invincible and so complete in our belief that we run this earth? Confronted with the powers of nature, there is so little we have any say about!

When I close my eyes I can see earth, with its close interaction with the biosphere, as a living organism interacting with other organisms. But she is still a suffering organism - our dear Mother Earth. Turning back the processes of destruction that began during the 20th century has been an intensive workload during the first two decades of this century. For almost twenty years now, people have devoted themselves to this work, and the recovery of the Earth has begun. But traces of mankind's ravages still abound. She is not yet quite strong - our dear Mother Earth.

“More and more people were telling themselves that this was the right moment, as we put a new digit to time, to create a new world.”

The last years of the 20th century and the first few years of the 21st century were the most dramatic times I have ever witnessed. For several years in a row the miserable condition of the Earth was the hottest political issue. It seemed natural to carry on this debate as we were moving into a new millennium. More and more people were



telling themselves that this was the right moment, as we put a new digit to time, to create a new world. The closer we got to the magic number 2000, the more solemnly, consciously, and focused people looked at the issues of earth and its survival.

But the growing consciousness wasn't solely derived from the psychology of numbers. At the end of the 20th century there were also an abundance of scientific reports, describing how critical the condition of the earth really was. Scientists were warning, ever more seriously, and with growing emphasis and concern, of what was about to happen. Disasters in the areas that had been hit the worst by the thinning of the ozone layer contributed to the global awakening. So did the descriptions of wars in areas with severe drought. Many people got a confirmation of their feelings in black and white that mankind was about to go over a cliff in a state of galloping collective madness.

Then - when we landed in the 21st century and the earth had defied many madcaps' prophecies by still not having succumbed - we realized it was time to stop talking about the dangers and start taking action. Forces to rebuild the earth appeared like mushrooms out of the ground. For mankind it was a matter of survival or extinction as a species. I am still rapturous when I think of the dormant human power to accomplish great deeds that surfaced during the Transition. There was so much good and constructive knowledge!

In a way, looking back at that time, it seems like a sort of dawning of history. It was as if mankind was released from a state of collective paralysis. From this time I also have my first memories of the uncontrollable and exulting joy that empowers many people today. Of the light that since then has been more and more visible in people's eyes. Year by year. It is incredibly contagious.

A lightning bolt and a sharp crack of thunder awakens Sara from her thoughts. She gets up, walks out to the kitchen, and makes herself a cup of steaming hot sesame chocolate. On her way back to her spot in the easy chair she grabs another blanket and pillow. What a view! Through the dark blue skies over the valley you can see blazing lightning bolts of various size, color, and intensity. Each lightning bolt has its own character.

She moves the armchair closer to the window to be able to follow the spectacle. It looks as if the thunderstorm is fading a little. The intervals between the lightning bolts are longer and the thunder has lost some of its intensity. Sure enough. Over there the sky is a little lighter.

She feels satisfied with her decision to come out to the cabin. This environment really is cut out for contemplation. She has a clearer view of the content of the seminar series which will discuss the development of society from the turn of the century until today.

2. The Immaterial Revolution

*The scene: Still at the cabin, thunder, at night.
Lead character: Sara.*

I can't really say that my memories from the 20th century are especially bright. No, for me it was a pretty restrictive time in many ways. I actually feel pretty bad when I think about my experiences of working in organizations. I remember how many organizations and businesses acted as giant brakes which stopped any interesting initiatives and stopped anyone from developing initiative. Maybe it was because many influential people in those days weaved in their own importance in some kind of mystical self-interest.

I didn't realize it at the time and would never have admitted it, but I also worked in that way. I see that now. For many years I persevered in many different organizations and also with so-called 'altruistic work'. My driving force was not to contribute to the average man's well-being but rather to make myself more important, to become someone.

Fortunately there were also businesses that increasingly began to see that there were people working within their walls who would actually want to accomplish something meaningful and something they could be proud of. These businesses took their employees' and their customers' opinions seriously and invested more in human relations than in the latest management trends.

Today most of the businesses and organizations give everybody a chance to contribute something positive. We give each other space to learn. The result is that knowledge and awareness grow at a pace never seen before. I have recently been involved in a development project that was completed within the space of a few months. It would have taken 30 years of strategic planning, within a similar organization, before The Turning Point.

These things will be part of the series of seminars. One way or another I'll have to make it understandable. I know how difficult it can be for younger participants to understand the old attitudes, especially when we look at the time before The Turning Point. There are so many films, videos, tapes, books, and newspapers to show from that time. The youth who grew up with lighter hearts don't seem to understand. They can forgive but not understand. That might be just as well.

How very fascinating it is to look back this way and really try to understand the currents that lead to The Turning Point! But of course it is difficult to fathom the depth of change when you are in the midst of it. It usually isn't until a long time afterwards that you realize the importance of what happened.

**“At the Turning Point there was
another important change.
The view of work changed completely.”**

It is, in any case, great that the interest for my seminar series has only increased. It isn't only young people who participate. Those who weren't there or were too small to understand what happened. There are also many middle-aged and elderly people who want to develop some perspective and understand why things happened the way they did. Some of them are there because it was prescribed by their holistic therapists. They are trying to be more conscious of the values that were realized in that vulnerable time in their lives when they were molded by their environment.

The funniest part may be that society developers and agents of change come to my seminars. It proves that I

have something else to offer besides what they can get from the media database. Maybe it's because we have so much fun putting together all the puzzle pieces that the participants have found. Discussions that inspire. The role playing, the life-filled exercises, the music...

At the Turning Point there was another important change. The view of work changed completely. Work has an entirely different meaning in our lives and has a new place in our everyday existence than it did in the 20th century. We began to ask ourselves why we really work. We began to discover that we had a foolish habit from the old world and that was to combine the position we had on the job with personal work. For example it was considered embarrassing not to have an income. It was called being unemployed. We believed that to be unemployed was to be idle and likewise to be worthless. I remember an incident when my father's bosses came home for supper during my quietly rebellious teenage years. When I was asked what I did, I answered that 'I loaf'. Poor daddy almost choked to death!

The Comm rings. Sara hears that distinctive ring that somebody wants to talk to her. Where does the sound come from? She turns herself half-way around and discovers that it comes from the bag that she apparently left at the front door. Something inside her says that she should answer. No, not now. She will listen to it in the morning. She begins to appreciate the bad weather and the flow of thoughts. She wants to continue her thinking. She doesn't even bother to check the Comm to see who called her.

How can I recreate for the younger participants the economic chaos that embraced the world during The Turning Point? The sense of utter insecurity we all felt. How one stock market crash led to another and the massive confusion over the value of currency in the hardest hit countries. Currency speculators didn't know if they were dealing with real money or if they were only dealing with 1's and 0's on the monitor. We didn't know whether our money was worth anything or not. The bartering market grew wildly and many people began to steal so their children could have food. Crisis meetings were held in various parts of the world and the financially strongest nations took the daring measure to study the problem deeper. They began to figure out after a while that the old economic system was crippled in more than one way. The villain in the drama was not only the deluge of currency and the speculators but there was another, even more important, problem that was incomprehensible. The old ideas and ideals were obsolete.

An important part of the background to the economic crisis were the false myths that the economy was built on. The first was that the economy was based on perpetual expansion. Today even the smallest child can figure out that this is wrong. Secondly, the old economic models were based on a surprisingly poor and simplistic view of human beings. The most important actor in all of this, the human, was in these models a profit-oriented machine, that devoted his life to the rational maximization of personal advantage. Nothing in the equation took into account that one's everyday acts are intended to bring joy to someone or seek some higher aim.

People had begun to learn to trust in their own value and their own outlook of the world. Already at the end of the 20th century it could be discerned how new economic patterns were beginning to take form. The so-called natural economies began to take shape. It was then that the first economic system was built on consideration of life.

These natural economies functioned in the beginning separated from the larger economic system. Many transactions occurred in secret in those days, since it was declared illegal to utilize alternative currencies.

In the reverberations from the massive stock market crashes during The Turning Point, the global conscience made inroads even into established business circles, where before it was not let in. Now influential people began to show consideration of people and to the life on earth. This was really the true beginning of the new era.

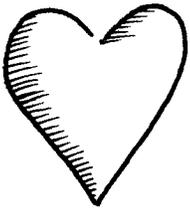
I feel extremely privileged to have been a part of that so-called immaterial revolution. I am only forty-nine years old, but to have seen the old system die out and the new one grow anew, makes me feel already satisfied with this life!

The crux of the development during the last twenty-five years is probably that we use more heart today. 20th century man had a closed heart which made him reason the wrong way and think illogically even if he believed he was thinking rationally. Even the most irrational analysis was considered to be completely rational and based in reality. The politicians and economists conspired to approve the most muddled and far from reality economic theories, while those who questioned these theories were accused of being muddled and far from reality.

The thought about the power of the heart was placed on the shelf for sentimentality and romantic infatuation,

or confused with something religious. Romantic love was considered harmless and a little cute, but not very important, practical or profitable. The difference is that today people use the heart as their guide for thought and action. The heart's power makes man energetic so he can devote the largest part of his life to helping others without being plagued by the thought of what he should receive in return. With the heart as the driving force the end result is in some strange way always right. This is true even in situations where all of the basic facts are not on the table. With the power of the heart man can accomplish things in everyday life that would have rendered him a saint on the other side of The Turning Point.

“The difference is that today people use the heart as their guide for thought and action.”



3. The Entrance of Photosynthesis

*The scene: Cabin. Early morning.
Lead character: Sara.*

Sara is waking up and realizes that she has been sleeping. She also has a feeling that she is not at home in her own bed. Where is she? Carefully she opens her eyes and brilliant light slips in between her eyelashes. A sunrise! That's right. She is in the cabin!

She realizes that she must have been tired the night before because she has slept in the easy chair and has slept well the entire night. Now the darkness is gone and the storm-filled night has likewise disappeared like a dream. She peers out the window with eyes that are not fully accustomed to the light. The sky is clear and the valley is bathed in a hazy and warm morning light. The sun is on its way over the treetops.

Sara moves and stretches her numb limbs. It was a little uncomfortable to sit and sleep there but she feels surprisingly revitalized. She allows herself the luxury of sitting still and sunbathing a little while as she looks out over the valley. She then decides to shower and start to work, despite the early hour. She is eager to write down the thoughts she had during the thunderstorm. Last night she had seen the development during the last decades in a clear light which felt a little new, and useful. The structure for the series of seminars is taking shape.

She goes out to the Road Frog to get the rest of her luggage. It sits there and shines after being washed by the night's rain. It is actually beautiful in both form and color. She walks up to the Frog to look through its shiny roof. The surface of the photosynths are dark green, almost a black-green. It's almost as if she can see how they move within those small blue-green beds. There are algae within the beds which produce chlorophyll as soon as there is light. The rich color of the mixture indicates that the algae are healthy. They have gotten fresh rain water through the liquid membrane on the roof and are now producing well in the sun.

Sara doesn't know exactly how the photosynths work for it is a complicated process. She does understand that the algae produce chlorophyll which catches energy from the light. Electricity is produced with the help of several substances from the plant kingdom. It occurs in an ingenious micro-channeling system of different ceramic pieces that are sometimes reflecting and sometimes transparent. The electrical currents which are created are used to break up the water in its components of oxygen and hydrogen. The gas from the oxygen and hydrogen is mixed and pumped into the Road-Frog's fuel tank with the help of micro pumps.

The result is that over ninety percent of the daylight's energy is absorbed and utilized. Sara also knows that the photosynths don't need the sun's warmth and that it is sufficient with just the light. She assumes that the Road Frog's synths already have produced a great deal in the morning since it has been in the sun for several hours. She is right. Checking the instrument panel she sees that the oxygen and hydrogen are filled to over half. When she came last night there was only a quarter tank left. She is fascinated every time it actually works. Amazing!

She'll have to get used to that as to all the rest. It has just been recently that the portable photosynthetic components have become an everyday phenomenon. The Road Frog has become immensely popular because it is the first passenger car with this type of component. As long as she doesn't drive more than one-hundred fifty miles a day she doesn't have to fill up the tank. It just needs a little clean water now and then. With another vehicle she would have to pay for liquid oxygen and hydrogen. Sara doesn't have her own photosynthetic components at home in the yard like so many other people these days.

Now Sara's storm of thoughts begins again:

What an amazing time it was when the Chlorophyll Technicians made a breakthrough to capture the blue-green algae's photosynthetic energy. What excitement! Nobody had any difficulties to see the revolutionary consequences of man's access to one-hundred percent natural energy. Up until the year 2011, when the photosynthetic technique became a working entity, the regulations for private travel became much tougher. At the end, internal combustion engines could only be used by emergency vehicles. Not even vehicles that operated on one-

hundred percent clean burning fuel and used a hydrogen-oxygen mix or electricity were allowed. That's because the production of these fuels was not 100 percent clean, if I remember correctly.

“Everything changed with the photosynthetic techniques.”

Everything changed with the photosynthetic techniques. The first sites for photosynthetic production were unstable and ineffective, but corporations around the world invested vast resources into research and development. In a couple of years all transportation with vehicles was with clean fuel. There was a strong demand to travel freely and the production of private vehicles took off quickly. Already by the year 2015, 75% of European households had access to a vehicle again.

Sara sends a thought of gratitude to all those people who were involved with the development of environmentally-friendly production and use of energy. It would have been an insurmountable environmental problem today without them. We might not even have been able to heat our houses.

The environmental influence that we haven't come to grips with today is heating with wood. That is why this cabin has the most effective heating smoke cleaner that one can get. It has an effective working capacity of 95% and cleaning capacity at about the same level.

Sara is a little humored when she thinks about how she grew up in the 1970's and 1980's. Her parents acquired all the technical and electronic gadgetry possible. She remembers when her father pushed that obnoxious lawnmower to cut the 300 square feet of grass they had for a lawn. This he did instead of getting a bit of exercise with the old-fashioned, maintenance-free, one-hundred percent clean, push lawn mower that didn't require any gasoline.

That's how they were, her beloved parents. Her friends' parents had the same attitude. It was only on weekdays that it was quiet in the neighborhood. On the weekends, when everybody had time to listen to the birds sing, all the neighbors came out with every sort of imaginable machine. This generation believed that machines made everyday life easier. But the problem was that the machines that were to save time instead took time. To have money to buy and maintain all these machines you had to keep a job you didn't like. People otherwise devoted themselves to hours of primitive electronic hardware such as the TV or CD ROM games. The fact is that when Sara thinks about her parents today, she also sees in that picture the TV and the sofa in front of the TV.

My parents would have never of their own initiative chosen to scale down their dependency on mechanical aids. I almost have the feeling that they were fascinated in the machines for their own sake. It was as if the machines were in some way important for people's mental development. These attitudes to technology developed hand in hand with the technology. Most of the homes had media and communications equipment and certainly other technical aids. The desire to shop has shrunk and I can't believe that there are many people who would be content to use technical machinery for its own sake. Most people would be angry if a neighbor took out that loud and obnoxious machine that smelled so foul and spread poisonous gases in the garden. Today peace is more important. Peace to

“Most people would be angry if a neighbor took out that loud and obnoxious machine that smelled so foul and spread poisonous gases in the garden.”

grow. That is why I am here right now. Three whole days for myself! Three days in peace and quiet to recharge and find inspiration for the fall's seminar series.

Sara feels the wonderful warmth of the rising sun against her back. The dew on the roof of the Road-Frog has almost evaporated. She brings the grocery bags into the kitchen and puts them on the counter. Eggs, cheese, home-baked bread, fruit, and some fresh vegetables are all there. She puts the water pan on the stone slab and lights the fire in the stove. She enjoys being in a house without electricity. There isn't any other technical apparatus in the house that didn't already exist during the Middle Ages except for the more efficient stove and the smoke cleaner. And the Comm of course.



Oh yes, the Comm! Someone had searched for her in the night! She goes to the room with the view. Her bag is still lying on the threshold. She asks the Comm to play the message. It is a man's voice speaking:

"Hello, it is Axel!" says the voice. "There is something I want to ask you about. Contact me at once so I can explain more about it. I will leave my contact identification on your Comm. I am at the Cross Discipline everyday."

Axel was one of the participants in Sara's last seminar series. He was a fascinating guy. He was involved with the most dissimilar subjects and the issues at hand with the same amount of energy. He seemed to be interested in everything. He managed to assimilate his new knowledge with what he had learned earlier. He had studied an array of subjects such as eco-technique, history, health-development, geophysics, psychology, oceanography, and bridging the gap between cultures. At the end of the seminar year he made contact with people who worked with navigating through information at the Cross Discipline. This is the most profitable research corporation in the region. He began to work with the ethics and esthetics of the information that the Cross Discipline publishes.

Sara had asked Axel if he wanted to work with her as an assistant for the next seminar. She knew that he could contribute with things that she had no chance to master herself. He was also nearly twenty-five years younger and had another historical perspective than herself and the other leaders of the Knowledge-Net. She maybe wouldn't have come to the point of asking him if he hadn't himself come forward and told her about his experience with role playing. He had taken some roles from his father in the markets and the antique shops and he had accumulated quite a repertoire of roles from the 1990's. He thought that it mirrored the spirit of that time even if the actions in the role playing could be applied to both past and future. Sara and Axel came to an agreement that he and his friends would demonstrate some of this role playing for her. Sara was fascinated and she booked Axel for several seminars in the fall.

Since Axel's voice sounded urgent, Sara goes straight to the Comm and says: "Voice Response!"

The Comm connects and Axel answers almost immediately.

"Hello Sara! I'm glad you got back to me!"

"Well, it sounded urgent. How is it going? What's up?"

Axel had both good and bad news. He began with the good news. This was the main reason why he needed to get a hold of Sara. He suggests that they meet as soon as Sara comes back to the city. So that they can look together at a collection of writings his mother had dug out of the closet. As a young journalist she had researched young people's values and dreams of the future and gathered some material the young people had written. When she learned that Axel would be in Sara's seminar she gave him the material.

Axel had leafed through the pages and his interest was immediately caught by a project called 'The Building of the Future' which was realized in the 1990's. It was a project for youth who didn't have a 'real job', as it was called in those days. The result of the project was a vision of the society of the future.

"Can you imagine, Sara, that they have actually hit several things right on the nail! They describe how they wish the society to develop, for example on a small scale. I can for the most part recognize it in today's society, the way it is now. Isn't it interesting?"

"Of course! Transmit the texts so that I get a chance to look at them a little before we meet."

"Okay. And then the bad news," Alex continues a little hesitantly. "Have you by any chance received any strange anonymous messages on your Comm?"

"No, what kind of messages?"

"Maybe I should call them threats. It's one or more people who state that their message comes from 'The

Past' and that 'terrible things will happen in the cities as punishment for those who knew and didn't do something'. It said that on a message I got. Where I work, at the Cross Discipline, we have learned that other people in the world have received similar messages."

Axel tells Sara that all these mysterious messages have in common that they come from 'The Past' and the writer says that they will stop the technological development 'that will bring everlasting ruin to humanity'.

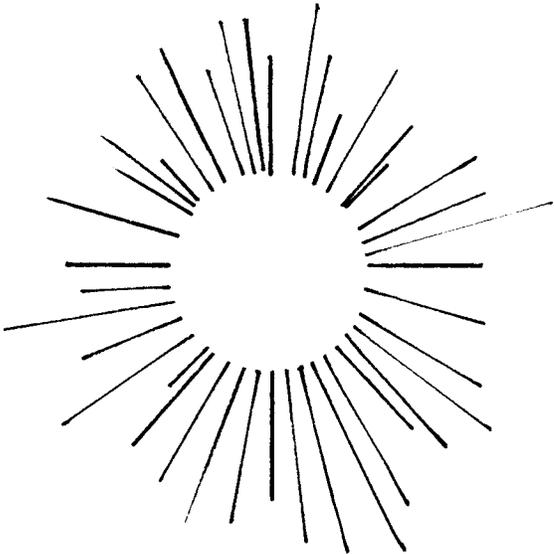
"What a mystery! Maybe it is only someone who thinks it is funny to scare us," Sara suggests.

"Well, we thought so too. But then one of our most knowledgeable Communications Interpreters researched the messages and she concluded that they are at least 20 years old and maybe more. How they have managed to get into our modern communication nets is something no one can figure out. But if they succeeded with that, the threats might also be fulfilled, maybe by some kind of pre-programmed sabotage in some complicated machinery."

"I think it sounds like a bad science fiction story," Sara says laughingly. "But since you seem nervous about it, I will meditate on it. Maybe some idea will hit me."

"Yes, I suppose you are right. I shouldn't worry over nothing." Axel sounds relieved and ends the conversation.

For a few seconds it is completely silent in Sara's head. She then becomes aware of the chaffinch heartily drilling away. He has been singing fully all morning and was part of her good mood already when she woke up.



4. The Space Journey

*The Scene: A number of passengers in a spaceship sitting next to a window.
Lead Character: Axel.*

Axel solemnly watches the multi-colored ping-pong ball floating outside in space. He sees areas in green, yellow, and blue that are nearly covered in a white mists. Everything looks very beautiful and peaceful. At this distance he cannot discriminate any of the large cities. Nor can he see any signs that the earth, during the past one hundred years, has been the scene for numerous wars and conflicts, and that it constantly has suffered from various stresses on the environment.

**“If we had carried on after the
Turning Point as we had previously, Mother Earth
would have been beyond rescue today.”**

Ever since the 1960's a growing number of people have been conscious that the earth's balance was seriously threatened. Some of the assessments were exaggerated but for the most part were proven to be true. If we had carried on after the Turning Point as we had previously, Mother Earth would have been beyond rescue today. Fortunately, today, global unanimity has grown. Today we understand that we must show consideration for the laws of thermodynamics.

There are certainly those who still fear that the Earth will not be able to survive, but more people seem optimistic on that point. Axel also thinks that this optimism is realistic. People have come so far, in fact, that the earth's processes of natural recovery have begun to show results.

Axel has lived his whole life with the new world order that resulted from the Turning Point. He was actually born in 1996, but he has no early childhood memories. His parents were true optimists. They saw early the positive possibilities in development and believed in positive change. These attitudes colored Axel's life. It is natural for him to live in a world that is committed to healing work. It has always been natural.

“We are approaching the Moon on our trip from the EuroSat base on Mars and will be landing in Front City in about 20 minutes.”

Axel jumps at the sound of the Space-Guide's voice. He has sat ensconced in his thoughts for a while.

“We will be passing the moon by only a couple of miles and if we are lucky we might be able to catch a glimpse of the moon base.” We sincerely apologize that we couldn't go down on Mars, but since the base has only been in operation a month, the personnel didn't want any visitors just now.

Axel stops listening and looks instead at his brochure, “The Project's History in Ten Pages”, which has been sitting in his hands since it was passed out. He turns over the pages, as interested as always, to see if he can find any good ideas to pursue. He reads that the World Improvement Agency (WIA), which has arranged the trip, has everybody's best interest in mind.

Everybody's best interest in mind! Hard to believe that we could live together on this little planet for such a long time until we discovered fully the joy of working together! Hard to believe that so many people allowed the old industrial society's way of life to consume the earth and its resources despite the insight that it wasn't working. The gap between insight and action was so large. A deep and unsatisfied craving was the basis for the industrial society.

The voice over the loud speaker system has stopped and has been replaced by quiet music which was unexpectedly clear and pleasant. Axel turns his gaze toward the view. The earth is closer now and nearly fills his whole field of vision. It is getting more and more beautiful, floating in eternity. He sees a dark circle shaped field over North America. Strange, what is that? When the ship turns towards the lighter side of the earth he sees what it is. It is the moon which lies there in all its grandeur. The moon gives an unreal impression, barren and eerie.

When the United States landed settlers on the moon it became evident that they were not happy there. A journalist who had just returned wrote an article: 'The moon is full of rock and gravel and they cast shadows over each other. It was exotic the first week but then I realized the best view from the moon was to the earth. Inside a window of lead, the drama soon loses its charm. I was home-sick! The idea of the moon base is only partially successful!'

**“The well publicized ‘Moon-Aid’ gala
raised enough money from a
tired world to bring them back home.”**

When the settlement project on the moon went bankrupt, NASA couldn't afford to bring the settlers home. The well publicized 'Moon-Aid' gala raised enough money from a tired world to bring them back home. The investors interested in space colonization quickly disappeared after this fiasco and any thoughts to colonize Mars were abandoned.

The vessel is now very near the moon. Axel sees clearly the result of the moon adventure in the form of a large structure on the moon's surface. It reminds him of a dead spider. Marie Celeste, the first and probably the last commercial moon base.

They leave the moon behind them and approach the earth. Axel focuses his attention in order to see better. He can see the greater part of Asia under the clouds. He should be able to see the Great Wall of China. Yes, there it is! A thin light thread on the surface. The Great Wall is intact despite all of the changes in the China.

"There are hardly any people on the earth who have lived through so many dramatic changes as the former Chinese," the guide announced. "There isn't much in these countries today which resembles the old communist China. After communism died, China adapted quickly to the type of market economy which existed in the West. This in combination with modern communication technology, gave new mobility to China. The changes went very quickly and those in power lost control over the course of events. It is often described as 'China's Second Cultural Revolution.'"

"Uncontrollable mass production combined with mass consumption broke out. The driving forces of self-interest and profit were let loose. The former giant republic broke into pieces and formed ten smaller states. It happened very quickly, but surprisingly enough without much bloodshed."

"The most extraordinary development was 'The Chinese Miracle,'" the guide said. During the era when China emphasized the market economy, China was a place of strong contrasts. On the one hand there were the corporations set on making fast profits and on the other hand there were the corporations who were ethical and environmentally friendly. What happened next was that environmental consciousness spread like wildfire throughout the world and got a foothold in the new states in China. Nowhere has the environmental revolution gone so fast and so easily as in this large nation. Those in the west were entirely surprised by the unexpected growth of "Eco-China".

How could this incredible turn of events be explained? What those from the west underestimated completely was that in China there was an ancient and deeply rooted eastern tradition based on holistic thinking. A philosophy of life where it is natural to live in balance with nature and listen to man's innermost wisdom. They had already a mentality from their past which we were so much in need of now in the present. This gave China a giant advantage. We only have to think of the years of work that western people had to go through before they started to

truly respect nature.

They are coming closer and closer to the unbelievably beautiful planet. They are now positioned over the Pacific Ocean. Over on the eastern horizon they can catch a glimpse of the American continents. They are descending with unnatural velocity. Axel is studying the American coastline when something goes by at a close distance. What was that? The voice returns:

What you just saw was 'an American communications' satellite sent up in 1987. It no longer serves any function but it remains up here because it doesn't contain any raw materials that can finance a recycling project. The Commission doesn't think that it will descend into the atmosphere and endanger anyone.

"There is today perhaps ninety-five thousand satellites in orbit around the earth that need to be taken down and recycled. In the last few years a project has begun with the goal to take care of half of these satellites."

With the coordination that only comes from years of training and experience the appearance of the Earth is changing from having been blue, green and in some places yellow to an entire rainbow of colors. The area around Mexico City goes from a scarlet to white and the entire North American continent is dotted with concentrations of red on the coasts.

"When our planet is colored according to population density in this way you can see that the places with a high concentration of population, often also are the places hardest hit by problems. Although the population explosion that went on before the turn of the century has diminished, it hasn't been completely halted everywhere. Over-population, water shortages, and pollution are still problems in certain areas."

**“A contributing factor
were the large reactor accidents in
Russia and the Baltic States.”**

Every new problem that the guide brings up becomes a new layer of symbols on top of the older ones, until the world is covered by a muddle of different little signs.

"The use of atomic energy had completely ceased even before photosynthesis became readily available. A contributing factor were the large reactor accidents in Russia and the Baltic States. Another important factor was that it became public knowledge that maintenance costs for nuclear power were way over what people earlier had been led to believe. A third important factor was that it became increasingly clear that responsible organizations or nations couldn't dispose of nuclear waste in a safe way."

"One of the world's greatest problems is that almost five percent of all energy still comes from coal and oil. The World Union's 'Vision 2050', which is a continuation and an extension of the old Agenda 21, sets the goal for the world to be free from burning fossil fuels by the year 2050. The unexpected and sudden breakthrough of the chlorophyll technology changes the situation and it seems that the goal can be reached by 2030."

"The countries that still burn fossilized fuels today are those that are controlled by criminal interests and who refuse to restructure the energy supply system. There are also still areas that are so far behind from a structural and educational point of view that they simply haven't reached this development stage."

"In general the photosynthetic technique has been accepted by most people. The Photosynthesizers are today so easy to maintain and inexpensive to buy that their growth has been explosive. Each year they become smaller and smaller. Today's smallest models weigh about twenty kilos and this number will probably be halved in fourteen months. It probably won't be long before every energy consuming machine that has access to light will produce its own energy. The cars with the photosynthesizers on the roof are just the beginning."

"Despite the existence of the criminal economies, the world's experts are today optimistic about the state of the biosphere. If the development work continues at the same rate as today, we will probably be able to see clear signs of a turn-around within five years. To summarize mankind's daredevil environmental adventure, we can say that in

little more than fifty years after the awakening of environmental consciousness in the West, mankind has turned the development in a positive direction.”

Axel listens intently. The information is matter-of-fact, engaging, and has a point. He looks out through the window. In Central Europe he sees an area where the small symbols form a compact point.

“What you see now is not today’s Europe, but a reconstruction of how it looked in February 2004. That was three weeks after the program virus ‘Hildegard’ destroyed the mainframe computer at the Medical Research Center of Bonn,” said the guide.

“As some of you might remember, this led to another type of virus, of biological origin, which was spread through waste water all over Europe. The virus reached the water table and during the following three weeks, we Europeans got to experience how important and vulnerable our water resources are. The disaster could have been avoided if vital information had been released right away. Critical files had however been destroyed when the computer crashed and it took a whole week before anyone noted that the virus was missing. By that time millions of people had already drunk infected water and were sick. Those infected fell sick with high fever and severe nausea. The weak, the sickly, the elderly, and the young died in thousands like flies. Hospitals all over Europe were overwhelmed and undermanned. Millions of cubic meters of water were imported from Scandinavia and Canada. Water rationing was enforced. Over half the people in some areas of Europe were infected. The chaos was everywhere.”

It now sends tentacles over almost all of Western Europe. The small symbols flash of danger.

“Those who recovered quickly became sick again if they drank the infected water or came into contact with somebody who was sick. During three weeks the European Continent was dependent on the water from us here in Sweden and from other countries where the water was uncontaminated. A temporary crisis team attempted to isolate the virus in order to kill it.

“This disaster, which reaped over two-hundred-eighty thousand lives, is considered one of the biggest wake up calls of that period. Many people in the ‘civilized world’ realized how fragile the planet was and how little it took for something to go wrong. Two weeks after the event, Sir John Aubert founded our organization, The World Improvement Agency, in order to avoid similar man-made disasters and make our planet a better place.

“Water is still the weakest link in Europe and it is one of our largest imports. We can still see traces of the virus during the yearly inspections of the European water table. We at WIA take an active role in the work to improve the water situation here in Europe and in the rest of the world. We have over a thousand water scientists working on this project. Besides developing the European water systems, we also support projects in Africa, Latin America, and the former Russia. We also participate in the world wide project Ocean Harmony.”

“Thank you for your attention! We will be landing in five minutes!”

The surface of the earth resumes its normal color and looks just as untouched as before. A mild thrust by the ship tells Axel they have landed. He gets up from his seat. The door is opened by the simulator operator and the twenty people in the ‘space capsule’ step right out onto the city square which is bathing in warm sunshine. Axel’s fellow travelers talk enthusiastically to each other. It has been a thought provoking experience and he hears that many people are impressed with the technical realization of the space simulator. When he won the ticket he didn’t want to go at first to WIA’s ‘Our World’ simulator. Then he thought he would test the space simulator journey to see if it would fit in Sara’s seminar series. Now that he has tried it himself, Axel thinks that the passengers have been given a pretty good idea of the earth as a living organism. They have also got an insight to how important it is for all the inhabitants of the Earth to work together in order for it to thrive.

5. The Monorail

The scene: Axel and his nineteen fellow passengers step out of the space ship into the city square after they have been on a fascinating space voyage simulation.

Main character: Axel.

He normally would have joined in the game and talked to the others. Instead he wandered quietly in order to think undisturbed. He remembered the Pocket-Wiz. No. Anybody who wants to get in touch with him can leave a message. He sometimes thinks that the greatest advantage with living in the century of information technology is that he can get important information at any time from anywhere. He has difficulty imagining how used to be when people were limited to news and other programs on TV - programs that they could only be viewed at certain times of the day.

He turns into a street leading to one of the larger parks in the area. He now he wants to walk and relax. He turns off the Pocket-Wiz and puts his hand in his pockets. He casts a glance at the relatively cloud free sky and begins to cross through the lush park. He thinks about the European virus accident. He was eight years old when it happened and he remembers vividly the awful news images of the sick and the dead. He remembers how he, several times a day, in breathless anticipation, checked the Internet sites that kept the reader abreast of the risk of contamination in different European cities. It was an eight year olds' first serious encounter with the insight that we share a common fate.

The disaster was not only a drastic lesson about mans' influence on the environment. He, and many others with him, realized the risks of giving over too much control to electronic control systems. The thought from that day that 'a little error can have drastic consequences' has been very real and apparent. He can not let go of the uncomfortable feeling that mysterious messages had left in the pit of his stomach. What if other such horrors were waiting to be let loose on us!

What is this? He stops in his tracks. Isn't that a cluster of plum trees over there? They are too far away for him to determine- but they 'call out to me'. Can they be ripe already? Axel leaves the gravel path and walks over the grass, past a couple of bushes with raspberries and black currants. There are some plum trees! There are loads of green plums and some are actually yellow and sun-ripened! The year's first!

He takes almost all the ripe plums he can see. There are approximately a dozen. He leaves some in case some other plum lover should come along after him.

Now he wants to meet Alicia. He is getting close to the Monorail. The sky is a little darker. It looks like rain. He decides first to go home and contact Alicia from there.

The Monorail had replaced the old streetcars in order to ease traffic congestion in the streets. Axel takes a seat by the window and programs the address he wants, 12 Cherry Street. The Monorail glides along, almost noiselessly. He looks out the window down at the street thirty feet below. The sun had shone only a few minutes ago but now it is raining. The clouds that have gathered empty their contents on the surprised and lightly clothed people below. Many people run into cafés or stores for cover.

He likes to go on the Monorail. The Monorail has a calming effect. There aren't any sudden starts or jerks. He also likes to fold down the trip monitor on the back of the seat in front of him. On it he can select different maps of the city while his own location is displayed.

He knows that Cross Discipline, the research company where he works, has participated in the development of the Monorail's control and information systems. That was before his time with the company, though.

There is a large difference between the Monorail and the older forms of public transportation like the streetcars or the train lines that still are in use in the countryside. The old trains were built not only with 20th century technology but also with another perspective. This perspective determines the practical meaning of a transportation system for people. Streetcars were first and foremost designed with the view of making it easier for

people to get to and from work. You could also say that they were designed to give the work sites access to the workforce.

The Monorail project is based on the vision that the Monorail should facilitate harmony in the life of the city. The Monorail was designed with the view to contribute to all of man's various possibilities to live a good life in the city and not just to get to work. The designers have seen to the totality of man's needs. The trip on board the Monorail is organized so that the riders will have a pleasant, inspired, and educational ride, since people's lives continue even during a trip. Eating, working, or studying are possible on board. It is even possible to relax in peace and quiet, socialize or be alone. The Monorail is also built to be pleasant even for those not on board.

It runs quietly and is built a little above ground so that it doesn't cut across any walkways or bicycle paths.

The difference in the culture before and after the Turning Point isn't only reflected in the Monorail project. Axel can see it in many of the business areas that he has studied. When he participated in the last seminar series that Sara held on the KnowledgeNet they studied the last half of the 20th century. He spent most of his study time listening to political rhetoric, news reports, and general debates that were recorded back then. He was especially interested in business; how the businesses conducted themselves, what people thought of business; how the business and the businessman described themselves, life, and people. He also dug deeply into that periods' economy and management literature.

The material gave him the collective impression that the guiding light for a business leader in those days, wasn't for her or him to create a good and prosperous business, but

how much money they could generate for the business. Not even that was enough. What was important was how much the profits had increased over the previous year. Axel also had discovered that many people with influence seemed blind to whether they personally lived a good life or not. Instead, they emphasized how much better their life was than other people's lives. Someone who didn't have it better than all of the others couldn't really consider himself completely happy.

**“Someone who didn't have it
better than all of the others couldn't really
consider himself completely happy.”**

It was especially surprising to discover what system they used to make comparisons. They used a measuring system that was simple and didn't involve too many variables. They didn't check correlation's between the variables. The result was a simple number system since numbers were something they understood. Numbers made the comparison problem free, since it is always easy to determine which of two numbers is higher and which is lower than the other.

So what was it that they measured? Quantities of money! In the same way they measured business success with money they measured a person's worth with money. Thereupon came this, the most significant symbol of 20th century society and business; the hunt for high production and consumption. They probably believed that they could raise the level of life quality by increasing the amount of the result. Just as if they also believed that it would be warmer outside if they could increase the temperature on the thermometer.

He had come this far in his analysis when he wrote the report about his studies. He didn't quite manage to explain the logic behind it, however. What he did manage to grasp was that a person who lives in a system striving for each to take for themselves, will get drawn into the system. If I exist in a world where nobody thinks about me, I

will adapt the same strategy as a means to survive. How could people get so far away from the central thoughts of life?

The Monorail has glided into a module transfer station. Two Monorail trains now have rolled up on the right side of the train Axel is in and all three trains are side by side. He sits and as usual, truly enjoys observing the module changing mechanism. He notices how the train is divided and set up in its different modules. It almost looks like sliced bread. The next step is the most fascinating. The 'bread slices' are to be moved to the appropriate train. This is done by a mechanism which moves over the slices that are to be changed. Axel's 'bread slice' is transported to another position directly to the right and then another notch in order to be incorporated with the train all the way to the right.

The entire procedure takes at most a half a minute and he hears the characteristic soft sound when the 'bread slices' are locked together in the new set: Shoff! The module transfer stations are nicknamed 'Shoffs'.

The three monorails, one of which he sits in, now travel forward side by side and then branch further out in different directions to different destinations in the city. His 'bread slice' and two others loosen themselves from the train after a while. They shall now travel as a 'snail', as it is popularly called, which means a short train consisting of only a few 'bread slices'. He guesses that all of the passengers in this 'snail' are going to Cherry Street.

The snail stops softly and an older couple steps off the 'bread slice'. The trip monitor in front of him begins to flash a red text: Next is 12 Cherry Street. Axel prepares to alight.

6. The Semi-Collective

The scene: The Monorail station at Cherry Street. A newly arrived young man, Axel, stands alone on the arrival platform.

He pauses for a moment on the raised platform and takes a full and deep breath when he hears the soft swishing sound from the departing snail. He gazes out over the neighborhood. He likes the area where he lives. There isn't any manufacturing nearby and the whole area is a car free zone. It is exactly the kind of quiet neighborhood he desires. The biggest problem today with cars isn't the exhaust but the sound of the friction between the cars and the road.

He goes down to the street and decides to take a little detour. He only needs to go 150 feet down the alley and there he finds them. Sure enough, a yellow one here and another one there. He goes home with four sun warmed plums in each hand.

During the last ten years so much has happened to make the city more beautiful. "Dead" areas have come back to life. Architecture, landscaping, and fountain art have come together in a refreshing way. Trees and bushes have been planted around buildings, streets, and parking lots. While some plants are only planted for their beauty most of the plants in the city are intended to supply food: fruit trees, vegetables, nuts, and herbs. Berry bushes are especially common in areas with a lot of children live. The fruit trees are traditionally Swedish: apple, plum, cherry, pear, and hazel nut. In the glass-enclosed courtyards you can also find exotic trees; tangerine, nectarine, peach, and grape vines.

Tomato and cucumber plants climb up many sun-drenched partially glass covered walls. Dill, parsley, basil, garlic, and many other foods grow on balconies and in hanging herb gardens in the parks. People in the city have found the cleverest ways to make room for small cultivation. One only needs a little crevice in a wall to hang and grow mini tomatoes, wild strawberries, or some other tasty food. When people began to realize the best way to survive in an unsure economic climate was to cultivate food, then the means to cultivate food developed quickly. In the beginning it was only the people who didn't have a 'real job' who began to grow their own food and began to utilize the areas that nobody used regularly. The interest in cultivation then spread to the greater populace and today everybody thinks that it is perfectly normal to be involved in the various gardening chores of the four seasons.

The cafés and shops have spread out over the entire sidewalk since there is no car traffic. Axel can see that Kenneth and Namida are putting their café's patio furniture for back out after the short thunderstorm. Judging from the rain soaked tablecloths they had already been out earlier today.

Axel admiringly looks up at the beautiful building where he lives. The sight of the three large greenhouses on the roof reminds him that he actually owns part of this house. A few years ago he and some friends had been searching for a house where they could live together and be reasonably self-sufficient, yet near the city. They had finally found this building, built during the 'glorious eighties'. It had been necessary to rebuild it somewhat to get complete support and recycling facilities, but otherwise it was a great building. Axel had been able to invest his own money in the building since he had saved up money in an interest free savings and loan association. Fortunately, the previous owners had removed the antiquated water-based toilet system and replaced it with a dry toilet system. The tax on water toilets had already sky-rocketed around 2010, so they got out of paying both renovation costs and increased taxes. Budgets in the beginning had been tight for most of them, but now most of the mortgage has been paid off and the building feels like theirs. When Axel thinks about the fact that it is themselves, all the families in the building, that have made all this happen, he gets a wonderful feeling of achievement.

He goes up to the roof to check the greenhouses. On the way up the stairs he passes three small children who are painting a little picture in a bottom corner of the stairwell. The walls are basically filled with paintings. It started with Katarina's and Gustav's children painting pictures between the first and second floor. The residents thought it was beautiful and then it became a tradition in the building that the children would take care of the

stairwell art. The paintings are allowed to remain for a maximum of three months and then it is o.k. to paint new paintings over them. It is not only a good way for the children to develop their artistic talents but the little ones learn how to write the date correctly.

He is halfway up the stairs when he hears a voice behind him.

“Axel!”

It is Besim who sticks his head out his doorway. Axel feels a strong comradeship with Besim. They have completely different backgrounds but see the world in a similar way. They can sit for hours in earnest conversation over complicated questions. They are now responsible for the cultivation on the roof. Besim has an education in compost and soil for the cultivation of food and he likes to combine the physical work outside with inside chores. He is happiest when he manages to trade the building’s vegetable surplus for other goods the building needs.

“Oh, it’s you!”, says Axel.

“I’m so glad I’ve caught you! The water pump is broken! A washer came loose and water shot spurt out over everything like a fountain! Helge’s and Katinka’s laundry is soaking wet.”

“Have you stopped it?”

“Yea, Ivar and Kalle took care of it, but it’s only temporarily. They can’t get any washers from the store until the morning. Alicia said that you had bought some rubber tape to fix the water hose on the roof?”

“That’s right! It’s under my kitchen sink.”

There are about twenty households in the building. Since they all know each other it is easy to organize things. It also contributes to a secure atmosphere. Some of the families that live next to each other share child care, utilizing the potential of the mobile walls by opening up the walls between the apartments.

**“The building’s residents
have taken pains that everybody in the building
has a place and a purpose.”**

The building’s residents have taken pains that everybody in the building has a place and a purpose. Nobody, for example, is considered too old to help. Older people are not left idle like they were before. Instead everybody is considered a contributing resource depending on their strength and capacity. Anybody who wants to contribute can. Some of the elder people are fantastic at watching the smaller children during the day. The children are much more in harmony when the elder people are in the children’s group. Many of the elder people often care for the fruit trees and berry bushes and then harvest the fruit. They do this systematically and lovingly. They feel good about themselves because their participation and knowledge is needed. They are actually incredibly healthy and maintain their vitality and creativity for many years.

The building basically works as a sort of semi-collective of individual groups and is only one example of the many types of living arrangements that exist in the city. Everybody in the house, even the children, work together to make the building as self-sufficient as possible when it comes to food. They cultivate many of their vegetables in the greenhouse on the roof and also have a large garden outside of the city. There also are many edible plants climbing up the building’s outer walls. The fertilizer that is created from the dry toilet system and from compost is a prerequisite for cost effective cultivation.

There are several similar buildings in the area but none of them can compare with the collectives out in the countryside. It is difficult for the buildings in Axel’s area, or ‘cohabs’ as they are called, to be as independent as these, even if they had wanted to. They do not have enough land to be able to raise cattle, although they did talk at one point about having chickens. So the small amount of meat, eggs, and milk that they need is bought in from a neighboring farm. Even smaller quantities can be bought at a local store which also buys their produce from farms nearby. Jørgen and Maja sell home baked bread to other people in the building.

There is a communal kitchen in the building equipped with the best appliances and designed for large volume cooking. Instead of each family or single resident buying their own food, heating up their own little stove in their little apartment, and washing their own dishes everyday; they have arranged something akin to a little restaurant. A few people take care of the cooking and everybody who eats there pays for their meal. Each apartment also has its own cooking facilities so that you can choose where and what to eat.

A large bright room with a high ceiling next to the kitchen is used as the dining room. The dining room has become a meeting point for the residents and even for many of residents' friends. Since it is bright and simply decorated it can be used in many different ways. People of different ages gather here to in the evenings to talk, play, dance, play music, paint, read poetry, and practice and perform theater, among other things. The young ones especially like the dining room and many of their friends from the city come there at night.

Axel takes the last three steps up to the roof in one stride. He enjoys being up here. Now his beloved protégés will get some water. He picks up the garden hose, attaches it to the irrigation system, goes to the faucet, and turns on the water. The residents have decided not to use the automatic irrigation system since they would miss the experience of going up to the roof and turning on the water by hand.

He enjoys the sprinkling sound as a small cascade of water streams out of the nozzles over the green leaves and plants. He walks through the different greenhouses, one by one, to see if the water has reached all the sections - and to smell the aroma. Wonderful!

He picks a sun-ripened tomato, then goes and stands at the edge of the roof to look out over the city. From here he can see the various colors and shapes of the city's roofs. He also sees a number of older sun cells and mini wind mills along with an impressive number of the new, beautiful, and small photosyntesizers. Soon sixty percent of the households will produce their own energy and almost all already have some form of energy production of their own.

“Soon sixty percent of the households will produce their own energy...”

What growth and how constructive! All of these different creations! So much beauty has developed in only fifteen years. Before our buildings and gardens were so much like each other. People followed the county's 'homogeneity and conforming aesthetic values'. This is a phrase that Axel learned about when he went through the county's old paperwork. You were not allowed to paint your house before you first got clearance about the color choice from the city!

Today not one garden looks like another. All of the buildings are explosions of beautiful colors and shapes. In one yard there are fantasy pleasure gardens, in another efficient food production troughs, in another almost clean surfaces decorated with herb gardens and fountain art, and in yet another a home-made adventure playground for the children.

Suddenly Axel feels ravenously hungry. He decides to go downstairs. When he gets to his apartment he notices the door slightly ajar. Maybe Besim is in there getting the rubber tape?

He steps through the door, puts his backpack on the floor, and goes to the study. There is light coming from the kitchen. Delicious aromas are floating out. He goes to the kitchen and there is Alicia with two plates in her hand. She is in the process of setting the table. She looks up at Axel and smiles.

“I wanted to surprise you with a little food! she says. You can't only live on berries and tomatoes.”

Two delicious aromatic curry-bean cutlets are frying on the stove. Alicia goes to the stove and lifts the cutlets up a little to see if they are done. They are golden brown and ready to be enjoyed. A wave of energy goes through Axel's spine when he looks at Alicia's soft and slender hands. He stands behind her, wraps his arms around her and kisses her shoulder.

He takes out a pair of inherited linen napkins from a kitchen cupboard. Alicia serves the aromatic curry cutlets

on the plates. They sit down across from each other to eat.

“How was the space trip?” Alicia asks.

“It was actually more interesting than I thought it would be. I’ll tell you more later. I have more interesting news!”

“Really, what is it?”

“The plums are ripe.” Axel answers and gets up to show Alicia his harvest.

They both break out in laughter. Ever since their first summer together, two years ago, Alicia has made fun of his passion for sun ripened plums. “The first time you described for me why sun ripened plums are better than anything else in the world, that’s when I fell in love with you,” Alicia once said.

They sit silently a little while and enjoy the food.

“This afternoon I’m going to SIT to see,” Alicia says suddenly.

Axel again breaks out in a short laugh and some rice flies out of his mouth. He knows that Alicia loves to play with words and it is her playful attitude more than her choice of words that causes Axel to laugh.

Alicia is knowledgeable about many things and she has already tried a number of different jobs in her young life. She studies part-time just like he does. She likes to have one or more jobs happening at the same time. Now she knows that the company SIT is interested in proposals from people who think they have something to contribute to the company. SIT manufactures something that has long been Alicia’s greatest interest, which is furniture that you can sit on. She has worked for a while with a project where cast-off furniture is recovered and renovated. They make the furniture useful and beautiful before they sell it. Alicia has an idea about how you can use certain parts in chairs that couldn’t be recycled before. She wants to present this idea to SIT and has set up a meeting with several co-workers to discuss it.

7. The History of Work and Education

The scene: Axel's home.

Main character: Axel.

Alicia has gone to SIT. The house is quiet. Her image is still captured in his eyes and in his heart. Now is a good time to write down some of those ideas I got during the space trip, Axel thinks as he gets the Comm. First, he wants to see if anything interesting has happened in the world during the morning. He switches the Comm to TV mode and punches in a news channel. He chooses a low mental gradient, sensational news and accidents. He is startled by the latest news about a plane crash in the South Pacific because his mother is in the area. She has finally been able to realize an old dream to go to New Zealand. She works as a journalist on the Monday Network and was going to combine vacation and work on her trip to New Zealand. Axel orders the Comm to display a detailed report of the circumstances surrounding the crash. He sees the point of departure, destination, departure time, passenger list, and lots of other less useful data. He sees that his mother's plane is not involved in the accident and relieved he reclines in his chair, evoking his mother's image.

Axel's mother, Beatrice, has written a great deal about man's potential to utilize time more sensibly, now that you no longer have to fill the entire day making a living. 'Why I Don't Want to Work More', is the title of a book she wrote at the end of the century, in which she challenged that period's achievement syndrome. The book came out exactly when the debate over the 'purpose of work' became heated. There was a whirlwind of controversy around his mother during those years.

At that time Beatrice, as journalist, criss-crossed the world; but then she, like other professionals, cut back drastically on her traveling. Today she prefers taking slower and longer trips, allowing her to experience other cultures and to come closer to its people, to the brief and fast trips that she used to take.

Axel's father, Oskar, was anything but amused over the fuss that his wife caused but became more understanding with age. Now he is at home and is writing a book about pea plants which is one of his big interests. Axel visited him a few days ago and enjoyed seeing him, with life and passion involved in his writing. He has some wild ideas about providing the poorer parts of the world with protein from pea cultivations.

They had a fruitful discussion about education. Oskar told Axel how happy he was that Axel had gone to a school which took into consideration the students' interests and learning styles. He still remembers when Axel would come home from school and talk about the different study techniques he had learned. Those things were never taught when Oskar went to school.

**“It was an education that stifled
children's curiosity and sense of discovery instead
of trying to encourage those qualities.”**

The learning process during his father's school years was hardly a dynamic creative process between student and teacher. Instead the children sat still and listened to what the teacher had to say. They were forced into that stagnant environment which was the contemporary classroom in those days. They studied subjects that neither interested them nor created any empathy for the subject matter. It was an education that stifled children's curiosity and sense of discovery instead of trying to encourage those qualities. The years passed without them being able to find a release for their enthusiasm and joy of life. The goal was to perform well at tests and pass the exams.

“I still see the consequences of what this type of education did to me”, his father said sadly. “I see it in how fragmented our world view is. Many adults of my generation have a world view that is broken up in pieces and they can’t put things in their right context. Thank God school isn’t like that anymore.”

Axel understood his father’s resentment. He often described how tired he was of school in his youth and how difficult it was during the first nine years of continuous studies. The image you get of school in those days was that the students were almost subjected to a type of serious abuse year in and year out. Maybe that wasn’t the intention, but it had the effect that many of the students were completely broken down by the time they left school.

“So what did your father do after his education?” Alicia had asked when Axel told her about his visit to his father.

“In those days it was common for people like my father to take vocational training as soon as they completed high school. He wanted to get away as far as possible from anything that resembled a school. He dreamed of being able to release all of the energy that was trapped inside his body. So at first he became a car mechanic. Then he joined a group of people that developed car photosynthesizers, and this was the first time he began to actually enjoy working.”

“It is really unbelievable how different it was for us,” Alicia blurted out. “Our education was based almost exclusively on individual studies with the teacher as an adviser and a sounding board. We collected all the data we needed with the help of library books, newspaper archives, articles, databases, the telephone network, job visits, and meetings with knowledgeable people. Then we compiled our own perspectives in a fruitful collaboration with other students who had the same interests.”

Alicia’s description of today’s education had sounded so obvious. Axel had a hard time understanding how it had been for his parents. And the grades! His father had told of how he still today could feel the humiliation when the teacher would judge his work. ‘As if I wasn’t capable enough to judge for myself the merits of what I had done!’ he said. The children didn’t receive any training in how to feel about their own accomplishments. Axel suddenly realized that the actual educational message behind the grading system was that you, the student, the individual, couldn’t judge the results of your own work! Instead grading became one of the most powerful tools that you can imagine in destroying the children’s self-confidence!

So what has really happened during this time? How could the development go so quickly? In his father’s day education was a preparation for a whole lifetime of satisfying the needs of an employer. Today education is instead an introduction to the individual’s own development in life.

“Okay! It is high time I do a little work!”

Axel chooses some creative music and connects the Comm again so he can write. He is stopped by a message from the Cross Discipline that gives him back that ongoing feeling in the pit of his stomach. Another threat has popped up, this time in Singapore.

8. SIT: The Furniture Corporation

*The Scene: The lobby at the furniture corporation SIT.
Lead Character: Alicia.*

The first thing Alicia sees when she walks into SIT is that there is an expansive plant environment in the lobby. Green plants are imaginatively arranged and interspersed with fountain art. There is running and sprinkling water around and between the plants. The air is fresh and pleasant to breathe. The chairs from SIT's assortment are displayed in this environment so that visitors can try them out. She doesn't see any two chairs that look the same. There are office chairs with various styles and functions, car seats which seem to be custom molded after the prospective driver's body, chairs that can turn into beds, dentist chairs... What chairs are not represented here? She sits down in an inspired, colorful, and functional monorail seat. As she sits a picture comes up on a screen in front of her. She can choose between seeing the historical origins of the chair she is sitting in, the manufacturing process, or the bio-technological thought behind the chair. She can access technical data, ideas about furnishing and placement of the chair in different environments, or if she wants she can simply turn off the presentation. She says 'off' to the presentation when she sees a young man with a determined gait coming towards her.

The young man politely introduces himself as Robert and explains that Matti Wallin, who she is supposed to meet, is running ten minutes late. Robert offers her peppermint tea, fruit, whole wheat cookies, or juice. She accepts a cup of peppermint tea. Magazines and newspapers are spread out on beautiful bookcases and stands in fantastic colors. Thousands of books of all varieties are at the other end of the room. On a couple of imaginatively designed tables, the latest models of Comm equipment are displayed.

Alicia asks Robert what his role is in SIT and what he thinks about the company. Robert has nothing against telling her. For the time being he works as a Generation Integrator for the company, but that is only one of his many responsibilities. His assignment is not only to increase understanding and respect between the different generations in the company but also to determine the different generations' needs when it comes to chairs. Alicia gets a definitive feeling that he values the company and especially its spirit.

'Hi!'

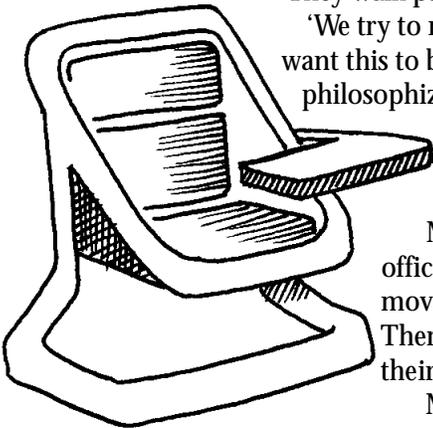
Behind them a man's voice greets her softly and carefully, as if not to scare them. It is Matti Wallin. Alicia turns and greets him. Already she feels good about Matti with the first handshake. He gives the impression of having a very good self-esteem. She feels that Matti is a person that really knows what he wants. At the same time, and maybe because of this, he seems to be very concerned that others should be given the space to offer their own ideas. Matti doesn't act as if he has a large corporation in his hands, waiting to be managed and maintained. She gets the impression that he has all the time in the world to listen to what she has to say.

They walk past the library corner.

'We try to make our assortment of books and newspapers as broad as possible,' Matti says. 'We want this to be a place for harmony and creativity. One time a fellow, Agne, sat here and philosophized, read and catnapped for ten days. The rest of us wondered if he was okay and he only answered, 'Uhhh, I'll talk to you later'. He had come up with an idea for a completely new design in those ten days! Now we are busy recruiting nine people to implement his idea.'

Matti shows Alicia some other areas of the company. He does not have his own office but considers the whole company his office. Alicia sees many participants on the move but also participants sitting and working together. Only a few are sitting alone. There seems to be a sense of security among the participants so they don't need to have their own corner or staked out territory.

Matti talks about the work and the company culture.



'The idea is that all of the participants should have the greatest possible participation in SIT's activities. Everybody has access to all the information concerning the company. This is important so we can have a strong spirit of trust and so that we can offer good service. It is important that the participants are involved also with the firm's problems, since it is only them who can help solve them. Our mistakes, our problems, and their solutions are some of the most important sources we have to build knowledge. If we make a mistake, it is important that everyone has the chance to know about the mistake and to learn from the it.'

**“If we make a mistake, it is important
that everyone has the chance to know about
the mistake and to learn from the it.”**

'So you have gotten past the notion of being embarrassed about a mistake?' Alicia asks.

'Yes. We in the management make a good example. I made several really big mistakes myself during my first year as a manager. I called together all the co-workers and told them exactly what I had done wrong and what I had learned from the experience. Then I asked the others if there were other lessons to be learned from my mistakes. Since that day we have felt unburdened. Shortly thereafter, several of the other managers under me did the same thing and told about mistakes they had made. Today it is easy for all the participants to share their mistakes and experiences.'

'But we don't expect that this will continue to happen automatically. We have on-going development seminars where we discuss issues like this.'

'Does SIT have a particular type of organization?'

'Our organization is constantly changing and developing,' Matti says. 'The participants create the organization depending on the current needs and circumstances, and their own ingenuity. We communicate intensively and playfully on the job. A lot can happen in a short time. When I came back after a couple of months sabbatical this past winter I hardly recognized a thing. The participants had refurbished the place, started new projects and found new customers. I was very happy that they really took the responsibility I had entrusted with them.'

Alicia laughs. She is in a great mood. There is something about Matti's style of communicating that makes her feel involved. The entire time Matti communicates on two parallel tracks. She feels that he listens at the same time he is talking. He searches and waits for her to digest what he is saying. He grasps how she understands.

'But you can always recognize the foundation, the core of SIT's activities,' Matti says. 'That doesn't change. It would be easier to close the company and start a new one from scratch than to change the soul of the company. It would be like a human being changing the genetic make-up of his body to that of the giraffe. It would be easier to die and be reborn as a giraffe. If that were possible...'

'And what is that core?' Alicia wonders.

'Our most important principle is to work along the lines of a long-term global development. We have come back to this vision year after year when we make our on-going revisions of our mission. However we don't have a fixed idea of how we will contribute to this long-term global development. It can change over time. Of course SIT's original business idea was to develop and manufacture chairs and couches that in various ways would contribute to people's well-being and happiness, both on and off the job. We first specialized in anatomically correct office chairs which were totally adapted to each individual customer. But with time our assortment has increased to include everything from light-weight wheel chairs to hyper flexible airplane seats. When you buy one of our products you should feel that they are produced with your specific needs in mind. Time and again we have received many testimonials that our customers really do feel this way. We know by now that our chairs contribute to the well-being of people all over the world. For example, they can work efficiently at their desks, be invigorated in our massage chairs; or they can choose to work, relax, or sleep in our train, bus, and airplane seats in a completely different way than in the old seats.'

‘Our participants remain keenly aware that whatever we do at SIT must be in line with our vision about long-term global development. Everybody should feel that the work they contribute is meaningful and important. It is, therefore, important that everybody has sufficient information to be able to see the whole picture of the work process in the company. This means that every participant can contribute to product and organization development, since this is where new insights and needs originate. Every or every other year we form groups to develop new goals for the company.’

‘Our point of departure is that everything is related,’ Matti continues. ‘Everything that we do within the company must fit in with life outside, so that life is one complete unit. We then have the philosophy that every step we take is important, no matter how small it is. For example we consider it important to care as much about a withering house plant as about a large customer who gets tired of our products. No detail is too small. The houseplant can be a signal of the same problem as the large customer. As another example we believe a small lie can cause the same harm to the soul as a large one. The person who is to have the responsibility for the big processes must also be a person who can creatively take responsibility for the small everyday details.’

‘Another important point is that we value quality over quantity. It isn’t how many hours you work, how high the paper piles are on your desk, or how much money you make that proves your achievements; it is how the work contributes to positive values in the world.’

‘What are the consequences of this philosophy?’

‘It has different effects during different periods. For example last year we spent a lot of effort to build bridges between the younger people’s strength and enthusiasm and the older people’s sense of reflection and experience.’

A woman comes into the room while Matti talks. She introduces herself as Alva Giessen and Matti explains that as the company’s Temperament Consultant, she is particularly important for the participant’s well-being in the company.

Matti says that Alva is a master of personnel activities and asks her to say a few words about this.

‘Sure, no problem,’ Alva answers. ‘Where do I begin? For example, we do a lot of things together. Every now and then we’ll just stop work completely and do stuff outside. It could be a hike in the forest or other types of excursions. Last Friday we went rowing in tarred rowboats. It was a fantastic experience! To be able to sit in an old, tarred, wooden rowboat and hear the sound of the waves splashing against the boat’s planks. Have you ever smelled the aroma of a tarred rowboat?’

‘I did when I was little,’ Alicia answered. ‘My grandfather had a boat like that. It must be nice to work at a place where there is so much comradeship.’

‘Yes, but we don’t try to force the comradeship on anyone,’ Alva says. ‘The participants need space to cultivate their family lives as well. Work and family lives are intimately connected, particularly via temperament. For example if we have a bad or unstable atmosphere at work the participants would take home that negative energy. Instead we do just the opposite. A day on the job is supposed to improve your mood, your attitude, and your energy. If someone comes to the job in the morning with negative energy from their family life, which happens sometimes, we will pick up and strengthen that person during the day so that he or she can go home and have a positive influence on his or her family. In this way the SIT spirit is spread. We accomplish temperament results on two, three, four, maybe five levels. I don’t know how extensive our reach is but some people say that the children take the positive energy to school and contribute good energy in class. SIT is known for spreading good energy and positive relationships.’

“A day on the job is supposed to improve your mood, your attitude, and your energy.”

‘We work consciously towards the goal that every day here should offer opportunities to develop a positive self value among our participants as well as our customers. Actually among anyone who we deal with,’ Alva says. ‘We start from the point that all that we do has a ripple effect. Every small gesture, thought, allusion, and attitude has

significance.'

'There must be a lot to learn for a new participant?' Alicia asks.

'Definitely. As a new participant, you spend your first year working on several different projects. This gives you a broad knowledge and a good overview of the company. You also get to know the company spirit and many of the other participants. We consider it important that a person be familiar with our thought culture and value climate before he or she takes responsibility for their own project.'

'In addition we are continually working with knowledge vision projects. This means that interested participants can get assistance to develop visions as to what knowledge and which qualities he or she wants to develop in the work. Currently we don't employ a vision-worker but we engage one when the need arises. The thought behind this is that if I know which knowledge or qualities I want to work with then I can direct my energy on a daily basis towards that development.'

'How do you mean?'

'Well, I can choose a method of working and a task based on what knowledge result it would yield. We often choose assignments and jobs which we believe we will learn the most from, rather than those jobs which we believe we can manage the best. We optimize the knowledge results rather than the product results. In this way the participants experience work as more enjoyable, which in the long run yields a better result.'

'How interesting! Does that mean that you can get your customers to understand and accept why you don't have the most experienced people doing a particular job?'

'Yeah, they understand,' Alva answers. 'We have found that customer service and the products both are of higher quality when we work in this way.'

'Finally the most important thing!' Alva says. 'We place a high value on everything that falls in the category FUN! Sometimes we do things that aren't efficient or productive for no other reason than that it is really fun!'

Alicia likes what she sees and hears. She definitely feels that if this company is interested in her then she is interested in them. Rosita Johansson, who focuses on product development, comes into the room, which gives Alicia an opportunity to talk about her ideas on how she can contribute to the company. She conveys her thoughts about recycling those parts of furniture which before haven't been recyclable. It turns out that SIT prioritizes research and development in recycling and Rosita realizes that Alicia has some new ideas. She likes the ideas. When Rosita enthusiastically elaborates on Alicia's ideas and immediately sees new possibilities for SIT, Alicia feels like she has already started working.

'We don't compromise when it comes to the environment,' Rosita says. 'Every time we cut down a tree to make chairs, we plant a new one. Once a year we close for a whole day and everybody goes out to plant trees. It is a kind of symbolic activity to strengthen the connection between our work and the nature that sustain us. But we are not yet one hundred percent environmentally friendly and this is a thorn in SIT's soul. So anything that comes our way with respect to recycling and restoration is extremely interesting!'

When Alicia leaves SIT she is very happy and exhilarated. She will return in a couple of days to meet several other of SIT's participants. She has already made up her mind. She wants to devote herself to SIT for the next few years as a Recycling Innovator, if she is given the opportunity. She walks quickly down the walkway. She is eager to tell Axel about the interview.

9. Changeville (Annorlanda)

The Scene: The Cabin.

Lead Character: Sara.

Since early morning Sara has had a desire to get some exercise. She readies herself for a long hike. Dressed in her most comfortable shoes she starts down the little forest trail. The birds fill the air with their sensual trill. Sara's whole body is happy. Butterflies sit on sun warmed stones and spread their wings. They fly away when Sara passes. She goes her favorite way which is up the valley. Within an hour she should be at Oval Lake. She considers hiking once around it's parameter.

The forest is well preserved on the way up to Oval Lake. The natural mixture of trees makes it seem like a primal forest. Birch grows next to oak; which grows next to pine, aspen, and juniper. Some of the trees have grown very tall.

Sara takes the beautiful forest trail further around Oval Lake. After a two hour hike she comes to the wooden signs in the forest which indicate the turnoff to Changeville. She stops for a while. Changeville is a small town that Sara is confused by but loves visiting.

She takes the turn towards Changeville. After only a half hour walk through the forest, it changes to fruit plantations. People here live in beautiful surroundings. A fairy tale of red and blue houses with white trim is interspersed with greenhouses in the shape of crystals. They glisten in the sun. There is a slide for children flanked by black and red currant bushes. There is pool of shallow water where the smaller children play.

Sara approaches the main square in Changeville, which is the heart of the town's activities. 'Welcome To CHANGEVILLE' is written in bright colors. The square is crowded with bustling people. There is a cluster of small stands with people shopping and talking. The square is enclosed by colorful, two-story, wooden buildings; with small cafés, stores, and restaurants at street level. The little restaurants are about to be filled with people that are hungry for something good at this time of the day. It's lunch time.

She goes to a restaurant on the corner where she knows she can buy Indian food to go. Ten minutes later she walks carefully over the square with a little basket made of flat nan-bread, filled with an assortment of pakoras and a little brinjal bharta sauce, plus some napkins. She heads in the direction of a grass slope at the open end of the square. Quite a few people are already sitting there. Under some large pear trees she finds a place to sit down to watch the chaos of diners, markets, playing children, and elder people in conversation.

She tears off a bit of the nan-bread basket and puts in her mouth with a bit of pakoras. Soon the sauce runs between her fingers. She cleans it up with one of the napkins and eats it up directly before it gets any other droppings on it. The napkin has a good spicy flavor which compliments the food. Sara takes a bite of the disposable fork which also tastes good. It makes a good dessert with its sweet fruit flavor.

“Today it is common sense to produce goods close to the consumers.”

While sitting in the grass Sara amuses herself by observing Changeville's local merchants. She sees little restaurants, cheese stores, delis, green grocers, grain shops, and a small bakery. What is sold in the stores is determined by what the owner likes to do. One store sells only home canned pickles. One shopkeeper sells second hand telecommunications equipment and old furniture.

When Sara was young, bread was produced in large bakeries (in a stressful work environment) so that the bread could be shipped (with noise and exhaust fumes) to large grocery stores (stressful), where it was bought by people packed in cars (with more noise and exhaust fumes). Today people prefer to do things on a smaller scale. A

smaller scale makes the world a nicer place to live in and it is certainly more practical.

Today it is common sense to produce goods close to the consumers. It works superbly to produce French waffles in Sweden and bake Swedish crisp bread in France. It's simply a question of exchanging recipes. You only need to do it once and it takes a few seconds on the Kom. Much easier and smarter than to daily ship bread hundreds of miles.

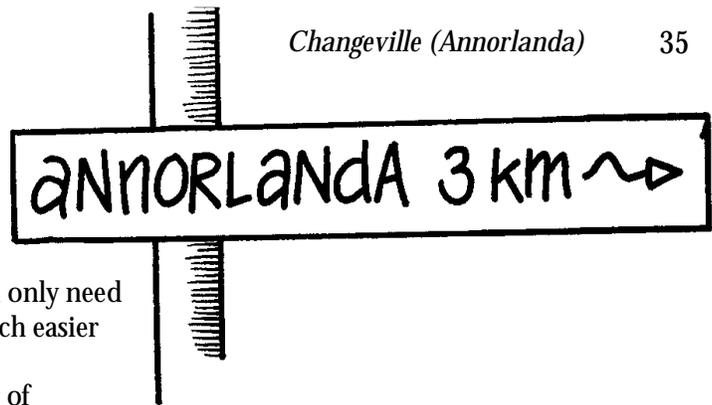
Another important development is that the number of middlemen for products has been reduced to a minimum. Today most goods travel directly from the producer to the consumer. This is one of the developments that was made possible by the communications technology. The buyer searches for a producer via the tele or kom. The buyer looks at the products over the tele (many areas of the world do not yet have kom systems) and the financial transaction is also handled over the tele. Then the goods are sent to the buyer through an ingenious delivery system of which there are many. The end result is that the producer is better paid for his goods and the consumer gets considerably cheaper products. Today products cost a third of what they used to cost in the old system.

Sara amuses herself by observing Changeville's residents. She cannot see a 'typical Swede' anywhere. Instead she sees a colorful blend of cultures. In some of the people Sara recognizes a cultural inheritance of exotic origin, but in general she cannot identify particular nationalities or cultural origins. They blend together impressions from the farthest corners of the world and for the most part in a most delightful way.

She also experiences that the residents have something in common on a mental plane, but she cannot put a finger on it. For some reason she never gave herself the time before, in the several times she has been here, to take notice of this atmosphere. Maybe she was preoccupied with other thoughts. Now her attention is focused on the mechanisms that form a society and she sees things she did not see before. She decides to pay a visit to Vera and Göran to get a little historical background. Vera and Göran are friends of Sara's and they live in Changeville. If they are home maybe they can explain Changeville's history in more detail. Sara knows that Changeville is a young town with a dynamic development, but she is not clear about what it was that made the town bloom. She is, as usual, curious about the current age and any aspects that can help explain way it became that way. Sara has learned most things in her life by asking questions.

Sara takes the road towards Vera's and Göran's house. All the impressions spin around in her mind:

The differences between different places becomes greater for every year that passes. Nowadays you don't have to travel far to experience something new and different. It can be enough to just switch blocks. When I compare Annorlanda with Trastgårda, where I live, like-minded people have moved closer together. Special blocks have developed where the residents have built their own cultural community within the commonship. The different cultures in Trastgårda haven't mixed together as they have here but have instead developed their individual characteristics. This would have never happened before the Turning Point but it works fine today. Why couldn't it have worked then? Maybe because before the Turning Point differences were confused with opposition! Then there wasn't this tolerance between people and cultures which causes the differences to lighten up the atmosphere. Sometimes it became ferocious. Only during the last ten to fifteen years have people seriously begun to appreciate and actually like the differences between cultures. 20th Century man was often afraid to be himself or to be different. 21st Century man is instead afraid not to be himself. To be himself in the sense of being in touch with your own inner original self.'



10. A Commonship in the Making

The Scene: A blossoming housing area in the year 2021.

Lead Character: Sara.

As she gets closer to the place where Vera and Göran have their house, Sara is struck by the way people cultivate in the area. Many of the houses have walls entirely of glass facing the direction of the sun. Sara knows what the interior of these houses looks like. The living room and the kitchen are often combined with a greenhouse. In addition, it is not uncommon for restaurants to be contained within these greenhouses.

Sara is lucky. Göran and Vera are at home and greet her with many warm hugs and words of welcome, 'happy to see you' and 'come right in'. They sit down in Vera's and Göran's kitchen.

Sara begins to ask questions about Changeville's history after they have heard all of the latest news from one another. Vera says that Changeville during the 20th century was a little farming community that quickly lost its population like so many others in the country. Changeville had a population of over eight hundred people at the end of the 19th century but there only were eighty people at the end of the 20th century.

'There were things that occurred that were quite different during the years of crisis at the end of the 20th century,' Vera said. 'It was in connection with the youth who drifted away from the big cities. I think about all of those young people in the big cities who had discovered that they did not belong anywhere. They were not accepted into the world of work. They did not have their own income. Those who were working soon discovered that they were discouraged from discussing the meaning of their work or from having a visionary goals for their work. You were there yourself and saw this and so were we. We became a group that floated outside established society without the possibility to return to the old system.'

'That's the way it was almost all over the world,' Sara remembers. 'That's part of the reason why so much happened during this period. When I think about it, it was quite an unstable and dangerous situation in society.'

'The driving force in those days was to create expansion in the established, but increasingly unstable, society. We, the youth, were looking for a deeper meaning.'

All three of them remembered how it used to be in those days. How more and more youth had begun to search for working models to build their lives upon. They searched for new role models and new paths to follow, and whether they were conscious of it or not they searched for leadership. They searched for mature and experienced people who had roots in the established world. The young constituted a large, grateful 'market' for leadership which created both potential and danger. There were many strange movements which were quite strong in those days. There were both political and religious movements, which if they had been stronger, would have been really dangerous.

'Yea, that's probably how it was,' Sara said. 'At the same time I must say that during those days it was hard to determine what was dangerous and what was safe. I remember that there were groups that were portrayed as sects only because they obstinately believed in love and maybe gave God a different name from the one used by the established Church.'

'Of course,' Vera said. 'People with established positions in the society often used expressions of ridicule as weapons. They wanted to do away with the things that made them unsure. At the time I didn't think that it was that difficult to determine the difference.'

'How did you determine the difference?'

'An obvious sign was if a group used their energy to portray other theories as wrong or other groups as evil. They also might sow the seeds of discord some other way. This has been going on between people for thousands of years and the conflict between people only continues to spiral upward. Another and related sign was if the organization determined for the individual what was right and wrong, instead of giving the individual space to search within himself for his own answers.'

'What was destructive might not have been so difficult to realize, but how were you able to determine what felt

right?’, Sara asked.

‘If the group’s actions were about understanding, love, and forgiveness; then everything fell into place in some way. There was then the possibility of growth and dialog, and not any one theory or special book was portrayed as the ultimate truth. The group’s focus was on contributing in positive ways rather than to preach the “infallible” truths.’

‘Yeah, I guess you’re right,’ Sara says. ‘Maybe it wasn’t so hard to determine. I didn’t have a very good track record myself in those days... All right, you were going to talk about Changeville.....’

**“If the group’s actions were about
understanding, love, and forgiveness; then
everything fell into place in some way.”**

‘Of course! I’m sure you remember that during those days when we, who belonged to the youth generation, drifted away unanchored from the system; there were many people who began to look outside the big cities. These were the young who had tried hanging out in the subways or in the arcades. They discovered that this was not what they were looking for in life. They were the young who had tried to identify themselves through sport clubs, fashion styles, night life, or religious movements. They had tried all of these things and nothing helped. They were about to lose faith that they would ever find something of value in what was offered in the big cities. They wanted to be a part of something that felt meaningful. They were hungry for radical changes in their lives.’

‘Many of them were ready to build another society. A society that could offer them something to fill in the gap that existed then. For a long time they had realized that the existing political system didn’t offer them a platform to work from. Their experience of party politics was that it was too restrictive and difficult to break into. Even if they could sympathize with individual issues that the parties pursued, they could almost never accept the entire political party’s platform.’

‘There were some adults at the same time who saw this need in the young people,’ Vera said. ‘These were people that also had tried the most diverse things. They had tried various “alternative lifestyles” in their youth. They might have lived in the country, in a collective, during the “Green Wave” of the 1970’s and 1980’s. They might have struggled for years with a traditional family, a house, responsibilities, and a career. They might have been through therapy and psychosynt themselves. Anyway they had acquired good experiences of what worked and above all of what did not work. With age they had developed the ability to piece together their experiences in perspective, an understanding, and a feeling for context. This became dynamite in combination with the force, will, and longing of the drifting young generation. Some of the adults realized that they didn’t have to keep all the power of realization to themselves. They could join together with youth that were drifting away from the big cities, who wanted to use their lives for something positive and energetic.’

‘This was how, during 2000 and 2001, no less than three such experienced people, all three women, came to Changeville. They came with the idea to build up a long-term and durable commonship with a local functioning economy. The commonship was connected economically to the various interest free economic systems which grew up all over Europe. These economic systems created larger possibilities for survival in times when the established society obstinately clung on to the sinking ship of interest rates. These three women were pretty surprised when they met each other because none of them had ever heard of any of the others. They had come up with their idea “on their own”, which may not be so strange since many other people in those days had the same idea. A coincidence which is maybe more amusing was that all three, at the same moment in time, chose Changeville (which was then called Annebruk) as the place to be.’

Suddenly a new thought pops up in Sara’s mind:

‘Didn’t they also at the same time want to distance themselves from technical development and put an end to the “IT-hysteria” that had to do with computers and Commcommunication in those days?’

‘Well, not to the point that they wanted to stop the development at any price, but it was clear that they questioned whether technology should control man’s life or vice versa. There were movements that really tried to open up the eyes of the authorities to the danger in the society becoming more and more dependent on a technical apparatus which could be damaged in the event of war or earthquakes.’

‘Sure. That debate is still going on. But I asked the question because I am thinking about some strange messages that presumably originate from those days and have the intent of technological mischief.’

Sara relates the morning’s conversation with Axel. Neither Göran or Vera can come up with the name of any organization that existed around the turn of the century that might be behind this threat. They do remember that there were a number of organizations that certainly could have done it. There were in fact a number of terrorist attacks against the established governments around the world. But this was a long time ago. Sara again brushes off her thoughts that there might be any real danger in the cryptic messages.

‘What happened then with the three women?’, Sara asks. ‘How did it go for them?’

‘They joined together with a number of young people to create a new vision. They had different ethnic backgrounds and different ideas about things but they were all in their own way far sighted and knowing. They would use their different experiences and points of view in a complimentary way rather than in a confrontational way. The building of a new society took off at an explosive pace. Today you can find many people among Changeville’s inhabitants who consider their first years here as one of their life’s high points. Imagine just having left behind a meaningless search in a disintegrating big city slum, what a joy it must have been to participate in building your own society. A society that actually worked!’

‘Fantastic!’, Sara exclaims. ‘But what did the original inhabitants think?’

‘They were content, but only after a while. It was a shock for them in the beginning when so many new people came all at same time. The new arrivals were in the majority. It was many years before the original inhabitants got used to the fact that they could no longer boss the young people around like they were accustomed to doing. ‘Oh, so you’re Johan’s boy! I s’pose you’ll straighten up one of these days!’

The newcomers had attitudes they did not understand and did things in a new way. One of the most difficult things to understand was why the village could not be called Annebruk as it had always been called. No, it had to be renamed Changeville. It took a few years before the new name was accepted. I don’t think anybody is sorry today.’

Göran, during the conversation, has gone out to put together a little food for lunch. When Vera has finished her story she gets up from the table to help out.

‘Do you want something to eat?’, Göran asks.

‘I just had some Indian take-out,’ Sara answers. ‘Though I’ll happily take a nibble of something and cup of mint tea to keep you company. I can smell the aroma...’

‘You’re right,’ Vera says.

‘When I walk around in Changeville I feel that there is some kind of sense of common values here. Is that right?’, Sara asks.

‘Maybe there is, I don’t know,’ Göran answers. ‘An unspoken one in that case.... Nobody has tried to formulate any common values in words. It would probably not be possible.’

‘Why not?’, Sara asks.

‘I don’t believe it works to put together some type of theory,’ Göran answers. ‘And who knows? Maybe it is

“The fact that each person reflects and communicates with others about their values.”

better as long as it’s “in the air“, so that no one can make a theory of it. This way it’s more alive, the development goes easier, and we notice more quickly when things aren’t the way we want them.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘Well, if development should start going in a direction that we don’t want, there is a risk that we would still think we had the situation under control if we had formulated a concept of common values. Look at United States, for example, during the last half of the 20th Century. Because so many of the citizens believed that they lived in a

free country, it became difficult for them to see that many people lived in a system that was not free. I don't know if it necessarily has to be like that,' Göran said. 'I think such ideas are difficult to get a handle on because there are so many possibilities.'

'I think it could be very beneficial for a group to define and declare make common values,' Sara says.

'I agree. It might be the process in itself which is beneficial. The fact that each person reflects and communicates with others about their values. I think the danger lies in accepting and being satisfied with the result.'

'Yeah! That must be it,' Sara says. 'That even sounds logical.'

They sit quietly for a while and Sara feels that it is good to let the presence fill the air. The meeting with Vera and Göran feels deeper and more intense in the silence, and especially when they look at each other. If they had not gotten along so well, they would probably start talking again right away. Vera's and Göran's sunny home has a peaceful and inviting atmosphere. The house is built of wood and must be at least a hundred years old. The kitchen where they sit has white painted cabinets that give the impression of being as old as the house. A cat comes and sits on the kitchen sofa next to Sara and looks to see if Sara will offer her a place to lie down. Sure, come little kitten, Sara thinks. The cat climbs carefully into her lap, molds a spot, and trustfully lays down.

'What are your plans, Sara?', Göran asks. 'Are you going to stay long at the cabin?'

'Three days,' Sara answers. 'I preparing for a seminar series. I am trying to understand the different aspects of societal development during the last thirty years. That's why I am so curious about how it was before in Changeville.'

'That sounds difficult!', Göran and Vera both say.

'It is in a way. But in another way it is as if the puzzle pieces fall into place at a furious pace, almost automatically, only because I allowed myself this three day space to think. What you have just related to me, for example, are important and interesting pieces in that puzzle.'

11. A Meeting on the Comm

*The Scene: Still at Göran's and Vera's house.
Lead Character: Sara.*

‘If you stay a few hours you can meet José,’ Göran says. ‘José is a second generation immigrant from Mexico. He has been interested his entire life in keeping alive his roots in Mexican culture. We have come up with the idea to have a Mexican culture evening over the weekend. We’re going to plan it tonight.’

‘Wow! A Mexican experience evening!’

‘We are going to turn the entire first floor of José’s house into a Mexican home. José has a group of Mexican friends who will portray a Mexican family and Mexican guests. This way the other guests will come to a Mexican home and experience the Mexican lifestyle. They will have to communicate the best they can. If they don’t speak Spanish they can use sign and body language. They will eat a traditional Mexican festive supper based on the type of meals that José’s ancestors had before they emigrated.’

‘That sounds great!’, Sara says. ‘What an idea!’

‘José came up with the idea on his job.’

‘What does he do?’, Sara asks, curiously.

‘He basically serves as a sounding board for people who want to enrich their body language,’ Göran answers. ‘He is especially adept with the body language of Latin cultures. José works either solo or in a group and he is very popular as a coach. He is very inspired. He also has the most imaginative Comm exercises I’ve ever seen!’

‘He works over the Comm?’, Sara asks. ‘I thought that working with body language would require face to face contact.’

‘It does, but providing such a unique service in a sparsely populated area like this, means that he needs to reach more customers than exist in the immediate vicinity. Are you concerned over the effectiveness of communications’ technology?’

‘I think that we do too much over the Comm these days,’ Sara says. ‘I’ve always thought that it is better to have an actual encounter between two people. There are many subtle signals that get lost in Comm communication. You can’t smell anything over the Comm. I also don’t like the equipment with which you can “touch” each other. It’s never close to the real thing. You can get an idea of an emotional state with your senses of sight and hearing, but it is quite another thing to feel the emotional state “physically” when two people meet in the same room.’

**“That is why today a
“real” meeting has become more
important and more right.”**

‘Yeah, you are right in saying that there is quite a difference between meeting on the Comm and meeting in person,’ Göran says. ‘I believe this creates an interesting psychological effect in that we begin to miss that personal confrontation that doesn’t exist in Comm communications. The consequence is that we become more and more conscious of all the subtleties that happen in a “real” meeting between people. That is why today a “real” meeting has become more important and more meaningful. We don’t “get through” a meeting as we did in the old days. We meet in a more profound way, more relaxed, and under more fun circumstances. We work at a deeper level and are more serious.’

'That's right.'

'Let's go back to José,' Göran continues. 'José has the ingenuity to convey a message with emotion over the Comm. If you want you can see a bit of what he has produced. I have a recording here that we can watch.'

'Hmmm, ... that could be interesting,' Sara says.

Göran and Sara go into the sunny living room. The room's large windows face a lawn containing small sculptured fountains, a photosyntesizer, and some berry bushes.

'We have designed our Comm room on a small scale. We have a Comm corner in the living room,' says Göran.

'Where?', Sara asks. 'I can't see it.'

'You won't see anything until I've started the program,' Göran says. 'The equipment is simple and discrete and the recording is projected onto those two walls in the corner. You'll see that you can get a lot out of a little.'

Göran opens a little door in the old bookcase, sweeps his finger over the cobalt blue control panel and a picture appears on the screen.

'Here we go,' says Göran. He selects among the multi-colored symbols and text elements. 'Here is my little collection.'

'Show José's entry!', Göran says.

Sara hears in Göran's tone that he isn't talking to her but to the equipment. He controls it vocally rather than with gestures.

Sara sees a beautiful waterfall run down the walls of the living room. It feels like clean and pure water. Sara can see right through it even though it swirls powerfully and roars loudly. She feels the roar of the waterfall filling up her mind after she has listened to it for a while. She thinks that the water sounds like music. But is it real music? She now begins to discern a clearer kind of water music coming through the sound of the waterfall. There is something that moves in the water. There is one color and then there are many shades of red and blue. They dance in time to the music. The dancing colors become more distinct and Sara sees that they are birds. They are beautifully colored birds that fly in and out of the waterfall as if dancing to the music. Suddenly, a swarm of hundreds of little light blue hummingbirds comes from out of the water. They come right out the waterfall and then abruptly turn and shoot directly up towards the sky. Sara reflexively ducks and then enthusiastically sits up straight on her chair.

'Wowwwwww!', she says. 'Wowwwwww!'

Sara is full of laughter. She feels a little dizzy from the effect of the music, the water, and the birds.

'Look at this!', she says. She laughs as the music whirls away with her heart and mind. 'What water! What exquisitely clean and clear water!'

'Dolphins!', Sara exclaims. 'What happy creatures! Look at them playing!' She laughs. She feels like swimming with the dolphins. She sticks out her hands to play with the cascading water but there is nothing there. It is only the play of light from the projector on the walls in Vera's and Göran's sunny living room.

'This is José,' she hears a man's voice say. 'Thank you for letting me share a part of myself with you! If you like the music, it might be that we have something in this music and this play in common.'

The waterfall then dissolves and is transformed into a glimmering downpour. What then happens is that Sara and the whole living room are enveloped in the downpour. Sara descends together with thousands of glittering raindrops through the air. Alone on the grass under a tree sits a person in a brown jacket. It is José. Sara now is one of all the drops that fall on the ground and onto José. The 'Sara-drop' carefully as a bird slows down and she surprises herself by landing right on

José's left shoulder. José carefully turns his head which now fills up the whole wall. He looks down at the 'Sara-drop' and says friendly and carefully:

'Hi!'

Göran carefully turns off the equipment and Sara is back in Göran's and Vera's sunny living room. There is a silly smile captured on Sara's face as she stares straight ahead with empty eyes. Her feet are on the ground. She is back on earth again. Inside her head it is still and quiet. There is not a thought in her mind. She just sits there. She does not do anything but peacefully exist.

Sara has not noticed that Göran has left the room. She does not



know how long she has sat in a peaceful reverie but now Vera and Göran come in with a cup of peppermint tea.

‘I just talked to José. He’ll be here in a couple of hours. Can you stay a while?’

‘No, I’m going back to the cabin while it is still light. I’ve got so many new impressions today that it would fill

“José believes that all people meet each other deep within themselves.”

half of a book. What did we see on that recording?’, asks Sara.

‘It was an introductory scene for a verbal sparring group that José lead in the spring. He used these types of presentations at every meeting in order to establish contact with the participants. He is always eager to get a communication process started as soon as possible. José wants to reveal something of himself in each introduction. He thinks that within the external human being, with all there imperfections, there is an inner tone and music. He thinks that, that music can be absolutely fabulous. José believes that all people meet each other deep within themselves. The outer physical forms play a very small role when our inner selves meet.’

‘This Comm video a relatively basic type?’, Sara asks ironically.

‘Yes , relatively,’ answers Göran. ‘The new African technological ideas have made possible good experiential quality with simple techniques. They construct their Comm tools from the point of how our senses work and then secondly apply technology to it. They have established a quality standard called “eco-hi-qu“ or economic high quality. This is expected to soon become the dominant standard, entirely replacing the old “eco-qu“. Although the old “eco-qu“ required a somewhat lower bandwidth for the transmission, the projection was a lot jerkier and was a more artificial experience. If you liked this I hope you get an opportunity to see some of José’s productions in a really good Comm room with full transmission in “hi-qu-3d“. You can tell that he custom designs Comm equipment for people’s individual needs.

‘I thought that this was really fantastic,’ Sara laughs.

‘And I think that this equipment is certainly adequate for my work,’ Vera says. ‘I appreciate sitting in our beautiful living room, the “Comm corner“, we call it, and eliminate the need for a special Comm room. It also feels good to know that the magnetic field experts don’t see any risks with this technology.’

‘Do you also work over the Comm?’, Sara asks. ‘I thought you worked with health development?’

‘Yes, I am a Wellcare Broker and most of the communication I do these days is over the Comm,’ Vera answers. ‘A big part of my work is to discuss and advise, and also to arrange contacts in health and wellcare issues. It usually is sufficient with verbal communication on many of my smaller jobs, but if it is needed we will add visual aids. We will even go to the expense of “hi-qu“ in some cases. The Comm can for example be very useful when I want to look closer at details in skin, hair, or eyes.’

‘Don’t you have any personal contacts?’, Sara asks.

‘Of course, I do. Wellcare issues are personal and life enriching. It is important that the initial contacts are in the form of real, personal meetings. I usually meet regular clients personally at least once a year. Some clients I always meet in person since I need to “squeeze and push“ a little on them or fix a bandage.’

‘So you’re out on the road quite a bit,’ Sara says.

‘I am. In the past few years, however, I’ve more and more focused on helping people, who have a particular need, to find a health coach or specialist that fits them. It’s one of the greatest services I can do if I can help people to drop treatments that don’t work for them. It sounds a little strange but this service has become the one that is the most appreciated of all my services. There is a great need today for this service. You must have both good instincts and experience to do this type of work in the right way. It suits me since I am a little older and I have acquired some perspective. I have built up a good knowledge of health coaches in the country over the years. I know many of them personally for several years. I also have compiled a database and maps of their areas of expertise, which works well for me.’

‘What do you think about the artificial health coaches that you find today on the Comm-net?’, Sara asks. ‘Are

they in fact updated with all the contemporary information in the health area?’

‘You can obviously never replace personal care. They are only pre-programmed, logic-knowledge network maps, equipped with a decision program in a playful interactive surrounding. The people responsible for the information are actually pretty quick to incorporate the latest medical findings. I can recommend them if you want to know something about simple and common health questions: anatomy, nutrition, exercise, etc.... There isn’t a living person behind this type of programming, so the intuition level is zero. It’s a bit paradoxical that sometimes these programs give a better answer than a human health coach, since a person can be temporarily tired or stressed out. I’d never advise anyone to only trust the information you get from an artificial health coach.’

12. Thoughts in the Forest

*The scene: A large, beautiful primeval forest. A lone wanderer.
Lead character: Sara.*

With a couple of hours walk through the forest ahead of her, Sara is eager to get going. She wants to be back in the cabin before dusk, if possible with a margin. After she has said good-bye to Vera and Goran she is back out in the forest. It's a wonderful afternoon. The forest is beautiful and peaceful. She meets several wanderers on the trail. Some of them walk purposefully at a fast pace while others seem to just browse around without a goal. She meets a family with two children who seem to be on their way home after a picnic in the forest. She feels a sting in her heart when she sees how the little children jump around and play tag between the trees. Her and Håkan's children used to play just like that when they were little. They had also been a happy young family, at least during the years when Love and Meija were small. Suddenly she feels how much she misses them. She hasn't seen them in over two weeks, since they have been living with her father. She and Håkan have shared custody since the divorce. It works out quite nicely since they both live in the same town. The children can easily get to their school both from Håkan's house and from her apartment. Things had worked out okay even though it had seemed difficult for a while. Sara had struggled for a long time to get over her grief over the failed marriage. The children had also mourned, in their own way.

I'm so glad I managed to pull myself together and started working on my self-esteem just when I needed it the most! I felt totally worthless and didn't think the children would ever want to live with me in my little apartment. I thought for sure they would prefer their father and the charming house with the beautiful garden. But they were wiser than that. They chose us both and got us to start talking to each other again. After a while I started to understand why I so often messed up, both in my relationships and at work. I just didn't like myself! I took my bad self-esteem out on others. What pains me the most is that it took so long before I was able to work on my problems in a constructive way. Many of my problems had their roots in early childhood and were the cause of much of my destructive behavior. But in those days I thought I knew everything about the human psyche. I thought that all the therapeutic classes I had taken, had taught me who I was deep inside. But that wasn't the case. I had turned off the most painful parts and didn't even know that I was carrying them around. When the divorce was a fact, the whole facade fell apart...

It's quite amazing, the progress that has been made in brain and consciousness research! I shudder when I think about psychiatric care in those days, which was nothing but stuffing the patients full of tranquilizers so they would be the least trouble possible. And that's not all that long ago! I personally know several people in their seventies, who have told me that at age thirty-five, that they hadn't had one bit of even the simplest therapy even though they had had psychological problems since childhood. And this is only thirty-five years ago.

I am forever grateful to the caring wholeness team that took care of me in my depressed condition. They seemed to know everything about different states of mental shock and how to get out of them. The energy balancer, for instance, did a fantastic job. The body-mind adviser. It actually wasn't all that hard to get better once they put me on the right track. I didn't really suffer from any physical ailments; all that needed to be done was to get a good cleansing and change focus. I learned techniques that I still use when I feel frustrated or down. Life can of course still seem like a struggle sometimes, but at least now I know that I can get through the hard times and that they lead to new insights.

It feels great to be able to be content with life as it is right now! Right here. I have never been looking for some kind of artificial paradise where no problems exist. If there were such a place it would probably be pretty unbearable in the long run. I've rather been searching for a balance; a balance between concentration and relaxation, between deep involvement and tranquillity... Luckily the younger generations seem to achieve that balance without any effort. Just look at Meija and Love. They have developed into much better adjusted children than what I was!

She turns off the trail at a place where she knows there is a hilltop with a view of a beautiful lake. The lake is quiet and still. Water lilies cover the near side. Both yellow and white flowers. She stands on the hilltop and looks.

Children?! They're actually teenagers! The years have flown by incredibly fast. Sometimes I wonder if the divorce and my response to it have hurt them more than they want to let on. But we have such an open dialog about everything and I haven't seen any signs that they have suffered. They have had access to all the qualified support they ever wanted from the health house. It's comforting to know that it's just as natural to get help for pains in your soul as in your body. It wasn't always like this.

The result has been evident. I absolutely believe that free access to personal development programs of all sorts is the cause of the dramatic decrease in health care costs. Not to mention the decrease in crime and drug abuse. We know today that it's more profitable to spend on preventive measures rather than, as before, wait until the disease broke out or the crime was committed.

In addition, most children today grow up with a completely different sense of human togetherness than when I grew up. Now there are often adults in the neighborhood, who can stand in as parents for the children whose parents work in a different area or are away on a trip. And today we don't work for money for anywhere near as many hours as we used to.

She remembers when she was little and seldom had a grownup at hand... But all of a sudden she sees the happy teenage faces of Meija and Love in her mind and she can't help letting out a giggle. No more reminiscing about the past; it's over and forgiven! It's the present that counts and everything feels good now. She knows that the children have appreciated her change from a stressed out and fairly quiet person to a happy and energetic one.

* * *

That night Sara gets out her vision book and leafs through it. After all the thoughts in the forest earlier today, she feels motivated to contemplate on how her life has developed in these past few years. She has already reached many of the goals and visions she had set up earlier, much faster than she had ever dared to hope. It's time to set some new goals.

She makes herself comfortable, closes her eyes and creates pictures of the Sara she wants to be. A woman who is not only accomplished and knowledgeable; but alert, present, and sensitive to other people's feelings and needs. A woman who shares a large portion of her life with her children, but who also lives together with the man she loves, in an alive and passionate relationship. She also makes room for new and exciting work assignments.

When she senses that the pictures she has created feel true enough to start be relished, she starts a new page in her vision book and writes at the top: "Sara 2026". Then she writes down her future story. It's about a typical day in her life, exactly five years from today.

13. The I-don't-know Shelf

*The scene: Axel's bedroom. Early morning.
Lead character: Axel.*

Slowly the incoming light from the sun has wandered over the window sill, across the bedroom floor to Axel's bed. Axel is turning and twisting under the cover, from both the heat and a dream that is keeping him from waking up. Suddenly someone bangs at the door. At first Axel doesn't know where he is, but slowly things fall into place. He gets up and walks out to open the door. Besim is outside.

'Coming to town with me?', Besim asks while looking at his wrist in the same way older people with a watch might do. Axel laughs.

When they get out in the crisp air Axel wants to take a little detour to the park. He picks a few plums and hands Besim a couple of them.

They munch on the plums and don't speak for a while. They pass a bulletin board outside a gathering place. "Experience the latest research results with all your senses!" a sign says in capital letters. Axel and Besim curiously read the fine print and learn that the poster is an ad for a simultaneous live broadcast from the five largest integration centers in the world.

The broadcast is to take place in a few days, in the very hall they are standing in front of, and also in other places in the world. It's going to be about the latest research results from all the areas where these integration centers are active; physics, biology, gene technology, religion, philosophy, psychology and astronomy. The text on the poster promises a particularly interesting evening with the new thinking and discoveries about the origin of the universe and its continued existence. The organizers also promise that the ones who dare to participate will also be exposed to a few "supernatural" experiences.

'Seems healthy to have a big "I-don't-know shelf" like you do', Besim says after having read all the astonishing facts on the poster.

'Your's isn't so small either', Axel replies.

'Maybe not. But you made up the term "I-don't-know shelf".'

'Well, there had to be some name for the space in my head where I put everything I don't know', Axel replies.

'There could be something in some strange things, but I need time to decide on things. I'm actually pretty open-minded when it comes to things that aren't easily explained. And I've realized that the people that I get along with the best, all have big I-don't-know shelves.'

On a few occasions Axel has met people that don't seem to have an I-don't-know shelf at all. Everything they have heard of they immediately wanted to place on the true-or-false shelf; all the thoughts, ideas and models, and all the experiences they were told about. He has been thinking about why most people these days are so open-minded for new and unusual things, compared to the past. Does a too big I-don't-know shelf demand patience when it comes to insecurity? Does it demand a person that is fairly sure about himself and his identity? If so, the increased openness is probably due to the fact that it is more and more common to have training and exercises in uncertainty handling. These are both in the country's educational institutions and in various sorts of adult education. This has probably also contributed to people today not feeling threatened by foreign cultures and values.

Stephen, one of Axel's friends, is a sort of "cosmic free-flyer", as Axel likes to call him. Stephen seems to lack many of the mental blocks that "normal" people have. He can talk to Axel for hours about the most incredible experiences he has had during the night. He seems to be able to travel freely



between different dimensions and tells about meetings and communications with entities that Axel has never heard of before. Stephen carries on an internal dialog with animals large and small, with nature, with creatures from the inner earth, with angels, Christ, space aliens, divine lights and God knows what; in a never-ending flow. He tells about the most incredible things in a most remarkable way. It could be about the construction of the cosmos, the relationship between man and space aliens; or more earthly subjects, such as the background to and the meaning of man's destructiveness. Stephen can speak two languages which he claims are not spoken on earth and which he has learned from creatures from other planets. He has sung songs for Axel in the language most suitable to express longing. He has described the most fantastic grammatical constructions in the language most suitable for technical connections.

He claims getting information about all this at night - and sometimes during the day if he is alone out in the forest. Night after night, year after year, he has received his "education". He can talk about this forever. Axel, on the other hand, can listen forever and really enjoys listening. Stephen likes to talk to Axel, since there aren't too many people who don't immediately place what Stephen has to say on the shelves for true or untrue. It would never occur to Axel to do that. Doing that would be the same as breaking to pieces the excitement and beauty of the present time. Not to mention how it would be the same as nullifying his friend's experiences. It would cut through the bond of trust between them. Instead Axel puts everything Stephen says, and that Axel can't experience himself, on the I-don't-know shelf. That's a good place for it, he usually thinks.

Axel lets other people view life as they want. But he doesn't allow anybody to force any ideas onto him. This is with the exception of Alicia, of course. She is allowed to convince him of anything. Alicia is more inclined to contemplate spiritual and existential matters than Axel. She has a lot books about philosophy and religion and unexplainable things. Alicia also likes Stephen and would like to learn how to cross the boundaries of dimension like he seems to do.

During their walk Besim and Axel have arrived to the town's lively market square and since they are going to different places they say good-bye to each other in the crowd.

14. Time

Scene: The cabin.

Lead character: Sara.

The three days have passed. Sara feels invigorated both physically and mentally. She has enjoyed the long walks in the surrounding forest, the nice company, the time to reflect on life, some vision work, and just the right amount of stimulating work. What else can you ask from a few days' time off?

The texts that Axel had sent were very interesting. Although she has only read a fraction of the material she realizes that you can build many exercises and discussions around the thoughts that these young people, the Future Builders, as they call themselves, wrote down. She looks forward to seeing Axel to discuss some of her ideas and to learn more about what he wants to do with the material. Most certainly there will be quite a bit of pressure to get everything finished in time, but she doesn't feel particularly stressed out over it. She's simply going to have to postpone some of the contents that she had at first planned. She knows that she has a pretty good perspective on the development of events during the past decades. She also knows that it's very important to create a living and creative atmosphere in the group so that the participants will take initiative and feel the joy of discovery. When they do, knowledge and insight will develop by themselves.

The August air is crisp and clear and she feels a tickling sensation of starting fresh. She is as eager as a child when she packs the 'road-frog' for the trip home, almost as if she was beginning an exciting journey. The packing is quick. Clothes. Toiletries. Fresh vegetables from the garden. Just as she closes the door behind her she pauses. Was that all? Did she look everywhere? No, back in again. A small pile of books are still sitting on the table out on the deck. Before she puts the books in her bag she stops herself again. Unwittingly, she had almost crushed the fresh picked tomatoes with the pile of books.

A bit too fast... Why am I in such a hurry? Am I escaping in thought again? Escaping to a future that isn't now? It's so hard to grasp this time factor. Many of the young people at the seminars often talk in terms like "there was no time". I have often interpreted this as a poetic expression for not being chased by "time that flies". All of a sudden I can see that it's not only about poetry but about a truth so urgently real it's turning existence upside down.

**“The more focused I searched
after tomorrow, the clearer it became
to me that all I could find was now.”**

'I waited for the longest time to see a bit of tomorrow, but it never came', the private philosopher Llesch Dnulresch once said in a lecture at one of our seminar series.

'No matter how much I searched', Dnulresch said, 'I could only find now. The more focused I searched after tomorrow, the clearer it became to me that all I could find was now. Day after day. Second after second. Never anything else but now. Not one bit of yesterday. Not one bit of tomorrow.'

More and more people discovered that time doesn't really exist at all. Space exists, and change in that space exists, but 'time' is just a conceptual idea constructed by man. I remember classes I took where we had to practice a different 'time concept'. The well care staff at the place where I used to work ran exercises not only to understand

'the new time,' but also to use this concept in our everyday work. They often collected inspiration from 'primitive' cultures where the concept of time doesn't exist.

As for me, and many of my friends, we couldn't quite understand the new time concept. Sometimes I have been painfully reminded of the problems I create for myself by my way of interpreting time. For instance, a few years ago I realized that for years I had been walking through life with this constant feeling of never having enough time to do everything I wanted to do. Whenever I got an idea of something interesting that I wanted to do, I marked a day in the calendar when I could do it. The problem was, by the time that day came around my enthusiasm was completely gone. This meant that I, and many of my friends, never managed to seize the joy of the moment. Slowly and gradually we became time depressed, without even knowing it.

One of the things that has been the most difficult for me to grasp about time, is that technical processes are still coordinated with a clock. The clock actually becomes more important the further development progresses. At the same time people are becoming less and less dependent on their clocks and calendars. I know younger people who claim to be completely freed from all measurement of time. Surprisingly, their lives appear to function just as well. They actually seem to get a lot of important and constructive things done, even when they are not planned. They often end up in well timed and important meetings - unplanned of course! Not to mention the fact that they seem to have a lot more fun; they seem more alive, happier and healthier.

'If I lock in my time in a calendar, there's no chance for my intuition to tell me what to do,' Love once said. 'I wouldn't be able to spend my time on whatever feels most important just now. To live by a clock and a calendar is to tell your intuition to go get lost and come back another time, another century.'

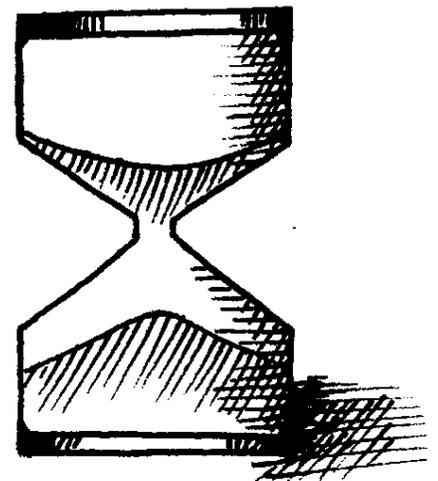
For older generations the most obvious solution appeared to be to get 'more time'. They have had a hard time understanding that the solution would be to simply discard the concept of time. Although they haven't quite grasped these things they have still been able to benefit from the changes that resulted from the changed consciousness of time. Without understanding the basis of the changed consciousness of time they have been able to 'surf the wave' so to speak, and thrived from it.

As for me, I got a confirmation of my own change last week, when I found an old pile of fashion magazines from the 1990's in the attic. Leafing through the magazines, I was struck by how hurried the people seemed in the photos. Even the clothes seemed to be made so that it would show that the bearer was a person that was running through life. In those days we really made an effort to be hard. It was fashionable to have a hard shell. To be stressed out.

This era's 'ideal people,' in the photos, looked as if they didn't have any spare time to care about anybody else but themselves. They even looked proud of looking as if they didn't have time. They were proud of not having any spare time to get involved, unless they got paid very well for it.

We were indeed hard on ourselves. At the same time there were other photos in the same magazine, in which you could sense a growing and strong longing for calm and quietness. In the middle of the magazine there was a 20-page spread of photos of old-fashioned gems, beautiful old stone houses, houses with shining wooden floors, rag rugs, and enamel milk cans. The photos were breathing an almost exaggerated stillness, especially considering that there were no people in the pictures. Only an occasional black cat on a hearth.

There was a longing for quietness and harmony in those photos. But they did not yet include any humans.



15. The Accident

Scene: Axel's house. Evening.

Fresh out of a hot bath and in clean pajamas Alicia has made herself comfortable in bed with a book. She hears Axel moving about the apartment. Just a few minutes ago the two of them came up to Axel's apartment after a dip in the building's seawater pool. They had been sitting in the soft water, talking about the events of the past few days. Alicia had told Axel about all her expectations of the new job at SIT, which she is to begin next week. Axel had told her about the social vision of the Future Builders and how he wanted to use it as a basis for several of Sara's seminar series. He had also told her about his concerns over the mysterious messages from 'the past'.

It's only a little after nine but Axel is tired and is about to join Alicia in bed when he hears the signal for an urgent communication on his Comm. He has a strange premonition when he opens the Comm and says a silent prayer that the call won't be too serious. He wants to get in bed.

'Have you seen or checked out a news agency recently?' It's his colleague Keega at the Cross Discipline, asking the question without even greeting Axel. This together with her quick and tense tone of voice enforces Axel's premonition.

'No, what has happened?'

'Are you in picture mode?' Keega asks.

Axel puts the Comm down on a table, folds out its laser projector and directs it to the first white surface he can find - a piece of white wall in the living room where he is standing.

'OK, I'm in picture mode', he replies.

'This is just going out over the news networks as we speak', Keega says. 'Are you sitting down? It's absolutely horrible. I attach.'

What Axel sees is the worst accident in the history of the Monorail, that occurred in Framstad no more than a half-hour ago. One of the switching stations seems to have gone completely mad. It started to release car modules ten meters straight down into the street. Twenty people had been killed and at least as many were injured.

'Wow.'

Axel can feel his blood draining from his head, he feels sick, and he can't see properly. He wakes up again when he falls into the couch and hits the back of his head against the soft edge. Alicia walks into the room and wonders what is going on.

'A Monorail accident here in town! 19 dead! I knew something was going to happen. I knew it! How the hell did it happen?' he asks Keega.

'I just have preliminary data', Keega replies. 'It seems that the program modules that coordinate the switching of the Monorail somehow got isolated from each other. They stopped cooperating, yet continued to operate even when they were isolated. This is not supposed to be able to happen.'

'Then the control systems seem to have been isolated as well', Keega continues. 'They are supposed to turn off the switching structure as soon as there is the slightest deviation. They must not have been getting any error signals. Nor did any human operator receive one signal that something was wrong! They actually found out about it on the news!'

All Axel can do is utter isolated swear words. Alicia is the one who keeps a level head. She asks Keega if she sees any connection between the accident and the warnings that have popped up over the past few weeks on the Comm networks.

'That's why I contacted you, Axel. Have you gotten any clues recently?'

'No, only that quite a few other people have gotten similar messages to the ones I got.'

'Is there a way to figure out what's going on?' Alicia wonders.

'Not that I know', Keega answers. 'But keep looking for the most obvious and simple things. That usually gives results. Even if it would be like looking for a needle in a haystack.'

16. Besim's father

Scene: Besim's house. Evening.

Two minutes later Axel and Alicia are sitting in Besim's kitchen. He has not yet gone to bed and somehow sleep doesn't seem important to any of them. Axel describes the accident and gives Besim more details. Besim listens carefully to the whole story and tears are running down his cheeks when he realizes the magnitude of the accident. He rises and goes to get some tea and crisp bread for his guests. They turn on Besim's Comm and follow the reporting from the accident for a while. At the same time they try to find new angles on what sort of trick it is that technology seems to be playing with mankind. They start talking about what it was like to live in the old days, before the era of computers. It wasn't that long ago...

Besim starts talking about his father Özcan, who grew up in a small farm community in south-eastern Turkey. Not much had changed in the village where Özcan grew up since the time of Jesus Christ. There were approximately two thousand people in the village, orthodox Christians who lived by the Old Testament. A good person will end up in heaven. Everybody knew everybody in the village and the families had lived in the village for at least five hundred years. All life in the village circled around religion.

Life was guided by the seasons. The people adapted to what the land and the animals offered. From the city they bought tools, salt and sometimes modern clothes. Otherwise everything was produced in the village; grain, wine, candy, milk, cheese, syrup, raisins. Everything was taken care of and prepared to last until the same time the following year. Animal hides were used, rugs and ropes were made. There was no garbage, no sewer, everything was returned to nature.

Sometimes a truck from town came to visit. All the children would come running to hear the big news. When someone in the village built a house everybody helped.

Özcan's family was forced to leave the village in 1980. By then some changes had begun. Electricity had arrived. Someone had gotten a radio and electric light. Moving directly from this world to a Western city was quite a shock for Özcan's family. It was like moving two thousand years in time. Özcan himself was nine years old and his strongest memory was that he was sick for several weeks straight. He didn't know whether it was the air, but at any rate the food didn't taste like food. Chicken looked like chicken but it was something completely different when they ate it. It tasted horrible. His stomach couldn't handle it.

Özcan had never been in an escalator. Never used a water toilet. Never turned on a faucet with hot and cold running water coming out of it. Never crossed a street on a crossing with red light. Never watched TV.

'The first time we watched TV we laughed for two weeks', Özcan had said. No matter what kind of program the whole family, from great grandmother to the youngest baby, sat laughing over the fact that people could be heard and seen moving on a screen.

**“It didn't matter if you
were out and about town. Nobody
saw you. You were invisible.”**

After a while Özcan's stomach got used to the food. Something Özcan never got used to was that you couldn't, as he put it, talk directly to a person in the new culture he had come to.

'I couldn't speak with my heart to anyone. I couldn't turn directly from my heart to another person's heart. I

had to talk around the person.'

This was in heavy contrast to how it was in Özcan's home, where each person had a total value. People in the Western culture weren't individuals in those days, in Özcan's mind. Here only a few, famous people had a total value. The others saw themselves as not fully worthy human beings, 'non-persons'. Thousands of young people wanted to be a famous model or president, but they really just wanted to be an individual - with a full value. It was a system that produced a large amount of losers.

This syndrome was long-lived and difficult to eradicate. One of the reasons for this was that the individual constantly was influenced from many directions.

'It started already in school', Özcan explained. 'It didn't matter if you were out and about town. Nobody saw you. You were invisible. Unless for example you were a girl and walked around in a string in the middle of winter. But you were never seen as a human being. Maybe as an object. People consumed ideals as they consumed time. Then they lived a 'substitute life' through the soap operas on TV. To fit in you had to be someone else; someone extreme.'

Back home in Özcan's village everybody had a value. Everybody! There was a respect for the individual. Each and everyone meant something. There he had a contact, a relation to others. He could talk directly to the person.

The friends sit quietly for a while when Besim has finished his story.

'What happened then to your father?' Axel asks Besim. 'Didn't he have an interesting time here in Sweden?'

'Sure he did. After a while he got quite a lot of use of his experiences from having lived in a "recycling society in a nutshell", as he used to call it. By the end of the 1990's experimental recycling societies started popping up in the West. Özcan realized that technology wasn't enough to make the recycling society work. It was just as much about the people having to find working attitudes to be able to live in harmony with nature, with the seasons, and with each other. It required an attitude, a mentality and a tempo that wasn't obvious to impatient westerners. So Özcan teamed up with a group of westerners that had the technical know-how to build a recycling society, which became one of the first really well functioning villages.'

17. A Collective Consciousness

The scene: The living room couch at Axel's house. The Comm set up for picture communication.

When Axel and Alicia came back to Axel's apartment after their visit to Besim, they sit down at opposite ends of the couch. They are not at all sleepy. The pictures from the terrible accident won't leave them and they can't let go of the thought that they may be able to help prevent other accidents.

'Oh dear!, Alicia says suddenly. 'My sister Anna takes the Monorailer occasionally on that particular stretch! I have to make sure that she and her family are OK!'

Alicia's sister Anna is soon connected and all is well with her and her family. They are of course equally upset over the accident and they talk about it for a while. Then Alicia wants to know about Anna's trip abroad.

'What a tan you have, Anna! Was the weather nice in Egypt?'

'Yeah, the weather was nice', Anna answers. 'But otherwise it was scary. It was like being back in the twentieth century again. It became obvious to me that governments in poor countries do not always think in the same way we do. They still think they have the right to abuse nature. They don't feel they have to be responsible before us westerners, since they feel that we are to blame for most of the problems on earth. Besides, they think we have robbed them of their economy since the oil isn't worth anything anymore.'

'Ummm', Alicia says.

Alicia admires Anna for her involvement in the Global Ethics Council (GEC). Anna's specialty is population issues, but right now she works mainly with environmental issues.

There is no doubt that Anna is frustrated. It must be tough to try to negotiate with countries that don't understand the perspectives of the GEC. Anna wants to do so much and the development work is so slow in the areas where she works. Compared to this, she is grateful that she also has her work as Environmental Informer at home. The work here is considerably easier.

'Oh by the way!' Anna says. 'I was just contacted by Wing and Kristina on the Comm. Let me connect them. I've been meaning to introduce you to each other anyway.'

'Sure', Alicia and Axel say simultaneously.

On the picture two more people are taking shape. The superimposition is nice and soft. It almost looks as if they are in the same room as Anna.

'Wing?!' Alicia says, immediately recognizing the unusual name.

'Eh, I'm sorry?' Wing says, somewhat uncertain, and corrects his glasses. 'Is it Alicia?'

'It sure is!' says Alicia.

Alicia and Wing used to be in the same circle of friends during a few years in their pre-teens. They had had a lot of fun together. That's why they were both bursting with laughter and a bit moved to be reunited like this.

Wing and Kristina tell how they moved out to the country after school, and have become quite independent of modern society. They are completely self-supporting and manage almost completely without electricity. They heat their house with wood in the winter and rely on the sun in the summer. Only in recent years have they acquired a photosyntesizer so that they can operate a small Comm.

'We could be without almost anything, except the means to communicate with the surrounding world', tells Kristina. 'Sometimes we are seen as a bit reclusive, which we really aren't. We don't seek seclusion for its own sake but because we love peace of mind and enjoy the simple life. We do want to have contact with other people. Wing has recently started working in a project that requires a lot of communicating.'

'Tell us!' asks Alicia and Anna.

'It's a project intended to follow how "the global attention" is shifting in focus', says Wing. 'There are signs that the choice of subjects in people's communication over the tele network and in direct meetings are changed in a rhythmical way. Different themes travel in an even rhythm from the northern hemisphere to the southern, and vice versa. These waves do not follow the movements of the sun. Instead some of the themes seem to travel north at the

same time as others travel south. The length of a phase is about three months. The question that this project is trying to answer is whether there is any difference between the idea themes traveling northbound and the ones traveling southbound.'

'What themes is it about?' Axel asks.

'We don't know yet. As long as I do the surveillance assignment I won't get to hear anything about it, or what others conclude. This is so that I won't be "ruined" as an independent observer.'



Axel sits up in his chair, leans forward and rests his elbows on his knees. It is obvious that he is involved and attentive. Wing is talking about things close to his area of interest. He also knows that they do research at the Cross Discipline similar to this.

'How do you do it, more concretely?' Axels asks.

'My task is to monitor a selection of English and French language papers and magazines, plus to note any changes in sidewalk art and street music around the world. The papers I retrieve on the Comm, and the street observations I also do via the Comm. All I need to do is connect to the direct link footage shot by cameras on various streets in cities all over the world.

Everywhere where you can hear street music I stop. Everywhere where there is sidewalk art I stop. I then have certain well defined events and signs that need to be classified and registered.'

'Sometimes I go into the city to meet research colleagues', Wing continues. 'Then I use the company's hi-qu comm room, it's almost like being there yourself.'

**"It's part of a project with the
aim of getting perspective on what happens today
within mankind's collective consciousness."**

'Sounds interesting!' 'And what is the actual purpose of this research?'

'Oh, I forgot to mention that', Wing laughs. 'It's part of a project with the aim of getting perspective on what happens today within mankind's collective consciousness. Many doors have been opened between people in our civilization during the past twenty years. The attitudes we have toward each other are more open, more honest and more trustful than before. Besides the Comystems have opened communication channels between people all over the world, regardless of distance, in a way that is probably unsurpassed in mankind's history. Right now there are reasons to question what is happening within our collective consciousness. We have reason to believe there will be a large step in development.'

'How do you mean?', Axel asks.

'Imagine a brain where the connection between the cells are rendered unconscious', Wing says. 'A brain where the individual cells internally exchange only a few spread out signals. What do you think about the possibilities for consciousness within the person who carries this brain?'

'They are probably not much greater than they are in the individual little brain cell...'

'No, exactly. In human terms the closest thing to this type of consciousness would be deep sleep. Now imagine the various cells starting to exchange information with each other. There are now possibilities for a consciousness that is much greater than the one for the individual cell. A larger consciousness is waking up.'

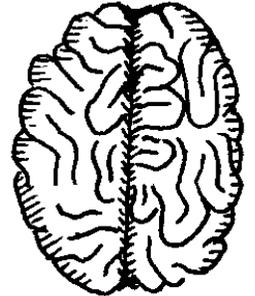
'My God!' Alicia exclaims. You mean that mankind in a similar way can be on its way to build in a consciousness of a whole different dignity than our consciousness as separate individuals?'

'That's right. There are many signs today pointing to a heavily increasing activity on the so called collective consciousness level. For the Consciousness Researchers of today it is actually very hard to believe that such a collective consciousness would not be about to wake up, considering the conditions prevailing with mankind today. The research that I'm involved in aims to chart consciousness movements within mankind. Each such movement can be seen as a thought, or an embryo of a thought, in the collective consciousness. A sign that this is

really the case is that more and more people seem to feel an affinity with all living creatures and that the various religions now seem to approach each other with respect. Maybe we'll have one single religion at the end, who knows?

'Absolutely fantastic!'

More than just Alicia among the listeners think so. Axel is however starting to feel terribly tired and it is time to finally go to bed.



18. The Geneoloid

*The scene: Sara and her children in the road-frog on their way home.
Lead character: Sara.*

Sara is struck by the insight that life assumes a whole different aspect of stability and security as soon as she has her children with her. She has just picked them up at their father's and the three of them are now on their way to the suburb of Trastgård on the other side of town. The road-frog is slowly rolling through the green and lush villa area. Håkan kept the house they had lived in when they had been married. He is now remarried and has another child. Love and Meija get along well with his new wife and Sara has to admit she is very nice. Håkan also seems happier these days and doesn't work as much as he used to. He has received patents on many of his inventions and can support himself just fine on this plus his consulting work within material composition.

'Look!', Love suddenly exclaims. 'A geneoloid! Look over there!'

Sara turns around and sure enough - it's a geneoloid.

'Ugh, how ugly it is! Look at those arms!', Love continues.

'Yuck, really disgusting!', Meija whispers. 'This one is even worse than the one we saw last time.'

'Did you see that? His head looks like a gooey gel blob. He is almost uglier than you', Love teases his little sister. Meija playfully pinches him in his ear.

The picture of the geneoloid remains in Sara's head. A human being with crooked arms swinging all the way down to his knees, and an unshapely face. It is incomprehensible that human beings contributed to create this monster.

The day the HUGO project succeeded in charting man's genes, most people thought that man had nature under control. It proved, however, that there was more to it than that to reach the key to life. The scary part was that from that day some of the scientists couldn't refrain from experimenting with humans. In the beginning there were enthusiastic reports of experiments that were claimed to have saved people from becoming disabled and from rare diseases. Today, the Global Ethics Council has shown that most genetical experiences should never have been made.

This is not to mention the gene-manipulated vegetables developed at the end of the twentieth century. They contained lots of vitamins, grew very fast, and were marketed as mega health vegetables. After about five years the result started to be noticeable. The mega vegetables had caused a strange hormone imbalance in the people that ate them. They began to age at a fast rate instead of being healthy and beautiful. Sara can still recall the pictures of people in their mid-thirties who looked like eighty and didn't have much longer to live.

Thank God that I remained skeptical over gene-manipulated food! Thank God I thought the best food was the most natural food, even though this opinion was often discarded as spaced out theories of development scared tree-huggers.

The geneoloids are a result of the 'gene adjustment' that was offered to the general public for a while. There were tests you could take before conception and test to examine the genes of the egg after conception. The argument was that you would be able to control which genes to pass on to your children.

Gene analysis became fashionable. She has never told Love but, before he was born she was offered a gene analysis and to have gene adjustment against psoriasis, which ran in both her and Håkan's families. Luckily she declined. Love's problems with psoriasis have been easy to live with when you think about what could have happened. Worst case scenario, he could have ended up as a geneoloid.

Gene technology turned out to be one of the most dangerous sciences man ever conceived, and today gene manipulation in any form is strictly forbidden. Only in isolated cases the Global Ethic Council has allowed exceptions, for instance to develop the algae used for the photosynthesizers. All such work is monitored closely by

the Global Ethic Council and scientific societies throughout the world.

'They don't make any more geneoloids today, do they, Mom?', Meija suddenly asks from the back seat.

'No', Sara answers. 'Today scientists don't do things only to satisfy their own curiosity. And they understood that things doesn't work in separate shoot.'

'What do you mean, shoot?' Love asks.

'Well, when the first gene technology came people thought it was possible to interfere in one place in nature and know exactly what effects the interference would have.'

“Today scientists don't do things only to satisfy their own curiosity.”

'How?'

'If, for example, they changed the genes in a person, they believed they would know exactly what would happen next. They thought they could control all effects. As if the relations of nature were as simple as a crossword puzzle. Today we know that everything is interrelated and that it's impossible for us humans to foresee all the effects that should be taken into consideration. We know now that each interference with nature can cause effects that are still unknown.'

'Sure. Did they think they could control life?'

'They actually did.'

'Hmmm', Love says and falls back into a state of contemplation.

Love's questions are sometimes good. When I manage to answer them I see things more clearly myself. Now it strikes me that today it is natural for us to see every event as part of a greater whole. We didn't do that before the Turning Point. Regardless of whether it is science, work life, everyday life, society, global, or our own self; in all areas we want to see the connections. Of course this is not a new concept, that all things are connected. Other cultures have known for thousands of years that, for instance, good health is related to inner balance. What's new is that people in the technology driven Western society also have realized this.

How come we humans have seen life in fragments for so long? How come we could believe that things happened independently of each other and without being related? What has happened in our recent thinking to make us see life as a whole again?

Maybe scientific developments play a key role. During the 1900's development brought us to a point where we couldn't go any further in scientific understanding of the world, without starting to see things in a broader context.

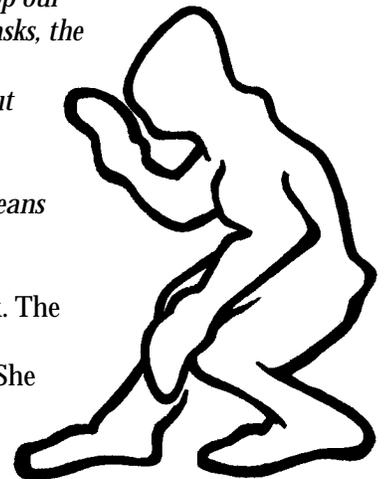
The development of information technology has of course been very significant. Systems analysis is one of the most advanced metaphysical sciences of today. Even the actual use of information tools has had effects on our consciousness. When most of us suddenly had computers on our desks, we began to develop our ability to think in terms of systems. While believing we were busy with other important tasks, the most important result was that we developed our ability of system thinking.

An incredibly comprehensive education in systems thinking quietly took place, without us even being conscious of it.

Having acquired the logic of systems thinking we were forced to also put ourselves in systems and contexts. The interest grew quickly for a concept like environment - which means context.

Sara pulls over and stops the road-frog outside the Knowledge Bank to borrow a book. The children are half asleep and prefer to wait in the frog.

She doesn't normally retrieve her books from the kom networks like most people do. She prefers to read real books to scanning the text on a screen. Nor has she bothered to get a book printer to print the books that she could retrieve via the kom networks.



‘Another book?’, Meija asks when she returns.

It is very rare that Meija and Love choose books over other media. They consider book reading too tedious.

To be fifteen years old and try to understand your mother can't be easy. Especially not someone as stuffy as me. It seems impossible to explain to them why I think it's more practical to read a book than to connect to an experience node among the kom networks. For me it's a secure feeling to hold a book. Ever since my mother and father read aloud to me from the Return of the Lion, when I was ten, I have associated books with exciting and cozy moments. I wonder if my children get the same feeling when they connect to an experience node. I just don't like to connect to the experience equipment. I think it's a bit scary to see, hear, and feel things that aren't really there. I want it to be clear what is virtual reality and what is real reality.

‘Books are easy to carry’, Sara says. ‘I can leaf through them and look up things in them. A Pocket-Wise may be simple to carry but it is difficult to put your fingers between the pages.’

‘Actually it's much easier to ‘put in thumb-marks’, sort, structure, and keep track of information in the Pocket-Wize than in a book’, Love says. ‘It's only because you haven't learned how to use it that you say things like that.’

Sara sees that a rational explanation isn't good enough. Why does she want real books?

‘Putting my feet up on a stool and enjoying a good book makes me happy’, she says. ‘I enjoy stretching out among the pillows on the living room couch and relaxing when I seek inspiration. And besides it smells good, too!’

There is silence from the back seat. No more counter arguments? No. Still quiet. As usual, they are most satisfied when she has found an explanation that is closer to the truth. She could list a thousand rational reasons to wanting to read a book. None of them would have hit home. It's arguments such as: ‘it makes me happy’ or ‘I enjoy it’ that work. Young people always seem to respect that kind of argument. And who could contradict her? After all she knows best what makes her happy.

That doesn't only apply to the children. Adults are also more satisfied when she says that she does what she does because it is fun. She remembers one of her early jobs as a consultant. She was at the software company DynaSoft. The dominating guy in the group, their number one programmer - a tall, unshaven guy with salty language and a sharp intellect - declared to the group that his purpose in life was to have fun. Period. He had no other goal than to have a good life - to have fun. Back then she was quite shocked over this ‘lack of respect’. She didn't realize that she had just caught a glimpse of the future. She didn't know that she would see for herself generations of young people put forward this targeted direction toward experience and quality of life. She thinks about the incredibly dynamic generation of the eighties, the generation which, in the last fifteen years, is on it's way to turning most of the entertainment field upside down, the generation that breaks all boundaries in culture.

* * *

Back home in Trastgårda. She pulls up at the car pool, parks the frog and starts unpacking her things. She walks up to the staff to turn in the frog's route card. The charges will be put on her monthly bill. The road-frog is the most common car in the car pool. Reliable, comfortable, and no luxuries. Since the car pool opened some ten years ago, many people have gotten rid of their private cars. It is liberating to not have your own car. The frog gets the service and care it needs. When she needs a car she simply signs up verbally from home; for a date, time, and voilà; the problem is solved.

The guy in the car pool asks if she has heard about the accident. He is just listening to an interview of a witnesses to the event. Sara and the children hurry up to the apartment and connect the Comm. Instinctively, Sara knows that at least one of the threats she thought were empty has been carried out.

19. On the Knowledge Net

Scene: At Sara's house in Trastgårda.

Lead character: Sara.

Tousled and half awake, she patters around in the apartment - careful not to wake anyone. It usually takes her a while to really wake up, which is why she usually sets her alarm clock early enough to give her plenty of time before it's time to get dressed and have breakfast. Normally, she does not have anyone other than herself to feed in the morning, and it's often something simple. Today is different. She promised Meija and Love to make 'Mom's Special' for breakfast. Mom's Special is a huge 'Hero sandwich' as they were called when she grew up. It's comprised of deep fried fish, egg, tomato, cucumber, onion, mushroom and, most important of all, Sara's homemade special dressing. She prepared dough to rise over the night and she will wake the children with the smell of fresh bread.

When she puts the baking-sheet in the oven she still feels affected by all the feelings and impressions of yesterday. No wonder. Come to think about it, she has been dreaming about the accident half the night. But, now she needs to greet the new day with optimism. First a cozy breakfast with the children, then a walk over to the Knowledge Net to make plans with Axel. Then lunch with Erik.

The smell of fresh bread fills Sara's kitchen and Meija and Love wander in, heavy with sleep, to help themselves to the sandwiches. She was happy yesterday when they told her they wanted to have breakfast together, even though she had to leave early. They are usually sleepyheads, both of them, as are most children their age.

'Best sandwiches we've had in many years!' they say.

Even her brain, which is almost constantly busy reasoning and analyzing things, is quiet and still for a long while. In the children's company she is usually focused in the "now", but today there is something else. She is affected by the presence of life that characterizes their lives. Sara is convinced that this is caused partially by the fact that spiritual development is part of the standard curriculum in school (which is not seen as having to do with religion). Maybe she ought to include something about presence of life in her seminar?

'Thanks for a wonderful breakfast, Mom', Love and Meija say as they get up.

'I'm heading over to the Knowledge Net to work for a while. I suppose you are going to see your friends? See you both tonight! Enjoy your day!

* * *

When Sara arrives at the Knowledge Net Axel has already been there for two hours. He is totally absorbed by yesterday's accident, not the least since he found out this morning that the father of one of his childhood friends was one of the victims. Axel is now searching feverishly in the Knowledge Net's historical archives for clues that could help explain what sort of forces could have managed to program this sabotage, a long time ago. He doesn't doubt for a minute that it is a question of sabotage. All the warnings that he and many others had received on their Comms stated that death and destruction were to be spread through technology. The Cross Discipline's experts have established the fact that the messages originate from the past, maybe 15 to 20 years back. But from where?

Earlier Axel had tried to solve the riddle of the warnings just for fun. It had been a challenge for him as an amateur researcher to succeed with something the highly educated experts had failed to solve. But now the game had become dead serious.

'I think you better let up for a while,' Sara says when she sees how upset Axel is. 'I bought some apple buns on the way. Let's take a break and collect our thoughts.'

Sara talks about her relaxed days in the cabin and she thanks Axel for the material from the Building the Future project. They sit for a couple of hours, discussing in which order the various themes the texts deal with should be planned. It's difficult, because all themes are related, without really having a beginning or an end.

* * *

It's lunch time and Sara heads over to a nearby restaurant where she is to meet Erik. They see each other a couple of times a week. Lately they've been seeing each other on the weekends also...

Erik has an interesting life story. He finished a vocational high school with a diploma in construction technology in the eighties and found work almost immediately. There was quite a lot of construction during 'the happy eighties' and salaries in the construction trade were high. Erik made good money and got himself a family, a house, and a car before the economic downturn of the nineties. Suddenly there were no jobs for construction workers and Erik was forced to report to the Unemployment Agency. He was told he ought to consider getting another education to improve his chances of finding work. The thought of going back to school made him despair. His memories from school were still too fresh.

**“Now it became clear to
him why in school they had classified him
as more or less uneducable.”**

Erik became more and more depressed and his finances deteriorated quickly. He was forced to sell the house and in the process his marriage fell apart. He got into bad company. He committed some petty crimes and took a few turns in jail. As it turned out, prison was his small fortune. When he landed in prison for the third time it was explained to him that he was dyslectic and not stupid as he had always believed. Now it became clear to him why in school they had classified him as more or less uneducable. He simply had difficulties learning to read and write the way it was taught in school. After extensive testing in prison, he learned that he was talented in many areas; artistically, musically, and spatially in particular. After trying new ways of learning he soon caught up with what he had missed in school. Eventually he became an expert in designing and testing pleasure boats. He also learned the trade of building boats in wood.

All this happened while he was in prison. When he got out he had enough confidence to start his own business. After a few tough years he had a break-through. Erik was one of the first to start showing his boats over the kom networks and at the same time small, solid, environmentally friendly wooden boats became popular. Today buyers line up years in advance to get one. Erik is taling it easy and is only expanding his staff by a few persons each year. The company isn't everything, especially not after he met Sara.

She sees him from behind from far away. He is sitting alone in the outside cafe, waiting for her. Her heart takes a leap. She sneaks up on him from behind and glides into the chair opposite him. They look each other in the eye without words. This heart activity that starts up every time she sees him is almost painful. But she would never want to be without it.

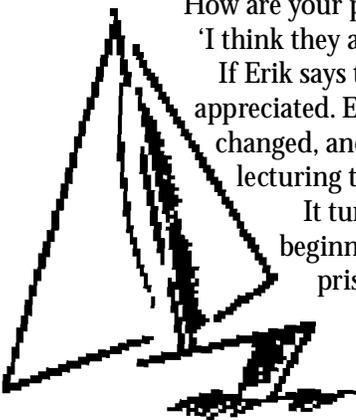
'How are your prison meetings going?'

'I think they are quite appreciated.'

If Erik says that he 'thinks' and that they are 'quite' appreciated, it means they are tremendously appreciated. Erik was asked a few years ago if he wanted to visit the prisons to tell his story of how he changed, and how he redeveloped his self-esteem. He hesitated at first. He didn't see himself as the lecturing type. But he decided to give it a try for the sake of a good cause.

It turned out that Erik had a good eye for the potential among the prison customers. In the beginning he was very surprised that he got so involved in the prisoners' stories. For many of the prison's customers, the meeting with Erik was a turning point. They 'turned the boat on its keel', as Erik put it. Now he is employed part-time as a prison humanist, for a symbolic salary. He knows his work is very valued.

'But it's not easy', he says. Today the petty criminals are at home with electronic



surveillance. Only the heavy criminals remain in jail. And it's harder to reach into their heart. But it's do-able. I'm going to continue as long as I'm of any help!

She sees the wrinkles around his eyes and his brown friendly eyes. They look at each other seriously for a while.

How could time have flown so quickly?! She hurries straight back to the Knowledge Net. Both the stomach and the heart have been satisfied, at least for the next few hours.

20. The Unraveling

Scene: Sara's house.

After a brief summary of the morning's work Sara decides to go home to work with the book she borrowed. Axel wants to continue searching for clues in the archives and Sara realizes that he needs to channel his energy into something to relieve himself of his grief and despair over the accident.

Love and Meija are out and have left the apartment in a condition that reminds Sara of when they were little. Things were messy, but comfortable and lively. She throws some towels and dirty clothes in the laundry basket. She takes a bottle of juice and a glass, her book, and a cushion and walks outside to sit in the patio. Some children are playing on a nearby lawn and an older couple are working in their vegetable garden. It's calm and peaceful. Sara decides to relax and do some vision work for a while, before her seminar starts in a few weeks. She always takes the opportunity to work with visualizations when she is in a peaceful place, and this seems a perfect chance. She makes herself comfortable, closes her eyes and visualizes the room at the Knowledge Net. She creates a positive image in her mind of how the seminar maintains a good atmosphere from the beginning. She visualizes all the old and new participants, with expectant minds and faces. She is friendly when she greets them, one by one, and shakes their hands. Pleasant music fills the air and everybody gets acquainted. A spirit of trust and warmth is spreading within the group... oh it is so wonderful to have the privilege of working with these people!

Slowly Sara returns to the present. She rises and takes a brief walk around the lawn before she returns to her chair. It is time to explore the book she borrowed. As always when she has a new, unread book in her hands, Sara enjoys leafing through and examining it and its content before she starts reading it. Some chapters she feels she can skip, while others seem very interesting. Suddenly, when she is randomly leafing through the book, a date jumps out at her from a page, as if it were written in letters of fire. August 10, 2021. That was yesterday! Why is this date in this book about the period around the turn of the century? The answer to this question pops into her mind when she quickly scans the pages that follow.

The chapter is about a sect hostile toward technology, lead by a fanatic man. He predicted the ruin of Earth, unless mankind immediately relieved themselves of everything that had to do with technological development. The sect had secluded themselves in a deserted part of a forest, from where they sent messages to selected people. Among other things, the prime minister had received a warning letter in 1999, which had been published in many newspapers. The police had managed to trace the sect and the leader was arrested. Before any trial could take place, he had committed suicide and the rest of the sect was dissolved. A few of the criminal experts at the time were assigned to investigate whether there was any substance in the threats the sect had been spreading. The letter to the prime minister had stated, among other things, that a number of accidents would happen in the future, unless she and her government convened a global meeting with the purpose of banning all computers. One of the dates when such an accident would occur, was **August 10, 2021**. The experts failed, however, to find anything that proved that this fanatic with his hostility to technology and his supporters had the know-how to be able to carry out their threats and to set the stage for accidents to happen some twenty years later. The case was closed and soon forgotten.

Sara's heart beats like crazy when she contacts Keega at the Cross Discipline. Of course, Keega had heard about this sect, but had forgotten it like everyone else. Keega remembers that a number of accidents were supposed to occur. Now there was no time to lose in pouring over old threatening letters, articles, TV news segments, and of course Sara's book, in order to get more pieces to the puzzle that might prevent further accidents from happening. First of all the police need to be involved, and then all available scientists, lateral thinkers at universities and in industry. The Cross Discipline's own participants would be called in immediately for a brainstorming session. Sara was invited on the spot.

It is an afternoon Sara will never forget.

21. Epilogue

The dust has finally settled somewhat after all the excitement over the ‘case of the hibernating curses’, as the media had christened the Monorail accident, with the events preceding and succeeding it. Sara has been interviewed numerous times and her picture has been shown on the news networks all over the world. Even though it was a combined effort of many people to prevent further accidents, Sara had been the one who put everyone on the right trail. The journalists wanted to hear her story and her analysis over and over again.

In spite of all the fuss, Sara and Axel started the seminar series as planned. ‘The case of the hibernating curses’ had certainly taken a good portion of their planning time, but it had also contributed with a lot of useful material for the seminar discussions.

After they had studied the Future Builders’ texts, Sara and Axel agreed to set up the next few weeks’ study groups around five themes. Each group would work with a theme, based on the five core issues that the Future Builders had worked with. They were:

- the environment
- the economic system
- learning and development
- work - leisure
- the local community

Each group would read those of the Future Builders’ texts that dealt with their particular theme, for example the environment. They would then relay to the other groups how the Future Builders had reasoned within this theme. They would also identify **the most important of the Future Builders’ positions**. These positions become the building blocks for The Building of the Future that will be the result of the whole project. When all the building blocks have been identified the seminar participants will be given the assignment to physically create the building blocks from recycled material and to create a building for a public exhibition. Anyone who is interested can come to see how a group of young people imagined the future twenty-five years ago.

In part II of this book the result of the groups’ work is described.

PART II

Building the Future

This part of the book is a written summary of the group assignments carried out by the participants in Sara's seminar series during the series' first few months. The work is based on a number of texts written by a group of young people in a project called 'Building the Future'. This project was carried out in the middle of the 1990's and aimed to create a vision of a sustainable future society in the year 2021.

1. The Environment establishes the Framework

Our group has agreed that the most important positions of the Future Builders were the following:

- **Respect for the environment must set the tone for all human activity. (Base building block)**
- **The laws of thermo dynamics and the four system conditions should define these frames.**
The basic principles of **the laws of thermodynamics** are:
 - * It's not possible to create or destroy material. It is possible to change its form.
 - * It's not possible to destroy energy but you can convert it.
 - * Disorder increases in closed systems. This is the rule that proves that iron rusts and that textiles wear out.**The four system conditions are:**
 - * The amount of material from the earth's crust in nature can not constantly increase.
 - * The presence of unnatural substances in nature must not be increased.
 - * The basis of natures cycle must not be impoverished.
 - * Utilization of resources must be effective and fairly distributed.
- **The sun must become our most important source of energy. Wind and water power must be utilized more. The use of fossil fuels must end.**
- **People's values will change from being focused on material things to the non-material.**
- **People will prioritize holistic thinking over separate solutions.**
- **These changes will happen through raised awareness.**
- **People will listen to and trust their inner guides.**

When reading all that the Future Builders wrote about the environment, energy, transportation, technology, etc., we have noticed that these young people were heavily involved in environmental issues. They were very frustrated by all the devastation they witnessed or heard about; destroyed rain forests, the thinning ozone layer, dead sea beds, acid lakes, and the alarming increase of allergies and cancerous diseases. In several places their texts can only be interpreted as cries for help:

"The term 'raised awareness' is constantly heard around us, it's what will turn us into more morally responsible people. Raised awareness and increased individual responsibility are being preached from everywhere. What does this awareness really mean and when is it going to start helping us?

I don't know whether to laugh or cry when I watch the TV commercials that use the environment as sales argument. It's as if we silence our conscience by buying a bottle of 'environmentally friendly' detergent.

"I always buy environmentally friendly products!"

This is what actually puts blinders on our eyes. We think everything will be all right as long as we buy 'environmentally friendly'. We are not able to see the real, large problems such as the population explosion, the over utilization of natural resources, the ozone holes, etc. We therefore become incapable of making the necessary changes. These problems might seem impalpable, but it surely is not a disadvantage to understand how they interrelate. The debate is turned against the individual and the individual's responsibility. The

average consumer is often viewed as feeble-minded.

"They probably couldn't cope with hearing about the really large issues so we will start gently with some environmentally friendly products."

That somehow feels like starting at the wrong end; if we knew more about how our own actions affect the earth, most people would probably assume more responsibility. Or is it so that no one understands? Ever since school we are fed with detailed information, it's more important to know what is than to know why we need math. You feel somehow cheated of the greater context, cheated of basic knowledge. Maybe this is why we can't see the complete picture, why the environmental debate is at such a low level. Maybe we need to see the larger picture before we have any use of our raised awareness.

Even among those who are supposed to know the complete picture there is a lack of a holistic view. Some intend that we still need to increase our purchasing power, our consumption, and even our exports! This doesn't fit with our raised awareness, which tells us that we need to consume less in order not to deplete our natural resources. We have to decrease transportation, or make it environmentally friendly, if we want to save the environment. There is a large ambiguity in today's society, a double message that goes straight to the individual.

We know so much today. Sometimes it feels as if we are completely flooded with information. Another feeling is the one that I really don't want to know anything more right now, because then I have to assume more responsibility. I have books lying around at home that I don't even dare to open; good books, interesting books, books filled with alternative life styles and good solutions. I think it's a pretty common feeling, somehow you are afraid of knowledge because you don't know how to relate it to reality. Knowledge can be a heavy burden. I know how I should live my life and what I should do, but I am incapable of realizing this knowledge. It is very frustrating to have this knowledge. I also have a serious problem balancing my need for material things with the knowledge that a more suitable behavior would be to buy less stuff. Sure, a lot is completely up to me. Sure, I could always do more. That's no excuse, but I wonder: 'Why can't I go all the way?'

I want to use alternative energy. I want to recycle. I want to live in greater harmony with nature. But how? Do I have to move to an eco-village?

I don't want to.

Do I have to live in the country, without the lively atmosphere of the city?

I don't want to.

I want to live in the city and yet live conscientiously. Why are there such poor prospects to do this? I can't use alternative energy in my apartment. Should I plug my toaster into my own wind mill? There aren't even any provisions for recycling, which should be the simplest thing to organize.

There is a lot of talk about the responsibility of the individual. How often are you in an individual situation, though? I'm virtually never in an individual situation. Most of the time you have to compromise. For instance I have to go by what my landlord wants when it comes to my household energy. I wouldn't mind paying twice the amount for alternative, environmentally friendly energy, but my landlord won't let me!

Another issue taking up a lot of my time is: When does one stop being an individual? When you become manager of a large company or a government department? At this point your individual responsibility must end. How else could things become the way they are? How else could large industrial companies be allowed to pollute the environment we share and ruin the public domain? I don't mean that this would in any way remove the responsibility of the consumer or the individual, on the contrary. I only mean that you must surely be an individual also when you are in a group. Surely you must accept responsibility even though you are not alone? There are indeed things happening in companies and organizations now, but there has to be more. The situation is serious now.

The new period we are entering means a lot of new opportunities and we all feel that things are changing for the better. We can't close our eyes to all the lurking dangers. That we currently organize ourselves in networks includes many positive things, but the network should be the place for a discussion of individual responsibility. Who has responsibility in a network? Nobody! It's great if everybody in the group could assume individual responsibility, but if they can't we have a large problem.

It is important, at least for me, to feel that I am a good collectivist, a good individualist, that I do good things

for our environment, and that I live as conscientiously as possible. Maybe then humankind will achieve harmony.

“...and in my heart the gods and the demons are fighting an eternal battle.”

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

It was this frustration that made the Future Builders decide to focus their project on creating a vision of the sustainable society instead of trying to give a picture of how work life might look in the future, which had been their original assignment. The Future Builders simply mutinied and decided to change the whole objective of the project. The project leaders, however, actually welcomed and were delighted by the stand they took and encouraged them to keep working on their “revolutionary” ideas.

It must have been promising for the environmental movement of this period, that an organization such as “The Natural Step” began to gain momentum, even beyond Sweden’s borders. The four system conditions that “The Natural Step” bases its environmental agenda on were not widely known during the mid-nineties. The Future Builders, however, were a notch ahead of their time since they worked with Future Studies. They saw clearly that these conditions were essential in order to put a halt to the destruction they had unveiled in their studies. Today more people work within “The Natural Step” all over the world than in all of our large corporations combined. The laws of thermodynamics are obvious to all of us. Back then there was still a strong resistance to any restriction in the utilization of the earth’s resources.

It is fascinating to look back at this period and remember that photosynthesis technology wasn’t even invented. Today it is one of the most beneficial inventions ever created. It is fascinating to follow the Future Builders’ thinking about how to finally solve the world’s energy issues. During this period the debate over the proliferation of nuclear power was fierce. The young people appeared to have widespread opinions on whether Sweden should decommission completely its nuclear power plants or spend the money on helping the countries of the former Soviet Union to decommission their leaking nuclear power plants. They seemed to have understood that nuclear power wasn’t the final solution, and there was much speculation about how to utilize the wasted heat from the sun.

They also had divergent opinions on whether or not the car should be considered to be of service to society. Some of them came straight out and said that man could manage quite well without the car, while others stated that the car has given man so much freedom that it wouldn’t be possible to abolish it. The ones in favor of keeping the car insisted that the development of technology would make it possible to build cars that wouldn’t affect the environment as much as during the 1990s. Not even the electric car had yet had its break-through and the hybrid car (a cross between an electric car and one with an internal-combustion engine) was seen as a possible solution. There is no doubt that the Future Builders realized that all vehicles were a real threat to the environment. It is easy to imagine how they shocked the business leaders of those days with statements such as: “We won’t buy your stinking cars!”

The Future Builders appear surprisingly knowledgeable about the then current global problems in the world, especially when you think about how uninformed most of the population seems to have been at the time. Among other things, the Future Builders were very concerned about the explosive increase in population and feared that mankind would soon be short of water and food. They predicted that serious conflicts would result from this and we know now how right they were.

“The only thing that can save the world from a total ecological breakdown is knowledge and raised awareness”, the Future Builders said. Opinions differed, however, on what exactly raised awareness meant. Some texts imply that they meant increased understanding and knowledge based on pure information. Other texts, however, expressed the idea that people needed not only facts and common sense, but also they should seek guidance from within. This is a commonly recurring idea in the texts of the Future Builders. Quote:

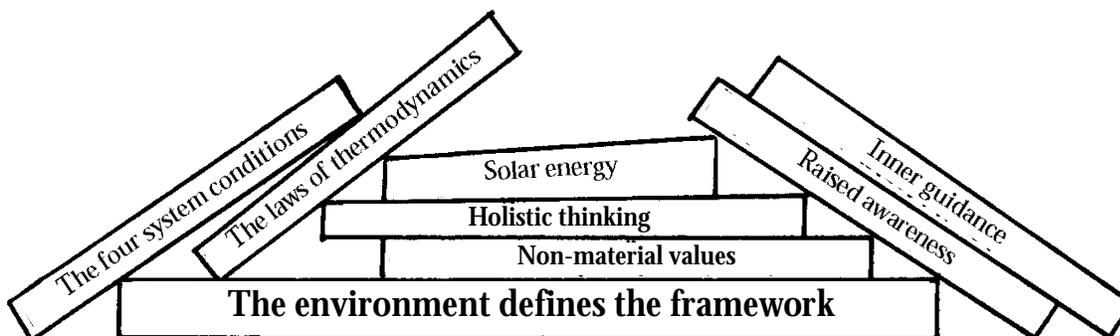
“We all, as individuals, share responsibility in the development of society. People’s fundamental values play a very important role in our world and in our society. Ethics and morals will become more and more important in the years to come. It is therefore important that we all declare to ourselves where we stand, morally and

ethically. Based on this awareness we can develop an integrated vision of society, built from the bottom up; together with good, leadership role models who have the ability to create understanding and involvement. When this is achieved, society will have reached a basic level of security, from which people could grow. A basis of security that will free the individual to some extent from his own everyday problems and allow him to tackle the societal problems. A sense of responsibility will accompany the raised awareness of personal values.

The Building a Future project proposes that moral and ethical councils are created, both locally and globally, with the goal of acting as guidance and creating a common understanding for a holistic viewpoint. This would prevent unethical behavior and errors in the system. The councils would oversee that rules and defined conditions would be followed. They would spread valuable information on how our acts affect our society.”

As previously discussed, the Future Builders wanted to create a sustainable society. By sustainable, they meant not only ecologically sustainable but also sustainable in terms of respect and honesty. They also considered love and compassion necessary prerequisites for a sustainable society. This was their public position in a time when expressions of racism and violence were increasingly common in society. Luckily they weren't the only ones and today we know that good will can create miracles.

In conclusion our group would like to say that we are very impressed by the clear-sightedness and maturity among the Future Builders. Today we live in a society where most of their visions have been realized. We are convinced that because people created visions like these before the Turning Point, we are where we are today.



2. A New Economic System

Our group has studied the Future Builder's views on well-being and the economy. We have with growing excitement read how these young people comprehended the public sentiments during the 1990s, when the then prevailing economic system was very unstable. They correctly predicted the total collapse that was to occur shortly thereafter.

We have selected the following viewpoints as the most important building blocks in the Future Builders' vision of economy and wellbeing:

- A new economic system must replace the old one (Basic block)
- The market economy must be balanced by globally enacted regulations
- Money must be tied to a real value
- Interest rates should be abolished in their current form
- The third world debt must be written off
- Local currencies and trade should be encouraged
- Some kind of citizen's compensation should be introduced
- Quality of life along with ecological and social durability should be the measuring stick for well being, not GNP
- Ethics and morality must guide all economic activity

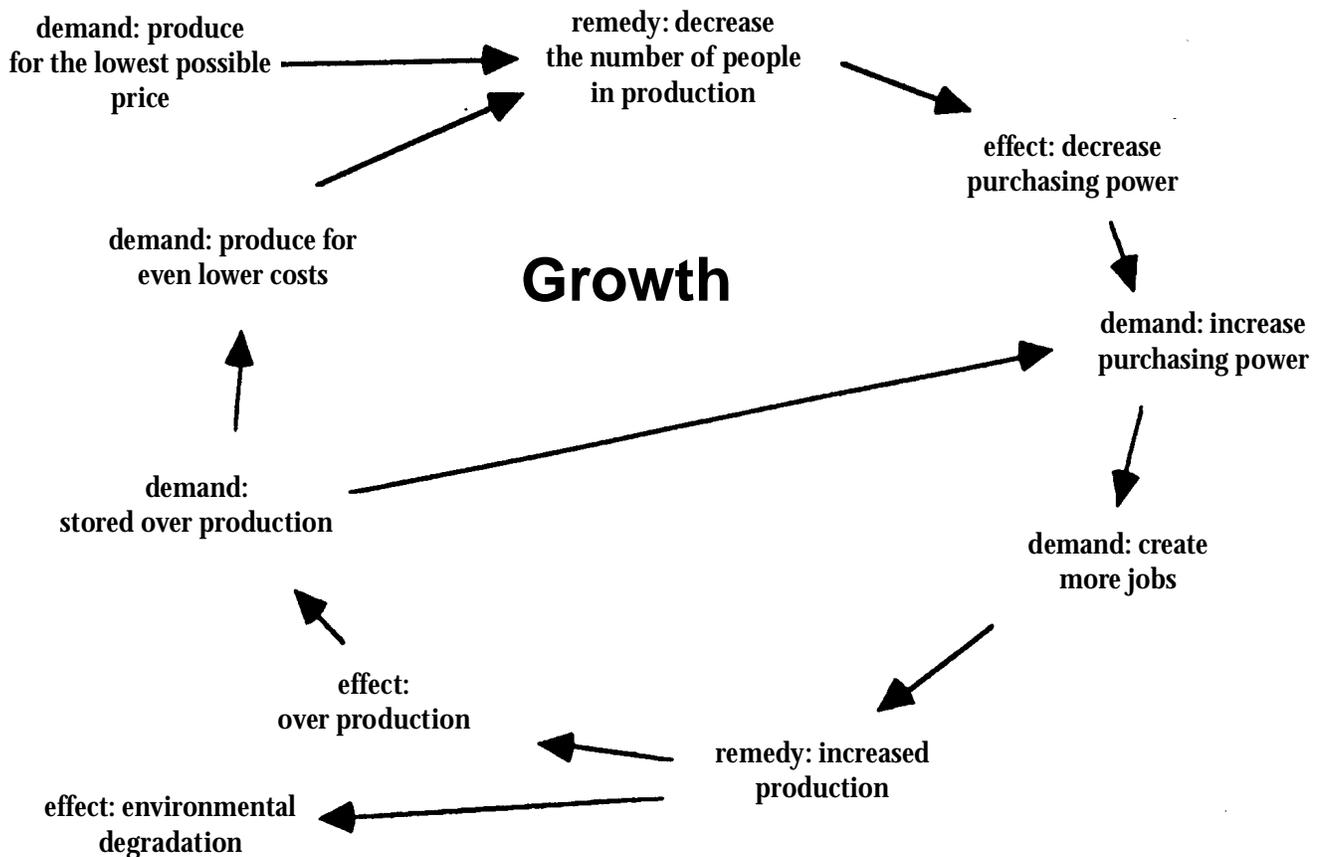
The one thing the Future Builders objected to the most, was the thought of eternal growth. "Is economic growth the sole meaning of our existence on earth? Is the meaning of life for us to produce and consume forever more? Or does life have deeper values?" was one of the phrases we read. This is how the young people described "the circle of economic growth":

"Today's societal economy is built with eternal growth in mind. It seemed to work well during the 1940s and 1950s. In Sweden we dreamed of 'the common man's home'. Everybody had to have a car, TV, and running water. During the 1960s the growth came to a halt. What happened?

In a market economy competition reigns. Companies try to produce their products at the lowest possible cost. The easiest way to produce at a low cost is to improve efficiency and automate with the help of technology. This means, among other things, to reduce the number of people in production.

Fewer people in production reduces the buying power. This loss of buying power is compensated for by increasing production, in order to create more jobs, in order to increase the buying power.

This causes a production surplus for which a market has to be found. For this you need buying power. To maintain the buying power also for the additional production, the goods must be produced at a still lower cost, which again creates a need to improve efficiency and to automate. Which means you need to compensate the loss of jobs and buying power by further increasing production. And so on and so forth. This spiral is called growth, 'economic growth'.



The problem with a 'growth economy' (increased production and consumption) is that the system keeps demanding increased usage of natural and energy resources, which are not unlimited. It is also of interest that 'growth economies' continually become more sensitive to disruptions. If consumption, production, or any other economically vital part is changed; the economy falls apart. The myth of growth economy will hit the ceiling when everybody in the world has a car, a TV, and running water.

So that Sweden's goal, full employment, would be reached, it became necessary to expand the public sector. We solved the problem financially during the 1980s, by the state borrowing money to finance this sector. This was the start of the national debt, much talked about today. (Another contributing factor was that the inflation during the 1980s caused heavy speculation, which led to the bank and finance crash at the end of the decade. The losses were huge and the state took care of the problem.)"

In spite of the Future Builders' strong criticism of the then prevailing economic system, based on a market economy, most people believed that the market economy would work even in a sustainable society. They realized,

however, that there had to be a balance brought about by opposing forces to stop those who abused the system. These forces would have to be created politically through laws. This would of course need to be on a global level, since the market is global.

Before the stock market crashes around the time of the Turning Point which paralyzed the world, there was, as we all know, a feverish movement of money on the global nets. It went so far that over 90 percent of all the money in the world was floating around in cyber space without being used for anything sensible. Both businesses and individuals, with more money than they needed, stopped investing their surplus money back into something substantial, into something that could be developed. Instead the money was invested in expectations; they simply tried to make money on money by speculating in currencies, bonds, stocks, convertibles, options, etc.. Even established institutions, banks, and insurance companies speculated heavier and heavier; not only with their own money but also for the corporate and private depositors. Since this speculation implied making money on money they didn't contribute anything of consequence to the growth of society. Instead they usurped strength and energy from society.

The Future Builders realized that this development was not sustainable, and they sketched out a society where different alternative economic systems were tested. Groups of people had already started to test different systems with local currencies and trade circles, which the young people thought very fascinating. The Future Builders were among the first of their generation who really studied this development in depth. They understood that very big changes had to take place for the earth to be in balance again. They saw the ruthless exploitation of nature and the impoverishment of arable land as the sad result of the greed and lust for power of the well to do. Instead they wanted to be creators and members of a society where environmentally certified companies produced useful products near their markets, a society with increased self-sufficiency, local cultivation, production, and services. They wanted a so called "care economy", which in short, aimed at enabling the citizens to do some sort of societal service in various areas in the immediate environment; such as education, health care, child care, cultivation, etc..

In their texts, they pointed out that the prevailing economic models were not created for a global economy with transnational companies and financial transactions. They considered it deeply unethical that the then underdeveloped countries never were given a chance to pay off their giant debts to the industrial countries, because of the interest that kept increasing the size of their debt.

The more the Future Builders became absorbed in their studies of contemporary society, the more they became convinced that the interest from the borrowing of money was one of the most important reasons for distorted development. A quote:

"Interest is paid not only by the person who borrows money, but also by the person who pays for a product. Calculations show that we pay, on average, 40 to 50 percent interest when we purchase a product.

Few people have income from capital/interest income which exceed their capital/interest expenses. An approximate estimation is that 10 percent of the population of the industrial world makes money on the interest system. Approximately 90 percent of the world's population live in the underdeveloped world. This means that one percent (ten percent of ten percent) of the world's population increase their wealth at the expense of the remaining 99 percent.

Sweden today has more money than ever, except only a handful of individuals possess all of this money. The ones who today are 'in power' have handed over the power to the market.

We let economic ideas and models govern our lives. People with territorial claims in the old system defend it to the last drop. New ideas, based on the life cycle and long term durability, are ignored because they disturb the growth economy.

The system in itself works well only as long as the public believes in the basic premises and values that the system is based upon. There is an interest in nourishing 'econocratic' notions, such as the connection between personal value and professional affiliation, between self esteem and finances. This is constantly fueled by advertising; the demands of affiliation, self esteem, and appreciation. The day we no longer believe in working by the sweat of our brows to increase our self esteem, the system will collapse."

The Future Builders' viewpoint was that mankind had to find new ways to practice commercial activities without the handicap of interest. They were also very critical to the practice of measuring well-being with what

was then called GNP (Gross National Product). For us in the group who were alive then remember how strange it was a country could improve their GNP growth after a large natural disaster, on account of all the extra clean-up and rebuilding work.

The GNP figures didn't account at all for the balance sheet (assets and debts); only the profit and loss account (expenses and revenues). The GNP didn't show whether a country's environment was devastated. Instead these became invisible items, to be paid by future generations.

All this is history now, but the Future Builders who lived in the middle of it became increasingly frustrated. They participated in seminars and debates, even at corporate management and government levels, but the adults didn't listen too seriously to what they had to say. We still think they were admirable for daring to oppose established economists and politicians, and today we know that their predictions were quite accurate. We would like to conclude our report with a text that we feel captures in a nutshell the Future Builders' view on societal development:

“We in the Building a Future project can see two different paths for economic development. One is to stubbornly continue with today's point of view, with the result that we desperately cling to a boat on its way down. The other is that we change the paradigm and build our economic thinking on models with long term sustainable growth for the earth. We rebuild the boat in the middle of the storm.

1) We go down with the boat: We continue with the old vision and live with the old thoughts and ideas. Insufficient economic models govern our lives, not us. This results in a handful of people controlling the money at the expense of the rest. The development might look like the following appraisal (today's development carried forward):

We will reach a point where people aren't capable of consuming more or there are no more resources from which to produce. When the circle is broken and the flow of money no longer circulates, companies will go bankrupt. Access to important basic necessities will disappear for the large numbers of people. People will be without their roots and their self-esteem. There will be a negative spiral, where everyone will first need to look after themselves. We will have a society characterized by egoism, violence, and with heavy environmental damage.

Affluent people will act as large magnets for more money. Since these people speculate with money instead of investing in constructive activities, monetary value will be disconnected from reality and the currencies will be watered down. These same people will also gain control over the changes in the value of the currencies. They will be able to both manage the economic cycles and to take advantage of both busts and booms in business activity.

We in the Building a Future project believe there are cultures in history that collapsed for less than this.

2) We rebuild the boat in the middle of the storm: This is a development of which we can see hopeful small signs today. It looks something like this:

More and more people with a new awareness find each other and build networks. Initially, these networks have had a validating function; people get their 'different' thoughts validated. After a while these individuals have confirmed each other enough and they start doing something more concrete. They simply start doing things their own way, without caring about the old way. They start cooperating based on new premises.

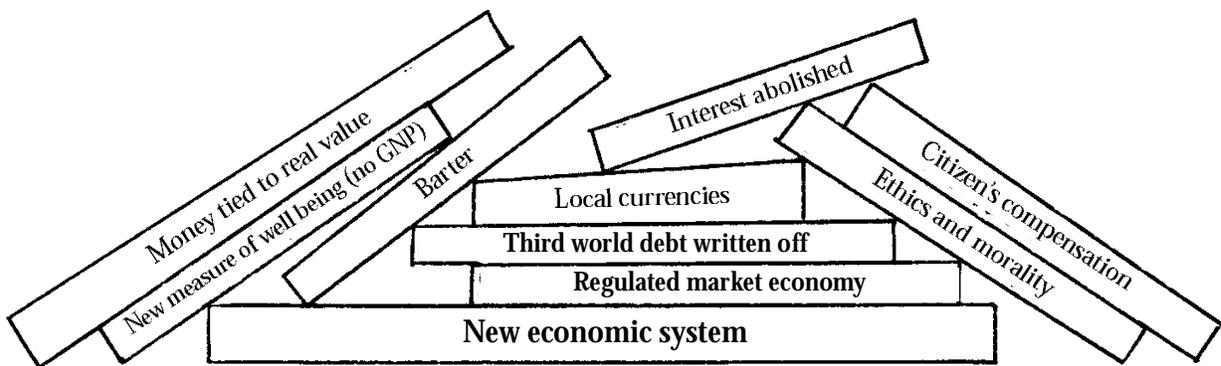
Islands of activity emerge out of nowhere. People within these islands do not make much noise about their new habits, they don't try to challenge the old structures. Some might try, but they are so roughly treated by the established society that they don't have the strength to continue forward.

By seeing a long term sustainability in the new forms they create, people also draw strength from them. The silent revolution has begun. One thing that signifies this spirit is that it is about getting to the core of things rather than to create quick or dramatic results.

The attention is focused on preventive measures rather than on running around repairing what went wrong after the fact. (The Natural Step is an example of this thinking. Instead of scientists running around putting lime on acid land, the idea is to stop spreading substances in unsuitable places.)

The old boat breaks up by itself, simply because it is not sustainable. The economic system based on long

term sustainable models has now grown strong enough to catch the spills from the old system when it falls. People desperately struggling for help, can get help to help themselves. A change in the economic system is on its way, we in the Building a Future project are fairly certain of this. The question is not if there will be a change, but how. The important thing is that the fall of the old system is mitigated so that the human tragedies are as few and as small as possible.”



3. Learning for Wisdom

It has not been an easy task to summarize the Future Builders' ideas, viewpoints, and feelings about education, the learning process, research, and development. The majority of the young people in the Building a Future project were extremely dissatisfied with their own education and they expressed many opinions about it. We can certainly understand their frustration over having been locked up in the closed world of education which was often the case in those days. The right to feel needed and respected was more or less taken away from them, and they saw themselves more as a burden to society than the resource they actually were. We sense that the Building a Future project was a kind of revenge for some of them, since they suddenly were both seen and heard.

The Future Builders were also concerned that the rapid development of technology and knowledge in society was not always taking place in humanistic terms. As the project progressed, they took a stronger and stronger stand for more ethical research and development.

Our group finally agreed on highlighting the following viewpoints as the most important within the area of education and development:

- **Learning must go on your whole life and must lead to wisdom. (Basic block)**
- **In all types of education the individual's specific learning and work style must be taken into consideration, so that everybody enjoys learning.**
- **The school must create an environment where all students can practice their ability to think.**
- **During the entire educational process, beginning with primary school, humanities studies should be a recurring subject.**
 - Included in humanities studies are knowledge and skills in
 - love and compassion
 - human relations
 - values
 - respect for individual differences
- **Integration and cross-discipline are key words in the education process of the future**
- **All product and technology development must be carried out in accordance with the laws of thermodynamics and the four system conditions**

(Since these have already been accounted for by the "Environmental group" we will not explain them further here)
- **All research must be submitted to a thorough ethical review**
- **Correctly managed telecommunications technology will enable global and peaceful cooperation and community**

During the 1990s all education was transformed by information technology. The Future Builders found themselves in the middle of this transformation. On the one hand they had been through an education characterized by lectures and cramming for exams. The Building a Future project, on the other hand, had given them an opportunity to experience all the possibilities with the Internet. They were able to acquire information from knowledge sources from all over the world. Books and scientific papers also started appearing at this time, dealing with new learning processes and the brain's capacity. The young people began to read books that today have become classics, such as "The Seven Intelligences" by Howard Gardner and "The Learning Revolution" by Jeanette Vos and Gordon Dryden. Several of the Future Builders seemed to have had problems themselves to succeeding in an education which too narrowly focused on the linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences and not concerned at all about the different learning styles required by other intelligences.

We understand that the Building a Future project had started an important process of change for many of the participants. They were given the opportunity to try learning techniques that were new to them. They were not

just fed knowledge, as in school, but they were driven by their own sense of discovery and eagerness to search for and find the information necessary for their project work. They suddenly realized the power in liberating man's thinking process. They felt that the project gave them a chance to free themselves from patterns of thought that had been forced upon them, and to create new visions for themselves and for society. A participant's quote:

“What business people call ‘empowerment’, meaning the delegation of responsibility among the ‘workers’, often starts a positive process in the individual. We call this human growth, which hopefully leads to a stronger self-esteem for the individual and maybe also bigger profits for the company. We want this process to be incorporated in the traditional school and we want it to be called ‘the fifth right’!

Since 1842, when the Swedish ‘folk school’ was created, and to this day, there has only been talk about the four rights: the right to learn to speak, write, read, and calculate. The fifth right means that everyone has the right to learn to use their brain to think for themselves!

Education is the institution that has changed the least over the last one hundred years. We predict that the fifth right, in combination with information technology, will be shaping a new kind of school and a new type of organization. This will give us all a new understanding of what education and knowledge really is, and how we can best use these concepts in the new society.

When you discover what you can do with the new technology you wonder how much of traditional education will even be necessary in the future. The development will most likely progress even faster. Since there are no rules telling us what we can and can't do with the new technology, we face at the same time what may be one of the greatest challenges man has ever come across. We are forced to ask ourselves what is ethically right and what actions are morally right. We want to include more ethics and morality in school. This is however a teaching dilemma, since ethics cannot be taught, it can only be learned. Ethics is ‘the theory of morality’”.

In the material we read there are several different proposals about what the school of the future should be, from the Future Builders' perspective. A recurring opinion was that the school must work harder with the students' human growth instead of just focusing on cramming facts into their heads.

Another point was that the subject structure of the schools at the time was outdated and that the studies had to be organized in a cross-disciplinary way, with all the subjects integrated. The Future Builders praised concepts like holistic and system thinking; concepts that today are obvious, but that were rather strange and novel in the 1990's world of education.

We are amazed over how many times the words ethics and morality recurred in the Future Builders' texts. The quote above is an example and below is another:

“In our discussions we reached the conclusion that a worldwide ethics council should be established. Why not within the framework of the World Union, which we have heard so much about? In this council, all countries, regardless of economic standard, would have one vote each. We believe the council should be composed not only of decision makers from the various countries, but also of people from different professional backgrounds who have a good understanding of how society works in their country.

The council needs visions and a goal to work towards, so that it doesn't become like the world organizations of today. These organizations often lack power and offer very limited access to the general public (an order with locked doors).

There also should be national ethics councils, where people with different occupations would be involved. Today it is mainly people with a clerical background who sit on such councils, and we think that's a bit too narrow minded. It is important that we all take responsibility!

In view of all the criminality and violence in the world today, which we think implies a decreased respect and empathy for the human being, it is important to take a few steps back and again put the value of the human being in the center. We feel that we in Sweden lack a vision for society that can help people fight for the things they believe in; and take responsibility for their actions, their fellow citizens, and their country.”

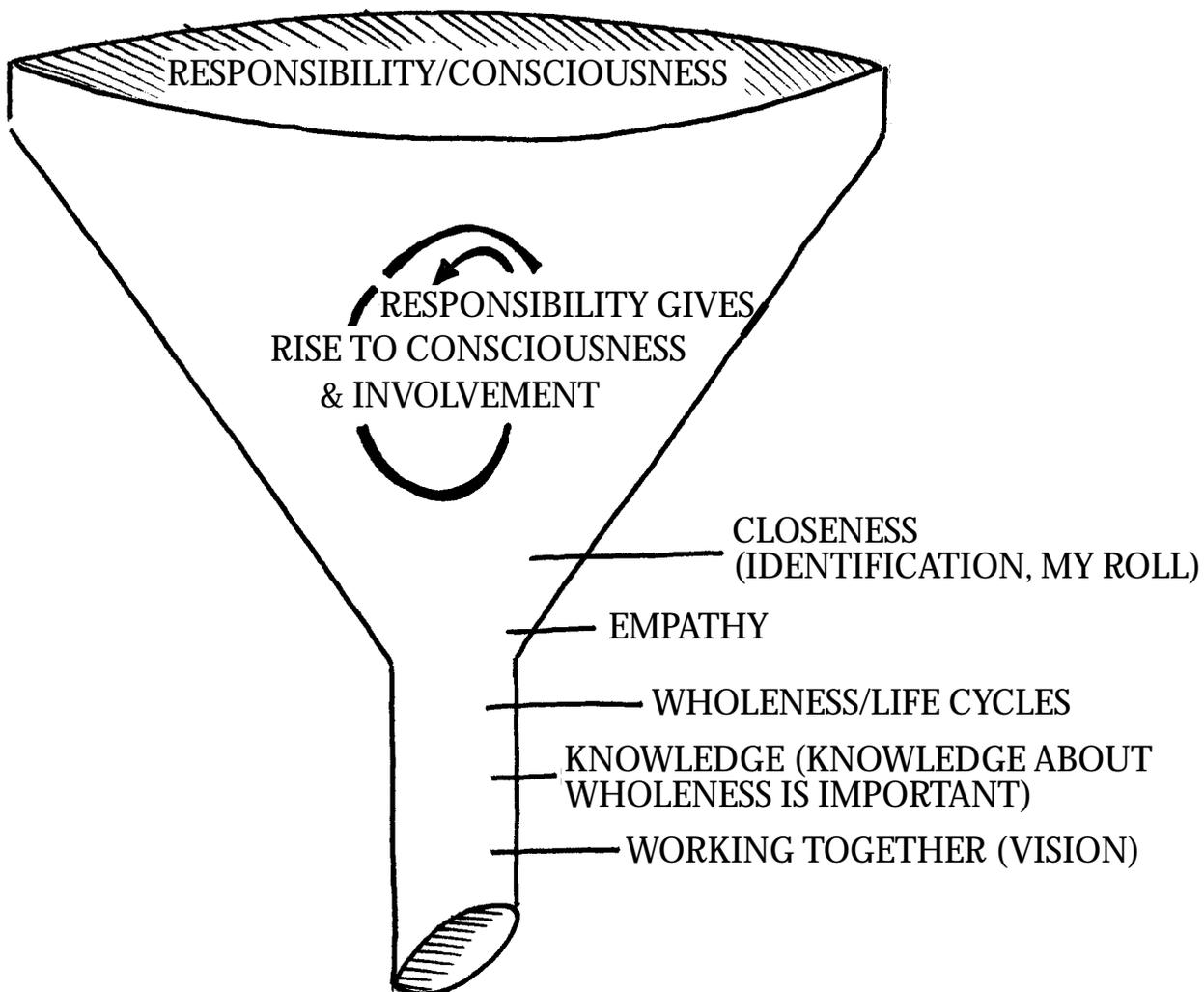
The Future Builders' recipe to get the citizens to dare to take larger responsibility was to have them discuss ethics and morality and work with values and relation issues, beginning with the early school years through

adolescence. They were unhappy that they hadn't had that possibility themselves during their school years, and felt that the opportunity they had now been given in the Building a Future project also should be offered to other people in the society. They proposed the idea that people who were active in a profession should be able to take a "thinking year" off; to be able to work with such fundamental issues as how our society works, morality and ethics, the laws of thermodynamics and the four system conditions, knowledge about the economic system and alternative systems, etc..

This would give people a holistic perspective of how society works, create an awareness of what is wrong, and what must be done to change this. With this new knowledge people will feel responsibility and want to be part of changing the system. A quote:

"When more and more people share this feeling, a strong force for change and a desire for something new are created. A vision is formed. This new vision will create an entirely new infrastructure and a completely new way of living."

In another text we found this picture, which we feel summarizes a good deal of what we have talked about so far.



Apparently the discussions have been rather heated within the project about the large and sweeping changes that society was going through at that time, and about the research and development that often accelerated these changes. Many of the participants asked themselves what responsibility the researchers really had for the repercussions from their constant new discoveries, especially within physics and medicine. This was one of the reasons why they thought that all people should start taking a stand on all the changes and decide whether they felt the development was headed in the right direction. Difficult ethical considerations, for example whether the manipulation of the human genes should be allowed or not, was one of the reasons why they wanted to establish the ethics councils.

The Future Builders felt very divided on the issues of gene technology and the quick development of the information technology. They were looking for more in-depth debates in society, where other people than the experts would also participate. A quote:

“Can man really play GOD? Can we really change how the world is created? Some people say no; others say that if the end justifies the means, for instance if we could cure difficult diseases, produce food for everybody, etc., it would be ethically defensible.”

Even though it today is forbidden to manipulate human sex cells, that doesn't mean that scientists don't want to experiment with it. They not only want to do it, they feel it is an unavoidable development of today's research. What will happen then?

What will happen if HUGO2 succeeds in mapping all of our genes, not only human, but animals and plants also? Who will control the gene technology? Commercial interests or laws?

How will gene manipulation of animals and plants affect our environment? If plants become larger and larger, don't they need more and more water to grow? From where do we get that water, given today's lack of water in the world?

Who is to know what about whom? What confidentiality laws will apply to, for instance, how much employers and insurance companies will know about your genetic composition and heritage? These are issues that many scientists don't feel that they need to consider; the knowledge is there and it is up to society to handle it the best they can. When HUGO eventually is completed, DNA tests will play a big part in decisions about where or if you will get employment or life insurance. Who has the right to your genetic information? You, the government, your doctor, your employer, or your insurance company?

The development of gene technology is progressing, whether we are prepared for it or not. Man has always been searching for new knowledge, especially knowledge that will benefit us. How gene technology will be applied depends primarily on our views on human life and on the world we live in. A great deal of public awareness will be necessary, about what scientist really do, in order to create a debate and to set rules.

Gene technology might solve much of the human suffering in the world; hereditary diseases, handicaps, and food shortages in a large part of the world. This sounds great. But what will happen if it's only us in the rich countries who become older and healthier thanks to the achievements in research and development?

Will the countries that today suffer from war, famine, poverty and over-population be able to keep pace with genetic development? Or will our success cause these countries to suffer even greater shortages of food, health care, and medicine, as their populations keep growing? Don't these countries have the same right to knowledge and information about the possibilities and problems with gene technology?

The question remains; how much gene manipulation will we accept? Can we accept the possible future manipulation of human sex cells to knock out hereditary diseases for ever? The answer to this question is in many cases yes. But as our genes are mapped, we uncover not only the building blocks for what is “sick“, but also those for what is “healthy“, and those for what makes us different as human beings; which is what has created the diversity on earth today. Doesn't this diversity fill an important role in today's society? Shouldn't we be as different as possible, rather than as similar as possible? If we decide to eliminate dispositions and characteristics that certain people have, which we today call “sick“, wouldn't that be wiping out a part of our development?

The same principle applies to manipulation of plants, animals, and other organisms. By manipulating these we will in the future lose species and their characteristics which today we do not see any use for, but which may have a purpose in the balance of nature. Again, it is the diversity that is important.

Whatever consequences gene manipulation might have on future working life is difficult to define clearly, but it seems inevitable that it will deeply affect our future society. How deeply it will be affected depends partially on how much and which information the public receives, what position the public takes, and how it might limit the information and its application. We have to create a debate before the decisions are made!!

We consider it desirable to have Ethics councils working together with the general public to solve ethical issues concerning gene technology.

Gene technology may help us develop medicine and food with pharmaceutical effects. It may also help us develop food without pesticides. Many people view this technology as the solution to the world's problems, and also as a way to make a lot of money. It is however extremely important to not let the wrong interests control this area."

In retrospect we wish that more people had listened to these voices, which warned of the drawbacks of gene technology. Then we might have been able to avoid the birth of so many geneoids before all gene manipulation was stopped.

In the same way as the gene technology seemed threatening to some people in the 1990's, many people also felt that the technological development was running over the little human being like a steamroller. From what we have been able to conclude, the Future Builders were in general quite positive to the new information technology. Like many other people that were connected to the Internet, they realized that this technology enabled the development of a gigantic global network, where people from all over the world could get closer to each other in many ways. But they were very critical to and upset by the increase of mass production and mass consumption, which threatened to ruin the earth's crust and undermine the prerequisites for life on this planet. They attacked the constant development of new things, and emphasized that knowledge and raised awareness was the only salvation. They felt that massive educational measures were necessary both for producers and consumers as well as for politicians and other people in influential positions. They viewed getting people to change their attitudes and values as the greatest challenge of all. But they didn't despair. Once a critical mass of people had understood, then the rest would also understand. This would raise the level of awareness of mankind and bring it closer to the 'wisdom' that the Future Builders saw as the goal for all education.



4. A New View of Work

We in our group feel that we got the most exciting task, since the Future Builders' original goal was to create pictures of what the future work life might be like. Today we know, that after a while they realized, that it wasn't possible to separate the part of life that was primarily occupied by work from the rest of our lives. But it was very interesting to follow the train of thoughts of these young people and to compare them with how we think today.

We interpreted the following viewpoints as the most important in the area of work and life:

- The new view of work that is emerging means that we have to redefine the concepts of 'work' and 'unemployment'.
- The people of the future will consider physical and mental well being and quality of life more important than material assets.
- The people of the future will demand a balance between 'unfree time' and 'free time'.
- A company's or an organization's values should be at par with those of its employees.
- More and more people will create their own jobs.
- Some kind of citizen's service should be established, guaranteeing a citizen's compensation for all people.
- People's needs for spirituality will become more important.
- More and more people see nature as holy and ecology is more and more existential.

We will not go into the various consequences of the rampage of information technology, as predicted by the Future Builders. Most of the somewhat far-seeing people realized that working life would change completely through distance work and increased productivity; and the resulting job cuts, changes in communication patterns, etc. It also seemed to have been a favorite subject of many futurists to envision the most fantastic scenarios of what the new information society would look like. We have read plenty of such descriptions and they get a little monotonous in the long run. Instead we have chosen to focus on the more humanistic and existential aspects of the development of man's conditions of life, as presented by the Future Builders.

One of the most common words in the Future Builders' texts are 'values'. One of the groups focused on values and life styles, and became quite familiar with the contemporary research in this field. They concluded that the attitude towards work had changed drastically during the passing of the centuries. A quote:

"To be able to talk about work and work life of the future, we first wanted to define what we mean by the term 'work'. We have discovered that our view of this concept is quite different from the daily meaning of this word. The way man has viewed work historically can be divided into different stages. In an early stage, the meaning of work was almost exclusively a matter of supporting oneself. Work was a curse, a necessary evil. These 'earn-a-living values' were characteristic of the working climate for a long time.

As conditions improved and basic needs were satisfied, the meaning of work took on a different connotation. Now it was a matter of increasing the material standard of living, to work to consume, and to enjoy. Work also gave you an identity and status. It was now a matter of 'external values'.

Today we work to develop ourselves and to grow as individuals. Work is a right that enriches life, both mentally and materially. People value work based on 'internal values'. By this we don't mean that all people base their work on internal values; there is still a large element of the first two phases.

How will the future look? Will we reach the finish line when all people have converted to internal values? No. We believe that a completely new set of values will be prevalent; 'holistic values'. By this we mean, among other things, that all work is seen as an integral part of life, neither valued more nor less than any other part of life. People will prioritize life as a whole, instead of focusing on work as the central part of life, as is often the case today. Holistic values also imply an attempt to contribute to a global, humane, and ecological development."

We can understand that the employers of the time choked on their morning coffee when they happened to hear a Future Builder on the radio, describing the below list of demands of a decent job, put forward by themselves and their contemporaries. Despite that, interest in their project was quite good, and they were often asked to present results of their work. In retrospect their demands might seem rather modest but at the time, with a rampant unemployment, particularly among young people, these things weren't talked about out loud. God only knows there were lots of people that thought this way. A quote:

“ Many of us that are young today refuse to take jobs in production or in other work where we don't see a purpose or can't be creative. We don't believe that this is a temporary, fashionable attitude, but that it's the first sign of some fundamental changes ahead, as a consequence of a change in values. The crux of the values of the young people point to the fact that work will have a fundamentally different meaning.

Those who are young today:

- do not want to have a career, but want to work with interesting and fun tasks under free circumstances.
- want a job with a chance to create and develop their creative sides.
- do not accept doing things without a purpose or in a certain way; they don't stop questioning a purpose or taking an interest in the quality of life only because they arrive at work.
- search for new standards as to where, when, and for how long they want to work.
- want a job where it is OK to be involved.
- value quality over quantity; it's not how many hours you put in, how high your piles of paperwork
- realize that work must be incorporated in the rest of your life and form a totality; the boundaries are, or how much money you make that proves how good a job you do. It's how your work contributes to positive value in the world.
- want a job where initiatives of change are viewed as an asset.
- do not want to be placed in a category, but want to continue to develop into different directions.
- want a job with individual salaries (based on results rather than on clocked time).
- do not believe in 'work duty'.
- do not see failure in being unemployed.”

The Future Builders predicted a development where companies, to a larger extent than in the 1990s, were forced to review their activities so that they wouldn't be viewed as unethical in any way. As an example, the participants in our group who weren't even born at that time, could hardly imagine how anyone could conceive of going to a job for a company that produced land mines. Somewhere we noticed a quote by a young guy from this time, stating that “the young people of today don't have the immune defense that makes it possible to work in companies whose values contradict their own“. We can see that the Future Builders were very adamant about this, and we are happy that they took up the cudgels for new thinking. A quote:

“It's no coincidence that the term 'environment' today is used frequently in public debate. It is also no coincidence that there is more and more talk about recycling. It's about the fact that we want to see the greater context of what we are all a part of.

Not only do we want to see in which context we belong, we also want to see that this context is 'good'. This of course has an immense impact on molding the work life. When we work with something, we want a complete picture of the whole process. We don't see the point in doing a small, separate task. We want to be able to see our own actions as part of a larger context, contributing to something constructive which guarantees a sustainable global development.

The company that honestly and credibly can define this context and prove that it is ethically correct, will become an attractive company in the value climate ahead. It will be attractive as a workplace, as a partner, as a supplier, or as a place of purchase.”

It must have become more and more evident each year for the people that lived in that time, that a period of so-called 'full employment' would never return. At least not with the definition that most adults would have full-

time, paid jobs. Strangely enough, there were still many who believed that if only there would be a so-called 'business boom', things again would be just like during the good years in the 1970s and 1980s. This was not an uncommon belief even among distinguished politicians and union bosses.

The Future Builders realized that the old society would never come back, and they prepared themselves for a life where they might never get a permanent job. They knew that they would constantly need to acquire new skills and knowledge, and that they would also have to market their competence in order to be seen. They realized that they would be spending a lot of time in short term project work. They also realized that they might have to create their own jobs during some stages of life.

We have noticed that they often talked about the concept of 'flow', as something they wanted to experience in their work. Already back then there began to appear companies with predominantly young people. You worked without glancing at the clock, enjoyed your work, and had so much fun that you forgot to go home. We can see that this had a great appeal to the young people of the time, but today we know that this could easily be overdone. It is not until this last decade that we have learned to moderate this kind of all-encompassing joy of work to a healthier form.

The Future Builders predicted that the increasingly tough working climate wouldn't suit everybody, which is why most of them sympathized with the ideas about 'societal service' put forward by certain researchers and public debaters. They were working on a model in which citizens could choose to put in ten years of societal service, working in jobs where they didn't always develop themselves or that weren't always interesting, but that needed to be done for the common good. These ten years would entitle you to a citizen's compensation for the rest of your life. Not a particularly high salary, but enough to get by. You could of course do whatever you wanted to supplement it. We haven't found any more details about this system, so we can't compare it with today's situation. It nevertheless is interesting that the Future Builders were on to this.

Another angle that they were on to was the attitude about, or rather the disregard of, unpaid work. They realized that this had to be somehow included in the system, when they were calculating the incredibly large part of a country's well being that depended on unpaid work. This also involves all the work performed by charitable organizations and individuals; we will however save this subject for the group who works with the local community. A quote:

"Part of what is produced daily in our society is destined for personal consumption. Another part is intended to be sold at the market. We will call production for your own consumption 'Sector A' and production for a market 'Sector B'.

During the industrial society, production of goods and services increased so dramatically that the economists completely forgot about Sector A. The actual term 'economy' was defined in such a way that it excluded all types of work and production that weren't intended for a market. All of the unpaid work often carried out by women in their home; all the laundry, all the child care, etc. were considered non-productive, in spite of the fact that Sector B didn't function without these services.

The large price increases on services and the new environmental awareness has caused more and more people to perform services for themselves. When the producers eventually realize this, they will create products to facilitate self-production of goods and services.

This will take place while politicians and experts argue over economic statistics based solely on what happens in Sector B. They worry about reduced growth and productivity, but as long as they ignore Sector A along the lines of industrialism's logic, they will never solve our economic problems."

As shown in these quotes, the young people in the Building a Future project didn't think that simply work and consumption were the meaning of life. They weren't the only ones with these kind of ideas; on the contrary there seemed to be an ever-increasing need to find an inner harmony among the worried, stresses people of that time. This didn't mean, however, a rush to the churches. People instead began to create their own belief systems. An increasing number of people also started to view nature as holy, and took to heart the connection between nature and spiritual values that was common among the primitive, ancient peoples. The Future Builders thought that this development would be even stronger in the future. A quote:

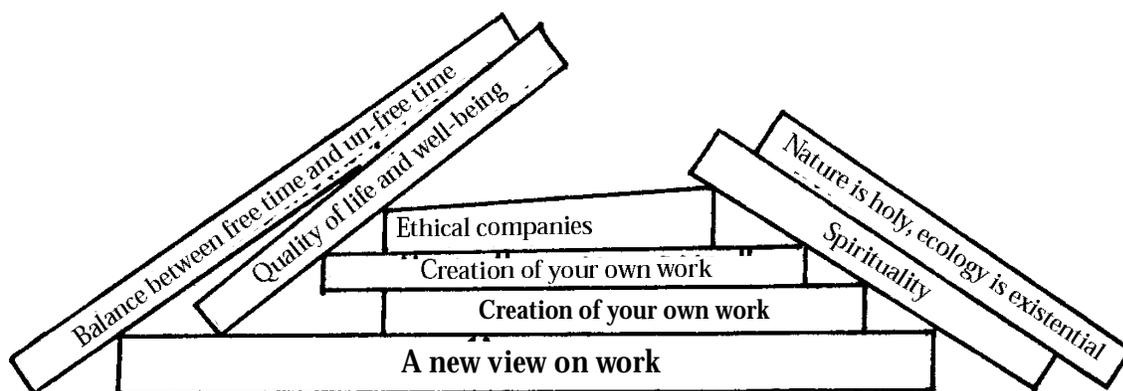
“Sweden has become one of the most secularized countries in the world. ‘The Spirit’ is torn free from the once strong connection to the church. Many people instead create their very own ways to believe. They simply put together what they feel is right for them.

A possible cause of this is our increased knowledge of the world around us. We know more today about philosophy, values, morality, and ethics than we have ever known before. We have never had as many choices when it comes to existential matters as we do today.

The thought that everything affects everything else, is part of the system theory of today. This, together with chaos theory and new findings from quantum physics, is directly contrary to the mechanistic view that has been characteristic for western culture, science, and religion.

Some religions have used guilt and fear as pillars of support. They have sold letters of indulgence and orchestra seats in paradise. These religions haven’t managed to subdue what we call human spirituality. Neither has socialism or capitalism managed to use the force offered by the resident spirit in man. The difficult trials predicted by many researchers will arrive, unless we reach a spiritual balance and change our way of life accordingly.

People will always have a need for an answer to the great issues in life.”



5. A Small-scale Society

Discussing new forms of society was the thing to do back in the 1990's. When our group studied old newspapers, and radio and TV programming from this time, we realized how tremendously confused people must have felt. As an example, Helmut Kohl, Germany's federal chancellor at the time, said in a meeting in Brussels that "the world exists in an ideological vacuum". There were of course many reasons for this confusion; not the least the fact that communism had loosened its grip on Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. But the capitalistic system was also seriously questioned, primarily by the increasing numbers of unemployed and destitute who became victims of a development in which the rich got richer and the poor got poorer.

In the midst of all this turbulence, people began to search for their own solutions. People organized themselves in neighborhood councils and barter associations. This was the movement observed by the Future Builders, and on which they based their scenario work. We have decided to focus on the following important viewpoints of the Future Builders, concerning the type of local society that they wanted to live in the future.

- **A great deal of activities at the local level are based on a small scale society (basic block)**
- **Each individual must take personal responsibility for the society in which s/he lives**
- **Foreign cultures are an asset**
- **Women and men have the same value at all times**
- **Time for ones family and time to nurture relationships with your fellow citizens should be a basic human right**
- **Part of a society's necessary work should be achieved by "community service"**
- **Local production of food and other goods should be encouraged**
- **Living and consumption should be characterized by recycling**

The Future Builders envisioned a development in which people would live in a closer community than they did when they grew up. They envisioned that some groups, maybe comprised of people with certain common values, would like to live closer to each other and develop different forms of communal living. Others would chose to live alone or in a nuclear family, but with more widespread neighbor interaction and more socializing across generations and cultures than what they had experienced themselves.

We interpret this description as an antithesis of the anonymity which often characterized our living during the second half of the 1990's, when people lived side by side with their neighbors for years without getting to know each other. The Future Builders also saw a great risk in the trend for more and more people to tele-commute. A quote:

"The number of lonely people might increase at the same rate as technology development. If more and more people start working from home, there is a risk that you won't see other people at all in your daily work. For the lonely people that lack a close-knit family and a social network, associations and similar networks will be needed. Social brokers might become a new profession in this field, meaning that special brokers match different people, individually and in a group, in order to help them develop, strengthen, and expand their interests. Another possible profession is pet broker, who could both help people find the right pet and pets find the right people."

The need for giving, caring socialization with other people would however not be the only driving force for an increased sense of community in the immediate society. Good socialization might actually be the positive consequence of engaging in various economic activities together, such as house maintenance and repair, roads and common areas; or cultivation of fruits, vegetables, and herbs in greenhouses or in common gardens.

The reality behind this, and other similar ideas about an economy based on domestic production and community, was of course the increasingly harsh economic climate in the Western world, with masses of people unable to support themselves. The Future Builders seemed to emphasize that as long as you have food and shelter

and on top of that a good relationship with your fellow citizens, there was no need to get stressed out just to be able to acquire the latest gadgets at any price. These so called post-materialistic values seemed to be increasingly common among the young people of this time, maybe simply because many of them didn't have the financial resources to spend very much money on consumption of goods. The primary reason, however, was probably the environmental awareness that was common among the young people during this time.

The type of small-scale society envisioned by the Future Builders demands of each individual that he or she assumes personal responsibility for the work that needs to be done. This type of responsibility can only develop from a person's ability to feel empathy, according to a group that did a future wheel exercise on the theme "responsibility". We have found other similar arguments elsewhere in the Future Builders' texts, and we believe it is a recurring theme for them that the society must be rebuilt from the ground up. The key to a sustainable society is people's love and respect for each other.

The Future Builders thought that the ability to feel empathy needs to be practiced from early childhood, both in school and at home. Increased compassion for your fellow citizens and holistic thinking, where the earth is viewed as everyone's common home, would also contribute to a decrease of racism and segregation in society. A quote:

"We see a desirable future society where people live and work together for the simple reason that you get along well and have a positive exchange of each other's experiences and destinies. You can either view this new society as a mosaic, where people from different cultures live together, in understanding and openness for new and different elements, while at the same time keeping their own identity and linguistic and cultural heritage. Or you can view it as a melting pot, where people live and work together regardless of origin, culture, and financial conditions, simply because they share similar values and goals in life. In such a society the citizens could effectively utilize the resources inherent in the different backgrounds, without seeing those differences as a threat to their own existence. If we effectively utilized all of the fantastic resources available in a multicultural society, we could easily solve many of the serious problems within our society. An increased understanding and openness would automatically lead to a decrease in prejudices, racism, unemployment, and criminality. In these times of large foreign debts and budget deficits this would be something positive for the whole country, since societal problems such as segregation and hostility towards immigrants are costing the state a lot of money."

Because the 1990's to a large degree were characterized by economic problems, the issue of how the country's citizens would manage to support themselves in the future was a recurring theme in the Future Builders' texts. We have already highlighted the idea of a return to a certain level of self-sustenance. Along these lines was also the idea of a system of trade of goods and services within a limited geographic area. The Future Builders also studied alternative economic systems with local currencies or other local methods of payment.

Another thought, expressed in the quote above, was to decrease the costs for society by preventing the problems from occurring. There was no doubt whatsoever that there was much work needed in this area. The Future Builders had seen for themselves how people around them were struck by misfortune and became a burden for society, maybe for the rest of their lives, simply because they didn't receive the help they needed. If they had received help in time, the cost to society would have been much smaller. This applied to children who displayed asocial behavior already at an early age, as well as to people with physical, mental, or psychosomatic problems, for whom even a layman could predict a development into a condition that would be increasingly difficult and costly to treat, unless addressed in time. A quote:

"Today no time is spent on analyzing why the patient has become ill. We lack a holistic view in health care, which contributes to a high risk of relapse or recurrence of the illness. Why do we never ask why a person is well? Does society ever ask how it can contribute to people being well rather than them not being sick?"

In addition, the Future Builders discussed ideas about social duty and citizen's pay. Their opinions were divided on how social duty would be organized. One thing they didn't want, was a centrally controlled society, where mandatory duties were imposed. The key point was that those people who didn't have the driving force and ability

to create their own work, or to elbow their way into the tough job market, would always be able to work with any of the many important services that are needed in a society. Besides work in human care and relations, which required lots of people, there was also plenty of work to be done in environmental and recycling areas. The Future Builders thought that a great deal of this work would most likely also require a certain amount of unpaid volunteer work by the citizens. Devoting time to volunteer work would be a completely natural part of life for man in the future.

We find it quite amazing that the authorities of this era hadn't begun to deal with the fact that a quarter of the population lived their lives outside the so called job market and received all sorts of allowances and subsidies, while at the same time there were lots of important needs in society that were never met. Luckily, more and more people besides the Future Builders began to realize how wrong this was. The division of work that we have today doesn't completely resemble the one described by the Future Builders, but we think they came a long way with the development of their ideas, as seen with the eyes of that time period.

We have touched upon relationships earlier. As mentioned, the Future Builders were well aware that the pillars of society are caring, creative people who take charge of everything that needs to be done. The determining factor, however, for good relationships is time. The view of time in the 1990's was, as we see it now, completely absurd. "Time is money" was a cherished concept then; and spending time with your children, aging parents, spouses, and friends was de-prioritized. This was often for a "noble end"; to be able to afford lots of things, which would create appreciation and admiration and ultimately love. The Future Builders wanted a society where it would be easier to care for your children and for your old and sick in or near your home. A quote:

"By changing oneself, maybe sacrificing some of the wealth, distribute the resources, discard the greed, and practice your ability to feel empathy, we believe a few more people would be a little happier. If we stop fooling ourselves by believing that money equals happiness, maybe we could discover things that are more valuable. We need a new life philosophy, beyond materialism, that can give our life a goal and a meaning. The old paradigms from the industrial society are no longer valid. We need to find an inner peace and a better quality of life.

Doing things to help others often leads to a higher satisfaction than only thinking about yourself. If you can be proud of yourself you've come a long way."

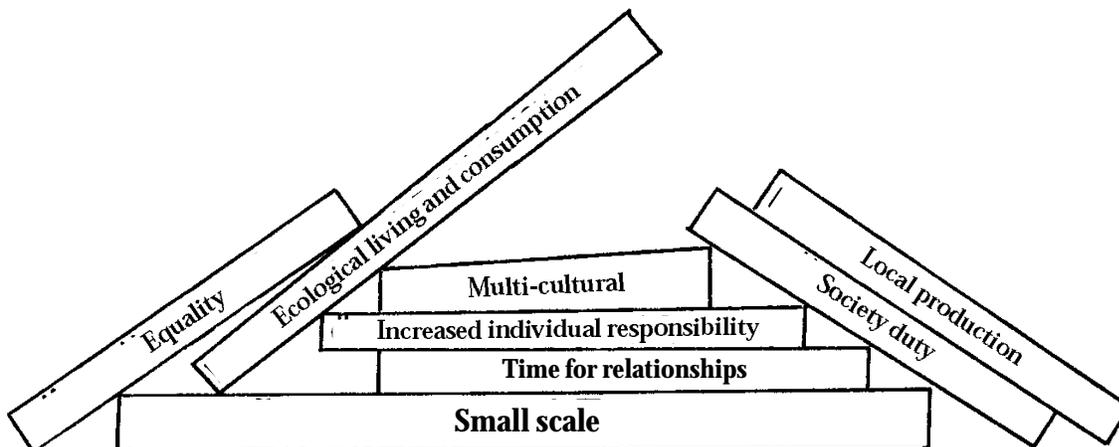
We finally want to emphasize one more time, how important it was for the Future Builders to base all their societal planning and expansion on the four system conditions. This was especially true for transportation, energy consumption, and construction. For example, they wanted to minimize heavy freight travel by locating production closer to the consumers, and human travel by having meetings and conferences via telecommunication. Above all they hoped that a new energy system would solve the worst problems of carbodioxide and dangerous greenhouse gases.

They established the following list for the construction business, and hoped deep inside that the futuristic buildings envisioned as the homes of the future by some future researchers, would never become reality. A quote:

"There has to be a change, politically and within the construction companies, concerning construction. The new houses must be built with the balance between man and ecology in mind. The new residential areas mustn't consist of large complexes, asphalt and concrete, like the million dwelling programs typical of Sweden in the 1960's. The houses of the future will hopefully be designed around the concepts of small scale, quality, and ecology. Below are some thoughts and ideas about housing in the future:

- **Tenants should be allowed to participate and shape the building they are to live in.**
- **We need an organic architecture. Greenhouses, for example, could contribute to a better neighborlines and a nicer living environment.**
- **Construction materials should be natural; no chemicals or prepared materials that cause allergies, asthma, etc.. You have to adapt materials to the house construction. Old trade skills should be integrated with new material techniques, and create revolutionizing new ways to build houses.**
- **Alternative sources of energy, such as sun, wind, and water, need to be developed so that the households are self-reliant for their heating and electricity consumption.**

- Residential areas have until today mostly been planned and built by men, with functional but boring designs. We believe that a more feminine architecture, with art and feeling, would give society a different look.
- In a sustainable society, you reuse and recycle in order not to have to use our natural resources in excess. Residential areas must be designed so that recycling and composting become a natural part of our daily life.
- Serious efforts should be made to reuse construction material from old houses for new construction and renovation.”



6. Conclusion

Scene: The Knowledge Net. Seminar evening.

After the five groups have reported on their work, a whole seminar evening is devoted to a follow-up discussion in a large group. Sara leads the discussion, which goes on for several hours. The participants have many interesting stories to tell each other, about how they found information on various things. None of them have been satisfied simply by reading the Future Builders' texts. On the contrary, the more they read, the more curious they became about how the world must have looked like when these texts were written. The younger participants understood that there was lots to learn that they hadn't discovered earlier. The participants who had been there themselves, realized that they had been so young then, so they hadn't really questioned what happened and why. Besides the written sources, the participants had also gone through old radio and TV programs and interviewed particularly interesting people that were involved in various issues during this period.

The younger participants especially have had difficulties fathoming the panic prevailing in the 1990's, when most of Europe was struck by what was called mass unemployment. Several of them have therefore put in extra efforts to analyze the consequences of unemployment and to see what measures the various countries took to correct the problems. Some of the participants have focused on getting a clearer picture of how the Swedish government performed during this period. They found that the most common measures against unemployment were gigantic educational programs for the citizens. This led them to question how, in those days, it was determined what knowledge and skills were relevant for the future. On closer investigation, it undoubtedly seemed as if this question had been overlooked, considering all the measures that lacked a connection to reality.

The participants can now see the context in which the Building the Future project was formed; that there was and is a real need to stimulate ideas and insights as to what type of competence that would be needed in the future.

A subject of discussion that was impossible to avoid was the fear of change. Ever since the monorail accident, this subject had been getting a lot of media coverage. Many people had been asking themselves why this fear often manifested itself by making people completely lose their wits. The seminar participants had followed the debate with growing interest, as they got more and more involved in the ideas and values of the 1990's. Now several of the groups are jumping into the debate. They make the point that when you live in a period of such revolutionary change as the people did in the 1990's, it is very easy to cling onto what is old and familiar. If you are not familiar with any of the methodologies of future studies, it is also easy to view yourself as a victim of all the changes, without seeing your possibility to influence things.

"This is indeed what happened," Sara says. "But those of us who were around back then, got to witness the development of courses and education programs in handling change and uncertainty. An increasing number of us began to understand that this thing with change wasn't just a temporary condition. We would never get the old life of stability back again. This of course didn't stop us from believing in and hoping for a more stable situation in the future, where we can find a balance in our way of living."

"It took a long time before we learned to deal with this. Before we took the step from a passive 'future preparedness' to a more active and creative participation in the shaping of the future", Sara continues. "This is what it's all about, isn't it? Creating visions and fighting to realize them! It's because there are more visionaries today that the fear of change has subsided," she concludes.

The participants have acquired a solid base for the next step of the seminar series by collecting a lot of information. This was exactly the intention, although Sara and Axel didn't express it when they handed out the task.

Axel took notes throughout the discussion. Below is a brief summary of what was said.

Concluding discussion

The discussion focused on the following issues:

- *What is unique about the Building the Future project?*
- *What is the recurring theme in the Future Builders' texts?*

The group started by agreeing on that two things made the project unique. First, it was focused on the unusual theme of future studies. Secondly, it was allowed to run for a long time; one and a half years. In many ways, this was a pilot project. The seminar participants realized that it was a bold direction taken by the authorities to approve funding for the project and to support this kind of education, even though it would neither lead to a specific profession nor guarantee work for the participants after the project was finished. Lengthily publicly funded projects, without a specific professional focus, were not very common in that era.

The groups also found parallel examples of creative projects done in a similar spirit at the same time, which shows that there was a growing movement of new thinking. Building the Future was however unique, because it was the first time in Sweden that laymen were doing future studies. Building the Future actually formed a school, both when it came to future studies and the special kind of research called lay research. Today this is quite a common type of research as demonstrated by, among other things, the Knowledge Net. But in those days research was normally conducted only by accredited scientists with lofty degrees.

After Building the Future, a number of other projects with a focus on future were started around the country. Today elements of the teaching philosophy developed within the Building the Future project are included in most schools, both in children's and adult education.

Another characteristic of the Future Builders, pointed out by the seminar participants, was that they were unusually well educated for their age. This was particularly true since only a few of them even had an academic degree. This could of course be a consequence of the length of the project, which gave them the time to delve deeply into the subjects they were studying and to integrate their individual knowledge with that of the rest of the group. But it wasn't only due to the length of the project. It was also due to the special teaching philosophy that permeated the project, which gave the participants knowledge and skills in many areas. It is obvious to us that they enjoyed learning, which wasn't always the case with education in those days. Compared to other project reports and youth research from the same period, the Future Builders appear to have had more knowledge and insight than their contemporaries. You can tell that they really had absorbed all of the books in their list of reference literature, and that they had acquired detailed knowledge about the issues that were the most topical at the time; for example the environment, gene technology, information technology, and the economy.

The rationale behind their statements and opinions was well substantiated, as opposed to many of their contemporaries, who just expressed opinions without having an important holistic perspective.

They were in great demand as debaters in panel discussions because these young people had discussed over and over again some of the important societal issues and taken a position on them.

Another very interesting point about the Future Builders was that they took the initiative themselves, to change the goal of the project to a vision of a future sustainable society. The initial intention was to describe what work life and jobs might look like in the future, but after a while these young people thought this perspective was a too narrow and old-fashioned. The interesting thing is that such a diverse group, comprised of men and women between twenty and twenty-seven years old, from different social and ethnic backgrounds, and with the most varied education and life experiences; unanimously agreed on the fact that a sustainable society was the most important issue of all. And by sustainable, they didn't only mean economically sustainable but also socially sustainable.

Of course there were other groups of young people in those days who were involved in, for example, environmental issues or the peace movement. But it was absolutely unique that the Building the Future project's consciously selected cross section of Swedish youth, after ten months of intensive collection and analysis of information, were so positively unanimous in their view that we must put the common good before our own good.

Now to the recurring theme in the Future Builders' texts. It was obvious in the reports from the five groups, that they demanded more morality and ethics in social relationships between people. This opinion was expressed time and again. The seminar participants therefore agreed on enlarging the building block titled "ethics and morality", and making it a permanent building block.

Two other concepts permeated the Future Builders' thinking; a holistic view and raised awareness. These

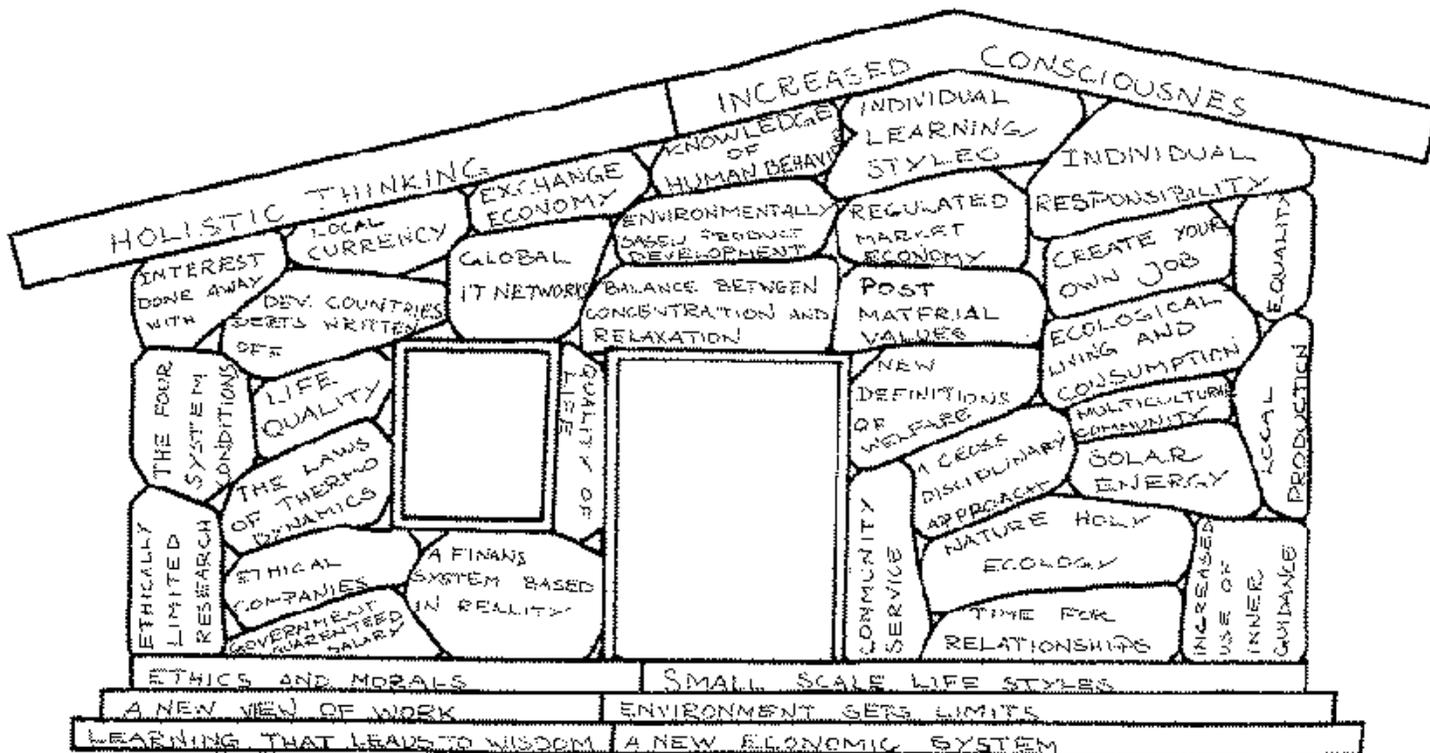
concepts encompass everything they had expressed about the environment, sustainability, systems thinking, loving and caring. The participants therefore decided to convert these two building blocks to energy producing roofing tiles, shielding the rest of the blocks and collecting energy for the building.

When the reports and the discussions are done, everybody dresses up in clothes from the 1990's, in order to create an ambiance of that time. Some of the groups have prepared a few skits related to various parts of the material, which are now performed to highlight situations that might be strange to today's people. Everybody gets a good laugh at the slightly exaggerated dramatizations.

After this, it's time for a typical 1990's meal with selected 1990's music. To round off the evening, everybody goes to work at what is the actual manifestation of the whole project:

THE BUILDING OF THE FUTURE!

Everybody has, at an earlier occasion, helped make building blocks in a clay-like material. It is actually a pliable dough, made from recycled lawn furniture. Sara's ex-husband, Håkan, who runs a company creating new materials, has supplied this construction material. The seminar participants now reshape the blocks they've decided to change, paint the texts on them, and proceed with the construction. They create a building facade which they attach to a wooden frame, so that it can travel to various exhibitions. The result is the building below.



PART III
Appendix

Examples of future jobs

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	Pet Broker	84	5
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Building the Future, A Pilot Project

The project, BUILDING THE FUTURE, has in many ways been a pilot with two goals. The first is to develop the participants as individuals with responsibility for their own future. The second goal was for the participants themselves to develop and drive the project toward a predetermined goal.

The participants have also been active when it comes to forming and implementing the learning and project work. They, themselves have handled the economy, decorated the projects facility, booked in lecturers, booked and given presentations, exhibits and social activities.

The projects purpose was to create a knowledge bank on the future of work life. The participants collective knowledge has been gathered in a report, which in turn was the basis for this book.

The education was made up of an introduction of twelve weeks. twenty public lectures held by The Vision Center for Futures Creation as well as training, seminars and conferences totaling sixty days.

Course Plan

Values and Values Patterns

- Ethics and Morals
- Culture Patterns
- Masculine-Feminine cultures
- Generation Conflicts
- Paradigm Shift
- Religion-Spirituality

Creativity an Learning Styles

- Lateral Thinking
- Mind Mapping
- Study Techniques
- The Resources of the Brain
- Learning Styles
- Mental Training
- Contacts with Inventors and Innovators

Computer Competence

- Word Processing
- Overhead design
- Internet
- E-mail

Technical Development

- Orientation in changing technical developments through attendance and participation-in several conferences arranged by the Engineers Scientific Academy and Sweden's Technical Attachés.

Environmental Education

- Agenda 21
- The Sustainable Community
- Diverse Environmental Conferences

Personal Development

- Personality Analysis
- Personal Leadership (goal setting)
- Team Building
- Presentation Technique
- Discussion Technique

Futures Studies Techniques

- Mass media Monitoring-text analysis
- Trend Analysis
- Forming Visions
- Delphi Technique
- Nine Box
- Scenario Writing
- Futures Wheel

Information Handling

- Interview Technique
- Questionnaire Writing
- Research Technique
- Data Base Search
- Video Technique
- Network Building

Business Life

- The Reason for Work (conferences, lectures, discussions, literature)
- The Good Company-(lectures, discussions)
- Contacts with "Young Business Life"

Politics

- Meetings with the political parties
- Diverse EU-conferences
- Lectures for and discussions with local politicians

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