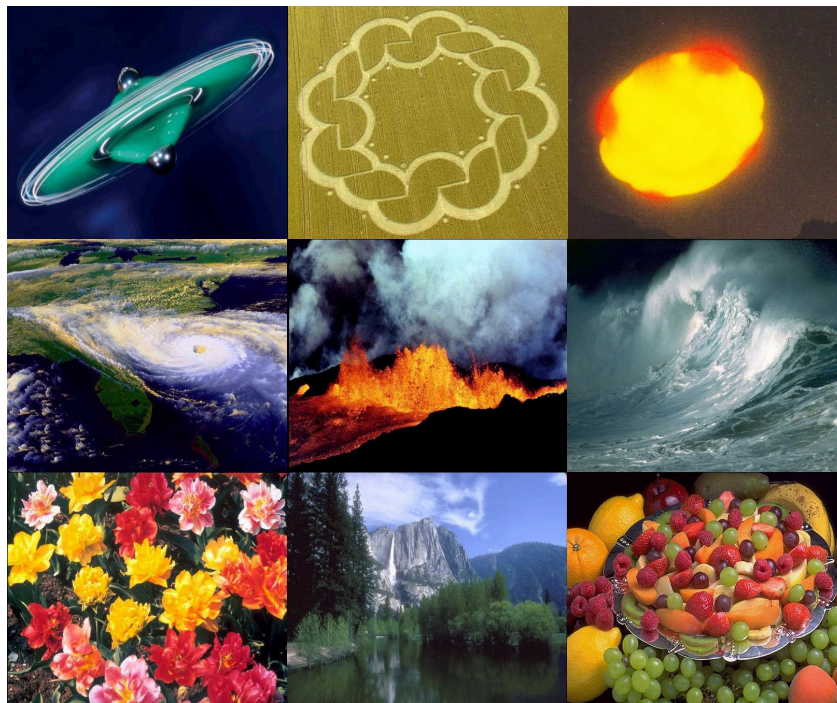




PLANET EARTH EXTREME MAKEOVER



Planet Earth: Extreme Makeover

*As the ancient prophecies of major floods and earthquakes
are suddenly fulfilled, many of Earth's people are rescued by spacecraft
and taken to huge mother ships,
where they debate and plan their New Society while Planet Earth
undergoes a complete restructuring.*

*Just as many intrepid souls once crossed the Atlantic from the Old World
to a new continent and a new life, so the time finally comes
when Earth's people return to their 'new' planet,
now cleansed, refreshed and replanted.*

*They bring with them new concepts of law and liberty
based on one simple, all-embracing principle, reflected in
land and resources-use, economy, business, and personal liberties.*

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PLANET EARTH: EXTREME MAKEOVER

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Planet Earth: Extreme Makeover PROLOGUE

And Darkness came over the Earth. The stars of Heaven and the constellations thereof gave not their light: the Sun was darkened in his going forth, and the Moon did not cause her light to shine. The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of Heaven fell to the Earth.

Nation rose against nation and kingdom against kingdom: and there were great earthquakes in divers places, and floods and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs from Heaven.

And upon the Earth there was great distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which were coming to pass on the Earth: for truly the powers of Heaven were shaken.

Then the days came, in which there was not left one stone upon another, that was not thrown down. The cities became piles of rubble, the beautiful woodland scenes flattened by the might of terrible storms. Great earthquakes ripped the mantle of the planet asunder, in a patchwork of destruction never before seen in the entire history of civilization.

The atmospheric storms, which roared across the surface, tore down forests of trees at a single stroke, and raised water out of lake and ocean to spread destruction and inundation far inland from the shores. Nothing would remain of the once-vaunted civilization that men had built for themselves.

Continents, sunk thousands of years ago, began to rear up out of the ocean to show man that his civilization is not the first, and that this is not the first time his efforts have been crushed by catastrophe.

Finally, the light of the Sun and the Moon were shrouded out completely for long periods, and the very air that is breathed turned to a foul miasma in the lungs.

When all seemed to be undone, when the world had become unrecognizable, when there was no way to escape being washed away in storms and floods, or picked up bodily by hurricane winds....

*...then look up, and lift up your head,
for your redemption draws nigh.*

Planet Earth: Extreme Makeover

Chapter 1 – WELCOME ABOARD!

The world was in chaos. Families were separated, homes washed away on huge tidal waves or flattened by hurricane winds, uprooted trees flew through the air like leaves, towns and neighborhoods were unrecognizable.

Amid the confusion, small spaceships darted about, unaffected and unconcerned, beaming up anyone who was ready, ready to release property and status once enjoyed and so highly prized, ready to accept trustingly, perhaps instinctively, the hands offered in help and friendship.

“Just trust and have faith, release, feel free... we will do the rest” was the message which so many now felt inside themselves. Thus, wet, dirty, weak, and thoroughly confused and disoriented, they were beamed up into the small spaceships, which, acting as ‘taxis’, quickly transported them to the undersides of great motherships where they disembarked and were directed to central reception areas.

Welcome aboard!

These were the words, and this the spirit, with which those who chose to be ‘beamed up’ to the Mother Ships were greeted. As people huddled together in groups, gaining some confidence from one another, they felt the warmth of a soothing voice, quiet, confident.

“I am Andromeda Rex. It is my pleasure, and great honor, to greet and welcome you. Please, have no fear.

“There is nothing to be feared in coming into our midst. We are loving, normal persons, as yourselves, with the attitude of good neighbors and helpers in a time of crisis. We are prepared with clothing, and your foods, and the needs to which you have accustomed yourselves. We will not be guards, but friends, and you will enjoy your time with us, especially as you look down upon your planet in its turmoil.

“There will be a period of time to be spent with us, for your beautiful Earth must be healed in its cleansing, and given time to return to its true glory. Then those who have been lifted in the body will be returned to reconstruct a New World and a New Order of things. As you tarry with us, you will be given the opportunity to attend classes and training for the work which will need to be done. You will be given our constant help in doing this; our advice and our technology will be at the disposal of these returning ones.”

Then another spoke.

“I am Commander Aleva of the Spaceship Rrmada, part of the Ashtar Space Command.

“Though there have been numerous warnings and predictions, for many of you these times will have come upon you unexpectedly. But we have long been preparing for these great events. All of you have been encoded. We have monitored many of you so that we would be familiar with your patterns and life styles, so to be of help wherever possible.

“We are offering our love to you for we understand and know what you are going through in all of these tribulations.

“There are many of us here from distant planets that have volunteered for this service. I am sure you might be curious to know where we are all from, but there will be time for introductions later. We volunteered to help those of you on the Earth plane in your time of crisis. We have studied to be able to communicate with you, studied your Earth life, and hope to be of some help. Many of us have come from far distant galaxies. As the word went out for volunteers, you would be astonished at the response. There were very few who, for reasons of family commitments and such, did not respond. Mostly all were anxious to be of service.”

“I am Master Hatonn, a Keeper of the Akashic Records and also at present a member of the Ashtar Command.

“Yes, each one of your names is written down on the records held in our great data banks. Your sectors have been carefully assigned to certain fleets and commanders who would oversee the needs of your sector. We knew you were there and exactly where to locate you. That is why each one of you received definite, instinctive instructions at the crisis moment so that you would know where to be at a given time. No one will be missed or overlooked.

“Units of families, separated in the great exodus, will be brought together again on our ships as soon as events make this possible. Do not harbor fear of any kind, but think only in an attitude of thankfulness to our Father.

“There will be a natural missing of accustomed environment, but a brief time with us will bring a forgetfulness, as you settle into the new routines and surrounding atmosphere. Our ships are beautiful places to be, and the atmosphere within them is joy and love and concern for one another. There are some of your own people also, volunteers, who have already trained to assist you in your adjustment to your new environment. We have trained these beforehand in their dream state for the work they are to do.

“I personally greet all of you as you are lifted into our midst to remain with us for a little while. When your planet has been healed, you will be returned to it and all of your needs for reconstruction will be given. Higher Intelligences shall walk with you to assist you in a speedy reclaiming of the Earth in Universal Love. I am Hatonn, and I am grateful for your consideration of my words. ”

With short speeches such as these, delivered with quiet and supreme authority, yet communicating an all-pervading sense of unqualified, unconditional love, the disoriented, disheveled crowds were calmed, as they now awaited with quiet confidence whatever their new friends might have in store for them.

Andromeda Rex spoke again.

“Now, dear friends, our colleagues will take small groups of you to your accommodations, where you will be refreshed, then sleep. It is not, and never could be, a part of our actions, to ‘manipulate’ you in any way, although you will find that in our atmosphere your spiritual vibration rate is already increasing gradually to meet ours, and that of your ‘new’ selves.

“On this one single occasion however, we are taking the liberty of bringing sleep to your physical bodies once you are refreshed and relaxed in your quarters, for it is only through sleep that you can truly become relaxed.

“Furthermore, upon awakening after the appropriate time, you will be programmed with reassuring thoughts, as if a friend were sitting by your bedside ready to comfort you as you awaken, to prevent a shock reaction ‘where am I?’ You will find that after rest, you will be able to accept what is past, and what is to come, with a quiet mind.” He paused, then continued with a smile: “Indeed we hope, in the fullness of time, to have your enthusiasm!”

An elderly woman, mature in years yet slim and physically fit, addressed the crowd.

“Hello, I am Aleva. I am here in my capacity as the Official Greeter, and I would greet each of you most humbly in the Light of the Radiant One. I would bid you welcome, for it is my joy and my pleasure to act as your official host.

“I know you must be weary and you are ready to rest. So I would suggest to you that perhaps you might now go to your designated rooms. There is no need to stand uncertain and be concerned – simply go in the direction that you feel is ‘right’. Some of you will turn to the left and some to the right, then continue until you see a certain inscription upon a door. A ‘knowing within’ will tell you that this is your room. I would suggest that you would enter. Now, please set off to your quarters, and I shall continue my description”.

Slowly at first, then gaining more confidence, people began moving off, many managing a quick smile as they found that, yes, they were indeed experiencing an ‘inner direction’ to go this way or that. Though Aleva was no longer with them physically, everyone, whatever direction they took, could hear her voice... aloud, or perhaps... ‘internally’ ...

“You will notice going down the corridors, that as you approach your room the door slides quietly open so that you might step into that which is your particular space. I see now that some of you are quite surprised to find that you have a particular favorite green plant in your room, or perhaps there is your special chair.

“Of course this is a replica of that which you have had on Earth. For you see, we have monitored you quite closely and it is our desire that this space, this area you would call your own, would be an area that would be quite comfortable for you, so we have brought in various favorite articles for your convenience.

“You will notice now that there is a closet, that there are chairs, and that your bed does not have legs, but rather it is a projection out from the wall. Now, if you would like to freshen-up by washing your face, you might like to touch that large button over there on the wall and you will find that the necessary concealed fixtures will make themselves available to you. Then I would suggest to you that you exchange the garments that you are wearing for one of the one-piece garments in your closet, as you will find this more comfortable. And yes, you will notice that you have a specific color for that which you wear, which we believe will reflect your personal preference.

“Now that you are refreshed, and have cast off at least the outer garments associated with your recent experiences, may I suggest to you that you recline upon your couch or bed, whichever term you prefer to use. There now, I trust you feel quite comfortable.

“Please do not be concerned that two persons will now ask permission to enter your room. They have come to assist you in balancing and in attuning to the vibrational frequency of the ship. Yes, notice that they do not actually touch your body, but rather, they work through that which is your auric field. There now, you can already feel that they have discovered a particular area of your aura where there has been an imbalance within you, and they are now working to smooth out that imbalance.

“I can now sense that you are feeling much more comfortable, much more relaxed. No, these two ones do not speak to you in words as you do, but your gratitude is conveyed to them through your thoughts. Perhaps you might choose to rest now that they have completed the balancing process. You will find that sleep comes easily to you. Sleep... what was it that your Shakespeare said.... ‘Sleep that knits up the ravell’d sleeve of care, The death of each day’s life, sore labour’s bath, Balm of hurt minds, great nature’s second course, Chief nourisher in life’s feast....’

“With those good words, I bid you rest”.

Planet Earth: Extreme Makeover
Chapter 2 – HOME ON A MOTHERSHIP

Next day, or whenever it might be in whatever time now existed, Earth's visitors found themselves awakening calm and refreshed, remembering their past experiences of course, but miraculously without fear, looking forward with enthusiasm – yes enthusiasm! – to the promise of a new day, much as one would feel waking up on the first day in a holiday resort.

The first task of their new Space Brothers was to repair the mental and physical damage, to soothe and comfort those in shock, for although sleep may have comforted them giving an appearance of calm, their subconscious minds too must be cleansed of trauma.

They would also begin to bring together those who had been separated. Next would come the gentle process of healing, and of steadily raising the newcomers' spiritual vibration rates. Indeed these two processes work together, for as their vibratory rates are raised, so any injuries or imperfections in their bodies heal themselves, returning to their perfect Etheric pattern, though in a few cases specific treatments may be necessary.

This means that all their old disabilities, the damaged foot from childhood, the results of an internal operation, the scars of an accident, the internal wounds of some past sorrow... all these will be healed, returning the physical bodies and their spiritual counterparts to their truly 'natural' state, their 'higher' perfect pattern as it exists on the Etheric level.

All of this, however, was taking place slowly and steadily, with only a bare awareness on the part of the 'patients', who were to be otherwise occupied with a conducted 'familiarization tour' of what would now reveal itself as a spaceship more vast than anything any of the visitors could ever have imagined.

When we think of 'spaceships' we probably visualize their size as corresponding perhaps to one of our largest aircraft, while those with a more adventurous imagination might visualize the size and facilities of an ocean-going liner or cruise ship. The reality, as the visitors found as they toured their new 'home', was to require a major effort of comprehension! Many groups were to be taken around by different members of the crew and the reception teams. One such group was to be shown around by Space Commander Alizantil.

"Make no mistake about it, dear friends, though you are many, you will find that nothing is crowded in these self contained, carefully ordered and incredibly spacious floating worlds. Seven of our great Space Cities are at work, and their size may come as something of a surprise to you. The Shan Chea, in which we are presently located and which houses the Headquarters of Lord Jesus Sananda, Lord Ashtar and the Ashtar Command, measures..." he hesitated to give weight to his words... "over 25 miles long by 8 miles wide, and 5 miles high".

“These Great Space Cities have in most cases twelve levels, and ours is no exception. Our tour begins where you arrived in your small ‘taxis’ which ferried you from Earth.

“This is level One, which is the great entry and exit portal for trafficking craft. It consists, as you can see, of disembarking platforms, parking docks, and garages for incoming visiting craft. There are also maintenance departments, and storage areas for the thousands of small scout ships which we stack one over the other. Here also are the temporary accommodations for our transient, or ‘first night’ visitors. Now we will move upwards level by level, using one of the large elevators which run up and down the central core.

“The Second level is a colossal stockroom. This is the Quartermaster Deck, containing all manner of supplies and inventories for the varied needs of all levels in multiple warehouses.” As the visitors looked around them, they noted especially how immaculately clean and orderly everything was.

“Now, as you emerge into the Third level you may be in for a surprise, for this is in fact a vast zoo. It is the level where we study animal husbandry, for is our belief that we are responsible for our younger brothers and sisters in the animal, aquatic, insect and bird kingdoms. We do not of course exploit them in any way, we ensure that they are respected, and we stand ready to assist them whenever they may encounter problems which only we can solve. Every manner of creature from many worlds has a habitat here. It is rather a noisy level, but the air is nevertheless pure and pleasant.

“Moving up we find level Four which is designated for agricultural research. It is like a combined farmland, botanical garden and fruit orchard. Here we grow all we need for our own food. As you can see, we believe in mixed, natural farming!

“Sample specimens are also brought on board from various worlds for reseeded on new worlds, so we also undertake research, and activity of that nature.

“The Fifth level is a housing center for all those technicians and persons who serve on the four levels beneath.”

As the group of Earth visitors continued up to Level Six, their minds already overfilled almost to capacity with mental fatigue rapidly setting in, they found themselves in the breathtakingly beautiful Recreational Level, with lushly landscaped park areas.

“You are wonderful tourists”, Commander Alizantil commented with a smile. “Yes, although it is quite normal to us, we know how you must be almost overwhelmed by the sheer size and complexity of our great ships. Here we invite you to pause awhile, to assimilate what we have seen together so far, and to enjoy the peace and beauty of our gardens. Relax! You will know when it is time to continue our tour, and...” he smiled, “you will know instinctively where to find me and rejoin your friends.”

Strolling around in wonderment among the trees and flowers, the visitors, or rather, the new residents, would come upon small secluded sitting areas, promontories with views, and all manner of recreational activities for all ages. Only after relaxing for a while did they begin to realize that they were 'in the open air', with fully grown trees, little hills and valleys, distant views, wonderfully fresh air stirred by a gentle breeze, and even, somehow, the impression of sunlight.

Having again reassembled, and moving on to level Seven, they found the sprawling Medical Complex containing comprehensive patient facilities and quarters for all medical personnel. Dental care areas, biological research centers, and the Ship's laboratories, all elaborated with the finest technology, much of it a mystery to the uninitiated.

It was immediately apparent at least, that healing work was carried out without physical contact or the use of those 'blunt instruments' beloved of Earth's medical profession! Here, new arrivals with special disabilities would be treated and healed. Here also, ongoing research is undertaken into the different forms of sickness which can be found throughout the immediate galaxy.

"Here on the Eighth level," Commander Alizantil explained, "is the housing prepared for you, our guests and new neighbors. It contains staterooms for individuals and apartments for families. There are countless joint dining areas, social halls, nursery care sections, laundry facilities and information offices. Gradually you, our ship's guests, will be introduced to the technologies of these various areas, and here I can promise you an exciting experience.

"Moving up now to Level Nine we have our prized University Compound where you will find what we call the Halls of Wisdom, together with vast libraries, endless concert halls and cultural facilities or programs from different sources throughout the Galaxy. Halls of learning offer classes with curricula for all ages. Very young children's classrooms are filled with individualized computer systems.

"You can see that what you might call our classrooms are decorated with domed ceilings colorful in their display of planets and worlds as they progress in real-time across the pathless sky, each at a different pace.

"Elementary astronomy is taught to the very young and they quickly learn to identify and name the various planets and sections of the Universe. I think you will see, that whereas for you, your 'world' was your planet, we see our galaxy as our home, and whereas you study and travel to different countries or nations, we study and visit our neighbor planets!

"In the Music Rooms of our great Craft, you could say that musical talent blossoms in outer space! Here one can play upon an instrument, in a soundproof room, along with a full orchestral background, with a limitless choice of repertoire simply by pressing the correct buttons on a computer panel. Any category of music, with thousands of selections, is available at the fingertips of the lone aspiring soloist.

“On level Ten, we house our visiting dignitaries from all dimensions in special apartments. This tenth level is also primarily the living quarters for your Space Brothers participating in these exercises, containing staterooms and apartments with multiple scattered conference rooms and dining and lounge areas. Many meetings and conferences take place in what you call ‘space’, brought about by events both within individual planets and their inter-action, often requiring extensive planning. I may tell you, that when you on Earth were exploding atom bombs, and at certain times in your recent history where there were potentially dangerous situations between nations – the ‘cold war’ as I believe you called it – there were many anxious moments during emergency convocations in our meeting halls.

“Fortunately, your people, though blustering at one other from their power bases, were fundamentally reluctant to destroy one another, so we were able to soothe them by transmitting feelings of compassion, mixed with plain commonsense. We do not normally interfere in the internal affairs of individual planets, but we must be ready to act in cases of foolhardy and irresponsible actions which endanger other planets.

“Moving onwards and ever upwards, we come to the Ashtar Command Headquarters, located here on level Eleven. Here also is the Great Rotunda Meeting Hall where we will finish our tour as we come together with other groups. It is here, on the many tremendous viewing screens around the circular wall, that you will soon be permitted to look down upon your world and see those things which are still coming to pass.

“This level also houses the Directional Viewing Room, Map Room and Soul-Panel Boards, and finally the enormous Command Communications Center, where all Earth contacts are precipitated or monitored, as well as Inter-Command communication.

“Level Twelve is not open to you at this time for as you can imagine, there is much to be done there. The Twelfth Level is the uppermost portion of the craft and is referred to as ‘The Dome’. It is the officers’ Observation Deck and Pilot Control Center. But I can tell you that although this is the hub of the ‘serious business’, the atmosphere is always calm and relaxed, though often very busy!

“The furnishings, what you might call the ‘ambience’ is deliberately calm and relaxed. The total surrounding circumference is furnished with comfortable chairs for relaxing and observation. Earth visitors will be welcomed there later as conditions permit. Question-and-answer sessions with crew members are always part of the experience there.

“I should also explain that directly down through the center of the great ship, all levels share a circular shaft or center core. This is where you moved up through the different levels in one of the numerous elevators. But perhaps more importantly, there is a power reactor running the entire height of the craft.

“Please note however that the activating source of power comes from the Universe itself, this is but a way of channeling it to our own purposes. The power center core is roughly 200 feet or so in diameter. The elevators for inter-level transportation are located in the core’s outer shell. A few larger lifts are restricted for Quartermaster and Maintenance use.

“Now, I would invite Commander Jon-Ton to speak to you.”

“Greetings. May the peace of the Infinite One abide within you in all ways, manifesting the beauty which is given through you.

“Even as the persons of your world have their many individual responsibilities, likewise in this self-contained world of ours each person has specific duties or responsibilities. Some are responsible for the ‘housekeeping’ or cleanliness of our surroundings; others provide food, while others maintain the structure of the ship, or the gardens and plant growth areas, as well as those who are responsible for our garments, housing and the environment.

“Those, for instance, who maintain the environment, are responsible for the quality of the air, its correct mixture for our well-being, the amount of light and its intensity, hue and color, and for the level of moisture available to us. They are entrusted with maintaining the in-ship environment that is most conducive to the well-being and upliftment of the ship’s inhabitants. For those of us from different spheres as well as galaxies, we have found that there is a universal air mixture which suits us all, but in the private quarters of each individual, an exact mixture is provided which is likened to their home area. Thus there is always the opportunity for individuals to balance out.

“As you on Earth now come to this ship, you will find that these specialists have learned how to adjust the total environment of your area, so as to achieve a minimum adjustment shock for each of you. Indeed, I hope that you will feel so comfortable, you will not even notice all the work and research we have done to provide for you!

“Our ship could be likened to a large city which is planned for the total benefit of its inhabitants. One aspect that you might find of interest, is the fact that we have no litter or refuse. We have the ability to recycle or reuse all that is with us. Thus we are self-sufficient and perpetuating. Families of crew members may also be assigned to this ship if it is their wish, so that we may have the experience of children or small ones coming forth to enrich our lives. In fact, we have a ‘birthing’ chamber, even as we have a chamber for releasing ones who have achieved their highest development within this particular sphere.

“Now, as we are all gathered together, we will be inviting you to see what has become of your Planet Earth. I should tell you that we have spared you the trauma of the Great Changes. Now, in our present time-frame, your Planet has become quiet, settling into its new geographical pattern. Be prepared for some surprises my friends, and be prepared for a whole new geography lesson.”

As Commander Jon-Ton spoke, the walls seemed to part, as Earth's people found themselves staring down at a planet... could that really be Planet Earth?

Due to the relative movements of Earth and the Mothership Shan Chea, the North American continent was most visible at that moment. Viewers gasped, as much of the American west coast appeared to have been inundated. From what had been Washington State down to southern Oregon, the coastline had moved many miles inland, with the ocean covering most of California, Nevada and Utah. Only a few higher elevations remained as islands. In the center of the American continent, a wide belt of water had flooded the Mississippi basin, connecting up with the Great Lakes, which themselves had risen and expanded, cutting off the eastern part of the United States from the west and effectively creating two separate landmasses. The bottom tip of Florida had disappeared out of sight beneath the ocean.

As they watched, more of the Atlantic came into view, and here, a new land mass could be seen rising slowly and majestically out of the depths, the sea water draining off rapidly from its high peaks and down its valleys – an awesome sight indeed.

There was much quiet talking among the viewers of this 'new' planet, as they stared in awe and disbelief, trying often in vain, to recognize anything remotely familiar. Finally, a hush came over the crowd, as each in his or her own way, came to terms with what amounted to the total eradication of all that they had known. The old familiar world globe they had studied at school was no more. There before them was a whole new planet, yet with just enough remaining detail for them to recognize what had once been home.

"Wow," someone finally said in a hushed tone. "Talk about extreme makeover".

"It was necessary", Commander Alizantil spoke softly, "for many reasons... not least... your civilization had become unsustainable."

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Chapter 3 - THE HIGHER PLAN

"We know". Someone in the crowd spoke. "Many of us were aware, what we were doing to our beautiful planet. It gave us great sadness. We really were trying to mend our ways!"

Commander Alizantil answered.

"Yes my friends, you were thoughtless, selfish, and destructive. And it was right that you recognized this, individually and collectively as responsible citizens of Planet Earth. But I will say to you, that there were other factors leading to the unsustainability of your civilization. To speak briefly, your level of technology and your accelerating population growth were not equaled by the ability of your societies to organize themselves socially and environmentally. No sooner were your more advanced societies beginning to make real progress in environmental standards, than newly developing nations began to follow the same path of pollution, and disrespect for the natural resources of their homelands. For example, I can glance back, but a few years through the Akashic records of history to see the streets of major Chinese cities clogged with thousands of bicycles. Then, almost overnight, it was motor cars, reflecting their new wealth and prosperity. This is an inevitable product of civilization. It is all foreseen within the Great Plan."

"Then why did the Great Plan permit such an enormous, and unsustainable population on our Planet?" a young woman asked.

"You speak as if to doubt the Great Plan" - Alizantil smiled, as if to reassure everyone present that doubting the Great Plan might be unwise, but was certainly everyone's prerogative. "Again, there was a reason. You see, with these Changes long foretold and scheduled, there were many old scores to settle, old wounds to heal. And many souls wished to reincarnate at this time in order to fulfill their karmic roles.

"However this is not to deny that, to put it plainly, you treated Planet Earth quite shamelessly in your single-minded quest for wealth and prosperity. Your religion was the primacy of the individual, an objective which each sought to achieve, through enterprise and invention yes, but also at the expense of others and your environment. This, in a nutshell as you say, was your great sin, the cause of all your misery and your eventual downfall. You exploited one another. And you exploited your planet.

"Humanity has always held the view that Planet Earth is an inanimate object, which you may exploit and abuse at your pleasure. But I will tell you that Mother/Goddess Earth is a living sentient Being, to whom you owe not just your respect, but the privilege of having been permitted to reside and evolve upon her surface.

“Mother Earth, the Goddess Gaia, is a very powerful Being, possessing profound wisdom and power. By the invocation of a single word she can transform the whole nature of her being. Although she has released partial dominion on her surface to Humanity as Planetary Guardians of the mineral, plant and animal life so that Humanity may learn therefrom, ultimately Gaia controls the planet and the nature of what manifests on her surface.

“Gaia also has her own, special destiny to fulfill, and this leads us, dear friends, to give you now a wider view of these great Changes we are all experiencing, and the reasons behind them. First, let us look at your planet herself.

“Gaia has now reached a time in her evolutionary cycle when she must change dramatically, rather like a snake throwing off its old skin. Every so many thousands of years, no matter whether Humanity is incarnated on Earth or not, she goes through a metamorphic change as part of her natural cycle. This is essential for the planet in order to preserve the creative, the reproductive nature of her being. So at the appointed time the planet goes through a cycle of transformation. This necessarily involves major shifting of the planet’s landmasses, movement of the waters, and the restructuring of the matter of the Earth.

“We should recognize, however, that the need for a thorough cleansing of Planet Earth at this time is more than a matter of regular end-of-cycle procedure for the Planet herself. Humanity too has played a part.

“Planet Earth has up to now served as host to many souls of younger evolution and also of many more aggressive and destructive souls from other parts of the Universe for a period of over twenty six million years. Many young souls have come to Earth to learn some of their first and most fundamental evolutionary lessons as consciously evolving Humans.

“Here they learn to discriminate between good and evil, and more importantly, to develop a greater respect for the sanctity of all other evolving lifeforms. They have many lessons to learn; for example, they must learn that when life gets difficult, usually through their own inability to organize their society properly, resorting to killing and maiming one another is not the way to go. Nor is responding to evil with more evil.

“When someone expresses anger towards you, the tendency of the ego is to respond in the same way. And even if your ego is not at that moment responding in the same way to that particular person, perhaps it will await a perfect opportunity to respond that way to another, in an attempt to clear itself of these impressions. This is why the negativity on the Earth has become so dense. Humanity has continued to pass it around, to propagate it, so to speak.

“Over a long period, a gradual accumulation of a ‘black cloud’ of negative thought has developed within the spiritual ethers surrounding Earth as a result of all this negative learning activity and it is clearly visible by those coming from the Higher Spiritual Planes.

“This negativity is now being cleansed from Earth’s ethers through Humanity’s end-of-age outpouring and resolution of past karma. A further cleansing of the physical damage and the mess left on Earth's surface by Humanity is also necessary.

“To those of you who might still look back with regret and ask ‘Did it really have to happen?’ I would ask in return whether in fact your civilization, with its sprawling urban development and pollution, its widespread poverty and starvation and constant wars was in fact really so worthy of preservation. On higher levels, the Ascension of Humanity and the rejuvenation of Planet Earth, regarded as one of the most naturally beautiful planets within our Galaxy, is in fact seen as an event of great joy. We on higher levels know that the Earth is a beautiful world, vastly more beautiful than some of its neighbors. I have always loved the Earth beyond all other creations, for I see within her a melody that has not yet escaped into the ethers. I see her crying as one bound! But she shall not be deprived her Celestial Song much longer.

“So, dear friends, I have spoken of Planet Earth and her own destiny, as well as Humanity’s inter-action. But even this is only a part of a much wider and greater cycle of events. To have this explained to you I will defer to one who is far more qualified than I. Here I speak of one whom we are truly honored to have with us, the Ascended Master Kuthumi, a member of Earth's Spiritual Hierarchy.

“Although I am sure that he would not wish it, I feel I must tell you something of this Great Master. Lord Kuthumi is Earth’s Chohan, or Director, of the Second Ray of the Seven Rays of Service. The Second Ray is the Yellow Ray of Intellect and Science, concerned with Mind and Intelligence in the intellectual understanding of Divine Laws.

“The Master’s previous Earth incarnations were as Aristotle; John the Beloved; Lao-Tze of China, 6th century B.C.; Theodosius, Emperor of Rome in the 4th Century A.D.; St. Columba, known as the Apostle of Caledonia, who helped to convert Scotland to Christianity in the 5th century A.D.; St. Francis of Assisi, incarnated in Italy in the 12-13th century A.D., founder of the Franciscan Order; and Leonardo da Vinci, the Italian painter, sculptor, architect, engineer and scientist, incarnated during the 15-16th century.

“His exceptional presence with us, here at this time, provides yet further indication, that the Great Changes currently taking place throughout the galaxy are unique and of the highest significance.”

Master Kuthumi rose to speak, a tall man of noble features and an expression which was stern, yet truly radiated love and wellbeing.

“Thank you Commander. It is an honor for me to be here, and to address our first guests from Planet Earth as she undergoes her long-awaited cleansing. Yes, this is indeed part of a much grander scheme, for we have reached a point in Earth's history and in Galactic evolution where the transition into fourth and fifth dimensional consciousness must be made.

“You are now being made aware of certain galactic facts of universal, immortal life. As you know, our Solar System is a part of the Milky Way Galaxy. Our Solar System revolves around the Great Central Sun of the Milky Way Galaxy in an orbit that takes 206 million years, as you calculate time. Let us refer to this revolution of our Solar System around the Galaxy as the Great Cycle Orbit. Our Solar System was created over four and a half billion years ago. This corresponds to 22 Great Cycle Orbits of our Solar System around the Great Central Sun of the Galaxy. In the Will of Divine Mind, as communicated to the Spiritual Hierarchy of our Solar System, this completes the time cycle in which our entire Solar System is to remain in its present state of evolution.

“With the Aquarian Age, we began to move into a new orbit around the Great Central Sun, and to move into a new, higher vibration.

“Our entire Solar System is now coming into the Great Initiation.... Indeed we are now on the border of this Great Initiation, we are heading closer and closer to its center and fulfillment. You may think that your world has come to an end, but this is not so. In truth, it shall be made new.

“And you, my dear friends, will also be made new as your vibratory rates are heightened, and with that process, your love and respect, for one another and for your Planet, will increase. You will return, as Masters of your World once again, yes. But this time, your mastery will itself be guided by responsibility, by respect for one another, by a spirit of mutual cooperation, and above all, a sense of loving stewardship towards your planet-home. Your people of Nepal had a saying: ‘A chief must lead his people, but take his orders from the Gods’. You will know at last, that privilege must always be tempered by responsibility.

“When you return to Earth, in your heightened spiritual state, you will then be on the same plane as your neighboring planets within your Solar System, no longer separated from them through the quarantine of your previous surrounding ‘Veil’ of limited consciousness. You will have totally regained your ‘Full Consciousness’, seeing life from a wider, much more objective standpoint. You will be able to communicate fully with your neighboring planets as well as other, higher spiritual worlds.

“You will be able to review your past lives and activities from that great storehouse of knowledge, the Akashic Records, and when you have choices to make in your lives, you will have limited future vision in that you will be able to foresee probable consequences.

“To you, perhaps, the memory of what has gone before may still be frightening. For the raging of nature which you so recently witnessed signified the release of energies far beyond the control of Humanity. But if Humanity did but know, it rarely controls its own environment. Because of its great intellectual progress Humanity has been led into believing that it is the master of its fate, that it is the master of the physical world, that Humanity alone decides the path on which it walks.

“But those of you who are aware of the God in all things, who recognize that the Divine Plan alone manifests on Earth, know in your heart that the Cycle which is now beginning was planned aeons of time ago. It has been seen on other levels and was prophesied to you by many Beings. It is a necessary path of evolution for Earth. You are here now, therefore, as witnesses to that path of evolution. And though you may still be harboring memories of fear, within your heart is the knowledge of what is to come and the part that you must play in it.

“That is my message to you. I thank you for considering my words. You are witness to a time of momentous changes. The most traumatic part, you have already overcome with great bravery and fortitude. From now on, your path can only lead you towards greater light and joy.”

Planet Earth: Extreme Makeover

Chapter 4 - PLANNING FOR A NEW WORLD

Within what seemed a relatively short space of time, those who had been lifted up at the time of the 'Tribulation' to the large Mother-Ships hovering high in Earth's atmosphere had overcome the trauma of the event, settling in as honored guests - almost family. The emphasis at first was on relaxation, and aboard the Shan Chea, as with the other Mother Ships, all the spaceship's great wealth of facilities, for learning, recreation and enjoyment as well as personal refreshment and reflection were placed at the new arrivals' disposal.

There was time set aside for individual personal development, for learning new artistic and intellectual skills, for self-study and self-understanding. Games, drama and music were shared with new Space Friends; and there was time to enjoy the extensive recreational parks created within the Mother Ships, to walk, relax and meditate. Certainly there was no shortage of pleasurable activity. But as time passed, a 'work schedule' was gently, almost imperceptibly introduced, for there were things that needed to be done.

Individuals had been healed physically and spiritually, their vibratory rates gently increased to match those of their space friends, and in readiness for the new spiritual level of their future on Earth now being cleansed and uplifted. Earth People's 'Collective Being' also needed to be healed, and time was set aside to review the Akashic Records of Earth's planetary history, much as individuals review their own personal history following the transition of 'death'

This process provides the opportunity to see the entire span of Human evolution on Earth, learning in the process from civilization's successes and failures.

On huge surrounding viewing screens, in three-dimensional virtual reality created by holographic imaging, Earth's people now saw the wars and devastation, the slavery, the inhuman treatment of man by fellow man, the mass slaughter of animals, and they reviewed the true damage done to the Planet's environment as the full extent of Human pollution and the havoc wrought by nuclear explosions became evident. But there is also a positive side to human civilization, the caring, the charity, the ideals of reform, the service, the good that people have done to one another. This too had to be 'seen' and absorbed.

They also reviewed, in realistic holographic scenes, the artistic creations, the music, and great theatrical dramas; they 'toured' the historic gardens of great houses and castles of yesteryear.

They followed intrepid explorers of yore on their adventures into uncharted territory, braving extremes of climate and facing great dangers in order to push forward the frontiers of human knowledge. They witnessed the brainstorming of scientists as they explored the sky and stars, the phenomena of time and gravity, as they discovered and learnt to harness the power of electricity, as they developed methods of capturing music then broadcasting it

on the airwaves or encapsulating it on magical silver discs, or as they invented and perfected tiny chips with memories and calculating power far beyond human capacity. The History of Human Evolution on Planet Earth: *This is Your Life* spanning over thirty million years!

The whole experience was quite stunning, requiring several weeks to view and absorb. Indeed, it made more of an impression on its viewers than had the horrors of the 'Tribulation'. Why was this exercise necessary? Because only by understanding the past, by reviewing and learning from its successes and its failures, can a better future be created.

And this indeed was to be the next challenge: the challenge of returning to a totally cleansed and geographically unrecognizable Planet Earth, and creating from scratch a whole new pattern of life. The reality of this prospect sharply focused everyone's attention on the need to formulate new social and commercial rules, to plan future resources-use for urban living, agriculture and leisure. The 'historical review' had brought into sharp focus the errors of the past, and the fact that this had been experienced collectively meant that everyone knew what had to be done, and everyone knew that everyone knew.

Basically the challenge was simple. "We need to be able to live together in peace, respecting one another, collaborating for the common good, rather than battling and exploiting one another for individual or sectarian advantage. Respect one another, respect our Host Planet." Simple, but vital. The shared experience of re-living mankind's history on Earth in all its explicit detail had impressed on everyone that a whole new personal attitude and a whole new rule-book for society was essential.

Aware of the importance of this task, their Space Brothers provided the opportunities and extensive facilities on the Mother Ships for the necessary Planning Convocations. The creation of a New World is a rarity and an event of considerable importance even in galactic terms, and every assistance was to be provided at these planning sessions with advice and encouragement from Space Brothers and participating visitors from other, more developed worlds throughout the Universe.

But these good people, however willing, cannot, and would not dictate Earth's people's future plans in any way, for if they did so they would be inter-positioning themselves between Earth's people and their own Karma, which would be improper and a violation of Universal Law. We must all learn through our own efforts, our own successes and our own mistakes, and this applies equally to a collective planetary civilization, just as it does to the destiny of individuals.

Earth's people need to consider and formulate for themselves the basic social-political rules and structure that will govern their new society; the basic rules of social conduct which will reflect their new attitudes and aspirations towards one another and towards the new and uplifted Planet Earth.

Man's development on Earth, from the times of primitive cave-dwelling to the relatively sophisticated lifestyles enjoyed by the more developed nations, had been largely concerned with the provision of physical needs of food, clothing and shelter.

On the New Earth this will no longer be Mankind's major preoccupation, thanks to a lower population density, creative collaboration in production and commerce, and new technologies which will become known on Earth.

Nor will the new Mankind be plagued by wars, slavery, poverty, revolution and social injustices; for the higher vibratory rate on which Humanity is to operate will ensure that the basic attitude of selfishness, which has in the past pervaded man's relationships with fellow man and hampered the true development of civilization, will not prevail. Indeed, cooperation and mutual assistance will be the natural inclination on the New Earth, ensuring peace and prosperity.

In a world where there is an abundance of physical needs, in a world where peace and cooperation are the natural order, mankind will have time to devote to intellectual and spiritual development, and this will then become the major preoccupation on the New Earth.

Yet politics must nevertheless play a vital role, for even with the best will in the world, with citizens who naturally respect one another, some form of government is still necessary, to provide overall planning of resources- and land-use, to ensure that infrastructure and essential services are in place and properly operated, to lay down fair and just rules in commerce. And where there is government, there must be constitutional principles as a guidance for and a discipline upon government. All of this had been well learnt during the course of human history!

Many of Earth's people initially approached the very subject of politics with reluctance, recalling only too vividly the inefficiency, corruption and costly mal-administration which characterized the 'democratic' process of government over which 'the people' had little or no control. "How can the old evils of politics be avoided? What sort of politics will serve the New Age?" many openly wondered, their tone expressing doubt that this could ever be achieved.

At this point, the Masters who had been following the progress of human thought, deemed that the time had now come when a word of guidance might be introduced, a single signpost showing the way to the future. But it would not be one of the Masters who would introduce this catalyst into the proceedings. Rather, someone from Earth, someone familiar with the whole development of politics and constitution, someone who knew quite clearly, the direction which political institutions should now take.

And thus it was that, at this auspicious moment in the development of Earth people's collective consciousness, a distinguished gentleman took the stand, quiet-spoken, recognizable instantly as an Englishman of 'the old school'.

He was introduced, not as his present spiritual identity, but as his previous incarnation on Earth. This had been as Lord Denning, one of Britain's most outstanding jurists.

"It has been some years now since my last tour of duty on Earth, but I say unashamedly that I am still an Englishman! I say this simply in recognition of the fact that the English race has always taken the lead in political and constitutional development, a lead from which all of us may well learn, should we so desire.

"It was in England, in the year 1215 to be precise, that King John, an unruly, financially burdensome, irresponsible and fairly useless monarch, was brought to heel by the clergy and barons of the land, by means of the Great Charter, the Magna Carta, the first major document in the world's political history which sought, not to impose rules on people, but to impose rules on those who would rule the people. The concept of Constitution was established.

"Henry Bracton, writing several years later, laid the foundation of English Common Law in his book 'On the Laws and Customs of England'. In it, he stressed the rights of ordinary people, and the duty of the King to rule wisely. '*Rex non debet esse sub homine, sed sub Deo et Lege*'. '*The King is not under Man, but under God and the Law; the King has a duty to rule wisely, and within the dictates of Custom*'. A brave ideal indeed. Yet as the years and the centuries passed, governments became ever larger, ever more costly, ever more self-seeking and corrupt.

"Before we create an institution with power over us, we would do well to ensure that we define the obligations of, and the limitations upon that power very precisely. What, exactly, do we want 'government' to do? And perhaps more importantly, what do we want it NOT to do?

"My own convictions were encapsulated in a phrase I wrote in my published memoirs: 'What matters is that each man should be free to develop his own personality to the full; the only restrictions upon this freedom should be those which are necessary to enable everyone else to do the same.'

"This ideal gives us the guiding principle of government, and here I quote with great pleasure, a most respected and honored colleague, Thomas Jefferson: 'the purpose of government is to prevent men from injuring one another'.

With a clear, simple and transparent mandate, the task of formulating laws becomes one of almost mechanical, predictable detail, of applying *a single guiding Principle* to the multiple events of everyday life. With this one single rule, mankind will share resources fairly whilst observing the rights of Nature herself; we will respect the peace, privacy and property of one another; and trade will be honest and fair, as each seeks to serve, not exploit others, giving fairly for goods and services received, asking a fair price for goods and services rendered.

“And similarly, with this clear and simple *Principle*, we have an instant, in-built, and watertight constitution. For we will have defined the purpose of government so clearly, simply and precisely as to leave no room for error. Government has its obligations, and its limitations. We know exactly what we want it to do, and by precise definition of the obligation, we know what we do not want it to do.

“In the limited vision I have been privileged to be given as to Earth’s future, there is an all-pervading sense of ‘goodwill toward men’. And I am confident that this will be reflected in honest government. Yet human nature often tends to take the easy path, and in government, which lacks the stimulus of competition, it is all too easy to attend a place of work without actually doing anything.

“Productivity and cost-effectiveness must be our watchwords; for taking citizens’ money while giving them no useful service in return is itself a form of injury.

“In summarizing therefore...” he smiled... “we judges love to sum up... in summarizing, I believe that our plans for our New Society must be based on this single *Principle of Mutual Respect*, explored and applied in every facet of communal relationships, in matters of personal liberty, in the apportionment of land and natural resources, in commerce and industry, and in citizen-government relationships.”

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Chapter 5 – POLITICS AND PARTICIPATION

If Earth's 'evacuees', who by now consider themselves as permanent residents aboard the Shan Chea – could look back and see, feel and experience themselves as they had been when they first arrived, they would hardly believe the difference, for they are now truly living on a higher evolutionary plane. Their own minds, bodies and emotions operate at a higher vibratory frequency, matching the spacecraft world around them. And indeed, this is how things will be on the New Earth, as their space friends have explained to them. The heaviness of the old, dense physical plane will be gone, the air will be lighter, the atmosphere brighter, colors more brilliant, gravity less heavy, and it will be generally easier to 'get things done'.

Mankind will have many forces and powers at its disposal, ranging from the almost free and limitless generation of electrical power, to the ability to re-form the atoms of matter electronically into new materials and shapes.

The physical 'lightness' is paralleled in people's attitudes towards themselves, their environment and one another. There is a pervasive sense of warmth and affection between all people, those one knows, and those one has never met before but whom one immediately treats as if they were part of one's own family. Yet at the same time people hold one another's privacy in deep respect. No one would approach or address someone seen to be sitting quietly on their own, being clearly in meditation or deep in thought.

People speak quietly and conduct themselves politely in public, and among the now reunited families there is always mutual caring yet without any interference, judgment or criticism.

The enjoyment of this developing 'togetherness' aboard the Shan Chea is not limited to Earth's people, though it is for them a new and wonderful experience. Their space brothers too are enjoying their new friends, not just for their company, but also for the pleasure of watching them gradually raising their spiritual awareness. They are all sharing, in one way or another, the process of evolution and the creation of new institutions in preparation for the return.

The next 'challenge' on the agenda for Earth's people is to create their new government. The great debates which took place in Philadelphia among the Founding Fathers of America came very much to mind, and were actually revisited through the Akashic Records. This re-visit was most interesting to students of American political history, since historically the major constitutional debates of 1787 had taken place behind closed doors. Now viewed by 'outsiders' for the first time, the impression was that despite considerable political wrangling and argument, a spirit of good, honest intent pervaded, and the witnessing of these historical debates provided an impetus for the similar debates which must now take place.

The central rule of politics, the *Principle of Mutual Respect*, had already been agreed: “Grow without diminishing others; prosper without impoverishing others; respect others, as you would have others respect you.”

Fortunately people no longer had any desire to harm one another, and the debates which followed over several weeks in Earth time focused more on the mechanics, the institutions and procedures which would ensure the consistent, accurate interpretation and application of the Principle.

Finally, when every detail had been worked out, the whole system was reviewed and tested with live debates to formulate laws appropriate for the New Inhabitants of the New Earth.

The new structure of government begins at the top with the *Principle of Mutual Respect*, recognized and accepted as an expression of the Highest Wisdom and the Fundamental Laws of the Universe in their application to social conduct. This Principle is the one and only law which has validity and authority. All else, the interpretative procedures of government, legislators, administrators, and the whole body of legislation itself, together with the judicial and enforcement agencies... all is subservient to and derives authority from the Principle.

The new ‘*Earth Planet Constitution*’ sets out the very broad implications of the *Principle* in terms of legislative guidelines, as well as some general rules of administrative conduct which must be strictly observed by government. A Constitutional Executive at planetary level has ultimate responsibility for ensuring, through the continuous monitoring of legislation, that the *Principle* is consistently observed.

The *Principle of Mutual Respect* is very precise and clear, and thus also is the mandate of government derived from and subservient to it.

“The purpose of government is to prevent people from injuring one another, nothing more, and nothing less. The law has no place interfering in personal, private lives, providing only that one’s actions should not harm or actively impose upon others, either fellow humans, other living creatures, or the environment. The legal maxim is already established: *where there is no injury, there can be no law*.

As to the debate and formulation of laws, some new features were introduced into the process, adding a greater sense of participation and input. The need for a new law, or the repeal or amendment of an existing law, can be set in motion by professional legislators who are constantly monitoring events and seeking to minimize imposition, by the legislature’s Representatives who maintain a continuing contact with citizens on a local basis or indeed by alert individuals.

Additionally a new element of representation has been established. As in the Old Age, people still have their special interests and their hobbies representing every shade of interest, opinion and expertise from civil liberties to environment and transport, and the

Societies or Special Interest groups representing them were now being brought into the legislative debating process.

Interestingly, these Societies are genuinely democratic in that they are supported by the subscriptions of members and are thus responsible to members and responsive to their needs. If they fail in their purpose they simply 'die' through lack of subscriptions and support. Conversely, as new issues and new concerns develop, new societies are formed. Citizens can rely on their Societies to monitor Legislative Proposals in their specific area of interest, and to draw members' attention to any need for action.

These groups are not necessarily politically oriented. The Ramblers' Association for example might occupy itself with path maintenance, providing way-shelters for walkers, and advising on itineraries. But the Association will also monitor any legislation which has a bearing on its members' use of trails and pathways, their location and maintenance. Young people are also encouraged to be active in political matters; it was strongly felt that all schools and educational establishments should have their own debating societies with an opening to contribute to legislative debates.

Also to be given representation in New Age legislative proceedings are animals and the environment.

Perhaps with some small encouragement from the space brothers, the fact became accepted that the natural resources are not 'owned' by people. The land and total natural environment belongs to Mother Earth, who permits humans to use it for as long as they need to do so, provided that they use it respectfully. The *Principle of Mutual Respect* applies equally here too: *use the land, but do not use it in ways which are wasteful, or harmful to Mother Nature or to other humans or lifeforms.*

The natural environment, the totality of natural resources that constitutes Mother Earth, has thus been recognized in the Constitution and in all legislative proceedings as a *Legal Entity* in its own right, represented by Counsel to ensure its respect, protection and husbandry. Similarly, animals and other lifeforms are also represented in the new government by Counsel, to ensure that their rights to live their own lives in their own way are at all times respected.

When a Legislative Proposal has been thoroughly debated and all sides have been heard, a draft Law will be formulated by professional Legislators.

If the Draft Law thus formulated is agreed by all concerned parties as being the most accurate possible reflection of the *Principle of Mutual Respect*, it will be passed as a proposal to the Constitutional Executive whose specific responsibility is to ensure that the process of its debate and formulation was conducted in accordance with constitutionally defined procedures, and that the proposed Law accurately reflects the *Principle of Mutual Respect*.

The purpose of law, any law, is to prevent or to minimize a specific and clearly identified imposition. If the law succeeds in this aim it will be passed; if it falls short, or if it exceeds its aim thus initiating a new imposition, it must be sent back for revision.

Following Verification by the Constitutional Executive, Legislative Proposals become formally enacted and gain the 'force of law' as they are passed to the Administrative, Justice and Enforcement Agencies for application, and are published for public information. Interestingly, the Constitution is placed at the head of the legislative system, not the judicial system as for example, in the United States of the Old Age. Under that system, bad laws could pass into circulation, only to be withdrawn after a long legal battle.

Under the new system, bad law, that is, unconstitutional law will never reach general circulation.

Government as now planned is simpler since it deals purely with Legislation. Community welfare, health and education are operated as normal commercial services independently of government, yet subject to strict verification of quality, productivity and price evaluation. Investment in capital infrastructure facilities and services is likewise independent of government, being handled by the Investment Banking sector. In its now simplified, purely legislative, judicial and enforcement functions, government can be more carefully controlled, its activities and their efficiency more closely monitored.

One important aspect of the New Age 'government' is that in no respect must it be outside the law. Government will be required to serve its customers, to fulfill its mandate accurately and consistently, and to conduct its operations with the maximum efficiency and thus minimum cost. Employees of government are to be paid according to their work in comparison to that of others, and given no special privileges.

Like any other business, government will not be permitted to run a deficit on its current account. Government is to be subject to rigorous standards in every aspect of its business conduct, and will be required to publish a quarterly Total Performance Audit, verified by the Constitutional Executive.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of law and government as planned for the New Age is that laws do not originate from an autocratic individual, nor from people, be they a minority or a majority.

Laws in the New Age originate from a Principle: *The Principle of Mutual Respect*. A Principle, not a Person or even 'The People', is the source of law in the New Age, a Principle to which everyone can relate, and to which government itself is equally subject.

"And Democracy?" someone asked.

From their New Age viewpoint, political analysts can already observe realistically that contrary to the widespread belief of their Old Age predecessors, true democracy never really existed, for true democracy, or 'power to the people', can only be said to exist when all of the people are of one mind - and in the Old Age the supremacy of individual interests ensured that 'the People' never were of one mind. In the New Age the *Principle of Mutual Respect* is universally accepted. Government in the New Age is thus a true democracy in that all of the people support the *Principle* as the single source of law guiding all social and commercial conduct, and the use of natural resources.

The *Principle of Mutual Respect* as a guide both for personal and social conduct is a reflection of mankind's new attitude in which individual creativity benefits both creator and community, rather than benefiting self at the expense of others. This change of orientation from self to community in turn reflects a new direction as Humanity turns its focus on spiritual development.

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Chapter 6 – CREATING A NEW GEOGRAPHY

As time and the higher vibratory atmosphere healed the many 'wounds' of past history – the memories of war and competitive strife of Earth-life – the old differences and distinctions of race, creed and color had gradually faded. They were not silenced as an act of self-discipline, nor were they 'swept under the carpet'; such distinctions and the prejudices which so often went with them had been manifestations of a lower level of existence, and in a higher-vibratory atmosphere the old national, religious and linguistic groupings no longer held any relevance. Earth's geography too had changed, so even if people had wanted to go back to their 'old countries' this would not in most cases have been geographically possible.

So how would they choose to group and locate themselves on the Earth's new surface? This question involved the probing of human psychology through much debate and soul-searching.

After considerable discussion which seemed to move in circles and lead nowhere it was decided to start again with simple basics, the very fundamentals of life which in the old, long-established societies had always been taken for granted.

To begin at the beginning, people need to identify with something called 'home'. Most basically of course, one needs a home in the form of walls and a roof – a private space in whatever form and in whatever particular location one may choose or find possible.

But the concept of home is not just a single isolated dot on the landscape; it is like ripples on the pool, an ever-expanding sense of belonging. Around or close to the private home-space you need a community in which to combine in work with others, for cultural exchange, to do your shopping, to meet friends. And widening the view yet further you need access to a town or city, where you can employ some specialized skill or enjoy those special things, the lectures, concerts, learning, that require and are generated by a larger population.

Ideas became clearer with further debate. Though many would choose the quiet life in remote countryside, all were in agreement on the fundamental human need for contact with others, for commercial, cultural, educational and social purposes.

Those who felt they might like living in semi-isolation, nonetheless visualized being within reach of a small village community; those who preferred village life liked the idea of having access to a nearby town or city which could offer more specialized and sophisticated amenities. And of course there were many who firmly chose 'city life' for its cultural stimulation, its varied activities and its sense of centrality.

At this point, however, the Space Brothers working with them sounded a warning. “Bear in mind that you will be living at a higher vibratory rate, and that you will have much more leisure time. This means in terms of planning, that you will need much smaller populations to support specialist services. So you will need to down-scale your population sizes accordingly.”

After yet more debate, the concept of the *County* was born as the fundamental unit of group habitation: small rural communities and a few isolated homes linked to villages, the villages linked to the County Town forming the nucleus of the County and acting as its cultural and commercial focal point.

“Your County Town itself might have a population of up to 10,000; adding another 15,000 in the surrounding villages and homes would bring the County up to about 25,000. At your new level of leisure time and evolution, you will find these population levels ideal,” their space friends advised.

But do we then spread these *Counties* equally over the Earth’s surface? If so, given that the world's population will be only one tenth of what it used to be, Counties would be too spaced out and isolated from one another. Further debate revealed the need for a yet wider sense of identity, some kind of a regional-grouping corresponding in many ways to the old European nation-state.

But how big should it be? While many looked back on their old ‘nations’ as being of an acceptable size, it was observed by those who had previously lived in the United States of America that most Americans had actually thought of themselves as Texans or Oregonians first and Americans second.

This was not to deny their American nationality; it was simply an acceptance of the fact that a comfortable grouping with which people can identify corresponds more in size to one of the individual States than to the total USA.

Thus it was decided by broad consensus that anything from half a dozen to a dozen ‘Counties’ could be grouped to form a regional ‘family’. The Counties would be grouped closely enough to create a sense of identity, yet sufficiently spaced-out to allow room for wilderness recreation and ‘for nature to breathe’. Thus the total population of a typical Regional Group might be 250,000. A much greater spacing and distance was envisaged between the Regional Groups.

What do we call this grouping of Counties? *Regional Grouping* is a bit cumbersome. *State*? No, not really; and the word *Nation* was definitely unacceptable! Ultimately *Region* was generally agreed as being the term most appropriate for the grouping of Counties.

As the debates proceeded on the Mother Ships and ideas gradually turned into formal plans, and as the re-planting of the now cleansed and stabilized Planet Earth by teams of Earth people and Space Brothers gathered pace, so the map of the New Earth's geography, both natural and built, began to take shape.

Regions were to be carefully spaced around the surface of the Planet, their locations often corresponding with the planet's internal Vortexes or Power Centers (equivalent to the Chakras in the human body), or else located to take advantage of a particularly pleasing natural area. Some were in the cooler areas, some in the 'tropics' – though on the New Earth there would no longer be the extremes of temperature which rendered the old Earth uncomfortable or even uninhabitable in its frozen polar, or humid equatorial regions.

The County Town would be the main social and commercial center, while the Regional Capital was visualized as home to the Regional Government, the offices of essential and infrastructure services, as well as higher education and linked research establishments. The Regional Capitals would tend to be places of quiet and reflection rather than commercial hubs.

So the New Geography took its final shape. The typical *Region* consists of say ten *Counties*, well separated with plenty of natural wilderness in between; yet overall there is a comfortable feeling of 'belonging' to one's home Region, enhanced by the greater spacing between Regions. Not that there is any competitive nationalism, nor any reason why people should not move freely anywhere on the planet – or to other planets for that matter!

Moving about.... Yes indeed, that was another vital, fundamental question to be addressed. What sort of transport will there be on the New Earth? Right from the start, two important propositions were accepted: one might be called negative, the other positive.

On the one hand it was unanimously accepted by everyone from Earth, that never again would they allow themselves to get into the mess of cars, roads, spaghetti junctions, tailbacks, commuter crawls, pollution and environmental degradation which had been the distinguishing features of 'transport' in the old days. Nor were they willing to contemplate what many saw as an even worse scenario: the hundreds of tiny 'personal flying craft' darting about the skies in a constant cloud of multi-dimensional and multi-directional movement often visualized by science-fiction writers of the Old World.

On the positive side they were shown by space brothers with knowledge of such matters something they could all readily understand: the simple fact that if you *plan* for shared transport, shared transport will work perfectly effectively. Examples of this proposition were shown from life on other planets. And indeed there were many interesting historical examples drawn from the Old Age in the USA, Britain and Europe showing how in the heyday of public transport during the 1920s and 30s shared transport had been planned in conjunction with major housing developments, or cases where transport undertakings had built amusement parks at the extremities of their routes to maintain traffic volumes.

In contrast, later location of residential and commercial developments in the Old World had been scattered and haphazard with the growing use of the motor car, spreading almost unrestrained over the countryside. The absence of integration with shared transport facilities made shared transport unworkable; and the low density of scattered development made individual transport inevitable.

The lesson was clear: viable and convenient shared transport requires concentration of urban and residential developments and their full integration with transportation..

But how can housing and commercial facilities be concentrated? And taking a different approach, what sort of homes do Earth's 'new people' want to live in?

Here, their space friends, concealing for the moment an ulterior motive, asked "what do *you* consider important in a home?" The answers fell under three broad headings.

A *view* was considered very desirable for those who could afford it! *Privacy* was also an issue, and most wanted some kind of a yard or garden or terrace, open to the sky as opposed to an almost-enclosed balcony in a high-rise apartment building. It was also considered desirable and convenient to be close to amenities of work, shopping and recreation, with parkland and open space close by.

At this point, their space friends took them on a holographic tour of a small Venusian city which was to prove a revelation in simplicity, inventiveness, and sheer convenience. The city was approached from a distance, and from there it was a greenery-covered hill merging into the natural background. On its slopes, closer inspection revealed terraced housing; access passages, it was explained, are at the rear of each apartment rather than in front like houses in streets. Thus everyone had a view, privacy, and thanks to the slope, a terrace open to the sky. But a 'home on a hillside' was only half the story. For the 'hill' was in fact artificial with a hollow center in which all the amenities of city life could be found.

"Here", a Venusian 'Community Planner' pointed out, "we please everybody. Our residents have the perfect home, and everything they need is only steps away, while in environmental terms we satisfy two basic rules of habitation: minimal footprint, and minimal visual intrusion." To the obvious delight of their space friends, the concept of the artificial hilltown was universally and enthusiastically acclaimed by earth's people, quick to appreciate the combination of the perfect home with minimal environmental impact.

Once the basic details and theoretical form-plan of home, community and transport had been agreed, Earth planners and participants on the Mother Ships were provided with holographic facilities which seemed beyond their wildest dreams of science fiction, though they were an everyday reality for the space brothers.

In an apparently 'live' environment of multidimensional holographic virtual reality, homes, neighborhoods, villages and towns complete with their industries, agriculture, recreational facilities, natural environment and transport could be created merely by the power of

thought. Individual homes could be located within particular villages or towns, then furnished, even color schemes were chosen, and gardens planted... all in the form of multi-dimensional 'Thought Reality' captured on the Mother Ship's powerful computers. Once created in this holographic form, the whole environment or any part of it could be experienced as if walking through it in 'reality'; yet anything could be modified or even totally restructured merely by the power of thought.

"Is this Illusion or Reality?" bewildered Earth people often asked their Space Brothers, who had a somewhat frustrating habit of suggesting that all experience is illusion, and that it is we ourselves who give it 'reality' so that we may learn from it. Yes, there were still some areas of mutual non-comprehension between people from Earth and those from other, more evolved planets; but the Space people all had a great sense of humor and fun, and since they seemed well aware of those concepts with which Earth people still had difficulty they would always make a joke of it. As one Venusian pointed out: "Fortunately Evolution continues on its way regardless of whether we understand it or not!"

The debates on the planning of the New Earth were taken very seriously however, and though there was no shortage of good humor it was always to the point and in proportion.

The planning and debating proceedings were led by Earth people in a style reflecting their new attitudes. 'Experts' were called upon for their advice but not to dictate to everyone else, and there was no competition to 'hold the floor'. Individuals who felt instinctively that they had a special talent or interest in the subject under discussion would speak out, after which general comment and debate would follow so that all views could be heard. Everyone felt quite free to speak their mind, yet all spoke briefly and no one dominated the proceedings.

All the plans were drawn up in minute detail before any 'real' construction began on the New Earth. Simultaneously with the planning sessions on the Mother Ships, Planet Earth was being re-seeded and re-planted with vegetation where it would not conflict with the building of towns, cities and transport lines.

Onto this pristine natural canvas the now completed plans of Regions and Counties, towns and villages, homes, parks and workplaces, recreational facilities and agriculture were then given physical form by teams sent down from the Mother Ships in advance of the general re-habitation. First came the 'advance guard', bringing with them the previously agreed plans for new towns and villages, neighborhoods and homes; they were to begin work on the pioneering task of building the 'physical' fabric of a new society. Only when all of the infrastructure and most of the living accommodation was completed, some dozen years after the 'Tribulation', did Earth's people begin their return in substantial numbers to their totally cleansed, rejuvenated and now largely rebuilt New Earth.

Just as in the 17th and 18th centuries so many intrepid souls had crossed the Atlantic from the Old World to a new continent and a new life, so the time had finally come for Earth's people to begin their return to their 'new' planet, now cleansed, refreshed and replanted. It was to be a time of great challenge, for those first years would set the tone for their 'new millennium'.

But it would also be a time of relief, of joy and thanksgiving as Earth's people returned 'home'. And the joy of return would mirror in reverse the trauma in which they had left, now forgotten as they begin a new phase of evolution, on a newly cleansed planet, with the guidance of a new Principle in the regulation of their communal affairs.

Planet Earth: Extreme Makeover

Chapter 7 – A RURAL RIDE

The first generation of humanity now returned and established on the New Earth are privileged indeed. Not only are they pioneers in a New World; they hold in their own memories their unforgettable experiences aboard the great Mother Ships. As future generations are born and grow up, tales of these giant space ships will be handed down as folk memories like the story of Noah's Ark. But for now the experience remains strong in people's living memory, providing a rich source of material for the stories which those of the present 'Mother Ship Generation' pass on to their children and grandchildren now being born on the New Earth.

But 'the Return' is a fading memory. Reality is the New Earth, on which its new inhabitants and their communities are now well established.

There is no population pressure on the New Earth, and the spirit of openness and friendliness makes of everyone an instant acquaintance. Yet there are many isolated, or semi-isolated homes around the rural periphery of each County for those who seek permanent solitude, or for temporary recreational or meditation purposes.

One such home is a single-story cottage sitting discretely in a shallow fold of a steep hillside. Though constructed of 'modern' materials the design and appearance of the cottage are in the old style, with muted colors and a wide old-fashioned verandah along its front.

The cottage is situated on the coast, and the views to left and right along the steep coastline and down to the clear turquoise sea not far below are breathtaking. The beaches and bays are narrow here, for the coastline rises steeply and dramatically out of the sea, its sharply contoured sides covered in the lush greenery of the temperate Etheric climate, punctuated by clumps of white frangipani, orange-blossom flowers and scarlet hibiscus. New varieties of old horticultural friends and numerous other plants previously unknown on Earth were sent as gifts to Earth and her people from many different sources including several distant planets; it was considered a pleasure and an honor to contribute to the beautification of the New Earth.

There is some cloud about today, dark and filled with the promise of rain; but the early morning sun is shining beyond the edge of the cloud, touching the semi-tropical trees with a wonderful silvery glow. A slight breeze sets the palm fronds waving gracefully, and the mildly warm air is heavy with the scents of a hundred flowers.

A translucent white garden table and some matching chairs are set on the terrace in front of the cottage amidst a profusion of plants and flowers, some growing from spaces in the terrace paving, others in large ornamental pots. An inviting breakfast of pastries, colorful fresh fruits and juices is laid out on the table.

At one side of the garden-terrace a crystal-clear rock-pool is fed by a stream; the pool empties over a waterfall, plunging down onto the rocks at one end of the small sandy beach below. A narrow path winds down to the little beach through the semi-tropical greenery.

A little way below the cottage a narrow, though well-made path forms part of the popular Coastal Walk. At times it remains relatively high up, often hugging the cliff-face perilously closely; then it might slope gently down to a secluded sandy beach. Walkers can stop for a picnic by a waterfall, swim in one of the freshwater pools, or relax on the beach in the sun.

There are way-stations along the path provided at a distance estimated to offer a good day's gentle walking - few people walk fast, preferring to enjoy the view, the scents of the flowers and the sounds of the birds. The way-stations are operated in this County by the Ramblers' Association.

The buildings' style and facilities, reflecting the wishes of members, are generally simple and somewhat rustic; but there is a modest room with a private balcony and shower for every guest, and there is always a view and generally a shared terrace or verandah with easy chairs where travelers can relax and meet new friends. The resident caretakers provide maintenance, meals and a warm welcome for their transient visitors, many of whom return regularly.

To the right of the cottage a branch off the coastal path turns inland, winding along a narrow valley whose tumbling stream feeds the pool beside the cottage.

A short way up the valley path a small neighborhood community accommodates some two hundred people. About half live there permanently, the other half being visitors who come for the change of scene, for walking and sea-bathing, or who stay in the village's beautiful Meditation and Natural Health Center.

This is a low complex standing just above the village, consisting of a sloping circular building of garden terraces with a partially glassed-in courtyard in the center where group meetings and lectures take place. Around the circumference of the building, personal accommodation rooms face out over the village towards the sea, while individual lecture and consultation rooms face inland.

This little neighborhood community is the terminus of a Rural Transit line which meanders through the countryside to the County Town at a fairly leisurely speed. The building which serves as the station is of small scale, yet combines several functions. Food can be eaten in the informal restaurant or taken out for a picnic, a small 'general store' offers a wide variety of goods, and the modest accommodation on the upper levels is used by visitors for stays of anything from a few days to a few weeks, and as an overnight way-station by people walking the coastal path.

This low 2-to-3-storey station complex is located at the edge of the small village, close to the side of the valley. The building itself is in a U-shape, forming three sides of a little paved square laid out with colorful shrubs in terracotta planters and some tables and chairs.

The fourth side of the station square faces the green hillside, but through a glass-like wall in which there are sliding doors precisely corresponding in location to the doors of the transit vehicle which terminates behind it. The glass platform doors are open only when there is a train in the station, a necessary precaution since all transport vehicles run automatically and unmanned, and are therefore physically segregated at all times.

A train is presently standing in the station awaiting its passengers, its wide doors and those of the glass barrier invitingly open. The vehicle's floor is flat throughout and presents a level entry precisely aligned with the platform. Constructed of a glass-like material, the lower half of the vehicle is light brown in color; the whole upper section is clear, the sides curving up and over in one enormous panoramic window, its treated surface darkening in bright sunlight.

The individual seats are molded in the same glassy opaque material; they can be rotated in either direction of travel or sideways to face the view and are comfortably upholstered with foam and an oatmeal colored hessian-weave cloth. The vehicle is articulated in several short sections providing a continuous carriage throughout its length. Since the vehicles operate without drivers there is clear unobstructed visibility to front and rear views through the clear domed end-sections; the front and rear seats are popular with children and with visitors touring the area for the first time.

As a quiet warning sound on the station square announces the train's imminent departure, a few people stroll over and enter the vehicle. Another warning sounds inside the train, the doors close smoothly, and the vehicle starts at once, gliding silently above its guideway, out of the village and along the side of the valley on its reserved, segregated right-of-way. The vehicle has no physical contact with the track surface, being magnetically levitated just above it by a powerful, permanently magnetic material lining both the trackway and the underside of the vehicle. Propulsion is by electric induction coils set in the trackway and controlled by onboard and central computers.

But the technicalities are quite taken for granted by the passengers who are enjoying the leisurely ride through the countryside, many quite unaware that following their track beneath them is a totally segregated goods transport system enclosed in tunneling, using computer controlled containers which are also magnetically levitated and self-propelled by linear-induction. The containers can be automatically directed at computer-switchable junctions to any part of the County or Region.

The passengers have no need to purchase tickets and will not be troubled by ticket collectors as there is no direct charge levied for each journey. This line is part of the County Transport Network which is paid for by a yearly charge on each resident of the County; this yearly charge also includes public parks, lighting, paving and County amenities in general.

Transport is considered an essential part of the 'mechanism' of the County, and to pay directly for each journey by any means whatsoever would be as tedious as having to pay for each step taken on the public paving, or each sniff of a flower in the public parks.

How are standards of service and quality maintained? Is the whole system operated by the County, or are individual lines 'privately' operated? Old Age readers may be interested in such questions.

First it must be said that there are no 'nationalized' services or industries owned and operated directly by central or local government. Legislatures at any level are not permitted to own or operate commercial services of any kind. They see their role strictly as adjudicators of fairness, quality and performance, and to fulfill this responsibility they must remain detached and impartial.

The County Administrations, as distinct from the County Legislatures which make the County bylaws, are responsible for the physical operation of the County infrastructure services; but the County Administrations are likewise reluctant to operate services directly, preferring to place day-to-day running in the hands of professional operating services subject to coordination and service specifications, and followed up by continuous monitoring. In this particular County the whole transit system is under one single management service, with the exception of four contiguous Rural Lines which are operated by a small, and highly efficient local company.

A spirit of pride and pleasure permeates the entire range of production and services in the New Age with an inherent motivation for productivity, efficiency and excellence. Individual participants are proud of their contributions, and always seek to please and to provide the best possible service for their customers and community. But beneath the goodwill, an underlying spirit of realism maintains the organizational forms, the checks and controls necessary to ensure that quality and productivity are always maximized.

Each and every service, large or small, is required to publish an independently audited quarterly assessment of its performance called a TPA, or Total Performance Audit. Performance details vary depending on the service concerned; for the public transport services the list covers everything from mechanical performance and maintenance to cleanliness, frequency of service, timekeeping, response to customer requests, and general user satisfaction. Needless to say those responsible for transport operation view their own 'scores' and those of other Counties (whom in the friendliest possible way they regard as competitors!) with the utmost seriousness. A substantial reduction in any particular score can be as upsetting to a transit manager as the loss of a Michelin star was to a French restaurateur in the Old Days!

Rural Line vehicles are relatively short and run at about ten-minute intervals throughout the day and evening. During the night when few people travel, vehicles can be called into service automatically from strategically placed underground storage depots simply by sensors noting the passenger's arrival at the station.

That the vehicle on which we are traveling moves relatively slowly does not appear to worry the passengers. Not that New Age people are vague about time; on the contrary, it is considered disrespectful to the lives and activities of others to keep them waiting for an agreed meeting or an appointment, and people always make a point of being very reliably 'on time'. But here in the country on the Rural Lines the pace is deliberately relaxed.

The Inter-county lines connecting County Towns with one another and the Regional Capital travel at much higher speeds on elevated transparent tracks or underground when nearing communities, while at the 'next level', the Inter-Regional transport vehicles, rising from tunnels as they leave the Regional Capital precincts, can move silently through the air without friction (by ionization of the surrounding air, thus creating a vacuum in front of the craft) at speeds of 3,000 to 6,000 m.p.h. or more, cutting the longest journey times around the planet to under an hour!

In general however, life in the New Age is less hurried. And anyway, when transport is civilized and the scenery pleasant, traveling can be enjoyed in its own right. The transit vehicles are all equipped with a wide variety of facilities to suit passengers' needs, and the Rural Lines are no exception. There are fold-down tables for those who want to use them, perhaps to enjoy a snack brought from the station or to work on a personal computer.

A screen is available to each seat which can be activated to show news bulletins, weather reports or a route map with real-time train location indicator. People often leave the map switched on when they are exploring 'new' territory as tourists; small speakers in the headrests can be activated to provide a commentary on any points of interest along the route, play music or be programmed to give an audible signal when the train is approaching a desired station.

The individual videophone is particularly useful for walkers and tourists who can call ahead to reserve accommodation at stations or in villages. If their hiking or touring route has been pre-planned they can also send personal baggage unaccompanied via the underground automated goods delivery network – though most people travel light, and all accommodations large and small provide relaxing-ropes, slippers and toilet requisites for their guests.

This route, like all Rural Lines, has been planned to afford the best possible views and 'countryside experience' for passengers. At the same time, its segregated right-of-way on a low grass-covered embankment has been carefully molded into the natural contours so as to minimize visual intrusion.

There are frequent under- or over-passes to ensure easy passage for people and animals across the line. When approaching villages or towns the transit trackway often descends underground so as not to disrupt life around the community, and the station is located conveniently beneath the community center. This Rural Line will call at four villages on its way to the County Town, where it terminates and interlinks with the Inter-county.

Most rural villages are built in the form of a ring rather like a grand stadium. The outside surface consists of sloped terraced housing, not more than three or four stories high, slightly irregular with periodic breaks planted with trees. The overall effect is that of a natural hillside covered in greenery. The terraces are always overflowing with flowering bushes, trailing plants and small trees that almost conceal the structure. The sloping terrace gives every home an uninterrupted view, complete privacy, and a small terrace-garden open to the sky.

The center core of the ring is open to the sky, with a village green sheltered by the surrounding terraced housing. On the ground floor of the ring and facing the central green are various shopping and recreational facilities – a partially covered swimming pool, gymnasiums, indoor ball-game areas – and several cafés with their open terraces, garden tables and sun umbrellas. Areas further back inside the building devoid of natural light provide space for several small automated manufacturing, agricultural storage and processing plants. The residential apartments are on the levels above these shops facing south, east and west, with workshops for craftspeople and offices for professional services on the less sunny north-facing areas.

As seen from a distance, the ‘outside’ of the village ring facing the open countryside is visually softened by its irregular terraced slope, planted with a profusion of greenery and flowers. The whole structure blends almost imperceptibly into the countryside, resembling from a distance a low green wooded hill rather than habitation. Indeed the organic blending of buildings with their natural surroundings is a major feature of New Earth architecture.

While ‘natural blending’ is one guiding principle of human habitation, another equally important consideration is footprint minimization. The artificial hill, with communal or commercial facilities in its core, ensures the most economical usage of land surface.

Immediately surrounding the villages, areas of agriculture provide specialty crops for which the local soil and conditions are particularly favorable, as well as mixed market garden cultivation for the village itself, since it is considered very important that everyone should have ready access to the freshest possible produce. Fields of single crops are regularly rotated. Market gardening is generally cultivated on an ‘intermingled’ basis: different crops of fruits and nuts, flowers for the bees, and medicinal herbs are grown in clusters, often around or underneath fruit trees and nut bushes. This ensures a healthy juxtaposition of different plants and their attendant biological life.

The agricultural machinery used in the countryside around the village is kept within the village’s interior sloping areas underneath the housing, with access to the cultivated areas along small radiating lanes. Various forms of organic plant fertilizer are pumped out to the growing areas from the village processing plants through pipelines embedded beneath the lanes.

The rural train is now winding gradually down into a valley that passes through nut and citrus groves, stopping along the way at villages or fruit picking centers, scenic spots or access points to rural paths and hiking trails. The passengers' dress and conversation often reveals their purposes; some are dressed more formally and their talk is of visiting friends. Many are dressed for fruit-picking or walking, and since it is still early in the day they are setting out for their walks, perhaps discussing their plans, then getting off the train at some rural halt.

Though transport is easy and convenient, travel is generally undertaken more for pleasure and recreation than for business. With an automated goods system serving every shop, factory and home no one needs to travel simply as an 'escort' for a package or a container! No one carries shopping home: it is packed into returnable box containers, bar coded, and invariably arrives home before the customer! Indeed home screen terminals make it unnecessary to 'go shopping' at all, though personal shopping is often combined as part of the general 'urban experience' enjoyment of cultural and social facilities.

Nor do people need to commute from the outlying towns to the County Town to seek employment, as each town and village is able to provide all the work opportunities needed for its inhabitants locally. Similarly those whose specialist occupation requires that they work in the towns have no need to commute to the countryside, for each town can provide an ample selection of pleasant accommodation with green views - and clean air! Many people also work from home, such is now the convenience and flexibility of audio and visual communication.

With an average working day of three hours or less there is much more leisure time on the New Earth, and many more people are able to enjoy the countryside. Activities such as walking and hiking in turn create a whole new range of pleasant, relaxing and rewarding jobs through the maintenance of walkers' paths and the hospitable 'way-stations' placed along the hiking trails. And every small community has its own market garden providing further local employment.

Individual passengers can program a 'personal' audible or visible warning at each seat to alert them when the train approaches their destination. Now however we hear a public announcement that the train is reaching the end of its journey: the County Town.

But where is the town, the rows of suburban houses, the edge-of-town shopping malls? Front-seat passengers see only a green, pyramid-shaped hill some 300 feet high. Only the glass pyramid glinting in the sun at its top dramatically signals habitation, rather like the tall cathedral spire of an old English market town. All New Earth architecture is 'organic' in style, blending with trees and plant life so that it always molds into the natural habitat as unobtrusively as possible. This particular pyramid hilltown is home to some 10,000 inhabitants.

Despite its deceptive covering of greenery this gently sloping hill is not a creation of Nature but a complete, self-contained town with surrounding terraced garden homes, containing shops, manufacturing and processing plants and a full range of cultural facilities within its structure. Nor is it a small construction. The 'hill' is half a mile wide at its base and inside the hollow center is a huge atrium 1200 feet across, lit by natural light through the pyramid glass roof at its apex.

The train dives underground as it did for the villages along its route, but remains in tunnel for a longer distance this time so as not to intrude on the town's views and surrounding park amenities. The 'tunnels' are not dull or boring however, for the natural surface has been cut smooth from the natural rock and finished to a high polish using disintegrating-transmuting rays, then stabilized with a clear diamond-crystal lining which enhances the beauty of the original natural veins and patterns.

The tunnel is softly and evenly illuminated as the vehicle passes through, often with some special geological feature highlighted.

This being a Rural Line which serves to connect the surrounding village communities with the County Town, the train terminates here, gliding silently into one bay of a large circular platform from which five other Rural Lines radiate out into the surrounding countryside serving similar smaller villages, communities and recreational facilities.

Glass elevators in the center of the platform take passengers either down to the Inter-County lines, or up to the 'town center', the Atrium Concourse, and the outer residences situated within the slopes of the hill.

Planet Earth: Extreme Makeover

Chapter 8 – HOME ON A HILLSIDE

A few unobtrusive individual homes are still built, some as rental vacation homes around lakes and beauty spots, others as isolated homes in rural areas for the dedicated countrysiders, or for those who seek especial peace and solitude for a particular period or reason. But most people on the New Earth live on the slopes of an artificial hill-town. This has come about entirely by choice, for the simple reason that the hillside home can provide every resident with three things now considered most important in a residence: privacy, an uninterrupted view, and vertical airspace for a garden terrace.

Privacy is important. The spirit of the New Age is one of cooperation and open-ness; it is normal for strangers to talk together in cafés and public gardens as if they had always known one another, and people often invite to their homes strangers they have met by chance, with whom they find a natural affinity. It may therefore seem something of a contradiction to observe that in their homes most people value their privacy, peace and quiet. But it is widely understood that 'you can only give what you already have', and in the privacy of the home one can develop that inner peace and wisdom which makes for good company and good conversation.

Privacy and peace are assured by the basic layout of homes and access, which places street passageways behind, rather than in front of the individual hillside residences. There are indeed a few outside 'ring' walkways where people can take a stroll and enjoy the views, and some residents choose to live facing these outer walkways. But the majority enjoy their own unobstructed, totally private terrace and view, with their indoor access 'street' behind them. Once inside their homes, residents have complete frontal privacy, with privacy between next-door neighbors on the garden-terraces assured by the planted sloping dividing walls on either side.

The second essential in a home, enjoyed by all hilltown residents, is the unobstructed view from their hillside garden terraces over miles of countryside, with its rolling hills and streams, clumps of woodland, and perhaps just the occasional glimpse of another green hilltown merging almost imperceptibly into the background scene.

The third essential is vertical airspace. The slopes of the artificial hills provide for every home a terrace garden open to the sky – as opposed to a high-rise apartment balcony which is open only to the front and perhaps the sides, with vertigo-views to the ground below! The generously-sized terraces are warm and sheltered miniature gardens, ideal for relaxing or for meals – most people like to eat 'out' on their terrace unless the weather is unsuitable.

Since the terraces are sheltered, residents are able to grow plants and flowers that are even more exotic than those in the parks or public gardens. Terraces are generally paved in varied finishes and colors simulating natural stone, with ample space for seating and dining; large terracotta plant pots containing flowers or perhaps small fruiting trees will

often be arranged on the paved surface, with more permanent flower beds built-in along the side walls. There is always a low earth-bed at the front of the terrace where people grow small bushes, flowers and trailing greenery. This planting at the front of the terrace provides essential privacy for the levels below.

In this particular pyramid hilltown all of the main vertical dividing walls are set at least 40 feet apart, determining the width of the homes and their terraced gardens. There is nonetheless a choice of size in home and terrace; half the levels have single-floor homes with 30-foot deep terraces and the other half are two-story homes with larger terraces of 60-foot depth.

The single-floor homes usually have a 20-foot wide living room with two 10-foot wide 'personal rooms' at the side looking onto the same garden terrace. The two-story homes generally feature a living room and dining area with an adjacent den/workspace at terrace level, plus anywhere between two and four 'personal rooms' on the upper level.

At the rear of the home, where there is no natural light other than that piped down through 'light-tubes' from the divider wall cavities, sound-insulated rooms offer ample workspace which many people use for constructive hobbies. Since these areas are at the back of the apartment, some people like to have windows looking onto the interior 'street'. These are usually craftspeople who undertake work on a limited commercial basis like sculptors, artists, or musical instrument-makers (yes, people still play hand-crafted wind, string and keyboard instruments!). Passers-by can watch the work in progress or perhaps see a small display of the items crafted. Customers who want to buy these more specialized products will not mind making the special journey to the home-workshop; craft products which are more in demand are displayed and sold in the centralized display and shopping areas for customers' greater convenience of access.

The element of privacy within the home itself is much respected in the New Age, peace and quiet being considered important for personal 'rejuvenation'. It is recognized that everyone needs time for 'self', time to reassemble one's thoughts, to review the day, and of course time for quiet contemplation which in the New Age forms an essential part of everyone's daily activities. Although many families live together, often with three or even four generations sharing one large home, there is still privacy for everyone, and that privacy is always respected.

Every family member has a 'personal room', a sort of miniature apartment, the privacy of which is never invaded, save by explicit invitation. The personal room is in effect a bed-sitting-room, with its own bathroom at the rear plus a small kitchen facility where meals can be prepared as required. The bed is arranged to blend in with the sitting-room furniture as a sofa during the day, to be made up as a bed at night with the bedding stored underneath. At the front of the personal apartment a sitting area might be furnished with a table or desk and reclining chair. In the two-floor homes each personal room will have a small balcony overlooking the family terrace below, and at the rear, its own separate access through a shared rear hall into the interior 'street'.

Quite often individual family members will 'invite' the rest of the family to their personal rooms for a chat or even a meal. Normally however families eat together and spend time together in the larger family rooms – though there is not the presumption that families must always be together for every occasion. Food can be prepared at home; alternatively one can 'call down' to the extensive food preparation services in the large central kitchens for 'autodelivery' of anything from cleaned and prepared fruits to complete dishes ready-to-eat in a variety of different styles.

Whether for individual personal use or family group entertainment, a vast catalog of documentaries, feature films, and recorded music from the past as well as new compositions, can be selected through the home video terminal; samples can be viewed or heard, and a chosen performance 'ordered' for immediate viewing. The necessary material is then transmitted along a fiber-optic landline and downloaded into the home computer as a complete film or musical score which can then be viewed on a large wall-mounted flat screen.

Musical scores come ready to play with their own settings of instrumentation and tempo. But built-in software in the home unit allows listeners to select their own preferred tempi and add or change the detail of musical phrasing at will, while databanks of different sampled instruments and electronically generated sounds allow listeners to make their own choice of instrumentation. Listening to music in the home can thus become a more creative process; the listener can select any desired instrumentation and 'conduct' the music in the very real sense of defining tempi and phrasing.

Most of the numerous activities taking place in the hilltown's interior theatres and concert halls, performance and lecture rooms can also be accessed in the home through a form of cable vision.

While a completely private home is generally preferred, there are those who like a little more social contact. Their choice might be a home facing onto one of the two or three Promenades which run around the outside of the Hilltown, so they can 'potter about' in their front gardens and exchange greetings with passers-by.

Others might go for an area known locally as 'The Quarry'. Imagine that a section of the hillside has been removed from one of the corner sloping surfaces of the pyramid – just like a quarry in fact. This forms a little square, the 'quarry floor', which is flanked and overlooked by four or five vertical stories of single room apartments with balconies. The quarry apartments are popular with people living alone; some will be youngsters experiencing a new-found independence, others perhaps older people who no longer have a family around them.

The Quarry's own little square is treated almost like a private club by its surrounding residents. They can peer over their balconies or call down to see if anyone wants a game of chess; the square's flower beds are tended by a couple of local residents; and the café with its outside tables serves most of the residents as a communal dining/living or clubroom!

Here they chat, check the news, have a meal or a snack. The wide variety of ages makes for lively conversation, and from time to time a 'stranger' happens upon this little neighborhood square and is always made welcome. Indeed it is surprising how many 'secret' corners and alleyways there are in these hilltowns, both inside and out. In many of the hilltowns, people who have lived there for years are still making new discoveries!

All hilltown homes are leased at low rates from the Community Corporation which oversaw the planning and construction of the hilltown and which has subsequent responsibility for its maintenance, though the work itself is usually undertaken under competitive contract by specialized firms. The highest standards of cleanliness and general maintenance both inside the hilltown's public areas and in the surrounding parkland can always be expected.

Overall planning at County and Regional level ensures that there is always an adequate supply of vacant accommodation of all sizes, making it easy for people to move about, especially as furnishings tend to be simple and much is built-in. Some people move quite frequently simply for a change of scene, while others elect to stay put in 'their' community all their lives! Another motive for moving home reflects changing needs as families grow larger, then smaller; though once again tastes vary, and some families keep their larger home, opening it to visitors when the children 'leave the nest'.

There is enormous variety in the types and sizes of home available, even within what might be imagined as the constraints of the artificial hill. The 'hills' vary too. There are formal cones and pyramids, though these are usually nearer the county centers. In the remoter country areas people prefer more 'organic' architecture and here the artificial hills are varied in shape, contoured to fit the topography, curved around a corner of a lake, or perhaps 'grafted' onto the side of an existing hill. All of these artificial hills are amply covered with greenery and flowers.

One interesting exception to the 'greenery rule' is a hilltown built into an existing hill overlooking the sea in an area where the rocky landscape provides little vegetation. This hilltown's sides are covered by a haphazard-looking jumble of houses of different sizes and shapes, interspersed with terraces, squares and little winding paths, the whole colored white in the style of an old Greek island village. Solid front doors leading into homes or private courtyards are in simple blues and greens, and citrus trees with their seasonal perfumed flowers followed by oranges and lemons abound in both private courtyards and the little public squares.

People have put out pots of flowers on their balconies, and outside their homes in the narrow winding paths and streets. In many of the public squares small cafés serve food and drink at rustic tables under trailing vines. At its lower end where the village meets the sea, a small harbor provides a home for rental pleasure boats, while small craft shops and cafés with their tables under sun umbrellas line the quayside. The town attracts quite a few visitors!

Privacy, a view, and vertical airspace: these are the requirements of a perfect home, features offered by virtually every one of the hillside apartments. But in addition to the requirements for the home itself, humans also have a social side: we need contact with others for work, trade, culture, entertainment, and simple conversation. And if these facilities are to be of any practical use they must be closely and conveniently to hand: a few moments' walk or ride away, not half-an-hour's stop-go drive through polluted air on a crowded road with parking problems at the end of it! Here again the hilltown scores on pure convenience, with all its commercial, professional, and recreational facilities concentrated right there in the hillside's interior core.

Indeed with such a wealth of attractive facilities so readily available, less time is now spent in the home itself, mainly because there is so much going on around it. The numerous facilities inside the hilltown in and around the central atrium, the roof top promenade areas and the beckoning countryside provide plenty of incentive to be 'out and about'.

Though many people enjoy going out into the surrounding countryside with its numerous market gardens and fruit and nut groves to pick their own fresh produce, much is also communally picked for restaurant facilities and shops, and this is processed in the large and well equipped kitchens looking out over parkland at the base of the pyramid where prepared dishes are made for home or restaurant use.

With the varied yet generally milder, more equable climate of the New Earth, combined with the increased leisure time at people's disposal and their great love of healthy pursuits, fresh air and the outdoors, it is hardly surprising that the residents enjoy and consider as equally important the facilities existing outside and around their Hilltown. Indeed as much attention was given to the outdoor surroundings as to the design of the town itself, and the immediate countryside offers a thoughtfully planned selection of facilities.

Access to the 'great outdoors' could not be simpler for the Hilltown residents. Periodic breaks in the housing units allow for public top-to-bottom walkways winding through treed and landscaped slopes. Or for quicker access the internal sloping elevators terminate at the base of the Hilltown permitting direct walk-out into the surrounding parkland. By its very nature and concept, this is a very compact town; there is no suburban sprawl gradually eating its way across those 'greenfield sites' so much beloved of developers in the old Earth days! This and similar New Earth towns resemble the old fortified towns of medieval times: town on one side of the city wall, open country on the other!

The extensive park area immediately surrounding the Hilltown is laid out semi-formally for quiet relaxation, and people can be seen strolling along the paths enjoying the trees, the green grass and profusion of colorful scented flowers. Although the air is good everywhere on the New Earth, whether in buildings or outside, here in the park it is especially relaxing; for this the townsfolk can thank the many different species of pine trees which are known to give off beneficial emanations. On each side of the smooth paths molded from a glasslike material resembling cream-colored marble, the emerald-green grass is dotted with patches of tiny blue and purple flowers no bigger than the blades of grass.

The colors of all the flowers are brilliant in their depth and intensity, and the scent is everywhere, sometimes almost overpowering, particularly when the sun is shining again after a rain shower.

In one area several rows of chairs are grouped in front of an old-style Victorian bandstand screened by trees at its rear. An announcement states that a local youth orchestra will perform 'for your pleasure' during the afternoon.

There are many small pavilions and open music auditoriums scattered around this extensive urban park, some circular and surmounted by crystal domes, others in the shape of small transparent pyramids or in the style of simple classical Greek structures, none higher than the surrounding trees, each one different, yet all in their own way blending into and enhancing the park. Quite a few are covered by rich greenery and flowers trailing from their terraces. Some of these buildings are cafés, sport facilities or garden and plant centers.

At its outer edges the semi-cultivated and formally planned Town Park gives way to wedges of informal parkland alternating with market-gardening agriculture or fruit and nut groves. Although the market gardens are supervised and tended by professional agriculturalists, most of the produce is self-picked by the town's residents themselves, who enjoy the experience of being amongst the plant life; they also take the opportunity, considered important in the New Age, to thank the plants for their generous gifts. This appreciation is carried through to the careful preparation of food and the tradition of eating slowly, consciously savoring the raw materials and their preparation.

The expression of gratitude to the Universe is a frequent theme in the New Age - and relaxed appreciation of one's food also makes for better digestion!

There is quite a choice of footpaths leading off into the 'real' countryside, each one having a small signpost showing its destination, distance and walking time; some of the paths are designed as circular routes, again with walking times given for the circuit. Walking is a favorite leisure activity, particularly as there is so much beautiful countryside to enjoy and ample leisure time to enjoy it, while the less dense, higher-vibration Etheric lightness of being causes less fatigue over long distances. A popular outing is to walk to the next village or scenic spot, perhaps enjoy some light refreshment then return home by one of the Rural Lines that fan out from the hilltown.

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Chapter 9 – LIFE IN THE ATRIUM

Passengers reaching the County Town on the Rural Lines arrive under the central atrium at a terminal bay, one of several grouped in a circle, with glass elevators in the center of the platform. Those passengers who plan to travel to another County Town or to the Regional Capital take the elevator down to a lower, square-layout platform where they can join the Inter-county grid, while taking the elevator up brings arriving passengers directly to the County Town's central atrium.

The Atrium itself, with sunlight streaming in from its glass pyramid 300 feet above, is a huge tropical paradise of exotic plants and trees vibrant with life, their leaves shimmering with the excitement of the activity around them. The odd monkey or colorful bird can often be seen peering through the foliage, though there are special areas set aside for them where they have been asked, and generally agree, to remain. They are not of course 'captive' but here of their own free will and agreement. They tend to enjoy their interaction with humans and generally stay for long periods, often for life, though they will be returned to their previous habitat at any time they make a mental request to do so.

This is the place to see and be seen, to enjoy the ever-changing parade of people, to make new friends or meet old ones, to read or relax, enjoy some light refreshment, work on a laptop computer, or play some table game with anyone who's interested

One can take a leisurely stroll around the perimeter, pausing to watch the passing scene in one of the many sidewalk cafés or benches set in alcoves among flowering bushes. The beautifully tiled floors and surfaces, alcoves with small sitting areas surrounded by scented flowering bushes and the many small ornamental fountains recall some ancient Moorish palace.

This is the hub of community life. The numerous small cafés and meeting areas are used as they were in the traditional coffee houses of central European capitals – places to sit for as long as you feel inclined, places to work, to read, to meet friends old and new, to play chess... the list is endless.

Tropical greenery and flowers abound, apparently thriving in the warm and slightly humid climate which is carefully monitored and controlled to resemble as nearly as possible what the technicians fancifully, though quite seriously refer to as "nature's own sweet breath"!

Around the Atrium periphery are numerous attractive counters dispensing a great variety of pastry and baked goods, fruit, fresh fruit juices and hot drinks, which people collect on trays then take over to one of the eating areas where elegant white tables and chairs are set under palm, mango and other tropical trees, perhaps grouped around a turquoise-tiled pool with its own small fountain.

Along the ground and second level galleries surrounding the concourse are the shopping areas, each area specializing in the sale of different categories of goods such as food, clothing and household articles. The shops are thoughtfully and attractively laid out as pleasing display areas, showing off demonstration items of the complete range of goods available in settings similar to those in which they will be used. Customers can test equipment and appliances, try on garments, and make their selections.

Their chosen items are then ordered by programming a hand held computer note-pad and passing a personal credit card over its surface which enters their name, address and account code. The goods are then immediately dispatched to the customer's home from automated warehouses deep in the pyramid's internal industrial areas by automated goods delivery, the cost being directly debited from the customer's personal bank account.

The warehouse computer, like those in other towns and cities, is in direct contact with the computers of supplier factories, so the factories are continuously informed as to sales movements. Providing that there are no design changes and that the product remains current, re-orders can be scheduled automatically.

There are 'supermarkets' for basic bulk-food requirements. These do not offer the bewildering range of competing highly-packaged 'brands' which were once a feature of the supermarket shelves in the old days. Packaging is considered a waste of resources, and high standards of quality and productivity make competition between similar products almost irrelevant. Much use is made of bulk food dispensers and returnable containers; household needs from cleaning materials to dry or preserved food products such as nuts and grains are selected from rows of automated dispensers. A shopper wanting some flour for home-baking will select the bin containing the chosen grains, program an indicator panel, and the grain will be ground to individual requirements in the quantity desired. The finished product is then dispensed into a small returnable container which is automatically labeled and coded with contents, ingredients, weight and price. When all the desired goods have been selected the customer passes a credit card and the coded packages over a scanner, then places the purchases into a container which is coded for immediate, automated home delivery.

Fresh fruit can be picked or collected personally in the surrounding market gardens; but for convenience many prefer to make a selection from the varied and colorful market stands gathered together along one side of the atrium concourse, where fresh produce is brought in from the town's agricultural areas several times each day for maximum freshness.

In the higher galleries overlooking the central atrium are the cultural areas and facilities: concert halls, theatres, and many meeting rooms large and small. Performances in the various theatres and activity spaces vary considerably, from old style operas to contemporary works; for something quite different there are dramas brought from other worlds in which the emotions involved in the action are communicated directly to the audience telepathically.

Most productions are 'recordings' projected in multi-dimensional form. Others may feature live human performances by local amateurs which can be combined with multi-dimensional background scenes recorded anywhere in the world or in other worlds, the audience totally enveloped with realistic surround sound and vision. Some productions however, are entirely 'live', largely because people have found they still enjoy 'acting' as an aspect of creation. This provides an outlet for local amateur talent, very popular with participants and audiences alike. Professionalism in performance is important, but equally important is that both performers and audience should enjoy the show.

Many people prefer to enjoy music in their homes; but there is always a wide selection of musical concerts, some 'live', involving local amateurs or else some pre-recorded featuring full surround-sound accompanied by a visual display of instruments, natural scenes, or complex interplays of light. Again the musical offerings are numerous in their variety, from medieval to contemporary – that is, New Earth music. New Earth music is not the same as the so-called 'New Age' music of the old times which tended to consist mainly of relaxing background sounds and harmonies.

The 'new' music expresses the New Age belief that music, like life itself, should reflect the 'trinity' of intellect, emotion and inspiration; thus it reflects more closely the baroque music of the 18th century, with its fugues and variations. Indeed the original baroque composers are much respected and their works when performed are particularly popular.

The music completely surrounds and envelops its listeners, but does not deafen them; it is never aggressive either in volume or in content.

The act of musical performance is also enjoyed in its own right, and in the many smaller rooms and performance spaces music students can invite a few friends or the public to a short performance. Or perhaps someone will be reading poetry, others might be giving talks... there is always something going on and the variety is almost endless. Any event can be experienced either in the central theatres where they are taking place, or accessed live from people's homes relayed onto their video screens.

High above the Atrium Concourse where the glass pyramid-shaped roof-dome meets the main hill structure, the roof-top 'Sky Walk' runs right around the 600-foot baseline of the glass dome light, both on the inside and outside, offering magnificent views out across the surrounding countryside or down upon the lively scene of the Atrium below. These lofty heights are reached by several vertical Atrium elevators of totally transparent construction, their stately progress as they gently rise and fall giving an added dimension of movement in the interior concourse. At night the elevator cars are glitteringly illuminated, as also is the pyramid glass roof.

The internal base areas beneath the Atrium which are devoid of daylight are occupied by the various support services: waste reprocessing, water heating, air pumping and extraction machinery. Since most manufacturing processes are fully automated, the computer-controlled production machinery also occupies the non-daylighted areas. The operators

who control and monitor the machines work remotely from stations overlooking the central Atrium, enjoying the natural daylight which filters down from the glass pyramid dome light, or from control rooms on the town's exterior north face.

All service and production areas are open to public viewing. Where automated machinery is in operation special transparent viewing passages and galleries are provided. Most people like to understand and appreciate the 'behind-the-scenes' operations of their town, and throughout the production, processing and warehouse areas people of all ages can be found viewing everything from effluent purification to maintenance of the transit vehicles. Explanatory commentaries are always provided, with a personal chat for anyone who shows a particular interest.

A totally segregated internal goods transport system known as the 'autodelivery' serves the entire hilltown through its own network of small-bore tunnels and lifts. The system uses 4-foot wide by 3-foot high containers propelled by linear-induction coils and supported by magnetic levitation. Destinations are bar-coded and containers are routed automatically through computer-controlled junctions for direct delivery to homes, shops, warehouses and production areas.

Thanks to the increased efficiencies of life in the New Age few people work no more than about three to four hours a day. Production and service work is generally organized in multiple shifts throughout the day to provide an overall 12- to 15-hour service period. With so much of the day freed there is plenty of spare time to enjoy and experience the town's great variety of cultural, recreational and learning facilities; this in turn creates an almost unlimited demand for new facilities and new ideas.

A real-time 'notice board' in the form of a central databank details the enormous variety of events and activities on offer together with their times and locations. This service can be accessed from screens throughout the city and surrounding communities, as well as from the personal *communicators* which many people carry with them. It is equally simple, via voice activation or keyboard, to reserve a meeting or performance space and enter the details of what you are offering.

The reservation and use of space may seem casual to Old Age readers but there are more than enough spaces of all kinds and sizes to suit every need, and users are very conscientious. No one would consider announcing an event without presenting it, and spaces are always left tidy, ready for the next user.

Another significant factor concerning the use of urban space is that of cost.

In the Old Age land was bought and sold as an 'investment'. When a town or city grew in attraction and population, landowners were able to ask higher and ever higher prices and rents, so the fate of the city was already sealed. As prices moved up in the old European cities the familiar meeting places, the cafés where people had been congregating, chatting, and reading the papers for centuries gradually became more expensive and many were

forced out of business. In America, escalating urban rents set in motion the infamous 'flight to the suburbs', to the cheaper greenfield sites, and thus many city centers gradually died while their outer growth sprawled. In the New Age the use of urban space is priced only to reflect the capital write-off and maintenance costs, remaining both reasonable and stable.

The built environment here in this County Town has been carefully planned and constructed to be varied and exciting, while providing numerous formal and informal spaces for events and activities as well as occasions for the chance encounters which New Age people so much enjoy.

In many of the interior and exterior areas of the central core of this City much of the essential spirit of the Old Age cities has somehow been recreated. There are small stone-paved squares surrounded by lush greenery and intimate corners hidden away, 'secret' courtyards at the end of narrow passageways, and some special secluded areas with a sign of two hands placed palms together indicating that they are set aside for quiet meditation. In contrast, several wide, imposing avenues run around the outside of the sloping hillside at different heights for summer strolling.

Though New Age people dress for simplicity and comfort, their clothes are always color-coordinated and chosen with care. Everyone manages to look effortlessly immaculate, with clothes fresh and clean, hair shiny and skin healthy. The atmosphere is definitely casual, yet there is an air of sophistication and worldliness among these relaxed, confident and smiling crowds.

The sense of activity, of things to do, and the ever-present challenge of exploration is almost overwhelming in this, the County's focal point, rather like the great 'World Fairs' of the Old Earth. The floor of this enormous concourse, and its surrounding galleries, offer a never-ending array of traveling exhibitions mounted year round as well as the numerous permanent exhibitions, such as those at the huge Art & Craft Center where all the best and most creative individual craftwork is displayed. There are working demonstrations of many types of crafts, together with their wonderfully individual products each so carefully made and finished, reflecting the enormous variety of creative artisan talent which has blossomed with the increased leisure time now available in the New Age.

Then there are within the County City's envelope, many Science and Art Museums, Concert Halls and theatres of all sizes and shapes, extensive Halls of Learning and a vast Central County Library filled with books from all periods of history and a great data bank of video and music recordings.

Back in the central atrium a cheerful, colorfully dressed gentleman behind a pastry counter set up outside one of the busy cafés tips his yellow top hat to the passers-by, offering free samples and an almost unending stream of humorous quips and stories. "This is the Hub of the Universe ladies and gentlemen" he announces. And no one in the smiling crowd would dream of disagreeing with him.

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Chapter 10 – GROWTH AND LEARNING

There is leisure time in abundance in the New Age, and innumerable ways of spending it enjoyably. But learning and self-improvement is also considered highly important, and the New Earth's new inhabitants seem to have an insatiable appetite for knowledge! Every community large and small provides a facility known as the 'Halls of Learning', where young and old can study either full- or part-time anything and everything from history and philosophy to specific skills or crafts. Learning may provide skills for a chosen occupation or profession, or simply an expansion of one's general knowledge and understanding.

Though personal teaching and apprenticeships are available, learning generally takes place through interactive computers or multi-dimensional imaging. This has the advantage of allowing individuals to take their own personal 'exploration path', developing their own talents, skills and interests at their own pace.

In the case of very young children however, education is still a very 'human' process. Young children come together in supervised groups much as they did in the old days. Grouping helps children to interact with one another, providing an important foundation and guidance for their future growth and development. They are taught to be aware of their own bodies, minds and spirits, to value them and to treat them with respect. They are taught how the body functions, and they are shown the effects of maltreatment, the diseases and illnesses which can be caused by wrong thinking or wrong action. Here the Law of Karma guides education: the object is to show children the direct results of actions in terms of their effects, so that the children themselves can make the right choices without parental pressure.

Young children are also taught politeness and consideration for others; any occasional sign of rude or aggressive behavior towards other children is immediately discouraged in open discussion. Children are taught to serve one another through the performance of school duties.

There are no 'staff' to serve food or clean the premises; young children look after their own learning and recreation areas, sweeping and cleaning every day, helping with the preparation of food under professional guidance then serving it to their colleagues and clearing up afterwards. They are taught to take a pride in service and to do it willingly and caringly; and they are taught to take a pride in their surroundings, to treat their learning facilities with respect, and always to 'leave wherever you have been better for your passing'.

Intimate inter-action between young children and the elderly is a feature of everyday life and education, to the clear advantage and enjoyment of both sides!

Younger children are also encouraged to communicate with and to respect the natural environment by the simple expedient of enjoying it as much as possible, and 'field trips' or outings are organized frequently.

It is quite common to see a party of young schoolchildren leaving a rural transit station and setting off down one of the country paths accompanied by several adults – who always look as if they are there for the fun as much as for any 'supervisory' duties. The children too look happy and relaxed, yet they are always well-behaved, with one or two younger ones walking in pairs holding hands. Children often come out in school parties to help with the fruit picking, working on the lower branches of the trees and bushes, always very serious about their work whatever their ages. They are never under pressure to work as an imposition; their parents and teachers try to communicate to the children the duty and the joy of making a contribution to their community.

Later on, when they have picked several boxes of fruit which is then dispatched directly to the town Fruit Center, the children gather at one of the pavilions in the fruit groves to be rewarded with some refreshing fruit juices accompanied perhaps, by a short talk on some aspect of agriculture.

After the children's rest and refreshment one of the teachers might talk about the fruit and nuts which form the main diet in the New Age, explaining that the fruit is freely 'given' by the plant to anyone who passes by. "Why?" the teacher asks the children. "So that the plant can spread its seeds" one of the children answers. "Yes indeed", replies the teacher. "The seeds are surrounded by tasty, tempting, nutritious fruit and the plant, which itself is not mobile, invites animals, humans or birds who *are* moving around to take and enjoy the fruit as a reward for spreading the seeds. Nuts also are *given* by the plant or tree in the sense that we do not kill the plant when we take and eat nuts; the same applies to grains. But when we eat roots or leaves we are taking a part of the plant's body, something which we do very rarely and generally only for medicinal purposes".

Food is grown organically in small irregular plots, fruit bushes and trees inter-mixed with flowers for the bees, and fertilized by natural humus derived from plants at the end of their life cycle. The trees, bushes and plants are lovingly – yes, lovingly! – tended and cared for, and the resultant fruit is healthful and bursting with flavor. There are many more varieties than in the previous period on Earth.

Meals are always prepared freshly, in the form of various uncooked savory and sweet fruit salads – perhaps accompanied by baked pastries and breads.

On another outing children might be taken to an 'Animals' Home' where they can meet horses, donkeys, goats and other semi-domesticated animals. Some of these animals will have come in from the surrounding wilderness areas to seek human care when they have been injured, while others simply come and stay for a while because they enjoy the contact with humans! There is never any compulsion for them to remain.

In the New Age humans are able to communicate with animals on a telepathic level. Certainly there is no fear on the part of animals, and no exploitation of any kind by humans – though animals and humans do occasionally work together by common consent. Horses and mules will readily volunteer their services to carry humans and their camping equipment into wilderness areas either for recreation or for environmental work, a collaborative experience enjoyed by humans and animals alike.

Needless to say, the ‘factory-farming’ and killing of animals, birds and fishes is not even contemplated in the New Age, with a resultant spirit of mutual friendship and respect between all life-forms. Nonetheless, people remain aware of their past human history, and remind themselves of it frequently on the principle that ‘mistakes remembered will not be repeated’. So the children communing with the animals as children like to do, will be told about man’s past relationship with the animal kingdom. But the story will be told briefly and in a somewhat ‘sanitized’ version.

That Man was once responsible for the annual killing of millions of cattle, chickens, fishes and other creatures is something which people in the New Age both young and old find too horrific to contemplate, and pictorial records of the breeding conditions and mass slaughter of animals as once practiced are rarely shown for this reason. Worse still was the killing of animals and birds for so-called ‘sport’, a form of ‘amusement’ which these New Age children would probably not even comprehend.

Today in the New Age humans have regained that wonderful bond of trust and friendship between all living creatures. As the children's teacher summarizes: “Mutual love between all our fellow beings throughout the entire range of Creation is something of great value to us all and to our universe. We must seek to develop and extend it, never letting it deteriorate again.”

One very fundamental principle guiding the upbringing of children in the New Age is the Law of Karma. Children are never told to “do this” or “do that” without any reason being given; rather, they are encouraged to review the different courses of action open to them, review the anticipated consequences, then make their own informed decision. And when they do take a course of action, be it good or bad, wherever possible they will be allowed to experience its consequences which will be clearly and patiently pointed out to them.

Children are taught that when they are young they take from their parents in the form of physical support; while it is always made clear that this is freely and lovingly given, at the same time children are expected to do their share in the home, for it is considered wrong that they should be encouraged to take what they are given without appreciation. They are held responsible for their own individual and personal upkeep and the cleanliness of their rooms; they are told how they should conduct themselves, and if they do not, then any unfortunate effects are solely theirs to be experienced.

For example, a boy may not keep his room tidy. The parents would not scold or order a tidying up session, but rather they would drop hints that “we never visit young Jimmy in his room – it’s such a disaster”. Since everyone has their own ‘personal room’ in the family home and it is the custom to ‘invite’ one’s family members to ‘visit’, there is a natural discipline upon children to keep their own rooms clean and inviting. For outings outside the home, children are automatically invited anywhere adults go; if they misbehave they don’t get invited anymore. They soon realize why, and will generally apologize and mend their ways. They are treated as adults, but they are also expected to act the part.

In the Old Age bored children were often responsible for community vandalism; in the New Age it is quite common to see groups of schoolchildren working in the public gardens, or helping with fruit harvests. They are taken around their communities and shown the detailed technicalities of how everything works, from public transit to communications systems, so that they will respect these facilities and treat them properly. They visit maintenance depots where they are shown working models and the current work-in-progress, and are frequently permitted to help under supervision. In such ways they are taught to identify with, and participate in the running of their community.

Children are also encouraged as early as possible to participate in County and Regional planning and legislative proceedings. There are several student societies for group participation in legislative affairs; and in all legislative and planning proceedings at any level the Constitution requires open access for all – with no age limit!

As children grow older, their education process grows with them, giving wider and wider latitude for individual choice and self-expression while at the same time subtly demanding a greater sense of social responsibility and participation in the community. Young people are encouraged to take part-time jobs after school at an early age; even simple jobs teach self-discipline, time-keeping and how to treat customers with care and respect. And the act of working, of contributing to society and earning some pocket money further enhances the child’s sense of self-worth and independence.

While schooling for younger children is paid for by the parents, at the age of fourteen youngsters take out their own loans in the form of Education Credit Units. It is considered important that young people see education for what it really is: an investment in themselves and their own future. It is also important for them to learn the power and the responsibility of purchasing, exercising choice and judgment with their own Credit Units. It is they themselves who choose the education program, the teachers and the level of equipment they wish to work with.

Thus higher-level education is always a reflection of what each generation of students wants to learn, and how they want to learn it. They are given expert advice on future trends so that they will know what skills are coming into demand; and expert analysts are available who can interview students on an individual basis and establish what occupation would be most suited to each student’s personal temperament.

But the decisions are the students' to make – and indeed to revise as often as they wish, for the education system allows as much flexibility as each student needs.

Many teenagers feel the need to get away from the family, see the world, and find their own feet. This is accepted quite naturally; indeed it is considered important in the New Age that young people should learn both the joys and responsibilities of independence in their early years. And in the New Age there are not the dangers which many parents in the Old Age feared for their children. There is plenty of opportunity for work anywhere on the planet the newly independent teenager chooses to go and no shortage of pleasant accommodation for rent – one-room studios in the towns and city centers being the preference among students and young job-seekers.

The Halls of Learning provide a wide and constantly expanding selection of facilities for more advanced study of everything from specialized skills, advanced meditation and mind-control, to historical or philosophical subjects, as well as higher levels of expertise in various creative manual crafts or musicianship. These facilities are used by people of all ages, and it is quite common to see eight, eighteen and eighty-year-olds sitting side by side without any sense of incongruity. Indeed the free intermingling of age groups adds a further depth of outlook and experience during any relevant group discussions. All forms of study are enjoyed, to the extent that learning, living and leisure in the New Age are really quite inseparable.

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Chapter 11 – WORK AND ECONOMICS

The abundance of leisure time in the New Age is due in no small part to the high level of productivity, thanks to which all the necessary goods and services are provided in abundance, to high standards of quality, and at progressively reducing cost. This results in part from the pervading spirit of goodwill, cooperation, dedication to service and fair trading. But the underlying economic systems make their own significant contribution to material prosperity, to the relaxed business climate, and to the continuous striving for excellence.

In 'days of old' the whole subject of *economic planning* proved a continuing source of contention. On the one hand, if it made sense to organize workers in a business so that everyone was effectively employed, then this principle should logically apply to the economy as a whole. But 'planning' could so easily become heavy-handed, as the Socialist Bloc countries during the latter half of the 1900s clearly illustrated. In the New Age it has been found possible to provide overall coordination and full employment of the economy, while not conflicting with the creativity and initiative of individual enterprises.

Economic activity is continuously reviewed through Community Planning Councils in villages and towns, then coordinated up to County and Regional level. These Community Planning Councils are not government institutions.

They are groups of interested people: representatives from service or production companies, educators, community administrators, people with new ideas, consumers who want a new product or service. Some attend meetings regularly, others may come occasionally to raise some specific point. It is in these meetings that people discuss new products or services that may be needed, new ideas which can be tried, new services for the town, improvements which can be made, or perhaps products or services which are running down so that new employment opportunities must be sought and developed. Advisors can also be called in when required from one of several non-government Employment Monitoring or Commercial Development Services.

Local initiative ensures that local needs are provided and that local people are employed; coordination through upper levels ensures that there is collaboration where necessary. For example, if a local community decides to promote tourism for some scenic natural attraction, then transport, accommodation and advertising can be coordinated with neighboring communities and at County level. Coordination also provides an order of priorities where labor or capital is scarce, so that resources can be apportioned productively.

A local Community Planning Council meets regularly in the County Town whose atrium and terraced apartments we have recently explored.

In the most recent debate a representative of management from a local manufacturing plant discussed new trends in electronics which must be incorporated into their design and production processes; this in turn would require that a new training program be developed for local education. A speaker from the local Hotel Management Group advised that tourism in the area is increasing, requiring more overnight accommodation and some additional walking paths, developed in conjunction with existing transit lines.

Another item debated concerned a local industry which is running down because its major product has been outdated by new technological developments; what can be done to replace the potential loss of employment? An advisor from one of the Economic Monitoring Services suggests that contact be made with a firm in another part of the County which has ideas for expansion but lacks available workers due to full employment.

In these meetings, the Performance Audits of local infrastructure services are also reviewed. A senior member of the 'Blue Line' Transit Management Team, a small group which operates four Rural Lines in coordination with the overall County Administration, has been invited in so that her Team may be congratulated on producing the best Performance Audit in the Region for the fourth consecutive quarter.

Thus business and the community together establish an on-going plan of action and priorities. Community Planning Council decisions are also used as guidelines for the investment of 'public credit', a term which may require brief explanation.

A credit facility or system of accounting ('money' in Old Age terms!) remains an economic necessity in the New Age for maintaining a record of the amount of creative energy or labor each individual has either contributed or taken from the community effort. It also serves the traditional purposes of facilitating trade in goods and services, as well as facilitating saving and investment. Without some kind of a credit system trade would revert to barter, while saving, and thus also investment, would be seriously impeded.

An aspect of the New Age credit system immediately recognizable to Old Age readers would be the servicing of customer and business accounts and loans, which is administered through the familiar network Banking System.

A major difference however, lies in the attitude of Banks to the credit facility they are handling. In the old days the credit which Banks created as part of the national credit flow was erroneously regarded as the 'property' of the Bank and was often used for highly dubious speculative purposes. In the New Age individuals may naturally do whatever they like with their own personal savings. But the credit created by the Banks as part of the public credit flow is recognized as a Community Resource which should therefore be directed in the broad interests of the Community.

The Banking System is thus required to direct credit in ways which will ensure the continuing development and productivity of the economy, and provide the facilities necessary to enjoy its resultant prosperity. This requirement and approach produce a much closer cooperation between bank and business in the best interests of both parties and the economy as a whole.

Individual Banks will call upon independent experts to assess all new business loan applications. New businesses will be assisted where necessary to ensure that their projects, pre-planning and projections are viable; regular subsequent monitoring ensures that the business performs according to its projections so that remedial action can be taken promptly when necessary.

An important feature of business loans in the New Age banking system, is that the total project, from design through production and management to sales, becomes the loan collateral, rather than the personal assets of individuals. Hence the need for monitoring. Thus creative collaboration ensures that new business is securely established and runs according to projections; bankruptcies are wasteful, disrupting, and are not considered an acceptable option.

Banks are also required to direct credit according to an order of priorities for which the Banking Sector relies on the Community Planning Councils. The 'interest rate' charged to borrowers remains unchanged at a low rate which reflects only the cost of administering the credit loan.

The Central Bank of each Region is responsible for regulating the overall quantity of credit circulating through the regional economy. More specifically, it is required to maximize credit availability within the productive capacity of the economy, or in other words, to ensure *full employment*. In the New Age everyone wants and expects to contribute and develop their creative talents in a rewarding job of work; if just one single person was unable to do so it would be considered degrading, a waste of talent – and a reflection of unacceptably poor economic management!

Full employment in the Old Age was impossible to achieve since economic expansion towards full employment was always accompanied by inflation. This is not a problem in the New Age, for pay and prices are based on the evaluated labor contained in a product or service and are therefore stable and not subject to inflation even in conditions of full employment. This condition of total monetary stability is ensured by the familiar New Age combination of goodwill and a well-organized system.

The approach to pay and prices in the New Age is influenced first and foremost by the more enlightened attitude of people towards one another. As to their pay, the preoccupation of most people is not to get as much as they can out of each other, but rather that they should not take from society more than they give. The same rule applies to prices: no one would want to feel that their asking price for a product or service was unfair or excessive.

The pay for the job, or the price of a product or service should be a fair reflection of the work and skill involved; in this way everyone can be sure that trade in all its aspects is fair and equal, value for value.

To achieve this objective, a standard Pay and Price Evaluation system, constantly reviewed and whenever necessary updated, is used to measure work in all its forms and at all levels, taking into account everything from training and responsibility to job satisfaction or concentration. By means of this system a fair remuneration can be established for each job, avoiding both the need and the embarrassment of having to argue over it.

Similarly, prices are established by taking the total outgoing expenditure on materials, remunerations, overheads and appropriate capital repayments, then apportioning this total over the products or services rendered. This is calculated on a yearly or half-yearly basis.

Of course this price-calculation process cannot always be precise, so firms may inadvertently make profits at the end of the year, or sometimes losses. Losses are held over to next year and remedial steps taken. Modest profits, this being more generally the case, are apportioned according to formulas set by law and by custom. Part goes to an emergency reserve fund; part goes to the Company for research and development; part goes to the co-workers at all levels in recognition of the success of their collective enterprise. Any surplus is regarded as an excess taken from the customers, and a downward adjustment of future prices would be made.

By this apparently simple yet precise system everyone is satisfied that they are paid in relation to the work they contribute, and prices fairly reflect the work which the goods and services 'contain'.

Thus workers and consumers can be confident, without ever having to think about it, that without any fuss or argument there is a fair remuneration for every job and a fair price for every product and service. Indeed economic historians in the New Age look back with horror at the strikes and lockouts, often violent, which so often accompanied the older process of 'free collective bargaining'!

Another major advantage of a universally established Pay, Profit and Price Evaluation system is the resultant monetary stability. The universal use of a stable evaluation system eliminates the possibility of inflation – a concept now consigned to the history books. Thus it is no longer necessary to put the economy into recession and maintain a permanent condition of unemployment in order to check potential or actual inflation.

This being the case it is now considered quite normal that there should be a rewarding job of work available for everyone who wants one. Youngsters can easily find part-time work to provide some independent income or to complement their studies. No one lives under a cloud of fear that they might be made redundant if their product or service is in decline, for alternative employment is easy to find.

And 'retirement' in the sense of enforced idleness as a penalty for maturing years is a thing of the past; as people get older they retire gently, doing a little less each year but retaining their skills and continuing to make a useful contribution to society and their community, perhaps in a teaching or advisory capacity.

Full employment opportunity coupled with locally based planning ensures that everyone is able to find work in their own community whatever its size. Physical access to work is also made easy by the compact design of communities, as exemplified particularly in the hilltowns. Within each hilltown access to offices, design studios, and factory control rooms is always within easy walking and elevator reach of one's residence, and 'commuting' time is rarely more than a pleasant five minutes' walk or elevator ride.

The production of physical goods and appliances in the New Age differs from the old days when globalization was the catchword and large factories produced centrally for distribution over a wide area. In the New Age it is not considered efficient to move large quantities of physical goods from one part of the planet to another, and there is not the motive of profit or self-aggrandizement, nor the pool of poverty willing to work for a pittance, which previously encouraged the spread of global corporations.

Technology, designs and technical expertise are indeed developed regionally or globally for use on a wide scale to achieve economy and excellence; but designs and informational systems are then licensed in the form of computer programs for use by local businesses. Detailed programs transmitted electronically can be fed directly into automated machines for local manufacture of products molded to the most sophisticated designs.

A typical manufacturing facility can be found in the industrial area of our local County Town. It produces a variety of kitchen appliances, such as food processors and whole-grain grinders, mainly for sale in the towns and villages of the local County. These products are all based on various well-known, world-class designs which have been licensed from one of the many specialist industrial design companies whose function is to develop new products or ideas, and continuously refine and improve existing ones.

Within the factory's translucent white walls and double-height ceiling, lit by a soft, evenly spread form of electroluminescence, fully automated machines are silently filling computer-generated molds with a liquid material based on the abundant resource of clear or pigmented water. The liquid is pumped into watertight molds and irradiated in the mold with specific high frequency rays to alter its molecular structure, in effect permanently 'freezing' the water into a diamond-hard crystallized form.

This material has an almost infinite variety of uses in products large and small. It can be left clear for glass walls and windows where light is wanted and privacy is not required, or for other glass-like products such as elegant goblets and other items of tableware. Opaque forms of the material are obtained by including a pigmentation; this is used for virtually all large structures and buildings, as well as for manufactured goods, such as machinery,

household appliances, transport vehicles and their trackways, even the translucent marble-like pathways that people walk on in the parks.

Once the 'diamond-crystal' material has been hardened, components are automatically ejected from the molds, and by making use of the various built-in molded connection points, they can be rapidly assembled by automatic machinery.

The whole process can be remotely monitored with the help of computers and video cameras from offices in a high gallery overlooking the central atrium. Apart from a few maintenance personnel in occasional attendance as required or on a short-shift basis, the only other signs of humanity in the factory itself might be a few curious explorers or a party of schoolchildren on an educational trip in the visitor galleries.

The manufacturing and assembly facilities, located on the lower levels below the central Atrium and the terraced housing, have direct access to the automated goods delivery system offering the large containers of the County-wide freight system, or the smaller containers of the autodelivery system for local delivery.

The large containers, twelve feet square by twenty-four to thirty-six feet long, magnetically levitated and individually propelled by linear-induction coils, travel between communities totally underground in tunneling. They are destination-coded and can be computer-directed to any part of the County or Region. Except in the case of extra-large sized shipments, such as for a major piece of machinery, these large containers are filled with smaller containers in several modular sizes; the consolidated load traveling between Counties can then be broken down at its destination, and the smaller containers delivered locally by the autodelivery system.

There is a considerable flexibility in labor work schedules. Actual working times are arranged in several short shifts to ensure continuity of service to the customers. Individual time worked is arranged between small groups of working colleagues to suit personal convenience and the overall requirements of the business. The spirit is easy-going and relaxed; but reliability in relation to one's work commitments and colleagues is always scrupulously observed. No one is ever late in honoring a commitment, and last-minute changes are always agreed with colleagues.

Holidays too are arranged to suit mutual convenience. A few days may be taken here and there for some special personal or family occasion, and people will often take a week's break for an extended visit or a country ramble. The average annual 'long' holiday is one to two months. Even longer holidays to distant places or other planets are taken every two or three years. Another popular option is temporary job-trading; people doing similar work in different areas will trade jobs and accommodation with one another for a change of scene.

There are no 'statutory' holidays, though everyone by common consent takes several days off to celebrate the changing of the year from old to new. At this time all non-essential services shut down and everyone enjoys the holiday spirit.

The atmosphere at work is friendly and informal; yet this conceals a high standard of organization. Whether in production or services, the correct quantities of components and materials required are always on hand when they are needed; work-flow is properly organized; working conditions are pleasant. Participants in any commercial enterprise at all levels take their responsibilities to their colleagues and customers very seriously, and the highest degree of professional competence is a matter of pride and prime importance.

Every business has an Executive Supervisory Board representing the business's 'stakeholders': those who have a direct interest in its success. This includes the staff at all levels whose jobs depend on the good management of the business; the Bank responsible for the financial investment; the local community which depends on the business for its prosperity; the business's 'significant suppliers' or distributors; the consumers who use the products or services; and the local educators who see the business as a vehicle for the talents they have encouraged and developed. This Executive Board oversees and monitors the firm's overall business activity, reviews performance and future trends.

Companies still have 'Managers' but they are not considered superior or privileged in any way, financially or otherwise. They simply have a role to play like everyone else, their role being to take an overall view of production and operation, and to coordinate the different functions or departments. Managers will often trade with workers in other fields, and worker-flexibility between different jobs is also encouraged. This provides the opportunity for change, and helps people understand one another's needs so that work can flow more smoothly.

Managers are also responsible for introducing improvements suggested by operatives and for the adoption of any new Standards which may be appropriate to the business. The Standards concept and the high status which it is accorded contributes significantly to the continuous improvement in design, systems and general productivity.

Research companies work constantly to improve designs and work systems, using their own in-house research and listening both to workers and consumers. Their findings are thoroughly tested and new or improved techniques, ideas and designs are incorporated into the Regional Quality Standards Database.

Every business is required to be conversant with the latest Standards additions and amendments, and to ensure that any relevant improvements are adopted as soon as possible. It is also considered important to 'contribute to the flow', and businesses and their workers take a pride in making continuing improvements large and small in research, design, production and management methods which if found effective are then communicated to the Standards Database for additional testing and promulgation.

Every business must also produce and publish a monthly, independently audited TPA, or Total Performance Audit detailing its financial performance, together with statistics on many other factors such as customer satisfaction, response to queries, faults, quality, workplace conditions, response to and adoption of Standards improvements, and so on.

The list will vary for each business. The TPA is reviewed by the Executive Supervisory Board and any shortcomings are quickly rectified.

Goodwill prevails; but the systems are in place and are strictly monitored. The Community Planning Councils provide a forum in which local business activity can be reviewed, new services can be planned and full employment ensured. This in turn guides the flow of credit into productive investment. Pay and Price Evaluation, combined with a high standard of management and pleasant working conditions ensure a stable industrial and business climate.

Designs, production systems and services are continuously improved, backed by the assistance of centralized Standards.

As a result, bankruptcies and business failures in the New Age are virtually non-existent; and quite unknown is any form of industrial dissension. Everyone enjoys their work, taking a pride in excellence, and pleasure in service to their colleagues and customers. The resultant prosperity, quality of life and available leisure time in turn provide the foundation of material wellbeing allowing mankind to concentrate on artistic, intellectual, and spiritual development.

Planet Earth: Extreme Makeover

Chapter 12 – THE REWARDS OF LEISURE

In mankind's previous phase on Earth, much of the world lived in conditions of extreme poverty with little or no hope of improvement. Even in the more developed nations, unemployment, wasted talent, aggressive competition and strife occupied much energy, diverting it from more productive uses, while incompetent and often corrupt government took some 50% of the gross national product, delivering perhaps a scant 20% of consumable value. A small minority managed to accumulate great wealth, far in excess of any contribution they might make to society, but the vast majority put in long hours of hard work to satisfy the basic needs of life.

In the New Age, physical sufficiency, the higher spiritual energies, and the universal spirit of cooperation combine to provide a high standard of living with physical prosperity and an abundance of cultural and intellectual facilities, set amidst the beauties of a cleansed and refreshed environment. Against this background there is leisure time in abundance. And since leisure is not needed to recuperate from the stresses of work, competition and commuting, it can be used for more rewarding ideals and activities. In particular, the needs of learning and evolving are an important component of leisure activities in the New Age.

Leisure begins at home. Every home can be connected to a great web of communication offering a wealth of knowledge, exploration and entertainment.

This is the World Wide Web of old, yet much wider, much faster, even more intuitive in its search-and-find capabilities, and individual reception is optionally three-dimensional and holographic, so that armchair travel can be a truly 'live' experience.

For outdoor recreation, the countryside is ever present, with paved walks and rural pathways available for walking or cycling. In the town centers, the choice of activity is almost limitless. Around the central atrium or in the many smaller squares and courtyards you can stroll, sit, watch the world go by, read or work, attend meetings or concerts large or small, listen to or give an impromptu lecture, consult astrologers and natural therapists, learn ancient Chinese mind-control exercises, swim in one of the glassed-in tropical-garden pools set into the outside surface, or find a quiet corner in the surrounding parkland where you can sit for several hours and hardly see a soul.

In the evenings people still like to 'dress up' for one of the many musical concerts, dramas, comedies or documentary displays.

The evening outing may be preceded or followed by a more formal dinner in a pleasant setting along one of the high galleries overlooking the Central Atrium with its myriad soft lights splashing the tropical plants and trees with color.

To readers in the Old Age who may be wondering if 'dining out' can be much fun when all you can eat is virtually a fruitarian diet... the answer is that only when you have tasted for yourself the New Earth's fruits, nuts and grains, so much more varied and so much richer in flavor and nutrition, only then will you begin to see that even with very little preparation every meal can be a taste sensation.

And the New Age chefs certainly know how to prepare the finest, freshest ingredients in an unending variety of ways, using subtle flavors and seasonings, drawing upon the many culinary traditions of the Old World or creating new taste sensations. Whether presented as a buffet display or on individual plates, dishes are always a visual delight, arranged with the utmost care and an eye for color and texture.

Nor should it be forgotten that the greatest benefits of New Age food lie in the after-effects it *doesn't* have! No one ever gets up after a meal feeling over-stuffed or lethargic, nor is there the longterm damage to health which was a feature of much of Old Age food.

New Age health education teaches that 99% of all illnesses suffered in the old days was caused by fats blocking the body's channels, from the larger arteries pumping blood around the heart, to the many tiny capillaries in the body such as those that serve the brain cells and which when blocked can cause a stroke or partial memory loss. As New Age nutritionists put it very simply: none of your bodily channels will ever get blocked by the cleansing qualities of pure fruits!

Good health is considered a pleasure to be cultivated and enjoyed in the New Age, and the physical body is always maintained in top condition. The focus in the New Age is very much on spiritual development and evolution, and as people often like to observe, "the body is the vehicle for the spirit".

Though relaxed and plentiful outdoor exercise is generally preferred, there are gymnastic facilities in every town and village, where people go for a combination of exercise and physical tune-up. It is quite usual for people to look in regularly at their local Health Center for an 'aura-scan'.

A popular alternative is a deep, relaxing manipulative massage followed by a hot steam bath and a cold dip. This not only tones up and rejuvenates the body, it also allows the expert masseur, whose art combines that of the osteopath or chiropractor, to check over the physical body for any minor dislocations, stress areas, or other abnormalities which can then be quickly rectified.

If there is any deeper unease, perhaps resulting from an unresolved fear or reaction to some traumatic past event, a Healer similar in qualifications and function to the ancient Egyptian Seer Priests will look into the patient's personality and history for the original cause. Quite often the remedy will involve reviewing one's personal Akashic Records then going back under hypnosis to a specific place and time which the healer has indicated in order to re-live some inappropriate action, confront it, and absorb it, thus nullifying its after-effects.

On the rare occasions where there is some physical problem with the body, herbal remedies will be used, or treatment in which a form of magnetic energy is directed to the affected area. Surgery, that is to say physical operations on the bodily flesh, is no longer practiced.

While organized games are popular in the New Age, competitive sport is not played quite the way it used to be. People play purely for pleasure, and games might seem somewhat chaotic to Old Age eyes since good nature and having fun take precedence over tiresome rules and there is less inherent desire to compete.

With short and flexible working times there is plenty of opportunity for every kind of leisure pursuit either day-by-day or as part of a longer holiday break. There are so many ways of taking a holiday; many people simply travel around on the fully integrated transit systems, usually taking the slow Rural Lines as much as possible. One can travel to a planned route, or simply 'browse the system', taking whatever line and whatever direction looks appealing!

On all transit vehicles it is possible to check accommodation at the next stop on the computer screen available to each individual seat; databases can be readily accessed giving descriptions and illustrations of local accommodation options, as well as descriptions of the surrounding area and things to see. Reservations are confirmed instantly through the computer terminal. Paying a deposit on a booking is unheard-of; but it is equally unheard-of to make any kind of a reservation whether for transport, restaurant, hotel or whatever, then not turn up! Notice of cancellation is always meticulously given, together with an explanation and a sincere apology, when reservations cannot be met.

Popular for shorter holidays, especially with families, are the Country Resorts of which there are quite a few in the outlying wilderness areas of every County, located in various scenic spots such as lakesides, large forest clearings or mountain areas. They are always located on, or within a short walk of one of the Rural Lines.

A typical resort might be a low semi-circular building in three sloping terraces of self-contained holiday apartments, with a green lawn, perhaps, sloping gently down to the lake in front. A café/restaurant serves the residents and passing walkers.

Life here is peaceful and relaxing, the days' activities consisting of mountain climbing or forest walking, perhaps returning tired and hungry – though bodily toned-up and spiritually refreshed – by the Rural Line transit. Early morning swims in the lakes are also popular, perhaps followed by a brisk half-hour walk before breakfast.

Despite the low profile of resort buildings and the relaxed, 'communing-with-nature' pleasures enjoyed by their visitors, the accommodations would be considered luxurious by Old Age standards. Each apartment is a tastefully furnished suite, comprehensively equipped and immaculately maintained, fronted by its own private terrace-balcony. This is no exception but quite normal in the greater prosperity of the New Age, and affordable for everyone, large families included.

Here, one can 'stay put' for a couple of relaxing weeks, or make a tour of several resorts. Advance booking is simple by computer, and luggage can be sent forward by the autodelivery system so that one can enjoy an unencumbered walk to the next resort along the well marked woodland trails.

One very popular recreation on the New Earth is known as the 'wilderness experience'. The typical County consists of its County Town at the hub, with its dependent towns, villages and neighborhoods surrounding and linked to it, the density gradually becoming thinner and the character more 'laid-back' and rural, the farther one gets from the Center.

Though the County is adequately spread to allow plenty of natural environment between habitation areas, it is nonetheless relatively compact overall. Between Counties, there is always a substantial area of wilderness. This gives identity to the County, and provides breathing space for Nature, as well as recreational space for those seeking solitude.

The 'wilderness experience' gives humans a chance to commune intimately with Nature in all her aspects. This was of course a fairly common practice in the old days, but today in the New Age, 'communion with Nature' takes on a different, and a much deeper significance. It is possible in the New Age to communicate with animals, birds, even trees and plants on the higher, spiritual level. This is partly an aspect of the general awareness that all Creation is One - this being understood as a very practical fact, not a matter of high-sounding words!

New Age people are fully aware that they as individuals are an integral part of the whole of Creation, an attitude which makes it very easy to identify 'self' with every aspect of the natural surroundings. In the case of animals and birds, communication can be more direct; this is speech on a mental level and can reach considerable depths of mutual understanding particularly through those humans willing to give of their time and patience.

Even for ordinary walkers and hikers it is quite common for animals and humans to exchange greetings and routine information on such topics as the weather or the condition of the trail. Animals may also approach humans for help, perhaps to remove a stone lodged in a hoof or a thorn in the side. On the rare occasion when a walker or climber may have a serious physical accident it would be quite normal for animals to come instinctively to the rescue, to run for help or to keep an injured body warm while waiting for the rescue party.

The wilderness is wilderness. So the expression goes, and although there are cleared trails, signs put out where necessary, and small hospitality cabins provided, these intrusions are all kept very rustic in character, designed and located to minimize their impact on the natural scene. This is done out of respect for Nature, and the humans too, for those enjoying the spirit and atmosphere of the wilderness will not want to be confronted at every turn by human artifacts!

The small hospitality cabins are freely available for individual or family use. If you're carrying a 'personal communicator' you can check a map of the area, with red or green spots indicating cabins that are free or occupied. Otherwise you take pot luck! If you want a cabin and find a free one, it's yours, for a day or a week. There is only one important rule, unfailingly observed: always leave the cabin clean and tidy.

The cabins are well spaced out to maintain the feeling of human isolation and wilderness communication, though the occupants are generally happy to welcome passers-by for refreshment and conversation.

Hospitality is a great tradition in the New Age; its arts are even taught in schools! The two main rules of hospitality are first that the host should offer it freely, generously and with love; the second is that the guest should never abuse the privilege. As the saying goes, "always leave your host wishing you had stayed longer!"

The 'wilderness experience' provides an opportunity for self-refreshment and a mutually enriching communion with the 'wildlife'. But it is also practiced more seriously as a unification of self with the whole of creation, and as such it is seen as an important contribution to the individual's training and evolutionary progress.

For a change of setting and tempo another popular option is a cruise in one of the large circular air-cruise ships which travel silently around the planet, presenting their passengers with a new and different scene every day. These air-borne cruise ships have exterior-facing suites right around the outer perimeter. For their 'ports of call' they are capable of floating offshore on water or alighting on dry land, allowing them to visit remoter areas where there is no existing accommodation.

And for 'something completely different' the more adventurous can travel in the interplanetary spaceships to see different ways of life on other planets. These spaceships depart from several Interplanetary Ports around the globe, directly connected to the nearest Regional Capital and thence, via the Inter-County grid, to every County Town.

Learning is also considered a leisure activity in the New Age. Everyone enjoys their work, as well as the pleasurable sensation of contributing to the society of which they are a part. Work is there for everyone, it is productive and pleasant. There is thus an ever-present incentive to gain and improve skills, to develop talents to the full, and this is undertaken at all ages with considerable enthusiasm.

Even in their later years people do not retire, they simply work shorter hours as they get older and continue to pursue their educational interests, to improve their skills or keep up with the latest technological developments.

The needs of knowledge are richly provided for in the extensive Halls of Learning complete with libraries and archives. The Akashic Records can also be accessed to delve into history, or to explore the remoter corners of Earth or other planets through the medium of multi-dimensional 'virtual reality'.

Learning is a pleasure, an on-going process that starts early and never really finishes, as youngsters embark on the great journey of knowledge, and people of all ages expand their skills or merely seek to satisfy their insatiable curiosity.

In this New Age, humanity is no longer engaged in strife and conflict, no longer embroiled in battles for personal prestige or national supremacy.

The motivations of individual enterprise, initiative, growth and development remain as strong as ever; indeed these features are enhanced by the pleasure and satisfaction of their own rewards. But they are tempered by the limitation of respect for others; growth comes through collaboration with others, not at the expense of others.

With conflict replaced by collaboration, energies find new directions: in culture, beauty, creativity, the arts, nature, and the simple pleasures of friends and community. When a rock is removed revealing a plant struggling for growth, that plant will suddenly flourish and blossom.

So with humanity. When the rock of conflict is removed, spiritual and intellectual growth can begin, destined to reach new heights of intellectual, cultural and spiritual development.

A new phase in human evolution has indeed begun.

Planet Earth: Extreme Makeover EPILOGUE

In these days of Tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven and earth shall be shaken.

And when these things come to pass, then look up, and lift up your head, for your redemption draweth nigh. You shall see signs in the clouds with great glory. And the elect shall be gathered together upon the four winds, from the uttermost parts of the earth.

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man. Therefore take heed, watch and pray, for you know not when the time comes. Take heed of yourself, lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, with wealth and property, and other cares of this life, and the day shall come upon you unawares. Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands; but in no way go beyond, and defraud your brother in any matter.

Watch therefore and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape the Tribulations that shall come to pass, and to take for yourself a new life.

And be not afraid, for verily, you shall weep and lament, but the Earth shall rejoice; and you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.