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This man is of the sort we now call original men . . . the first peculiarity is that they communicate with the universe at first hand.
—Thomas Carlyle

Buckminster Fuller

Anthology for the New Millennium

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The World Game—How to Make the World Work

from *Utopia or Oblivion*

To start with, here is an educational bombshell: Take from all of today's industrial nations all their industrial machinery and all their energy-distributing networks, and leave them all their ideologies, all their political leaders, and all their political organizations and I can tell you that within six months two billion people will die of starvation, having gone through great pain and deprivation along the way.

However, if we leave the industrial machinery and their energy-distribution networks and leave them also all the people who have routine jobs operating the industrial machinery and distributing its products, and we take away from all the industrial countries all their ideologies and all the politicians and political machine workers, people would keep right on eating. Possibly getting on a little better than before.

The fact is that now—for the first time in the history of man for the last ten years, all the political theories and all the concepts of political functions—in any other than secondary roles as house-keeping organizations—are completely obsolete. All of them were developed on the you-or-me basis. This whole realization that mankind can and may be comprehensively successful is startling.

In pursuance of this theme and under auspices to be announced later we are going to undertake at Southern Illinois University, in the next five years, a very extraordinary computerized program to be known as "How to Make the World Work."

Here on Southern Illinois' campus we are going to set up a great computer program. We are going to introduce the many variables now known to be operative in economics. We will store all the basic data in the machine's memory bank; where and how much of each class of the physical resources; where are the people, what are the trendings—all kinds of trendings of world man?

Next we are going to set up a computer feeding game, called

"How Do We Make the World Work?" We will start playing relatively soon. We will bring people from all over the world to play it. There will be competitive teams from all around earth to test their theories on how to make the world work. If a team resorts to political pressures to accelerate their advantages and is not able to wait for the going gestation rates to validate their theory they are apt to be in trouble. When you get into politics you are very liable to get into war. War is the ultimate tool of politics. If war develops the side inducing it loses the game.

Essence of the world's working will be to make every man able to become a world citizen and able to enjoy the whole earth, going wherever he wants at any time, able to take care of all the needs of all his forward days without any interference with any other man and never at the cost of another man's equal freedom and advantage. I think that the communication problem—"How to Make the World Work"—will become extremely popular the world around.

The game will be played by competing individuals and teams. The comprehensive logistical information upon which it is based is your Southern Illinois University-supported Inventory of World Resources Human Trends and Needs. It is also based upon the data and grand world strategies already evolved in the Design Science Decade being conducted, under our leadership here at Southern Illinois University, by world-around university students who, forsaking the political expedient of attempting to reform man, are committed to reforming the environment in such a manner as to "up" the performance per each unit of invested world resources until so much more is accomplished with so much less that an even higher standard of living will be effected for 100% of humanity than is now realized by the 40% of humanity who may now be classified as economically and physically successful.

"The game" will be hooked up with the now swiftly increasing major universities information network. This network's information bank will soon be augmented by the world-around satellite-scanned live inventory of vital data. Spy satellites are now inadvertently telephotoing the whereabouts and number of beef cattle around the surface of the entire earth. The exact condition of all the world's crops is now simultaneously and totally scanned and inventoried. The interrelationship of the comprehensively scanned weather and the growing food supply of the entire earth are becoming manifest.

In playing "the game" the computer will remember all the plays made by previous players and will be able to remind each successive player of the ill fate of any poor move he might contemplate making. But the ever-changing inventory might make possible today that which would not work yesterday. Therefore the successful stratagems of the live game will vary from day to day. The game will not become stereotyped.

If a player resorts to political means for the realization of his strategy, he

may be forced ultimately to use the war-waging equipment with which all national political systems maintain their sovereign power. If a player fires a gun—that is, if he resorts to warfare, large or small—he loses and must fall out of the game.

The general-systems-theory controls of the game will be predicated upon employing within a closed system the world's continually updated total resource information in closely specified network complexes designed to facilitate attainment, at the earliest possible date, by every human being of complete enjoyment of the total planet earth, through the individual's optional traveling, tarrying, or dwelling here and there. This world-around freedom of living, work, study, and enjoyment must be accomplished without any one individual interfering with another and without any individual being physically or economically advantaged at the cost of another.

Whichever player or team first attains total success for humanity wins the first round of the gaming. There are alternate ways of attaining success. The one who attains it in the shortest time wins the second round. Those who better the record at a later date win rounds 3, 4, and so on.

All the foregoing objectives must be accomplished not only for those who now live but for all coming generations of humanity. How to make humanity a continuing success at the earliest possible moment will be the objective. The game will also be dynamic. The players will be forced to improve the program—failure to improve also results in retrogression of conditions. Conditions cannot be pegged to accomplishment. They must also grow either worse or better. This puts time at a premium in playing the game.

Major world individuals and teams will be asked to play the game. The game cannot help but become major world news. As it will be played from a high balcony overlooking a football-field-sized Dymaxion Airocean World Map with electrically illumined data transformations, the game will be visibly developed and may be live-televised the world over by a multi-Telstar relay system.

The world's increasing confidence in electronic instrumentation in general—due to the demonstrated reliability of its gyrocompasses, and its “blind” instrument landings of airplanes at night in thick fog, and confidence in opinion-proof computers in particular, will make the “world game” playing of fundamental and spontaneous interest to all of humanity.

Ultimately its most successful winning techniques will become well known around the world and as the game's solutions gain world favor they will be spontaneously resorted to as political emergencies accelerate.

Nothing in the game can solve the problem of two men falling in love with the same girl, or falling in love with the same shade under one specific tree. Some are going to have to take the shade of another equally inviting tree. Some may end up bachelors. Some may punch each other's noses. For every

problem solved a plurality of new problems arise to take their place. But the problems need not be those of physical and economic survival. They can be perplexing and absorbing in entirely metaphysical directions such as those which confront the philosophers, the artists, poets, and scientists.

The game must, however, find ways in which to provide many beautiful shade trees for each—that is to say a physical and economic abundance adequate for all. There will, of course, have to be matchings of times and desires, requiring many initial wait-listings. As time goes on, however, and world-around information becomes available, the peaks and valleys of men's total time can be ever-improvedly smoothed out. Comprehensive coordination of bookings, resource, and accommodation information will soon bring about a 24-hour, world-around viewpoint of society which will operate and think transcendently to local “seasons” and weathers of rooted botanical life. Humanity will become emancipated from its mental fixation on the seven-day-week frame of reference. I myself now have many winters and summers per year as I cross the equator from northern to southern hemisphere and back several times annually. I have now circled the earth so many times that I think of it and literally sense it in my sight as a sphere. I often jump in eight- and nine-hour time-zone air strides. As a consequence my metabolic coordination has become independent of local time fixations.

It is my intention to initiate on several occasions in a number of places anticipatory discussion of the necessary and desirable parameters to establish for playing the world game. I intend to nominate as participants both in these preliminary discussions and in formal play only those who are outstandingly capable of discussing these parameters. The participants must also be those well known for their lack of bias as well as for their forward-looking competence and practical experience.