

Beneath the Third Wave



By
David Wasdell

In his book, 'The Third Wave', Alvin Toffler, author of 'Future Shock', seeks to synthesise the surging waves of change sweeping across our world. In response, this paper is sharply critical of the symbol construct used and widens it to include the unconscious processes at work. An original section on 'global exploitation' provides background to the debate on North/South relationships..

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[A response to 'The Third Wave' by Alvin Toffler, published by Collins, 1980]

To symbolise the totality of human history within a trinity of tidal surges is an heroic attempt at synthesis. Toffler's time span carries us from the dawn of history through the first surge of the agricultural revolution, across the rip-tide of industrialism into the maelstrom of tomorrow's world. The integration of time-span, the aggregation of data and the synthesis of over-view require that the communication be in symbol form, lest the reader lose the wood in the trees. So it is that Toffler adopts the symbol construct of his three waves. I describe the work as heroic because I am left with the impression that while the writer sets out with a clear symbol construct in his gallant swim across the Hellespont of time, the closer he comes to his goal of describing the third wave itself, the more overwhelmed he is in the tide, the surging cross-currents, the spume, the spray the sucking surf, and the boiling whirlpool, until eventually he and his readers lose the wave in the seas.

To be an effective carrier of communication a symbol requires to be comprehensive. As a symbol the 'Third Wave' has archetypal resonance. It is jewel with many facets from which the light reflects in a myriad hues. It has elements of hope and elements of terror - hope in that a wave is a disturbance of a steady state, it surges across the surface creating a temporary discontinuity, which once passed leads to a settled pattern under new conditions. The passage is turbulent, but calmer water lies behind the crest. The daring will surf-ride, the foolish will drown, the wise will dive deep and surface in the blue beyond.

The tidal wave is a thing of terror - triggered by some submarine shock or generated by a cyclonic freak of meteorology. The tidal wave gathers itself as it approaches the shallow waters, marking the boundary between the deep and the vulnerable lowlands of human habitation, sucking up the shallow seas in its path it rears its head and rages coastward, to hurl its massive force destructively across the shoreline. In tomorrow's world there are no hinterlands of safety. The waters of the deep have long been used as a symbol of overwhelming terror, be the picture that of the watery chaos of cosmic origin, the punitive retaliation of a wrathful deity, the threatening invasion of an armoured host, or the terrifying phantasies of an unknown future - the sea is the home of unconscious terror, in flight from which man seeks the safety, the rationality of dry land.

The symbol of the wave has other advantages. It is dynamic, mobile, changing, evolving, interactive. As wave meets wave, cross-surges, clashes and counter-clashes are generated, as the surface erupts into a chaos of white water. But the wave is not only symbolic. Behind it, even if only at an intuitive level, lies the application of fluid dynamics to social process, a tacit understanding that one can synthesise and model the human system within the four dimensions of the wave form, and here Toffler's symbol is found wanting. Waves are disturbances in a fluid medium, generated by forces acting upon it. The medium itself is treated as dynamically inert, its atoms, molecules or particles do not generate energy or motion of their own accord, either individually or acting in the mass. The medium is essentially material, inanimate, passive, suffering the effects of environmental impingement.

In this, wave symbolism is effective in communicating threats which impinge upon the human organism, whether at individual or corporate level from its environment. But when humanity itself is treated as the medium with each person reduced to an inert point of passivity within the fluid, the symbolism becomes inhumanly mechanistic and is unable to carry the depth of psychological impact of the phenomena described. The result is a sea without feeling, a humanity without self-consciousness, a surge without suffering, a catastrophe without crying. Under this inanimate symbol Toffler achieves an emotional distance, an existential detachment, a schizoid cut-offness in which the progression of the Third Wave is described from a clinical standpoint of an uninvolved observer. Perhaps the anxieties generated by the Third Wave are too intense to face, the trauma is too great to hold body and mind together, psyche splits from soma and watches its suffering from the schizoid safety of its cerebral construct.

There is evidence of subsidiary splitting within the book, but it is this fundamental fault which mars the work most deeply. Here is synthesis on a grand scale, but only of one side of the coin. The existential involvement is absent. It is as if man who is in touch deeply with his human emotional responses is unable to handle the terrors raised by the information, and therefore faces a choice: handle the data but deny the humanity; or celebrate humanity and silence the data. We still await the synthesis that can handle humanity in its wholeness, together with tomorrow's world and its watery wildness.

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Facing the Future

Human reaction to the unknown is increasingly well-documented, whether that unknown lies on the other side of the boundary of knowledge, the boundary of space, the boundary of time, or the boundary of consciousness. Provided the beyond can be phantasised as a continuation of the known, no anxiety arises. In so far as evidence mounts that the beyond involves major change in the status quo and in particular where such changes necessitate major shifts in life-style, in value system, or even threaten survival itself, then major anxieties arise within the human group, which responds defensively in predictable ways. The phenomena of social defences against anxiety as applied to perceived future threat are touched on at several points within Toffler's work, although not treated systematically, nor sourced in human psychology. The opening paragraph of Chapter One sets the scene.

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‘A new civilization is emerging in our lives, and blind men everywhere are trying to suppress it. This new civilization brings with it new family styles; changed ways of working, loving, and living; a new economy; new political conflicts; and beyond all this an altered consciousness as well. Pieces of this new civilization exist today. Millions are already attuning their lives to the rhythms of tomorrow. Others, terrified of the future, are engaged in a desperate, futile flight into the past and are trying to restore the dying world that gave them birth.’

The major division in reaction is between those who welcome the advent and those who preserve the event. Data-blindness is a symptom of data-generated anxiety. Man tends to

suppress that which is most disturbing. Those a little more alert to the implications of the data experience rising panic and terror and seek in fugue to return to some psycho-cultural zone of safety, some womb in which they can remain for ever unborn. Others, less threatened by change reject the twin reactions of suppression and flight, face the future with more or less courage and press forward creatively across the frontier with the unknown.

Future scenarios are largely dependent upon the anxiety defences employed in facing the unknown. Motivation, strategic policy-making and the energy invested in political programmes also flow from the same matrix. Toffler speaks of two contrasting images of the future.

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'Two apparently contrasting images of the future grip the popular imagination today. Most people - to the extent that they bother to think about the future at all - assume the world they know will last indefinitely. They find it difficult to imagine a truly different way of life for themselves, let alone a totally new civilization.... They confidently expect the future to continue the present..... it adds up to a vision of a future world that is essentially "more of the same" - Second Wave industrialism writ even larger and spread over more of this planet.'

This I would suggest is essentially the mythology underlying the Brandt Report. But, as Toffler points out, undeniable data of the instability and imminent disintegration of the status quo has begun to break through into consciousness.

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'Recent events have severely shaken this confident image of the future. As crisis after crisis has crackled across the headlines, as Iran erupted, as Mao was de-deified, as oil prices skyrocketed and inflation ran wild, as terrorism spread and governments seemed helpless to stop it, a bleaker vision has become increasingly popular. Thus large numbers of people - fed on a steady diet of bad news, disaster movies, apocalyptic Bible stories, and nightmare scenarios issued by prestigious think tanks - have apparently concluded that today's society cannot be projected into the future because there is no future. For them, Armageddon is only minutes away. The earth is racing toward its final cataclysmic shudder.'

So the first reaction, that of blindness, sees no problem, envisages no change and carries on life as normal. The second reaction perceives terror ahead, phantasises cosmic catastrophe and experiences the death of hope. Both reactions and their concomitant scenarios lead to similar effects.

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'On the surface these two visions of the future seem very different. Yet both produce similar psychological and political effects. For both lead to the paralysis of imagination and will.

'If tomorrow's society is simply an enlarged, Cinerama version of the present, there is little we need do to prepare for it. If, on the other hand, society is inevitably destined to self-destruct within our lifetime, there is nothing we can do about it. In short, both these ways of looking at the future generate privatism and passivity. Both freeze us into inaction.

Toffler himself identifies with a third way which he describes as 'the revolutionary premise'.

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'It assumes that, even though the decades immediately ahead are likely to be filled with upheavals, turbulence, perhaps even widespread violence, we will not totally destroy ourselves. It assumes that the jolting changes we are now experiencing are not chaotic or random but that, in fact, they form a sharp, clearly discernible pattern. It assumes, moreover, that these changes are cumulative - that they add up to a giant transformation in the way we live, work, play, and think, and that a sane and desirable future is possible. In short, what follows begins with the premise that what is happening now is nothing less than a global revolution, a quantum jump in history.

'Put differently, this book flows from the assumption that we are the final generation of an old civilization and the first generation of a new one, and that much of our personal confusion, anguish, and disorientation can be traced directly to the conflict within us, and within our political institutions, between the dying Second Wave civilization and the emergent Third Wave civilization that is thundering in to take its place

'When we finally understand this, many seemingly senseless events become suddenly comprehensible. The broad patterns of change begin to emerge clearly. Action for survival becomes possible and plausible again. In short, the revolutionary premise liberates our intellect and our will'

Reactions to rapid change, high stress and low resource are fairly familiar from the study of human groups, individuals or institutions, but are now manifest at societal level. Those reactions may be listed as follows:

Denial - Complete refusal to accept any data that might disturb the status quo.

Regression - Reflection back from the boundary into a previous place of safety.

Paralysis - The state of acute anxiety which while aware that the past cannot be re-entered and provides no place of safety, dare not face the future either while finding the present intolerable.

Anarchism - A nihilistic destructive outburst of aggression without particular target or direction and without the hope that the aggression will actually achieve anything. The random destructiveness is an expression of rage against the cosmos.

Suicidal despair - The anarchic rage is turned inwards with the ultimate end of irrational self-annihilation.

Grieving catharsis - As the loss of the known world is faced and denial, terror and rage give way in turn to tears and mourning.

Egressive drive - Survival activity engages with the reality of the environment, comes to terms with the process of change and pushes through the matrix, facing whatever risks are involved and adapting to the changing environment as necessary.

The reactions, of course, bear great similarity to the sequence of response to bereavement noted by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. The origin of the common set of reactions stems from common perinatal experience which laid down the archetypal trace of environmental impingement, massive change, loss of the known safety of the womb, and emergence into a strange new environment with massive sensory overload and incredibly rapid process of adaptation required for survival. The experienced threats, the anxieties raised and the psychological defences against such terrifying stress being recalled into consciousness form the foundation for all subsequent reaction to change by the human organism. It is Toffler's apparent lack of awareness of the significance of such primal process which contributes to the superficiality of his treatment.

He is, however, aware of the phenomena even though operating without adequate framework. So in describing different reactions within the egressive drive he writes,

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'Instead of merely receiving our mental model of reality, we are now compelled to invent it and continually reinvent it. This places an enormous burden on us. But it also leads toward greater individuality, a de-massification of personality as well as culture. Some of us crack under the new pressure or withdraw into apathy or anger. Others emerge as well formed, continually growing, competent individuals able to operate, as it were, on a higher level.'

Those few sentences contain in a nutshell the whole range of primal abreaction and integration. The verbs are those of parturition, the bearing of an enormous burden, the experience of new pressure, emerging well formed, growing..... It is becoming increasingly clear that reaction to high stress and rapid change is determined by the level of stressing within the birth trauma and its subsequent reinforcement or annealing. Those who have undergone massive perinatal stressing present brittle, rigid anxiety defences with high levels of splitting and dissociation. While operating apparently smoothly under normal conditions, such people will tend to crack up suddenly as stress levels rise. People with much lower levels of trauma associated with the repressed primal trace are more able to handle egression without fracture. Repeated experience of handling high rates of change under high stress with adequate support can facilitate cathartic abreaction of the primal traumata, a bleeding out of the repressed distress levels, a reintegration of the persona and much higher levels of ability to handle environmental change, to integrate high levels of data input and to synthesise reality much more effectively. In other words, the level on which we handle reality and in particular change in reality depends to a large extent upon the intensity of primal stressing. More importantly, major increase in our potential for handling reality and changing reality results from primal integration, an effect noted here by Toffler, albeit without understanding.

Returning to the sense of confusion, chaoticisation and destruction associated with the breaking of the Third Wave, we find social phenomena which resonate deeply with the common unconscious, pre-verbal memories of the on-set of parturition.

'Never before have so many people in so many countries - even educated and supposedly sophisticated people - been so intellectually helpless, drowning, as it were, in a maelstrom of conflicting, confusing, and cacophonous ideas. Colliding visions rock our mental universe.

'Every day brings some new fad, scientific finding, religion, movement, or manifesto. Nature worship, ESP, holistic medicine, socio-biology, anarchism, structuralism, neo-Marxism, the new physics, Eastern mysticism, technophilia, technophobia, and a thousand other currents and crosscurrents sweep across the screen of consciousness, each with its scientific priesthood or ten-minute guru.

'We see a mounting attack on establishment science. We see a wildfire revival of fundamentalist religion and a desperate search for something - almost anything - to believe in.

'Much of this confusion is actually the result of an intensifying cultural wax - the collision of an emerging Third Wave culture with the entrenched ideas and assumptions of industrial society. For just as the Second Wave engulfed traditional views and spread the belief system I call indust-reality, so today we see the beginnings of a philosophical revolt aimed at overthrowing the reigning assumptions of the past 300 years. The key ideas of the industrial period are being discredited, discounted, superseded, or subsumed into much larger and more powerful theories.'

Social groupings, institutions, beliefs, symbols, value-systems, these are the structures erected by man and used as defences against emergent psychotic anxiety. Provided the framework stays stable and unthreatened, primal angst remains repressed and undisturbed. Once the foundations begin to shake and the superstructure crumbles man faces not only the environmental data of change but the phantasy agenda of emerging primal terror, released into social systems as social defences crack. The result is an hysterical search for new and more effective anxiety defences in an attempt to re-repress emergent psychotic terror. Toffler's apparent unawareness of the psychological origins of reaction to change lead him to list a cacophony of juxtaposed phenomena for whose effect he has to attribute causality to the impact of the Third Wave on Second Wave systems. His interpretation is, of course, correct as far as it goes, yet it lacks the capacity to get down to the heart of the matter and enable understanding of the reasons why such reactions emerge during the unstable period of culture clash.

In passing, it should be noted that it is this desperate search for new and more effective anxiety defences which generates the motivation and seduction of the fundamentalist wing of religion into a renewed frenzy of activity. People desperately seek for authoritative answers for fundamental assurance, for security of belief and community. Questions of truth become irrelevant. Systems are judged solely on their capacity to sustain and enhance social sedation.

Evidence of psychological breakdown reflecting the cracking up of previously effective social defences against anxiety and therefore the re-emergence of previously repressed primal distress triggers some of the more violent symbolism in Toffler's work.

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'If we look around us we find widespread evidence of psychological breakdown. It is as though a bomb had gone off in our communal "psycho- sphere". We are, in fact, experiencing not merely the breakup of the Second Wave techno-sphere, info-sphere, or socio- sphere but the crack-up of its psycho- sphere as well.

'Throughout the affluent nations the litany is all too familiar: rising rates of juvenile suicide, dizzyingly high levels of alcoholism, widespread psychological depression, vandalism, and crime. In the United States, emergency rooms are crowded with "potheads", "speed freaks" and "Quaalude kids", "coke sniffers" and "heroin junkies", not to mention people having "nervous breakdowns".... fully one fourth of all citizens in the United States suffer from some form of severe emotional stress.... "psychological turbulence .. is rampant in an American society that is confused, divided and concerned about its future".'

Such phenomena are not, of course, confined to the United States, though the intensity of disturbance depends on the level of awareness of future change and the level of perceived threat which such change triggers.

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'This wave of malaise has not struck all parts of the technological world with equal force. If psychic distress and disintegration are most strikingly evident in the United States, and especially California, it merely reflects the fact that the Third Wave has arrived a bit earlier than elsewhere, causing Second Wave social structures to topple sooner and more spectacularly.

'Indeed, a kind of paranoia has settled over many communities, and not just in the United States. In Rome and Turin, terrorists stalk the streets. In Paris, and even in once peaceful London, muggings and vandalism increase. In Chicago, elderly people are afraid to walk the streets after dark. In New York, schools and subways crackle with violence. And back in California, a magazine offers its readers a supposedly practical guide to "handguns and gun courses, attack-trained dogs, burglar alarms, personal safety devices, self-defense courses and computerized security systems".'

'There is a sick odor in the air. It is the smell of a dying Second Wave civilization.'

What Toffler is here mapping is the degree to which society is exposed to emergent psychotic anxiety. Psychic distress, disintegration, paranoia, anarchy, suicidalism, depression and the sense of the death of the known world. These are the well known signs of emergent psychotic anxiety originating in primal distress, irrupting into consciousness as previously effective anxiety defences crack apart.

In so far as the psychotic anxiety experienced within society is deemed to originate in environmental change, just so far are social reactions to the environment massively dysfunctional. If man relates to his world by treating it as a crushing, persecutory cervix, threatening him with annihilation, then his reaction to primal phantasy projects into that environment psychic energy, which then begins to generate precisely those effects most feared. The irruption of psychotic reaction poses the most fundamental threat to functional survival, with a far higher potential for generating catastrophe than the realities of constraint in the world system, or change in the technological basis warrant.

If California represents the point of impact of the Third Wave then the paranoid leadership of a Jim Jones and the messianic community in flight deep into the Guyanian jungle stands as a warning light for the world. If the phantasies of primal persecution and paranoia mount unanalysed, with the origin of threat projected onto the out-group, it is quite clear that suicidal leadership into oblivion by cyanide could emerge at global level as the surging impact of the Third Wave spreads. If primal terror rules the day and paranoid projection identifies the other as its origin, deems the future as Armageddon and any boundary transaction as aggression, then it may seem perfectly rational to follow world leadership across the threshold of nuclear war into a process of genocide, mediated not by guns and cyanide but by bombs and radiation.

The world community is in the early throes of a global primal (to use Janov's terminology). The therapeutic negotiation of that abreaction demands clarity of analysis and rigorous distinction between phantasies and projections associated with emergent primal distress and the reality-oriented agenda of coping with change within the world energy/population/resource and pollution system.

That mankind is open to seduction by paranoid dictatorship is painfully obvious.

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'Millions of people, spurred on by the press, have arrived at a single, simple, easy-to-understand explanation of our woes: the "failure of leadership". If only a messiah would appear on the political horizon and put things back together again!

'This craving for a masterful, macho leader is voiced today by even the most well meaning of people as their familiar world crumbles, as their environment grows more unpredictable and their hunger for order, structure, and predictability increases. Thus we hear, as Ortega y Gasset put it during the 1930's when Hitler was on the march, "a formidable cry, rising like the howling of innumerable dogs to the stars, asking for someone or something to take command!'

We have seen sufficient examples of that process in many parts of the world during the present century to be aware of the path of catastrophe to which it leads.

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Cause and Effect

As Jay W. Forrester has so clearly demonstrated the linear connection of singular cause and observable effect, familiar in the operation of simple systems, is quite inadequate for the understanding of complex social systems. Toffler recognises the complexity and the impossibility of naming a single, simple cause as triggering any wave of change across the face of the world. So in seeking an answer to the question as to what triggered the industrial revolution, the Second Wave, he writes,

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'Many streams of change flowed together to form a great confluence. The discovery of the New World sent a pulse of energy into Europe's culture and economy on the eve of the industrial revolution. Population growth encouraged a movement into the towns. The exhaustion of Britain's timber forests prompted the use of coal. In turn, this forced the mine shafts deeper and deeper until the old horse-driven pumps could no longer clear them of water. The steam engine was perfected to solve this problem, leading to a fantastic array of new technological opportunities. The gradual dissemination of industrial ideas challenged church and political authority. The spread of literacy, the improvement of roads and transport - all these converged in time, forcing open the floodgates of change.

'Any search for The cause of the industrial revolution is doomed. For there was no single or dominant cause. Technology, by itself, is not the driving force of history. Nor, by themselves, are ideas or values. Nor is the class struggle. Nor is history merely a record of ecological shifts, demographic trends, or communications inventions. Economics alone cannot explain this or any other historical event. There is no "independent variable" upon which all other variables depend. There are only interrelated variables, boundless in complexity.'

The large number of variables are not all independent but rather interdependent, influencing and influenced by each other through a wide range of 'feedback loops'. The nature of such linkages varies vastly and is itself subject to change. There are positive feedback loops generating exponential shifts. There are negative feedback loops damping down change. Some links will only be brought into play above a given threshold, others change violently under certain circumstances. So Toffler, paralleling Forrester's ideas, writes,

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'And when we put negative and positive feedback together and see how richly these two different processes interplay in complex organisms, from the human brain to an economy, startling insights emerge. Indeed, once we as a culture recognize that any truly complex system - whether a biological organism, a city, or the international political order - is likely to have within it both change amplifiers and change reducers, positive as well as negative feedback loops interacting with one another, we begin to glimpse a whole new level of complexity in the world with which we are dealing. Our understanding of causation is advanced.

'Yet another leap in understanding occurs when we further recognize that these change reducers and amplifiers are not necessarily built into biological or social systems from the beginning; they may be absent at first, then grow into place, as it were, sometimes as a result of what amounts to chance. A stray event can thus trigger a fantastic chain of unexpected consequences.

'This tells us why change is so often hard to track and extrapolate, so filled with surprise. It is why a slow, steady process can suddenly convert into an explosive change, or vice versa. And this in turn explains why similar starting conditions may lead to sharply dissimilar outcomes - an idea alien to the Second Wave mentality.

'The Third Wave causality that is gradually taking shape pictures a complex world of mutually interacting forces, a world filled with astonishment, with change amplifiers as well as reducers and many other elements as well - not just billiard balls clacking predictably and endlessly against one another on the cosmic pool table. It is a world far stranger than simple Second Wave mechanism suggested.'

For a model of cause and effect in complex social systems we have to combine understanding of the complex socio-economic model of Jay W. Forrester with its multi-level, multi-feedback loop configuration, together with an understanding of the psychological parameters and the introduction of discontinuous behaviour within the feedback system itself, possibly utilising Rene Thom's Catastrophe Theory to handle the sudden level shifts and discontinuities of multi-dimensional complex psycho-socio-economic systems. Our search for manipulable models with which to simulate reality in order to anticipate change leads us into higher and higher orders of complexity as the model approximates ever more closely to the complex interdependence, the dynamic equilibrium of life itself.

Against that background of the understanding of causality Toffler seeks to describe certain phenomena or characteristics of the different stages of human history, without attributing to any one particular element the ultimate cause of the social condition or the process of change. One such significant phenomenon or characteristic is the energy base utilised in the different stages of social evolution.

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'The precondition of any civilization, old or new, is energy. First Wave societies drew their energy from "living batteries" - human and animal muscle-power - or from sun, wind and water. Forests were cut for cooking and heating. Waterwheels, some of them using tidal power, turned millstones. Windmills creaked in the fields. Animals pulled the plow. As late as the French Revolution, it has been estimated, Europe drew energy from an estimated 14 million horses and 24 million oxen. All First Wave societies thus exploited energy sources that were renewable. Nature could eventually replenish the forests they cut, the wind that filled their sails, the rivers that turned their paddle wheels. Even animals and people were replaceable "energy slaves"

'All Second Wave societies, by contrast, began to draw their energy from coal, gas, and oil - from irreplaceable fossil fuels. This revolutionary shift, coming after Newcomen invented a workable steam engine in 1712, meant that for the first time a

civilization was eating into nature's capital rather than merely living off the interest it provided.

'This dipping into the earth's energy reserves provided a hidden subsidy for industrial civilization, vastly accelerating its economic growth. And from that day to this, wherever the Second Wave passed, nations built towering technological and economic structures on the assumption that cheap fossil fuels would be endlessly available. In capitalist and communist industrial societies alike, in East and West, the same shift has been apparent - from dispersed to concentrated energy, from renewable to non-renewable, from many different sources and fuels to a few. Fossil fuels formed the energy base of all Second Wave societies.'

The boundary conditions of social development within first wave society were thus managed by the constraints of the renewable energy cycle. Such boundaries were removed when access to energy capital reserves was gained early in the Second Wave transition. The result was the triggering of an exponential phase of population growth, energy and resource utilisation, production and pollution. Any system utilising capital resources to fund exponential expansion is unstable, limited in duration and subject to potentially catastrophic stress during its terminal period. Toffler foresees Third Wave culture as re-engaging the boundary constraints of the renewable energy-resource cycle. In this new phase, growth in population or growth in quality of living will depend on more efficient exploitation, on fine tuning of the ecosystem under conditions of dynamic equilibrium. First Wave society utilised renewable energy sources and very low technology. Second Wave society grew exponentially on the back of capital energy resources and medium level technology. Third Wave society is characterised by high technology and rapid change but returns to the renewable energy resources of the first wave system.

In so far as that analysis focuses on changes in the boundary transaction between the human organism and its environment just so far does it come close to being a causal description of shifts in civilisation, though many factors and feedback processes were involved in generating those shifts in environmental transaction.

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Splitting, and the Industrial Revolution

All social systems are used by their members as defences against psychotic anxiety. One of the ways in which those defences are reified is in the form of splits which reflect the intrapersonal defences into the interpersonal relationships of the institution concerned. Splitting in the social system is therefore an indicator of the level of unresolved primal stress within persons and the effectiveness or otherwise of the intrapersonal defence systems, together with the level of stress experienced by the institution itself in relationship to its environment. Toffler appears to me to be somewhat naive in attributing major social splitting to the on-set of the industrial revolution. I would suggest rather that Second Wave society utilised different forms of splitting, just as the defences of Third Wave society will be radically different from those of the industrial revolution. Splitting within the social system

was clearly there in feudal, rural, agricultural life as any study of relationship between landowners and landworkers will show, as indeed between the different groups and hierarchies of landowners.

Major change in civilisation, however, requires a restructuring of fundamental defences used by that civilisation to contain psychotic anxiety within its members. The period during which those social defences against anxiety are being restructured is one in which society is threatened by the emergence and acting out of the psychotic anxiety previously held at bay. The hermit crab feels secure with its soft tail tucked into a hard shell but while changing shells it lives in terror of attack.

Toffler traces much of the malaise of advanced industrial society to the fundamental splitting underlying it.

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'If today industrial civilization seems to us something less than utopian - if it appears, in fact, to be oppressive, dreary, ecologically precarious, war-prone, and psychologically repressive - we need to understand why. We will be able to answer this question only if we look at the gigantic wedge that split the Second Wave psyche into two warring parts.'

This split between conflicting interests is the core dialectic of Toffler's rationale of history. Social symptoms represent the synthesis, the interplay between two fundamentally opposing forces. Hegel endorsed this dualism in philosophy, Marx applied it through the class struggle to economics and Freud interpreted the psyche in terms of conflict between the life and death instincts. The interpretation reaches much further back than that, however. The affairs of men are the outcome of conflict between the gods, the battle of light and darkness, good and evil, Yin and Yang, body and spirit etc. Social systems are consistently interpreted in terms of the outcome of conflict between two underlying and mutually opposed forces. For Toffler the polarities are represented by consumption and production.

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'The Second Wave, like some nuclear chain reaction, violently split apart two aspects of our lives that had always, until then, been one. In so doing, it drove a giant invisible wedge into our economy, our psyches, and even our sexual selves.

'At one level, the industrial revolution created a marvelously integrated social system with its own distinctive technologies, its own social institutions, and its own information channels - all plugged tightly into each other. Yet, at another level, it ripped apart the underlying unity of society, creating a way of life filled with economic tension, social conflict, and psychological malaise. Only if we understand how this invisible wedge has shaped our lives throughout the Second Wave era can we appreciate the full impact of the Third Wave that is beginning to reshape us today.'

One of the myths of Toffler's history is that feudal society operated as a 'unity'. That is an unjustified extrapolation to the social system of the unity between production and consumption inherent in subsistence farming. To project the unity of production and

consumption onto society as a whole is an idealisation of First Wave civilisation. Toffler proceeds to identify and describe the splitting process of Second Wave society as follows,

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'The two halves of human life that the Second Wave split apart were production and consumption. We are accustomed, for example, to think of ourselves as producers or consumers. This wasn't always true. Until the industrial revolution, the vast bulk of all the food, goods, and services produced by the human race was consumed by the producers themselves, their families, or a tiny elite who managed to scrape off the surplus for their own use....'

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'It will help us understand the Third Wave if we conceive of the First Wave economy, before the industrial revolution, as consisting of two sectors. In Sector A, people produced for their own use. In Sector B, they produced for trade or exchange. Sector A was huge; Sector B was tiny. For most people, therefore, production and consumption were fused into a single life-giving function....'

'The Second Wave violently changed this situation. Instead of essentially self-sufficient people and communities, it created for the first time in history a situation in which the overwhelming bulk of all food, goods, and services was destined for sale, barter, or exchange. It virtually wiped out of existence goods produced for one's own consumption - for use by the actual producer and his or her family - and created a civilization in which almost no one, not even a farmer, was self-sufficient any longer. Everyone became almost totally dependent upon food, goods, or services produced by somebody else.

'In short, industrialism broke the union of production and consumption, and split the producer from the consumer. The fused economy of the First Wave was transformed into the split economy of the Second Wave.'

Toffler then examines the effects of this splitting in terms of the emergence of the market place as the point of management of the new interdependency through to splits in politics, psychology and sexuality.

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'In politics, however, Second Wave governments found themselves increasingly torn by a new kind of conflict born of the split between production and consumption. The Marxist emphasis on class struggle has systematically obscured the larger, deeper conflict that arose between the demands of producers (both workers and managers) for higher wages, profits, and benefits and the counter demand of consumers (including the very same people) for lower prices. The seesaw of economic policy rocked on this fulcrum.'

These two facets of the same society, the fact that its members are the producers of products demanding maximum profit for minimum output, but that the same people are also

consumers of the same products, demanding maximum goods at minimum price create a schizophrenogenic matrix for political process. Such splitting cannot be overcome by the resolution of the class struggle in terms of the dominance of one side or the other in the battle for the ownership of the means of production.

The split between fundamental roles within society affects every transaction.

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'This divorce of production from consumption, which became a defining feature of all industrial or Second Wave societies, even affected our psyches and our assumptions about personality. Behavior came to be seen as a set of transactions. Instead of a society based on friendship, kinship, or tribal or feudal allegiance, there arose in the wake of the Second Wave a civilization based on contractual ties, actual or implied.
.....

'The cleavage between these two roles - producer and consumer - created at the same time a dual personality. The very same person who (as a producer) was taught by family, school, and boss to defer gratification, to be disciplined, controlled, restrained, obedient, to be a team player, was simultaneously taught (as a consumer) to seek instant gratification, to be hedonistic rather than calculating, to abandon discipline, to pursue individualistic pleasure - in short to be a totally different kind of person..... to perform a patriotic service by keeping the wheels of the economy turning.'

The overall dependency of society for its means of survival has not changed. The means by which that dependency is managed have undergone, and are undergoing, massive changes. The anxieties associated with threats to survival, life and death are always present in these transactions. In First Wave societies these anxieties were managed at the boundary between man and his environment. In Second Wave societies, the same anxieties emerged in the transactions between man and man. The anxiety defences were thus restructured, splits occurring at different points within the social matrix.

The underlying principle remains the same. Each human organism or level of aggregation of such organisms depends on its environment for its very survival. That dependency may be mediated and modified through machinery, through trade, through levels of the social system, or by government provision within the 'Welfare State'. Whatever system is utilised to manage the transaction, it carries the anxieties associated with survival. The structure erected to provide the means of survival also manages the anxiety defences required to repress the terrors of death. Only when the psychological dimension is added to the socio-technical, political and economic paradigm utilised by Toffler can we gain access to a deeper synthesis, a more wide ranging framework of understanding of human behaviour at all levels of the social system across all periods of time, under changing conditions of technology and environment.

Global Exploitation

Exploitation represents unbalanced transaction between producer and consumer. It can occur either way. The producers can exploit the dependency of the consumer on them for an

essential product and by this process the producer extracts a greater real value from the consumer than the exchange product contributes to the consumer. The barter is unequal, the wealth and living standards of the consumer degrade, those of the producer accrue. Exploitation by producers emerges when the products are vital for the survival of the consumer and where the producer has some level of monopolistic power over the means of production. Consumers can in this case be held to blackmail and relative standards of living are governed by the relative dependency on product or in other words, relative power over the means of survival.

Conversely exploitation may be of the producer by the consumer where the producer depends for his livelihood on selling a particular product which is not essential for survival to the consumer. In this transaction the value transferred to the producer by the consumer may represent a much lower real value than that transferred by producer to consumer in terms of the product concerned. The result is a net increase in wealth and living standard to the consumer and a degrade of wealth and living standards (and ultimately of survival) to the producer.

Where production and consumption of the means of survival are contained within the same close knit community, exploitative imbalances tend to level out and are subjected to negative feedback or damping. As the functions of production and consumption are split and divorced from each other so the damping negative feedback loops tend to be broken and the transaction shifts into a potentially unstable exploiter/exploited mode. Relative standards of living are then dictated by the balance of power and dependency associated with the production and consumption of the means of survival.

Any group in society concerned with the production of a commodity upon which that society depends can hold that society to ransom and gain from it an imbalanced transaction enabling the producer group to live at a relatively high standard of living, while depressing the standard of living in the rest of society. Such dynamics are also played out between nations within the global construct whether in terms of oil producer exploiting the dependency of the industrialised economies, or the consumer power of the North exploiting the survival needs of the South in terms of the production of sugar, cotton, rubber, cocoa, tea, coffee, etc. Exploitation may therefore be defined as any transaction between parties which leads to the net increase of wealth of one party at the expense of the other. Sustained exploitation is the process by which the rich get richer while the poor get poorer. This process governs world trade at every level. The concern of any given party is to maximise benefit to that party, whatever the consequences to the environment. The alternative trading basis would recognise a mutual concern of both parties for equity in the transaction based on a mutual responsibility for sustaining quantitative and qualitative survival of the species on both sides of the transaction boundary.

It is this kind of understanding of exploitation that lies behind Toffler's treatment of 'The Imperial Drive' in the eighth chapter of his book. He contrasts the comparatively petty small scale pilferage of international exploitation in the First Wave culture with the imbalanced world trade which emerged rapidly as a characteristic of the Second Wave.

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'Here was a new imperialism aimed not at bringing back a few trunkloads of gold or emeralds, spices and silks. Here was an imperialism that ultimately brought back shipload after shipload of nitrates, cotton, palm oil, tin, bauxite, and tungsten. Here was an imperialism that dug copper mines in the Congo and planted oil rigs in Arabia. Here was an imperialism that sucked in raw materials from the colonies, processed them, and very often spewed the finished manufactured goods back into the colonies at a huge profit. Here, in short, was imperialism no longer peripheral but so integrated into the basic economic structure of the industrial nation that the jobs of millions of ordinary workers came to depend on it.'

Conversely, the livelihoods of millions of ordinary people in the exploited colonies were degraded by it. The ruthless parasitism de-stabilised transaction boundaries, artificially inflating the wealth surplus of a few nations at the expense of the Third World. The transaction pattern laid down during this process of history forms the matrix of the North/South interface today. The exploitative imperialism of that earlier period re-emerges as the rationale behind the Brandt Commission.... a dynamic decisively demonstrated by Toffler's treatment of food and manufactures.

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'In addition to new raw materials, Europe also needed increasing amounts of food. As Second Wave nations turned to manufacturing, transferring rural labor into the factories, they were forced to import more of their foodstuffs from abroad - beef, mutton, grain, coffee, tea, and sugar from India, from China, from Africa, from the West Indies and Central America.

In turn, as mass manufacturing grew, the new industrial elites needed bigger markets and fresh outlets for investment. In the 1880's and 1890's European statesmen were unabashedly open about their objectives. "Empire is commerce", proclaimed the British politician Joseph Chamberlain. The French premier Jules Ferry was even more explicit: What France needed, he declared, were "outlets for our industries, exports, and capital". Jolted by cycles of boom and bust, faced with chronic unemployment, European leaders were for generations obsessed by the fear that if colonial expansion stopped, unemployment would lead to armed revolution at home.'

Almost identical quotations could be lifted from the Brandt Commission Report a full century later. Motivation and rationalisation, then as now, walked hand in hand.

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'The roots of Grand Imperialism were, however, more than economic. Strategic considerations, religious fervor, idealism, and adventure all played a part, as did racism, with its implicit assumption of white or European superiority. Many saw imperial conquest as a divine responsibility. Kipling's phrase, the "White Man's burden", summed up the European's missionary zeal to spread Christianity and "civilization" - meaning, of course, Second Wave civilization. For the colonizers regarded First Wave civilizations, no matter how refined and complex, as backward

and underdeveloped. Such attitudes made it easier for the Second Wave forces to justify the annihilation of those who stood in their path.'

Behind such rationale stood the dynamics of an unstable equilibrium. The exponential growth of industrial society was based on the exploitation of capital reserves and resources from beyond its own renewable resource cycle. Sustaining the hyper-exponential growth required hyper-exponential exploitation. The cycle triggered exponential population growth, with each person expecting an exponential improvement in standard of living, while technological improvement required an exponential increase in both output and consumption per person, if levels of unemployment were to be kept within manageable bounds. Such an unstable process could only be sustained for a limited time and even then at increasingly massive cost to the environment. The 'environment' here represents all resources - energy, raw materials, human, capital and renewable, which lay beyond the boundaries of the industrial social system.

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'Behind the racist attitudes and the religious and other justifications as the British, French, Germans, Dutch, and others spread around the world, stood a single hard reality. Second Wave civilization could not exist in isolation. It desperately needed the hidden subsidy of cheap resources from the outside. Above all, it needed a single integrated world market through which to siphon those subsidies.'

The development of the integrated world market was intended, ideally, to enrich everyone. The advantages of global trade should have accrued more or less evenly to all sides. But that rationale, as Toffler points out, 'was based on a fantasy of fair competition.... It overlooked nothing except real life'.

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'In reality, negotiations between Second Wave merchants and First Wave people over sugar, copper, cocoa, or other resources were often totally lopsided. On one side of the table sat money-shrewd European or American traders backed by huge companies, extensive banking networks, powerful technologies, and strong national governments. On the other one might find a local lord or tribal chieftain whose people had scarcely entered the money system and whose economy was based on small scale agriculture or village crafts. On one side sat the agents of a thrusting, alien, mechanically advanced civilization, convinced of its own superiority and ready to use bayonets or machine guns to prove it. On the other sat representatives of small prenational tribes or principalities, armed with arrows and spears.

'Often local rulers or entrepreneurs were simply bought off by the Westerners, offered bribes or personal gain in return for sweating the native labor force, putting down resistance, or rewriting local laws in favor of the outsiders. Once conquering a colony, the imperial power often set preferential raw-material prices for its own businessmen and erected stiff barriers to prevent the traders of rival nations from bidding prices up.

'Under such circumstances it was hardly surprising that the industrial world was able to obtain raw materials or energy resources at less than fair-market prices.'

Competition and the collusion of vested interests served to freeze raw materials prices well below their real values and keep them at or near the original low trading levels. World commodity prices therefore stabilised at levels which reflected the balance of imperial power and the Second Wave nations 'profited greatly from what was euphemistically called "imperfect competition".' The result was that 'the benefits of expanding trade were not evenly shared. They flowed mainly from the First Wave world to the Second.'

The result of this process was that with the emergence of industrialism within the colonial powers, the previously stable and self-sufficient economies of the non-industrial world were de-stabilised and caught up in the industrial vortex.

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'Treating the rest of the world as its gas pump, garden, mine, quarry, and cheap labor supply, [DW comment: and rubbish dump - industrial pollutants were pumped back into the environment!] the Second Wave world wrought deep changes in the social life of the earth's non-industrial populations. Cultures that had subsisted for thousands of years in a self-sufficient manner, producing their own food supplies, were sucked willy-nilly into the world trade system and compelled to trade or perish. Suddenly the living standards of Bolivians or Malaysians were tied to the requirements of industrial economies half a planet away, as tin mines and rubber plantations sprang up to feed the voracious industrial maw.'

So gradually the whole world economy was caught up and governed by the dominant interests of the industrialising nations, the transactions were in-balanced, exploitation the norm (and therefore unnoticed): the dynamic which has produced the North/South divide was in place. To those who had, more was given, from those who had not, even what they had was taken away. Religion was drafted in to justify the process, missionary charity was employed to discharge the guilt.

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'In the Second Wave world, however, Grand Imperialism paid off handsomely. As the economic historian William Woodruff put it: "It was the exploitation of these territories and the growing trade done with them that obtained for the European family wealth on a scale never seen before". Built deep into the very structure of the Second Wave economy, feeding its ravenous need for resources, imperialism marched across the planet.'

Toffler argues that this imperialism is not confined to the colonising countries but is a facet of Second Wave or industrial culture. European, North American or Russian systems differ only in surface symptoms, their underlying dynamics are identical. As the food/energy/population/pollution/wealth cycle reaches the end of its capacity for sustained hyper-exponential growth, the battle for survival between the super-powers is on. Each unit becomes paranoid with respect to the others in the face of inadequate resources to sustain its unstable life-style. Massive armed splits emerge between the blocks, internal boundaries are

blurred and internal conflicts suppressed. As the industrial North ruptures into psychotic reaction in its struggle for world resources, the South, ravaged, emasculated, oppressed, impoverished, dependent, and in deepening debt, watches its wealth of generations about to vaporise in the smoke of a nuclear fire-works display. The end of exponential mutual exploitation on a global scale can only be mutual catastrophe on a global scale. High sounding rhetoric and hysterical attempts to preserve the status quo and to perpetuate the exponential madness merely serve to sedate current anxieties and escalate future catastrophe.

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Value Systems

If Durkheim argued that each society produces the form of religion that suits its own social needs, then we should perhaps generalise his position to say that every society moulds its ideology to validate its dynamic. Value-systems are symbolic shorthand constructs serving to codify social process. In so far as those processes are incoherent, discontinuous or even antithetical, just so far do we find within the value-system ideological discontinuity, incoherence and conflict. The attempt to generate social uniformity by imposing one particular pattern of value system, is, of course, quite impotent, since the value system is dependent on the social reality and not vice versa.

Once in place the value system, ideology or religion acts as a social preservative, a negative feedback process which attempts to damp and return to the status quo any initiative, innovation or movement which threatens significant social change. In so far as the social systems, institutions and structures of a community are utilised as defences against psychotic anxiety, just so far does the ideology and its maintenance institutions serve to preserve the social defences against anxiety. Significant social change, however triggered, therefore releases irrational psychotic retaliation from the ideological system responsible for the preservation of social values and norms.

The interface between industrial and subsistence agricultural societies shows all the signs of rupture of the value system. Similarly, as Third Wave civilisation erupts into Second Wave culture, a similar disruption of value systems, ideologies and religions is experienced. Since the religious structures of society change most slowly of all the disturbance generated by the Second Wave has nowhere nearly worked its way through the system of world culture, before it is caught on the run by the Third Wave disturbance. Indeed it is clear that the so-called First Wave civilisation was still in process of evolving its religious construct when the Second Wave itself struck home.

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'As Second Wave civilization pushed its tentacles across the planet, transforming everything with which it came in contact, it carried with it more than technology or trade. Colliding with First Wave civilization, the Second Wave created not only a new reality for millions but a new way of thinking about reality.

'Clashing at a thousand points with the values, concepts, myths, and morals of agricultural society, the Second Wave brought with it a redefinition of God... of justice... of love... of power... of beauty. It stirred up new ideas, attitudes, and analogies. It subverted and superseded ancient assumptions about time, space, matter, and causality. A powerful, coherent world view emerged that not only explained but justified Second Wave reality.'

Within the differing ideologies of Left and Right lay the fundamental unity of an industrial value system. 'While socialists and capitalists might disagree violently about how to share its fruits, both looked upon nature in the same way. For both, nature was an object waiting to be exploited.' 'On both sides of the ideological divide, therefore, one found the same image of humanity standing in opposition to nature and dominating it. This image was a key component of indus-reality, the superideology from which Marxist and anti-Marxist alike drew their assumptions.' Toffler sees a similar unity of values in the view of man as the current crown of the evolutionary process and the dedication to growth and progress as fundamental planks in the value systems of industrial culture.

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'Beneath these convictions lay still deeper assumptions about reality - a set of unspoken beliefs about the very elementals of human experience. Every human being must deal with these elementals, and every civilization describes them in a different way. Every civilization must teach its children to grapple with time and space. It must explain - whether through myth, metaphor, or scientific theory - how nature works. And it must offer some clue to why things happen as they do.

'Thus Second Wave civilization, as it matured, created a wholly new image of reality, based on its own distinctive assumptions about time and space, matter and cause.'

As the new value systems and their supportive institutions were established there were episodes of psychotic social anxiety, violent irrational persecution of creative thinkers, and an attempt to preserve the old order from cracking asunder as the social defences began to tremble and psychotic anxiety began to surface.

As the Third Wave breaks similar processes of conservative religious reaction emerge. They represent hysterical attempts to preserve tottering value systems as the social matrix which gave them birth contorts, convulses and reforms beneath them, generating shock wave after shock wave of shift in value construct.

It is consistent with Toffler's socio-technical parameters, his inanimate wave symbolism and his suppression of the psychological and intrapersonal reactions that the battle of the gods gets short shrift. In the long term he is probably right, in that as Third Wave civilisation settles in it will generate its own dominant and global ideological perspectives. In the medium term, however, it is the irrational convulsions associated with disruption of Second Wave value systems and the related release of social psychotic anxiety that poses the most acute threat to humanity during the period of transition. I would even go so far as to assert that it is the interplay and resolution of the ideological systems and the massive, albeit irrational levels of psychological energy vested in them, that will determine whether man

manages this transition via a smooth process of social evolution or via the potentially decimating leap of global catastrophe. Toffler does us a grave disservice in passing so lightly over the potentially disruptive dynamics of change in social systems.

Beyond the crest

One of the problems with the Wave symbolism underlying Toffler's work is the incoherence between the symbolism as an organising framework and the content of the book which he seeks to synthesise within it. The symbolism inevitably focuses attention on the wave front, the impingement of one form of society upon another and the disturbance created. The wave is, however, a transient disturbance leaving behind it a stable state, albeit at new levels, in other words, a different form of civilisation. Now the descriptions of First Wave and Second Wave civilisation refer to this steady tidal level after the initial wave front has passed. However, his description of the Third Wave is focussed on the Wave front itself, rather than on the tidal surge whose onset it signals. The disruption of the Second Wave social surface is brilliantly depicted, the surging onslaught of the Third Wave discontinuity is deftly described, but then the perspective breaks down. Toffler's closing 80 pages are dedicated to an attempt to look over the crest at some of the characteristics of tomorrow's society. It is an extraordinarily difficult task, but even so it is disappointingly and inadequately tackled. Toffler's great strength lies in his capacity to synthesise and marshal data and he finds himself struggling when faced with the need for genuinely creative construction. Again and again Toffler turns our gaze forward to the possible scenario of tomorrow's world only to be repeatedly trapped into the restatement of one facet after another of the impact of the Third Wave, its turbulence and chaoticisation, as if, fascinated, he cannot escape from the maelstrom. Thus,

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'To create a fulfilling emotional life and a sane psycho-sphere for the emerging civilization of tomorrow, we must recognize three basic requirements of any individual: the needs for community, structure, and meaning. Understanding how the collapse of Second Wave society undermines all three suggests how we might begin designing a healthier psychological environment for ourselves and our children in the future.'

For a few paragraphs he then struggles to indicate how such community, structure and meaning could be established for humanity beyond the Third Wave but then is pulled back relentlessly into the context of the break-up of Second Wave society. It seems to me a fundamental fallacy to suggest that the little social lifeboats being launched in an attempt to ride the surge of change necessarily represent permanent structures suitable for life beyond the crest.

While certain sections of tomorrow's world may be characterised by electronic cottages and high technology 'prosumer' society there are major question marks as to whether this society does not in fact represent an even greater widening of the gap between the rich and the poor, between the ultra-high technology elite and the ultra-oppressed, crushed up against, and in many cases over, the boundaries of survival. Toffler's description of political structures for

democracy in tomorrow's world may be appropriate in an isolated island of affluence but they appear manifestly utopian as an attempt to manage the political realities of an over-populated, under-resourced globe within the foreseeable future. It is as if the negativities of the future have disappeared into Toffler's unconscious, along with the potential suffering associated with the breaking of the Third Wave itself. This is consistent with his continuous suppression of the unconscious domain of social reality. One is left in conclusion with a construct which lives on one side of a schizoid split, quite unaware of the other side of the coin and even more deeply unaware of the origin of splitting itself as a fundamental defence against the emergence of psychotic anxiety into social consciousness.

The closing chapter on 'Twenty-first century democracy' retreats under the colossal pressure from a global perspective to ideation associated with the major industrial nations and increasingly with the United States alone. It is desperately difficult to transcend the existential perspective of the author. May be California will emerge as a self-sufficient network of fibre-optic linked electronic cottages with a de-massified, de-centralised and democratised government embedded in a society of mutually interdependent and socially responsible citizens. But what happens in South America? In Africa? On the Indian sub-continent? In Bangladesh? For the affluent the Third Wave may well bring the joys of surf riding - for the down and out it may well be the signal for drowning.

It is also symptomatic of this cutting off of negativities that Toffler also aborts the potential for human development in terms of psychological enhancement of performance, preferring rather the possibilities of neuro-chemical evolution and the possible long-term enlarging of the cortex. Toffler is either out of touch with, or too ready to dismiss, the research into the development of human potential associated with the release of repressed psychotic anxiety and the consequent dismantling of the intra- and inter- personal anxiety defences associated with the repression system.

Significantly, the inanimate, sub-human symbolism of wave dynamics breaks down at precisely that point of existential involvement at which the author stands, namely that shuddering surging instability at the ending of the Second Wave society as the crest of the Third Wave begins to break overhead.

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'The super-struggle between these Second and Third Wave forces, therefore, cuts like a jagged line across class and party, across age and ethnic groups, sexual preferences and subcultures. It reorganizes and realigns our political life. And, instead of a harmonious, classless, conflict-free, non-ideological future society, it points toward escalating crises and deep social unrest in the near-term future. Pitched political battles will be waged in many nations, not merely over who will benefit from what is left of industrial society but over who participates in shaping, and ultimately controlling, its successor.

'This sharpening super-struggle will decisively influence the politics of tomorrow and the very form of the new civilization. It is as a partisan in this super-struggle, aware or unwitting, that each of us plays a role. That role can be either destructive or creative.'

Faced with the pressures, the conflict, the struggle, the threats of the overwhelming flood, the power battles, the ultimate struggle for survival, it is inevitable that primal symbolism eventually surfaces. Toffler experiences with every-man the convulsions at the end of Second Wave civilisation.

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'It is that entire civilization taken together, along with its institutions, technologies, and its culture, that is now disintegrating under an avalanche of change as the Third Wave, in its turn, surges across the planet. We live in the final, irretrievable crisis of industrialism. And as the industrial age passes into history, a new age is born.'

* * * * *

D. Wasdell
8th July, 1980