Modernist Paradigms Never Die, They Just Fade Away
Dietmar R. Winkler

> Limits to Knowledge = Limited Freedom
> Unlimited Knowledge = Unlimited Freedom
> Unlimited Knowledge + Unlimited Freedom =
> Utopia:
> To do, or not to do; to think, or not to think.

Modernist principles of universality, oblivious of social contracts between members of macro and micro cultures, must give way to greater sensitivity and understanding of social concerns.

The Modernist Epoch

Each century begins, as each epoch must, with reference to the near or even distant past. Such acknowledgment is necessary to begin framing the culture-sustaining, reinvigorating, and metamorphosing concepts that achieve better futures.

This century, at its start, acknowledged the sum of good and bad human intentions, conservative and adventurous ideas, constructive and destructive inventions, and the ambitious social engineering and experimentation which became, in some instances, culture sustaining and, in others, pernicious. Human memory's natural short-sightedness and selfishness is aggravated by the territoriality of schools of thought, arrogant national chauvinism, disdainful religious beliefs, and the baneful nostalgia that always transforms the more simple past into a cure for the more complicated future.

The human heritage of previous thought and accomplishment is embedded in all present, from the philosophical to the religious to the political. The ideas, objects, and conventions flowing from it are both the culmination of cultural achievement as well as obstructions to identifying those obstacles to better futures.

The roots of all ideas reach far back into history. They become obscure over time, yet their impact and inferences are durable and at times, permanent. Francis Bacon, John Locke, David Hume, and their peers, thinkers, philosophers, historians, and statesmen, stand in the wings, concluding the Age of Enlightenment by ushering into existence Europe's major social revolutions. Martin Luther's emancipation of commoners, and Gutenberg's publishing venture and disseminating the resulting of knowledge, finally lead to the American social experiment and example-following declarations of
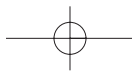
independence. The musings of the ancients, the influences of Descartes and Spinoza, and Kant's and Hegel's philosophical theses prepare Kierkegaard's existential vision which, in return, nurtures modernist ideologies.

At this point in time, modernism, trying to keep its nearly century-old cultural power and control, and not ready to give in and die, is slowly fading away. Naive social concerns and a misunderstanding of societal complexity make way for more sensitive approaches to solve the problems of the next epoch.
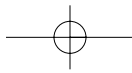
The Social Experiment

Consider the end of the nineteenth century: Europe begins to experience an extreme social transformation, provoked by further industrialization, the continuous migration from agriculture to manufacturing industries, the abandonment of countryside, and the growing congestion within metropolitan areas. What results is a tangled metamorphosis of the entire social hierarchy. Hierarchical controls, leveled through the formerly rigid class structure, are freed from the social straightjackets of church and court, thus enabling the expansion of ideological possibilities and choices. Common interlopers, taking advantage of the university and entrepreneurship through industry, usurp the power of traditional landowners and aristocrats. Nobility and military see their social position slip; they sometimes become less equal with aggressive industrialists and the new class of educated.

With eyes fixated on hierarchical survival, a blind spot of vulnerability emerges, with a pervasive vacuum of social irresponsibility. New political movements emerge, pressing the public to choose from among benign socialism, national socialism, fascism, autocratic communism, and totalitarian and militant Bolshevism.

Society builds the social contract on individual perceptions of what the quality of life is (or should be), and what a particular society guarantees all of its members. Designers must understand that most values, no matter how altruistic, are bound by certain realities. No member of society wants utopian expectations for the future. Each wishes them to be pursued and actually realized, sooner rather than later, and, it is hoped, in one's own lifetime (or at least that of their children).

Values are the means by which individuals, small groups, or entire cultures establish the measures for expectations of behavior and responsibilities. Valuation occurs when machinations of cultures are observed and framed into self-defining perceptions. All valuations are in states of constant deliberation and flow. Cultural validation is an interpersonal system of valuation reached through consensus. Value systems comprise past experiences and values selected by others and by cultural institutions. All valuation requires either acceptance or rejection of one thing over something else. Cultural comparison represents the first step in developing a

cross-cultural overview. And it is daunting to determine which cultural measure to apply—western, Judeo/Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, all, none, new ones?

Value is that place between existing conditions and a desired state. Individuals scan relevant information for fulfillment of expectations. They respond to outsiders' opinions, moods of presentation, and contexts for interpretation. A free society minimizes those risks inherent in having values that differ from others. But even a free society refers to outsiders as "crackpots." Individual perceptions joins with others' perceptions to compose a cultural frame for the social contract. Even with many shared values, the complexity of human interactions inevitably creates conflicts. Members of tightly-knit families do not always agree; the global view of intercultural values is even more loaded.

The Scientific Legacy

The accumulation and coexistence of ideologies—many ancient, many superseded, and many reinforced by religious interpretations and dogma—held the cultural perception of science in nearly schizophrenic strongholds. Even today, creationism competes directly with Darwin's thoughts on evolution. Throughout all epochs, cultures faced drastic metamorphoses, even with substantial intervals between the beginning of consciousness and the next intellectual intrusion. But each generation of change has accelerated in relationship to the efficiency of recording methods, and contemporary rates are stunning.

The concept of atomism (concepts of the smallest units), developed nearly 2,500 years ago and declaring indivisible, indestructible atoms as the basic components of the entire universe, reluctantly must cope with the new challenge of determinism and its subsequent challenge by concepts of relativity.

Determinism, as framed by Isaac Newton and his seventeenth and eighteenth century contemporaries and looking at the inevitable consequences of causes that are independent of human will, is somewhat easier for citizens to understand. It is easier to live in a deterministic world where cause and effect can be identified and measured. A deterministic world structure is easier for doling out praise or punishment. Einstein's world, with its continuous shifts of values, makes life more complex. When he insists that everything is dependent on its contextual relationship with something else, the citizen must abandon simplistic viewpoints and search for a wider range of possibilities. The citizen's sphere is further agitated by Heisenberg's concept of uncertainty, which allows for questions that expand the number of realistic and utopian possibilities. When quantum physics and mechanics enter the commoners' sphere of perception, the reaction is overwhelming.

The arts, literature, and music pick up the philosophical threads, and the world is provided with expositions of uncertainty
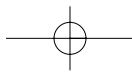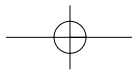
in which conjecture, prefiguration, foreshadowing, and forecasting play new, important roles, and where the prospect of miscalculation becomes part of an intellectually challenging discourse.

Through the Renaissance and continuing to the invention of photography, the scientist is both an observer and recorder of visual manifestations of phenomena. We find in DaVinci's drawings his scientific discoveries, and in Dürer's drawings and woodcuts, the exotic quality of foreign animals. In Kepler's and Copernicus's sculptural and mechanical models and drawings is the four-dimensional understanding of the universe, and in Galileo's water colors, the sensitively materialized surfaces of stellar systems. The diaries of Humbold and Lewis and Clark shed life on ancient cultures and new continents, while Audubon freezes the frantic world of birds. There is no rift between artist and scientist yet.

But at the turn of this century, there is clearly a deep schism between artist and scientist. While scientists consider the complex, the multicontextual, and the unanswerable questions of probabilities, the Modernists are exploring the opposite, specifically the reduction of the complex world to a simplified essence.

Existential Modernism

There probably is no trace of a direct connection between existentialism and modernism. However, existentialism is a principal energy of the times, and the turn of the century could not define itself without the introduction of new scientific, philosophical, and social ideas, giving rise to, and permission for, energetic experimentation.

Existentialism made it clear that life was, and is, Sisyphean in nature, absurd, man-made, and individually constructed. In the personal interpretation of a convoluted, nonsensical universe lies the individual's existence and the impetus for responsible personally-directed action. The paradox of knowledge that simultaneously is and is not of importance, fidelity, and value lies in the belief that everything knowable exists already. What is known seems to vacillate between transparency and semi-transparency, and opaqueness. Even that which is in sight, completely formed or only partially discernible, we cannot understand because of the blurred vision of language, and its lack of appropriate metaphors. We are deterred by customs and taboos, the human shortness of memory, and the sluggishness of one-generation minds.

Humans live in the middle of nature, ceaselessly communicating with her, yet remain strangers, while she betrays none of her secrets. The observer can only speak of the world and nature in relationship to what he observes and then constructs into meaning. He may anticipate, foreshadow, muse, and invent; but he can be sure of anything only through verification, which he must do over and over and over again. To reconcile the wish to have things behave in specific, deterministic ways with the dynamic reality of nature's
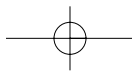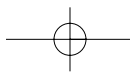
complexity defines the struggle between the simpleminded human ego and nature's ecological metamorphosis.

Life is chaotic in that knowledge metamorphoses with the revelation of something new. Thus, all taxonomies are spurious, awaiting reorder. And all measures of aesthetics are deceptive, awaiting another elitist's redefinition, because all measures of aesthetics serve to express the power of a self-appointed ruling class.

In the territoriality of disciplines, the lines are clearly drawn. Science denies spirit (art), and spirit denies matter (science) as a product of spirit. Cognition battles intuition, while the world awaits the unification of matter and spirit. Meanwhile, the whole person is both cognitive object-maker and dreamer, diligent information-processor and imaginative misinterpreter. The world of the intellect is territorial; the genuine, significant discovery must do battle with tradition, dogma, and ideological barrier—culture admits nothing easily.

One person's ideological expansion is the other's shrinking intellectual territory. Only time verifies the worth of ideas. Soft thinking is usurped by hard, uncompromising reasoning. Statements of fact and knowledge are accepted only after scrutiny and value certification by the cultural "gatekeepers," usually ill-equipped and unwilling to accept new ideas. Only independence can create knowledge, satisfying personal curiosity, and sharing it in discourse. For a social system to maintain vibrance, all members must be literate. Those privileged to receive the quality education that the school catalogue dares to promise must excel in their cultural literacy and aspire to build the foundation of culture.

Interestingly, while modernism preserves for itself the right to think and do freely, it invents dogma for its followers and the slogans that make the missionary process efficient. Only the true individual could not be confined by their naive truisms: small is or is not beautiful, form does or does not follow function, design does or does not make order, and does or does not make meaning.

The truly independent individual must be Sisyphus, condemned forever to roll the burden of knowledge uphill, only to find it again in the "not-knowing" position. Albert Camus considered Sisyphus content in his absurd role, understanding that none of human actions matters. Each person, individually, must translate the rockpile of life into a world of personal order, meaning, and aesthetic quality. Therefore, the fulfillment in life lies only in the utopian dream.

Utopia is the perfect place, the impractical, the altruistic, and the idealistic concept for intellectual reform. Utopia does not allow boredom to assail the senses. Unattainable, utopia is hope, hope for a better future. It provides choice between despair and exhilaration, and provides the impetus for innovation, exploration, and discovery.
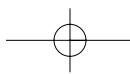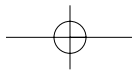
The human struggle to be recognized, to achieve status and rank high socially; and to control vast physical, emotional, and ideological territories; pits man's biology against his mythology. In the desire to leave behind fingerprints, modernists gave the world many concepts—many of them constructive, but most of them contorted and destructive of culture. In the drive for self-actualization, modernists insured against self-ruination, but they could not conceive of the possibility of individuals reaching beyond that which modernism would allow. In implementing their plans, they forgot for whom the world was to be designed. They forgot that, above all, they must preserve the rights of citizens to evolve, to mature, to understand, and to refine their individual understanding.

There seems to have been a very pivotal point in the nineteenth century, when the sense of individual independence and emancipation is further focused through existentialism. Not knowing, or not understanding, is pitted against the self-imposed responsibility of struggling to understand—countering not doing with doing, placing healing in opposition to hurting, setting building against destroying, and hoping against despairing.

Kierkegaard's existentialism condemned each person to freedom and responsibility, and to a dual life of cosmic loneliness and cosmic belonging. Existentialism revels in its belief that the universe lacks specific purpose, as well as permanent, predetermined values; since the human self has no permanence, man can then free himself from biological constraints and become a free spirit, assigning an independent intellectual quality and a moral conduct to his life. Believing that thinking turns the soul into spirit, and that each action must respond to soberly deliberated judgment, the keystones for the dreams, responsibilities, and realities of modernist institutions were in place.

The intellectual quality of existential modernist knowledge vacillated between understanding itself as the most precious possession and, simultaneously, the most pernicious illusion. It neither freed nor enslaved us. Its confinement of perception, language, conventions, and customs on one side was offset by the freedom to investigate all altruisms of life, turning Chauvinism into internationalism, selfishness into compassion, and dishonor into honor. The roots of the design profession were imbued with qualities through which society would snatch freedom from the jaws of human despair.

The modernist vision begins this century in spite of the existential belief in the universe's lack of specific purpose or clear meaning. Modernism charges its individual members with making the journey into the void of life meaningful, placing life's concepts of essence—personality, spirit, individualism, and value—directly behind the immediate action of the moment, and making action and existence the machine of life.
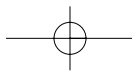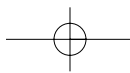
Unfortunately, modernists were quickly mired. While the climate was right, the intellectual preparation for the ideological journey into freedom lacked depth and quality. Down deep, modernists were elitists. They believed in their superiority, but not in emancipating the public. Modernist institutions such as the Bauhaus enjoyed the symbolic status which the close relationship with the industrial and corporate worlds fostered. Its legacy is both further intertwined with the industrial complex and further adrift from understanding people's culture and behavior.

A search through the curricular documentation will reveal that form and color languages were efficiently linked to practical concerns, and the effectiveness of form concepts rationally explained. But it is immediately clear that these modernists were disconnected from the social and cultural value system. This intellectual vacuousness and serious deficiency in understanding behavioral, social, and cultural issues is uniformly integrated into most design programs.

Modernists missed the point. Design functions best when it facilitates communication and when it reconciles those social, cultural conflicts that stem from competing social, political, and economic contexts. To design well means to understand the complex human interactions, especially the human ecology of value discrimination which locates and identifies individuals and defines their behavior. Sound design solutions emerge from the context of human conditions; they cannot evolve without direct reference to user and culture.

The Bauhaus provides a good model for analysis because of its respect and reverence among design practitioners and educators. Many a curriculum plan has, at its base, a significant portion of the original Bauhaus model, and many a professional's early success was based on Bauhaus rhetoric. The missionary eagerness of the Bauhaus also meant, unfortunately, that its intellectual vacuousness was transplanted. By aligning itself with craft and technical education and guilds, it severed its future from intellectual possibilities. Although design education is not doomed to a second seat forever, it must struggle against its anti-intellectual history and adopt a better definition of the new function of design.

The modernist missionary zeal carried its ideologies from Central Europe to dramatically different cultures. It never occurred to modernists that design for cultures in which the individual is guilty until proven innocent cannot function in the same fashion as design for cultures in which the opposite is true. The American Constitution, for example, promises and suggests (in principle at least) vertical or horizontal movement, according to choice and unrestricted by social strata. Modernist viewpoints prove themselves uncomfortable within that framework. They are destructive to indigenous cultures, and chip away at what is the obvious necessity of choice in democratic societies. By imposing uniform solutions
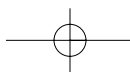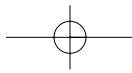
for diverse audiences, modernists revealed their disdain for the citizenry. It is interesting to see Jan Tschichold's prediction come true. He had charged modernists with playing into the hands of the totalitarians and autocrats. Looking at the design culture, it is obvious that modernism best supported the military-like industrial complex.

The New Responsibilities

Designers are at a crossroad. They either can continue to support ideas and ideals from a different century—continue to make objects and images—or they can take a different road to building cultures.

The builders of culture assume responsibilities that go beyond self-serving gain, notoriety, and self-adulation. They assume the mission of becoming well-educated. They must see the world as a web of stimuli, generated not by a singular ego, however brilliant, but by all disciplines, each contributing to the knowledge of the diversity and complexity of human nature. Authors, researchers, scientists, philosophers, sociologists, and behaviorists—all humans are observers of a same universe in a same epoch, even if their contexts for viewing differ. As they muse aloud about their perceptions, they influence each other. As they articulate their views of the world—never completely right or wrong—they negotiate what they see through the values of their time, verifying fact through discourse and challenge. Somewhere in the middle, between the many perspectives, members of the culture form their own opinions, based on their reading of the information at hand.

Creativity, inventiveness, and discovery can be measured only through the metaphors of language. Inventions can be refined only through the simultaneous refinement of language. Language helps ideas evolve through a vast, complex system of metaphors.

The task of building and supporting cultures begins by defining a world which supports an autonomous individual in reciprocity, maintaining and sharing the environment. Each individual has in mind the specifics of a social contract.

The Social Contract

The social contract is an unwritten birthright, a tacit pact between individuals and their society. It exists mostly in fragments, and is dispersed throughout the entire quilt of a culture's ethos, guiding its members' behavior. These fragments reside in language; comprise mythologies, taboos, and values; and restrict or encourage personal behavior and customs. They serve to express those values and aspirations that signify the best of an individual's culture.

This contract guarantees the most basic components of social, cultural, and physical survival: enough food to thwart famine; shelter against the elements and against intrusion or harm by others; a sense of belonging to a family or clan, not feeling marginalized or segregated; and qualities such as self-esteem, social standing, and the right and opportunity to express opinions and
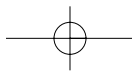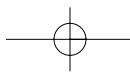
make choices. These guarantees are linked to anticipations and expectations, which are responded to through personal behavior. When the expectations are unmet, the social contract has been broken and contentment becomes fear or paranoia.

Individual sovereignty is the key to the culture in the social system of the next millennium. Designers must understand the ramifications of supporting members under this umbrella. Autonomy, with the right and opportunity to decide, begets principles of social equality and respect for all individuals of the group. The democracy that emanates from this principle selects its government, and elected representatives execute it.

Democracy, however, promises only the potential for achieving quantities of high quality. It guarantees only that the voice of the majority is heard. Therefore, freedom for one does not translate automatically into the freedom of another—and the contentment of an entire society is not a sure thing.

An integrated world society cannot be expeditiously fabricated: the variables in any one human ecology are much too complex, let alone in a large number of competing human ecologies. The concept of an integrated society is an utopian ideal, too easily lending itself to simplistic solutions and propagandist rhetoric.

The reality is that groups generally meet with one another solely to satisfy common needs and reap common benefits. Because they seldom have identical historical, religious, and cultural backgrounds, cultures rarely meet as equals. While biology, sociology, and anthropology suggest that human equality is a natural impossibility, it nevertheless poses an ideal that the design community can accept as a decided, necessary possibility. Designers own the tools and processes that can reduce the inequalities by communicating and celebrating the differences between cultures.

Each perceptual personal frame anticipates certain results. The qualities of interaction with the social and natural environments shape anticipations. Both personal and societal values are in a continuous metamorphosis. Great injustices separate the individual's frame of value from that of the social group. When the expectations of social conduct are no longer met, the social system cannot survive, and the social contract indeed has been breached.

Value Introduction and Modification
To attain sustainable futures, designers must understand the difficulties of changing the behavior that is bound to, and relates to, traditional values. With the earth's resources diminishing; with the imminent doubling of population; and with the plagues of famine, pollution, and waste, a major new field in design will be the modification of traditional values and behavior, and the introduction of new ones.

All values are utopian, withstanding clear definition. They represent the tangible and intangible: turf, territory, ideas, dreams,
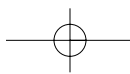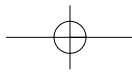
and emotions. Mediating the constant shifts in merit is disconcert-ing and consumes too much energy. Mediation declares either that things are appropriate or are not operating in unison; it signals change in worth or merit in physical things, ambitions, and emo-tions.

Finally, values describe the quality of life. Values define its iterations through language and its system of symbols. Values are the foundation for contracts between individuals and their social institutions. In dynamic value transactions, expectations are trans-formed into realities that function. The social contract between the individual and the group is organized, and the conventions that emerge are frozen (for the moment). Both the individual and the group understand the ideal configuration of anything of value, and when the fragments of the ideal do not materialize, the transaction is not satisfactory.

Ideal conditions are the gauge for measuring up. Valuation is multi-contextual, mega-contextual, and overlapping. It is a compe-tition of aggressively intertwining contexts, requiring intellectual and emotional compromises from everyone because concern, insight, humility, and empathy are easily subverted or fall victim to misunderstanding and self-deception.
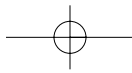
Evaluation of the quality of life means constant self-exami-nation and adjustment. Territoriality is the world's most rudimenta-ry standard of measuring the value of something, and unfortunately is ruthless in its competitiveness. In a sense, this gauge preserves, hardens, or softens the borders of emotional and ideological ter-rains, forcing relationships into hierarchies of greater and lesser de-grees of importance, and provides social and political recognition for individuals within the power and control structure. The social contract is built on individual perceptions of what is, or should be, a quality of life, and what is perceived as a societal guaranty, birthright, and entitlement for all of its members.

Developing Sustainable Futures
Modernists used themselves as an example. They rarely encoun-tered a cross-section of their own social group, and were quick to make all kinds of unfortunate cultural assumptions. Today's studies of futures have shifted from naive, simplistic assumptions and impositions from one successful culture on another, to careful, thor-ough, balanced viewpoints to guide individuals and groups in constructing the essential qualities of life, work, satisfaction, con-tentment, and aspirations.

Such care requires deep knowledge—not knowledge isolated in one domain, but interdisciplinary and cross-cultural knowledge that is shared and sharpened through maintenance and criticism. The thoroughness requires the synthesis of behavioral, social, anthropological, and historical wisdom lodged in the specific cult-ure for which a future is to be evolved.
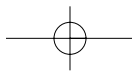
Granted, futures can only be prospects, possibilities, or probabilities. Therefore, the process of future planning must allow for alterations to the routes and directions of the metamorphosis in progress.

Being able to identify and frame the problem no longer is enough. Fixation on what does not work is an obstacle. What obstructs good solutions must give way to a clear focus on the solution—not merely as a stopgap measure, but as a process that is constantly revaluated and improving.

Most problems are ancient ones, configured by the ancient values embedded in the language that describes them. They are part of the behavior that the value system sets into motion by a social group usually sharing a certain value-laden language. Each value creates constraints or directives for the solution. Each value must be analyzed and is a critical component leading to a strong, supportive solution. Each value expression engenders a high and low measure of emotional response. Each fosters or hinders the envisioning of a solution.
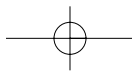
It is important for designers to weigh their own value systems, ethics, and motives before beginning to change someone else's. The same ethical questions a journalist asks before embarking on a story can guide designers: why, for what purpose, who wins, who loses, etc.? Not all missions are honorable. Not all missions benefit those for whom they are intended.
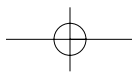
From Modernist Universality to Empowerment of the Individual
The modernist's Esperanto—artificial, simplistic, and culturally uncouth—isolated values from one segment of culture to impose them, missionary style, on global cultures. In simplifying, the complexity of cultures was lost; in standardization, human freedoms of expression were blunted and choice was stunted.

Language truly reflects the values of a culture. It is impossible to convey something lyrical and fine through a limited vocabulary or an artificial language, one that is divorced from cultural memory, history, and tradition. It is clear that vital members of a living culture gradually will adopt some foreign values, but that occurs through osmosis rather than imposition. In the interdiction of foreign values, after missionaries infiltrate the native cultures, the outer cloak of religion hides original beliefs, rituals, and customs. When Marxism wanes, Czarist Russia comes back into focus. The roots of culture are deep and hardy.

The beginning of this century stressed universality. In contrast, the beginning of the next must address the problems created by an assortment of diversity. Instead of the single measure, the new futurists will have to address the plurality and differences in approaches and visions. They must enable each culture, no matter how removed from the mainstream, to define its goals and ambitions. It is clear that each future must find ways to support the indi-

vidual as a whole person, providing physical well-being in terms of nutrition and health services; mental well-being in terms of elimination of social and cultural threats; and emotional well-being in terms of having territorial space and status within the culture.

On the one hand, members of the western and European cultures must realize that they must stop consuming so much of the world's resources, given their smaller number. On the other hand, those cultures with explosive population must find ethical, acceptable ways to stem further exploitation of resources. Each cultural group must recognize that a decline of the quality of life in one area impacts the rest, even if negative effects are not readily apparent. For a healthy world culture, the whole must support each smaller segment through educational and economic programs, and social and physical welfare initiatives. Early Marxism, communism, socialism, and Internationalism thought that the most worthy of values could be transferred from one culture to another. But history shows that human societies evolve slowly, adopting new ideologies only if they have some relationship to the cultural ethos.

Human Autonomy and Technology
Human progress distinguishes between the human use of technology that frees people to live independent lives, and any invention that shackles humans to technology, making them dependent and machine-like. The true humanist always is glad to be bonded to and part of nature. The technocrat—whose pride deceived him about the efficacy of machines—justifies the conquest and degeneration of nature. As man cannot cut himself lose from his human traditions, neither can he sever his link with nature. For in conquering nature, he will ultimately only defeat himself. The human must be the center of any system, especially a mechanized one, for only then can there be some vibrancy, allowing for introspection, perfectibility, and life producing.

The greatest fear of the powerful always has been the independence and autonomy of others. The road to equality is littered with failed experiments. But because independence and autonomy are critical to a better future, one must address dehumanization, injustice, oppression, and exploitation.

How then does one sustain futures? The contemporary futurists post the outlines of an interesting debate which must occupy the imagination of the design community for many years to come. Opposite of the modernists, who revelled in simplification, they delve into complexification. They dare frame a post-colonial, post-European, post-military-controlled, and post-imperialistic civilization. The problems of complexification make them construct their plan on the best of ideals for the modern man.

They seek viable alternatives to the controls and influences of the traditional power-institutions of state, business, and industry. They are redefining economics not according to the "bottom-line"
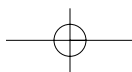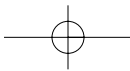
value system, but by linking it to ethical and spiritual bases for responsible and accountable decision making. They are responding to the value embedded in the quality of life as the only value worth seeking. They embrace cultural diversity, along with modern and indigenous wisdom, aiming to create new institutions that enable citizens to live autonomous lives.

Now is the opportunity for designers to respond to modernism's ubiquitous blind spots. Resurrecting ancient, inventing new, and redefining stagnant social contracts; preserving the frameworks of individually-determined qualities of life; and empowering micro-cultures will not necessarily make the power of modernism die immediately, but slowly fade away. The designer of the twenty-first century, as builder of culture, will have to find delicate answers for sensitive social conditions: What kind of culture is envisioned? For whom is it? Who participates? Who builds it? What quality of life is relevant at this moment and should it be relevant to other cultures? Is it sustainable? Is it worth pursuing? Who benefits? Who is left out?