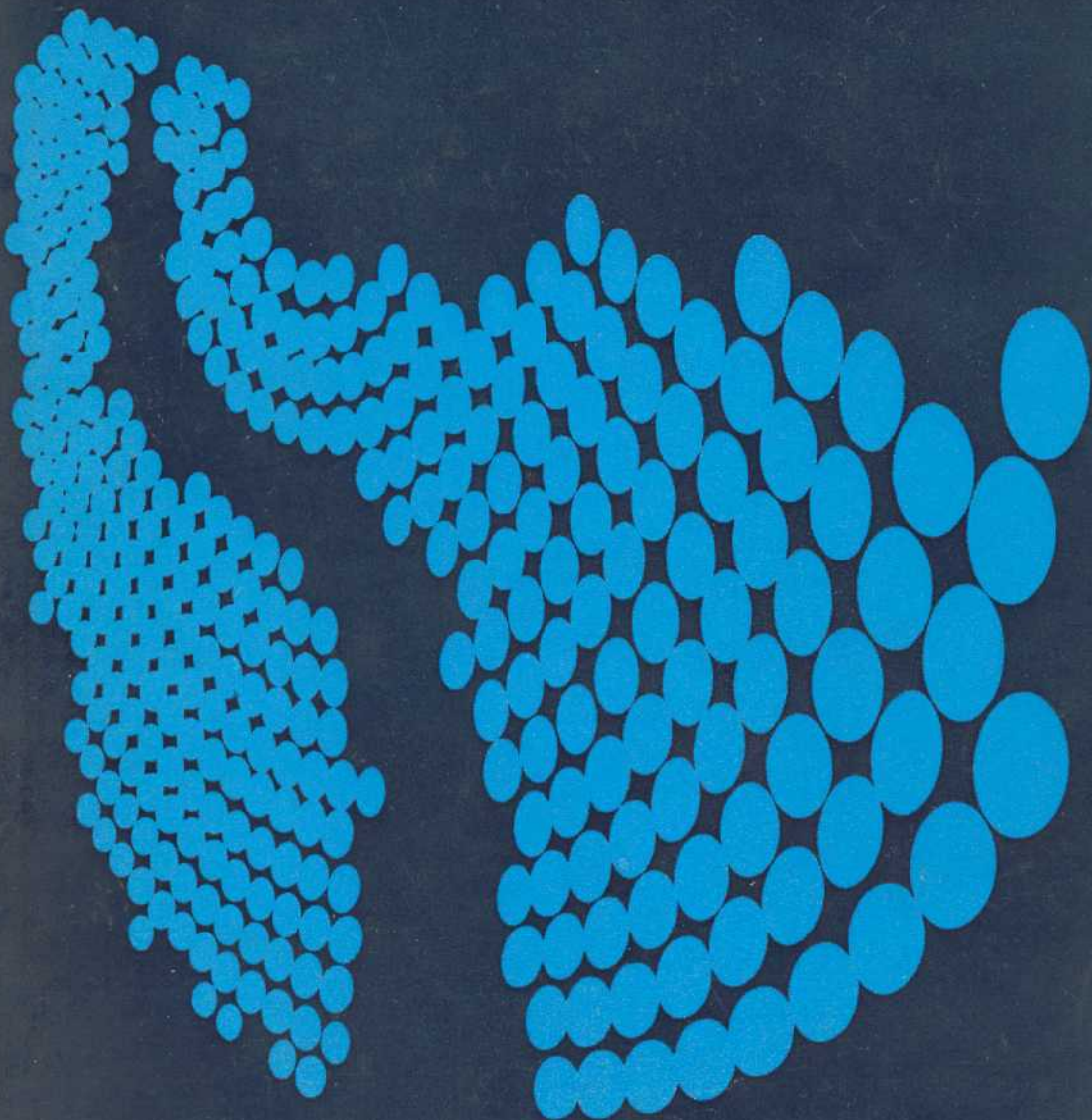


the image of the future



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elsevier**

Chapter 2. Image and Actuality

It was but a small step for man from realizing that he had a future to wanting to know what that future would bring. The impulse to propitiate the powers of the future in order to avoid catastrophe and procure blessings may well have been part of the drive to know from its early beginnings. Both magic and religion probably arose at least in part out of this twin drive for certainty and control. For many centuries man struggled to obtain a reliable reading of signs and omens, both in the heavens and in the world around him. It seems likely that dependence on the direct inspiration of gifted specialists, whether priest or prophet, came somewhat later. Sometimes prophet and propitiator were the same, at other times the two functions were separate. As man the maker embarked on the adventures of agriculture, navigation, and his first large-scale engineering projects, such as pyramids and waterworks, the need to predict and control the future became of still more practical urgency. The beginnings of science grew out of this urgency: astrology and its more sober offspring, astronomy, alike served this need to know the future.

In attempting to blueprint his own future, man has been forced to deal with the concepts of value, means and ends. As long as the prophet propitiator was acting only as a transmitter of messages from on high, man accepted his ethics ready-made, with no alterations allowed. In a later stage man staggered under the double load not only of having to construct his own future but of having to create the values that will determine its design. To primitive man, the task of looking into the unknown must have seemed terrifying enough. As modern man gains an increased understanding of the complexity of interplay between attitudes and values and technological know-how in the process of social change at all levels of society, the terrifying

aspects of the unknown are scarcely diminished. However, between this initial period and modern times there have been many ups and downs in man's attempts to push back the frontier of the unknown. This attempt can be seen as a twofold process: the development of ideas concerning the idéal future as it ought to be, and the unfolding of the real future in history, partly as a result of man's purposeful intervention. Awareness of idéal values is the first step in the conscious création of images of the future and therefore in the conscious création of culture, for a value is by définition that which guides toward a "valued" future. The image of the future reflects and reinforces these values. The relationship between conceptions of the time-dimension, the future, and the ideatistic ethical objectives of mankind for that future, has been a neglected one and offers a fruitful field for research.

As a society develops a common set of values and norms in its ethics and moral philosophy, this leads to a more or less stable set of expectations regarding the future behavior of its physical environment, as it develops practices in the realm of magic, religion, and science in order to deal with natural or supernatural phenomena. These two trends of expectations merge and crystallize into systematic projections toward the future, or images of the future. We have already indicated that our concerns center on those crystallized expectations that picture a radically different world in an Other time, and that are imaginatively shaped in such a way that they can be applied on behalf of mankind.

The resurrection of Israël as preached by the Old Testament prophets has been one of the most powerful and persistent images of the future ever evolved, as has the Kingdom of Heaven proclaimed by Jésus. In *The City of God*, St. Augustine spells out still further this potent image of the future, to be fulfilled by the grâce of God and mediated through the Christian church. Plato's *Politeia* opened the way for a series of projections which, via Thomas More's *Utopia*, culminated in the socialistic and humanistic utopian images of the Enlightenment.

In a sense it is the prophet, the projector of images, who may write in advance a considerable part of the history of the future, but the materials out of which he creates his images are drawn largely from the cultural heritage of the social group or society to which he belongs. The images themselves may be thought of as time-bombs that explode somewhere in the future, although the men and societies who create them have little control over when, where, and how they will explode. These explosions release masses of concen-

trated energy, and radioactive particles load the heavily tidal time-stream between past and future.

Theory of the Image

In this work we are, in a sensé, taking the existence of images of the future as given and tracing out the effects of their existence on the course of history. In doing so we are deliberately starting in the middle of the story, so to speak, and apparently ignoring the beginning, the problem of images in gênerai and how they are formed. We offer no excuses for this, because it is the business of the mind to begin work at the point of major insight. The image of the future does represent such a major insight, and carries within itself its own intellectual imperatives for a further working out of the idea. This procédure seems ail the more justified since, according to our thesis, it is the image of the future that forms a dynamic factor par excellence and an extremely powerful force contained in the working of ail images as such. Therefore, the dynamics of the images of the future, which we treat separately in this book, hâve a spécial relevance for a theory of the image in gênerai. We cannot and do not wish to ignore the problem of a systematic theory of the image, however, and would like to consider this work as a small contribution to a more gênerai^ theory.

The more gênerai theory of images may be thought of as "eidetics." This concept, derived from the Greek *eidelon*, "image," has a long history. Plato, Epicurus, and Democritus used the term to refer to knowledge and the learning process. Francis Bacon made similar use of it. The term *eidetisch* appears in the writings of the German psychologists, especially E. R. Jaensch, who specialized in research on children between the âges of thirteen and fifteen. Jaensch related certain types of eidetic endowments to physical constitution (*Körperbau*) and to personality type. On the basis of this he later outlined a theory of the development of culture. The concept recently appeared in slightly changed form in a book by the economist Kenneth E. Boulding.¹ Though very welcome, these developments are only a beginning and leave many questions unanswered. Nor do they put enough emphasis on the significance of the time-

¹ The Dutch original of *The Image of the Future* preceded Kenneth E. Boulding's book; *The Image* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956) by several years,

dimension in the dynamics of image formation and image propagation. They shift the focus away from the image of the future as such, which served as the initial center of interest and inspiration, and which we view as a basic élément in the operational activity of ail images.

In a gênerai theory, attention must be given to the dynamics of image formation, both in the private and the public mind, and the function of images in the economy of the individual personality and the social, national, or cultural group. What do images mean, how are the meanings transmitted, and how do they affect individual and social behavior? Under what conditions do images change, and why? What can accelerate or retard thèse changes? How amenable are they to purposeful manipulation, in both the short and the long run? We hope that some light is thrown on ail thèse questions by our study of images of the future.

One of the strongest links between images and the image of the future is contained in the Book of Genesis, where we are told that God created man in His image. It would be wrong to suppose, however, that the use of images to capture the future is limited to the sphères of religion and mythology. Such images are always présent and operative in ail social groups, and social science is increasingly making use of thèse images to increase its analytic power, but without fully understanding the implications of adding the time-dimension to its analysis. Images are at work everywhere, individually and collectively: private and public images, images of ourselves and others, of our own group and of other groups. We hold images of our own nation, race, profession, party, and belief-system, and likewise of other nations, races, professions, parties, and idéologies. Images are formed and changed of producers and consumers; capitalists and communists; of artists, bohemians, and scientists; of entrepreneurs and workingmen; of right and wrong behavior, good and bad guys, hipsters and squares, organization men and rugged individualists; of husbands, wives, and children; and of fathers and mothers.

Public relations men are powerful image-makers and manipulators. They build images to influence buyers and voters; they sell attractive public images and self-images with which people, whether consumers or citizens, can easily identify. The secret of their being able to persuade the masses to buy certain brands, symbols, ideas, or politicians is hidden in the almost unlimited potential of selling an image of the future with modem techniques of merchandising and marketing. It is, however, a rather long way from the classic image of the

future to today's cheap imitations. Later on the implications of this assertion will become clear.

Images and Their Dimension of the Future

We have already stated that this work singles out the image of the future because we are convinced it is the time-dimension of the future that acts as a pre-eminently dynamic force in the working of all images. In analyzing how the concept of the future has operated in the historical process, there are six main aspects that come into play:

1. *Images of the future are always aristocratic in origin.* The author of the image invariably belongs to the creative minority of a society. He moves in the company of Isaiah, Socrates, Rembrandt, the French *philosophes*, and nearer to our own day, such men as Henri Bergson and H. G. Wells. The formation of images of the future depends upon an awareness of the future that makes possible a conscious, voluntary, and responsible choice between alternatives. This means that the development of images of the future and ethics are intimately related. Human judgments can, to a great extent, be explained in relation to the striving toward a highly valued future goal. The development of ethics and moral philosophy is one aspect of the development of techniques for visualizing and controlling the future, and the image of the future receives much of its driving force from ethics. Kant's ethics—reduced to his famous categorical imperative, the whole field of *Sollen*, "ought," as distinct from *Sein*, "is," and *Wirklichkeit*, "reality," as opposed to *Wert*, "value,"—are all based on a time-dimension hitherto never clearly delineated. They can all be effectively translated into the language of the image of the future. They all express the underlying philosophy of what we call influence-optimism. Man, in this process of ethical development, is no longer simply "split man," capable of dividing his perceptions into two realms. He now becomes "moral man," responsible for the use to which he puts his perceptions and powers for reaching the Other and better. At this point the positive image of the future in its classic form becomes one of the main instruments of culture, providing both a vision of civilization and the tools for realizing it.

2. *The propagation of images.* The force that drives the image of the future is only in part rational and intellectual; a much larger part is emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual. The appeal of the image lies in its picture of a radically different world in an Other time. Psycholo-

gists will term this variously as escapism, compensation mechanisms, and projection. It is above all the spiritual nature of the ideals embodied in the image of the future that infuses the image with power. As between two opposing schools of thought, historical materialism and historical idealism, we favor the latter. The primary forces in history are not propelled by a System of production, nor by industrial or military might, but rather by the underlying ideas, ideals, values, and norms that manage to achieve mass appeal.

3. *Image-effect, or the relationship between the projected future (whether positive or négative) and the actual future as it passes into history*, is discussed in the next chapter.

4. *Self-élimination of images* becomes central to our discussion in Chapter 18, "Timeless Time." Self-elimination takes place in a natural way through the historical process of succession of images, and through the dialectical changes they themselves provoke.

5. *The periodic adaptation to time-change through self-correction, renewal, and change on the part of images of the future in the continuous interplay of challenge and response* forms the underlying Connecting thread of Part One. It is only when we come to the turn of this century that we must for the first time examine the last aspect:

6. *The loss of the capacity for adéquate self-correction and timely renewal of images of the future.* It is a main thesis of this work that for the first time in the three thousand years of Western civilization there has been a massive loss of capacity, or even will, for renewal of images of the future. There are few signs of constructive images, and no generally accepted idealistic images, forthcoming today. There is a contraction of time-consciousness to the momentary présent and a blurring of a spécifique sensé of the future. The dualistic mental structure that is essential for eschatological and utopian thinking about the future has been severely crippled.

We do not discuss private images of the future, but only shared public ones, not because there is a différence in the operational principles involved, but because we are primarily concerned with the larger social and cultural processes. The kind of images that we discuss are shared public images of the cosmos, God, man, social institutions, the meaning of history, and others of similar scope. Again, in all these images it is the time-dimension of the future that gives them their spécial force. For example, the dimension of the future exercises a dominating influence on the image of the world, the *Weltanschauung* (see Chapter 18, "Timeless Time"). The image

of God is a concept that is related to the future in its very essence, since God lives as a promise in the minds of hopeful men (see Chapter 17, "De-eschatologizing," and Chapter 19, "The Future of the Christian Belief-System"). The future dimension in the image of man is related to the concept of the dignity of man in terms of man's responsibility for his own destiny {see Chapter 9, "The Renaissance as a Renaissance of Utopism"). We deal with the impact of the future on the image of social institutions, both implicitly (see Chapter 10, "The Image of the Future: Guiding Star of the Age of Enlightenment") and explicitly {see Chapter 24, "New Perspectives"). The nationalisée image of the future is discussed in connection with the régression of the once universal utopian idéal (see Chapter 10). The image of the processes and meaning of history is also treated in its relationship to the dimensions of the future {see Chapter 14, "The Image of History and the Image of the Future").

In focusing on the time-dimension of dominant public or collective images of the future, it becomes obvious that these different images are structurally interrelated. The image of the future as such may therefore be an important tool for an interdisciplinary social science. The possibility that science may be able to predict and control social processes through analysis of existing images of the future, both private and public, and direct a change of these images, is a thought-provoking one. Granted that we may still be a good distance away from effective prédiction, it is still not too soon to begin pondering the problems of controlled image-change. How could such a possibility be fitted into a démocratique system of government? The whole question of public policy in relation to image-change may be a matter of life and death for Western civilization. If we pause to think what can be done with the minds of men through the public school System, public health policy (which is increasingly concerned with mental health in its educational and préventive as well as remédiaire aspects), économie policy, censorship, and a foreign policy based entirely on secret negotiations, we cannot accept the idea of controlled image-change as a social good per se. We not only need to give a great deal of thought to practical methods of image-change and the kinds of images that our society needs, we must examine and be as fully aware as possible of the influence on society of those images of the future already existing in the minds of political planners, scientists, and professional practitioners in every field. If we find that these influences are bad or weak, how can we redirect them? If we find that the créative minority of our culture is no longer constructing positive and idealistic images of the future,

what then? These are some of the questions that we hope our historical analysis helps to answer. However, the whole truth does not reside in the image of the future alone. These images do not act on the historical process in a vacuum. They are in a constant state of interaction with the past and present. Thus, we will now examine the interplay between the time-dimensions of past, present, and future.

Dynamics of Interaction Between Past, Present, and Future

How can we account for the diversity of images of the future that emerge from history? Why does this image arise in this time and this place, and another elsewhere? Why does each society have a characteristic type of image? It will not suffice simply to describe split man and state that his unique mental capacities enable him to divide his experience into two realities. Nor can we be content with a conception of man as a completely free, independent being who can choose his images of the future at will. He is—or conceives himself to be—opposed by certain forces of the time that are perhaps themselves the ultimate shapers of the future.

Beside the antithesis in the human mind between the here-and-now and the Other we must place a second antithesis, that of human potency or impotence as opposed to divine or supernatural omnipotence. Man can visualize the Other, but can he do anything about it? The entire history of philosophy and religious thought is significantly marked by man's tragic conflict between the dream and the power to act on the dream.

Optimism and Pessimism

Who or what really dominates the future, and how is the domination accomplished? Man's images of the future have depended on his changing answers to these questions. The psychologically inclined observer comes face to face with the riddle of societies that seem either basically optimistic or basically pessimistic, seeing the world through either rose-tinted or smoked glasses. These changing attitudes relate both to the idea of supernatural dominance and to the concept of the power of man to rule over his own future—to superhuman versus human power. Would the explanation of these succeeding waves of optimism and pessimism give us a key to history, or would it be just the reverse? And is the struggle for power between man and

the supernatural a real one, or only a figment of the imagination?

This raises the point of the functional relationship between the image of the future and optimistic and pessimistic attitudes. Which of the two is the independent variable? This question compels us to examine more closely the various feelings societies have had about the position of man in the cosmos, and how he stands in relation to time. When we include the element of power, the mere opposition of optimism and pessimism becomes an oversimplification. There have always been degrees of feelings of human impotence combined with a kind of optimism, and feelings of human potency mixed with a kind of pessimism. Optimism and pessimism are then used in a different sense, one which conceals the very problem on which we wish to throw light.

It will be helpful to make distinctions between optimism and pessimism along the lines of the concepts of *Seinmiissen*, "what must be," and *Seinsollen*, "what ought to be." It would then be possible to speak of *Seinoptimismus* or *Seinpessimismus*, which we shall refer to as essence-optimism or essence-pessimism, and *Willensoptimismus* or *Willenspessimismus*, which we shall refer to as influence-optimism or influence-pessimism. The essence categories refer to an unchangeable course of events; the influence categories refer to the supposed or rejected possibility of human intervention. The first point of view sees history as a book that has already been written; the second sees history as a process that man can or cannot manipulate.

The correspondence between essence-optimism and its accompanying image of the future is fairly direct. Man has scarcely any rôle to play in the image of a universe that operates by divine and faultless harmony. He is a sojourner in a world progressing steadily toward perfection. Various schools of thought have identified different primary mechanisms in this evolutionary process. The physiocrats looked upon agriculture as the key, nineteenth-century liberalism emphasized the doctrine of self-interest, and Marx saw the proletariat as the crucial instrument that would bring about the last stage of perfection. Basic to all these Systems is a combination of doctrines of determinism and automatism. Human power is usually eliminated as superfluous. Here we observe a combination of essence-optimism and influence-pessimism, with a net positive effect upon the image of the future.

The most negative image of the future grows out of a combination of essence-pessimism and influence-pessimism. In this view of life chaos overrides cosmos from beginning to end, and man can do nothing except resign himself to the inevitable. Examples of this view

are found in the concept of original sin, in the ideas of eternal recurrence, and in the concept of the evanescence of all human culture. All that is left to man is the possibility of a stoic *amor fati*—"love of fate," or suicide. The pendulum of history constantly swings between the two extremes. There is an extended area between these poles, however, where the thoughts of men are more wont to come to rest. Here we find the several possible configurations of essence—pessimism and influence-optimism, and the separate streams of thinking and doing converge. Certainly, existing reality is both precarious and disgusting. It is possible, however, to imagine a much better future, and it is even possible for man to work for this future. The conception of the nature of this work and the manner of approaching it may be one of relatively passive submission to a higher power, or an active exercise of the human will.

We can discern two main types of influence-optimism in these configurations, with two corresponding types of images of the future. In the one, man's rôle is indirect; the accent is on supernatural power and man's reconciliations with it. In the other, man's rôle is direct; the accent is on natural events and human effort. In these two different conceptions, the mandate of work is set against the mandate to pray. These are the two main paths to victory over the unknown. The religious route offers man the help of a savior. The secular route offers the philosopher's stone. They result in parallel images of the future—one eschatological, the other utopian—but they are not always separate: there are times in history when the two routes merge into one main highway.

Man and Culture

The most interesting problem is not so much the various modes of attack on the future, but the question of how various hierarchies of goals come to be established, and why certain means to chosen ends are valued in one historical period, and different means are valued in another. At any given period one finds a coherent culture-pattern into which the means-ends scheme of a given society fits. Each cultural epoch has its own uniquely fitting images of the future. It is also possible to relate the psyché of a people to their images of the future: "Tell me what your vision of the future is, and I will tell you what you are." This is, however, only a tautology. How do we account for the fact that each phase of culture, each type of human

personality, appeared on the historical scene just when it did and in just that form? Why do cultural patterns and social attitudes change? What is the relationship between these shifting patterns and the changing images of the future? Specifically, why do we see such changes within the images of the future regarding the rôle of man and his feelings about the attainability of his goals?

Historically we are faced with a continuous process of transformation, sometimes gradual, sometimes in a series of abrupt shifts, from a passive and indirect influence-optimism to a more direct and active one, until at a given moment man suddenly seems to be bereft again of his will power. Thus, in the development of Western civilization we have seen man shift from a passive drift toward a future Kingdom of Heaven to a sudden seizing of the rudder with full mastery of the arts of navigation. His increasing skills in agriculture and medicine gave him a new power over life and death. Now, unexpectedly, the hand on the rudder wavers. Man continues to try to steer, but apathy has overcome him, and life seems to be but an "existence to the death." Was the faith in human power but a bubble, to be pricked so soon?

Any student of the rise and fall of cultures cannot fail to be impressed by the rôle played in this historical succession by the image of the future. *The rise and fall of images of the future precedes or accompanies the rise and fall of cultures.* As long as a society's image is positive and flourishing, the flower of culture is in full bloom. Once the image begins to decay and lose its vitality, however, the culture does not long survive. The secret of Greek culture, which came to its second flowering in the Renaissance, lies in the imperishable harmony of its image of the future. The endurance of Jewish culture, reborn today in Israël, lies in its fervently held image of the future, which has survived diaspora and pogrom alike. The prognosis of the dying Christian culture—if it can be said to be dying—lies in its dying image of the future. The primary question then is not how to explain the rise and fall of cultures, but how to explain the succession of shifting images of the future. How do virile and forceful images of the future arise, and what causes them to decline and gradually fade away? Furthermore, how do the successive waves of optimism and pessimism regarding the images fit into the total cultural framework and its accompanying dynamics?

Challenge and Response

Historical forces operate not only out of the past but also from the future. That man exercises influence over his future through the image he projects of it is only half the truth. The other half is that the future itself in its turn exercises a spécial influence over man and his images of the future. This kind of personification of the future can easily lead to mystification, so Toynbee's challenge and response thesis will be helpful here. According to Toynbee, that culture survives which can give timely and adéquate responses to the ever-new challenges that are presented to it. But who makes the challenge? Toynbee would answer that the times make the challenge on the basis of the response a society has given to the previous challenge, and so the causal chain recedes into the infinité distances of the past. However, it is possible for man to look forward as well as backward. The challenge of the times can also be based on the future, which may challenge us to examine and prépare in advance to solve the problems it has in store for us. Certain possibilities out of an infinity of potential futures throw light or shadow on the présent and can be further illuminated or darkened by the influence-optimism or influence-pessimism of the man who looks ahead. Out of the réverbérations of the clash of past and future in the présent, the image of the future émerge.

The future works upon the présent only to the extent that the présent can receive the challenging images it broadcasts. Man has to be tuned in to the right wave-length. Image-reception varies widely, however, not only from historical period to historical period, but from individual to individual during the same period. This is inévitable, since the shape of the future is not yet an objective reality, but a vision subject to the temper and spirit of whoever sees it.

Second, we must give closer attention to the manner in which the response to the challenge of the future is made. Toynbee maintains that just as the challenge varies in nature and severity, according to circumstance, so the adéquate response must vary. It is in forging a response to a challenge that the members of the inventive and creative minority either pass or fail their crucial tests of compétence. This is indeed true, but we would add that this adéquate response can be nothing less than a comprehensive and inspiring vision of the future.

The challenge of our times consists in building up for the real future that which the possible future, by virtue of its relationship with the most récent past, is trying to demolish: images of the future

inspired by a renewed influence-optimism, which can lift us out of the lethargy of our présent essence-pessimism. So far, our génération has made precisely the wrong response to the challenge of our future. Nihilistic images are paralyzing us into an inability to forge more positive and constructive ones. Western man must never stop thinking and dreaming the materials of new tomorrows, for he has no choice but to dream or to die.

Définition of the Problem

In trying to give a systematic history of man's thinking about the future and the influence of this thought on the actual course of events, we have had to adopt criteria in order to select from the overwhelming amount of material available, and to stay close to our purpose.

Out of the vast array of historical images of the future, we shall be concerned with those that have sifted down through history into the receptacle we term Western civilization. We shall be especially interested in the influence the siftings from earlier periods have exercised, by dominating current attitudes and beliefs, on the development of this civilization. Specifically, we will try to ascertain whether the critical condition of still-revered current images of the future out of our own past is a factor in the present critical condition of Western culture. In general we will treat those images that best illuminate the problem of the future of our civilization.

In a systematic study of the future we must unfortunately exclude one of the most important sources of all knowledge, human experience. We can experience what has been, but not what is to be. We can experience what has happened to those images of the future and their anticipated futures, which now belong to the past. However, as soon as we want to change our knowledge *ex post* into an *ex ante* knowledge we have to tap supplementary sources. Only with the help of reason can the experience of the known provide a basis for a useful extension into the unknown. Science has already taken a long stride in the direction of predictions of the future by using models based on assumptions of specific periodicities or trends. Concepts of determinism have given way to concepts of probability. At the same time, specialization in science has led to an examination of more and more minute segments of reality, moving further and further away from total patterns of any kind. Irrational tools have contributed more to thinking about the future. Faith has been the most impor-

tant factor, with its ample tool-chest containing ail the instruments of sacred knowledge. Next come philosophie thought, méditation, and spéculations, sometimes coupled with asceticism. Last comes the realm of émotion, particularly those aspects concerned with hope, longing, and expectation. Intuition and eestasy belong hère, and most of ail the power of the free créative imagination, which is indispensable to ail thinking about the unknown. Thinking about the future requires faith and visionary powers, mixed with philosophie detachment, a rich emotional life, and créative fantasy.

What sources can we turn to in order to feel our way into thought about the future of other times and peoples? The symbolic language of the myth will tell us much. Religions and sacred writings and teachings will be helpful. We can also feel our way into the images of the future by studying the philosophers, scientists, and artists of the past who helped to create them. History itself will give us the broad picture of the image-life of a Society.

The Problem Restated

By focusing on the idea of the future as the Other, the perfect antipode of the imperfect here-and-now, we automatically eliminate ail those prédictions of the future which do not stand in polar antithesis to the présent. This élimination implies a basic distinction between utopian and eschatological visions on the one hand, and short-term or even long-term social planning on the other. The position hère is that bold visionary thinking is in itself the prerequisite for effective social change, even when piecemeal amélioration is involved. We also reject the vaguer phenomena of thought about the future and focus instead on crystalized images of the future.

We are treating the image of the future both as an object for research and as a statement of the problem. In this time of cûture-crisis the social scientist must be made aware of his rôle in the création of the future, and to achieve this awareness he must also consider the image of the future as an object for research. It is time that the image of the future be introduced into the social sciences as a conceptual tool, adding to their diagnostic powers. The anticipatory image of the future is tested in the présent book for its value in helping to write the history of the future, at least for the coming century. The concept of the personal équation is relevant hère. The observer influences that which he observes. The formulation and description of images of the future may influence the future

itself, and the social scientist may rewrite the history of the future.

In addition to considering only those concretely expressed images of the future that are the antipodes of the présent, we will further delimit our field by including only those historical images that are positive: those images that express optimistic belief that the Other world is not only différent but better. Thèse positive images may vary widely in content and orientation, ranging from the area of supernatural and personal salvation to the humanistic reconstruction of earthly societies. In every case they represent a high idea of a realm of the future: the Thousand Years' Reign of Christ, the Golden Age, or the New Zion. The spécial characteristics and functions of the négative image of the future typical of our own time will be examined in Part Two.

A sociological study of this kind must inevitably touch upon philosophy, theology, psychology, history, and anthropology. However, even in his capacity as a generalist, the sociologist is no less a specialist. He must give spécial attention to the dynamics of social change, particularly as they function in revolutionary changes in social institutions, cultural patterns, the spiritual climate, and the world-view.

Stated in sociological terms, the problems are thèse: what is the relationship between fundamental changes in the social structure and changes in the reigning images of the future? Is there interaction between images of the future and the future itself? More specifically, what are the implications of a disintegrating image of the future of Western culture for the future of that culture?