The View from Prague

This work is the result of the Forum 2000 conferences initiated by Václav Havel and Elie Wiesel. The book is based mainly on the first five conferences which were held in Prague from 1997.

The first essay written by Václav Havel deals with spiritual preconditions of the global survival of humankind, and the second one is the quintessence of Havel’s views on the world which we have inherited as well as his views on our hopes for the future. The book closes with Havel’s personal reflection on the deeper meaning and aim of the Forum 2000 meetings.

Subsequent chapters analyze and interpret the ideas that were expressed by the speakers and interlocutors of the first five conferences in which they tried to identify and understand the primary issues facing mankind globally. Reflections deal with the main dimensions of globalization and with their synchronicities as well as asynchronicities based on the quintessences of the annual conference reports.

A B O U T  T H E  E D I T O R S

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THE VIEW FROM PRAGUE
THE VIEW FROM PRAGUE

The Expectations of World Leaders at the Dawn of the 21st Century

Václav Havel et al.

Edited by Jíří Musil and Tomáš Vrba

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Editorial Note

This book is the result of the Forum 2000 conferences initiated by Václav Havel and Elie Wiesel, and which could not have been realized without the understanding and support of Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of the Nippon Foundation of Japan. Since 1997 the conferences have taken place regularly every year in Prague. Our book is based mainly on the first five conferences which were held in the Spanish Hall of the Prague Castle. An important part of the conferences were also “The Multi-religious Reflections” that took place in St. Vitus Cathedral at the Prague Castle. After Václav Havel’s presidential term ended, the Forum 2000 conferences continued—albeit in a more modest form—and since 2002 its location has moved from the Prague Castle to various halls of the city.

The Forum 2000 conferences have not been large-scale meetings of specialists or politicians seeking to address specific global problems, such as population growth, urbanization, environmental damage or the status of women. They have not been congresses on a single major topic, but rather assemblies of leading world figures—Nobel laureates, politicians who helped to achieve peaceful solutions to conflicts and wars, leading intellectuals and academics, as well as artists and writers—who exchanged views in a spirit of goodwill. Their common aim has been to identify links among the major issues of today and to look for ways to overcome or forestall the major threats facing humanity.

In its first part, the book presents two essays written by Václav Havel. The first one deals with spiritual preconditions for the global survival of humankind, and the second one is the quintessence of Havel’s views on the world which we have inherited as well as his views on our hopes for the future. The book closes with Havel’s per-
sonal reflection on the deeper meaning and aim of the Forum 2000 meetings.

The second part of the book deals with problems and visions of the world today as seen by the participants of Forum 2000. The chapters in this part analyze and interpret the ideas that were expressed by the speakers and interlocutors of the first five conferences in which they tried to identify and understand the primary issues facing mankind globally. Some of the studies, especially the essay on the state of the world economy, also used the insights of the conferences held after 2002, which were mainly concerned with socio-economic gaps between macro-regions of the planet.

The reconstruction of the ideas and visions of the Forum 2000 participants was made possible by the annually published Conference Reports. These reports, which contained verbatim transcripts of all keynote speeches, reactions of the panelists and interlocutors, offered a rich documentation of the opinions, ideas and visions of the invited intellectual and political world leaders. To transform this rich information into a condensed synopsis we have contacted a group of scholars and asked them for their reflections and observations on the main issues discussed. They were asked to summarize the main thoughts of the conferences, and to compare the ideas expressed on the Forum 2000 to mainstream contemporary thinking on globalization processes.

These rapporteur reflections deal with the main dimensions of globalization and with their synchronicities as well as asynchronicities. The chapters analyze and interpret the impact of globalization processes on societies and cultures, they analyze the transformation of religion in a globalizing world, political globalization, the state of the world economy and last, but not least, global environmental problems. The last chapter is written from the perspective of an observer who wishes to express the inclusive and complementary approach that we stress in our endeavor: the rationality of analysis and recognizing the importance of ideals.

All manuscripts were submitted by their authors in late summer 2005.

*Editorial Board of Forum 2000 Foundation*
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Jiří Pehe has been the Director of New York University in Prague since May 1999. From September 1997 until May 1999, he was Director of the Political Department of the Office of the President. Earlier he directed the Analysis Department at the Open Media Research Institute and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Munich. In the years 1985–1988 he was chairman of the Department of East European studies at Freedom House in New York. A well known commentator of political and social events, he has published hundreds of articles and analytical studies, and he gives lectures on political science at New York University, Prague and at Charles University in Prague. He is also author of the book The Tunnelled Democracy (2002, Prague).
The idea of organizing a meeting of the “wise” in various fields of human endeavor and from various parts of the planet to reflect on the state of the world emerged in the second half of the 1990s. It was linked with two names: Václav Havel and Elie Wiesel.

As President of the Czech Republic and a well-known European intellectual, Václav Havel was often invited in the second half of the 1990s to visit various countries on every continent. In 1995 and 1996, he visited Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Japan and Brazil. In speeches delivered during these visits, Václav Havel more and more frequently reflected on the new situation in the world after the disintegration of its bi-polar configuration, which provided a certain stability, in spite of all the problems it posed. After the collapse of Communism and the disintegration of power in the Soviet bloc, a new configuration arose that brought with it new, as yet unknown, global problems. The new situation was also the result of major technological and economic changes occurring from the 1970s onwards. In the early 1990’s many people, including politicians, had not, however, realized their significance.

In a speech entitled “The Future of Hope” delivered in Hiroshima, Japan, in December 1995—fifty years after the dropping of the atomic bomb on the city—Václav Havel very clearly stated his conviction that the world was once again under threat. This threat was derived from the conflict of civilizational or cultural or religious groups, not from what is termed “the clash of civilizations.” He posed very clearly the question of how to face the new growing danger:

What kind of world order, what system of global cooperation should we build to avert the danger that our grandchildren may
experience horrors far more dreadful than World War II, whose end we are now commemorating after fifty years? How can we avoid the possibility of new Hiroshimas? 1

Without minimizing the significance of efforts to avert this threat with the aid of political institutions, treaties and agreements, in Hiroshima he emphasized very clearly the need for a deeper foundation, which would allow humanity to avoid major conflicts and wars. This foundation is the awakening of a general responsibility built on the awareness that “...the key to solid human coexistence, and to a life that does not become a hell on the earth, lies in respect for what infinitely transcends us, for what I call the miracle of Being.” 2 He also reflected on “…the necessity to proceed much more forcefully than before, to reveal and identify that which unites us rather than that which divides us. It is in this that I see the principal challenge for the coming century and the coming millennium.” 3

It was significant that Elie Wiesel and Václav Havel met in Hiroshima in 1995. They were aware of the alarming signs of new conflicts in the world and recognized, in a very similar way, the responsibility of intellectuals and politicians for the fate of the world. Havel’s own words most clearly describe the birth of the whole concept:

The idea of holding an event like this came about for the first time in a conversation with Elie Wiesel, in Hiroshima, where we met while attending another conference. Quite soon thereafter we established contact with Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, without whose participation at an intellectual, organizational as well as material level, these Conferences could not have existed.” 4

The idea of holding the Forum 2000 conference in Prague was fleshed out in the spring of 1996. In the summer of 1996, Václav Havel organized two meetings of like-minded Czech intellectuals and politicians at his country

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2 Ibid., p. 180.
3 Ibid., p. 181.
4 See Václav Havel’s “Why Forum 2000?” at the end of this publication.
How the Idea of Forum 2000 Emerged

house at Hrádeček where he explained what Forum 2000 was intended to be. Fairly quickly a planning committee, cooperating closely with the Office of the President of the Republic, was set up to organize the conference. At first it was assumed that there would be only one conference, but the success of the first conference in 1997 changed the original project. Forum 2000 became a series of continuing conferences.

Today, ten years after the first Forum 2000 conference, when we can already look at the first annual reports with hindsight, it is evident that they represent important historical material, capturing the state of mind of an influential group of people. The conferences took place at a pivotal time, when the optimism inspired by the collapse of the authoritarian systems in Central and Eastern Europe was already fading, and fears for the future were not yet as strong as they are today. The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York occurred shortly before the last of the introductory series of five major Forum 2000 conferences. This necessarily marked its course and also the declaration that marked the end of the first series of the conferences. It must, however, be emphasized that the financial crisis in Asia in 1998, the bloody massacre carried out by the Taliban in Mazar-i-Sharif in Afghanistan, the war in Kosovo, the bombing of Belgrade, the democratic revolution in Yugoslavia, and a series of other events throughout the whole period of the Forum 2000 conferences signaled that the world already found itself amid new tensions and conflicts capable of provoking a new global catastrophe in the future.

The present publication seeks to document how leading world intellectuals, scientists, religious leaders and politicians, both from Europe and North America, Australia, and from Asia, Latin America and Africa, reacted to this reality. A deeper level of our work consists in the effort to understand the diverse reactions to the present state of the world on the part of thinkers representing the world’s main religions, which still form the foundation of the major cultural regions of today’s world. In this respect we follow Max Weber’s tradition of understanding the role of religion in structuring the human values that shape the conduct of people in the political sphere as well as in the economy.

Despite the efforts of the majority of conference participants to seek what major cultural and civilizational groups on the planet have in common, we could not overlook the fact that even they saw the world we live in today as a place full of serious social, economic, cultural and political tensions. This situation, in our assessment, illustrates how justified were the fears of conflicts
between the various civilizational and cultural groups in the world which Václav Havel and other participants of Forum 2000 conferences expressed.

In brief, the publication wishes to be a contribution to the historiography and sociology of ideas at the end of the 20th century/beginning of the 21st century and to add to the understanding of the political implications of the ideational conflicts that have been identified. It wishes, also, to demonstrate another phenomenon of our time, the speed of cultural and social changes that accompany the globalizing societies of our planet as a result of one of the deepest transformations it has ever gone through. In a period characterized by rapid change in almost all the numerous spheres of the lives of the often unsettled and, moreover, manipulable masses of the population, it is especially important to understand the ideas and suggestions for resolving the contemporary problems of the world which guided two significant groups of persons in their reflections and activities: on the one hand, those who reflect systematically on these issues as intellectuals, and on the other hand, those who have had personal experience of acting as politicians in countries beset by dramatic and often bloody conflicts.

Time proceeds at a relentless pace, particularly nowadays. Nonetheless, efforts to grasp the major outlines of contemporary history are justified, albeit highly risky. This volume is just such an attempt. It seeks, in an analytical fashion, to present a picture of how the world was perceived by a group of people whose thinking helped change it, or whose activity has influenced developments. Before long this book will be evidence of their foresight or their misapprehension.

Jiří Musil and Takeaki Hori
Part I.

Our World
Spiritual Preconditions for Our Common Global Survival

Václav Havel

We live now—for the very first time in human history—in an era when our planet is enveloped by a single civilization. Virtually the entire population is connected by the myriad links of communication and contact, shared models of behavior, habits, trading patterns, and so forth. The roots of this modern civilization lie in Europe; it is there that its spiritual foundations began to evolve through an amalgamation of the classical tradition with Jewish and Christian spirituality. This civilization, developed over two millennia, has embraced the concepts of historicity, progress, development, searching and discovery. It has brought forth the belief that humanity is the master of this world, capable of rationally describing and controlling it. Furthermore, it has demonstrated an underlying concept of expansion and conquest. This particular feature of the European, and later Euro-American, civilization has manifested itself in various ways over the course of time. But regardless of precisely how expansion took place, one thing is clear: this civilization did not blanket the world by a historical accident or coincidence. Rather, expansion is part of its essence.

The present civilization has, as we all know, a thousand advantages. It has enabled humanity to enjoy numerous achievements—from the incredible advancement of science and technology, augmenting the range of human knowledge at an amazing pace and enhancing certain aspects of what may be called the comforts of life, to the cultivation of coexistence, as it has been embodied in the modern concept of human rights and democracy. At the same time, however, certain aspects and results are in fact problematical. Humanity appears to be irrevocably losing what various civilizations previously have had—a link with the eternal
and the infinite, and a resultant sense of humility and responsibility, a relationship to the world as a whole, to its metaphysical order, to the miracle of creation, to the Earth, to the universe, to our own future and to the mystery into which we have been thrust.

Disastrous outcomes of modern civilization’s deficiencies can already be seen in a variety of dangers—from environmental, social, demographic and cultural threats, to such ills as terrorism, drugs or depersonalization in today’s gigantic cities. Libraries brim with information about these threats, offering horrifying analyses and even more horrifying prognoses. Thousands of conferences, including United Nations summits, have been convened to deal with them. Numerous technical or systemic proposals seek to confront these menaces. And yet, there is still little hope of fundamental change.

Oddly enough, modern humanity seems to embody an essential inconsistency: while our cognitive capacity allows us to clearly see the dangers facing the human race, our ability or our readiness to combat these dangers in a truly resolute fashion and on a global scale is very limited.

We have, then, two possible courses of action.

We can take an ostrich-like approach, disregarding the long-term global problems in the hope that they will have no fatal effects within our lifetime and concerning ourselves instead with just today and tomorrow, or—when we happen to be politicians—with our momentary image on television or with our chance of winning the next elections. We can dismiss the warning appeals or questions of those who are worried with a simple answer: that modern science will undoubtedly produce new achievements to solve these problems.

The other alternative is to give the situation truly serious consideration, risking the outcome that our thoughts or warnings may go unheeded.

For my part, I advocate the latter course. This is actually one of the reasons I have been dealing with this subject, trying time and again—to the extent of my limited powers—to stir the stagnant waters of apathy that surround me. And this is what has determined the main theme of my deliberation: What can be done? Why has so little been done so far? Where should we start?

A voice that wants to make a serious impression in the present circumstance is most likely to succeed when it has a scientific background. All the proposed solutions to the fundamental problems of the present...
civilization have therefore been of a largely technical or systemic nature, and considerable ingenuity has gone into devising sophisticated procedures. These could perhaps work—if it were not for the fact that nobody puts them into practice. Their application is hindered by the modern way of life itself. There is not enough readiness to pursue solutions that go counter either to the established habits or the immediate interests of people, nations, communities, corporations or various lobbies. Whenever we inquire into these problems, trying to identify the possibilities for responding and the reasons why no one is trying, we always wind up against a hopeless lack of will and inner urge to act, that is, against barriers in the realm of human awareness or mentality.

This has increasingly convinced me that a change of course is impossible unless something begins to change in human minds, in humanity’s attitude toward the world and the values of life, in our ways of thinking and our perception of responsibility. Only this kind of change can generate the will to change our behavior and, eventually, to undertake the systemic changes as well. However, I am far from objecting to the kind of systemic changes that are now proposed. I am just saying that they can be implemented only as a result of a more profound phenomenon—a change in the way humanity views life. That, unfortunately, cannot be done through even the best technical tricks, administrative measures or systemic reforms.

I simply feel that the one thing that can avert the various impending disasters facing our civilization at the beginning of the third millennium A.D. is profound change, or even a revolution in the realm of the human mind. If such change is to be truly effective today it must be global and universal.

We can only speculate about the nature of such change and the circumstances that may bring it into being. Nevertheless, let me point out where I see an avenue that may possibly make it happen.

Today’s civilization envelops indeed the whole planet, thus allowing us to see the same products, the same ads, the same TV series, and branches of the same transnational banks or giant corporations nearly everywhere. International pop music is heard wherever we go, and the young people wear the same jeans. All this, however, is but a thin and recent veneer. Underneath it we find multiple layers of diverse cultural, social and political traditions formed in different areas in the thousands of years when those different worlds had minimal contact.
Our contemporary civilization could thus be compared to a common room in which we are doomed to live together, but which does not change the fact that each of us is a different being. More than that: as we become more numerous, and the conforming pressure of our civilization increases, we seem to be ever more irritated by others’ dissimilarities, feeling an ever greater urge to defend our individuality against all that may tend to dissolve it in some cosmopolitan sauce—or even against anything that is simply different. Such sentiments, combined with rapid population growth, lead many to see an enormous threat in the conflict between different cultures, religious worlds or spheres of civilization, or a whole cascade of conflicts among nations. In other words: parallel to the process of global unification in today’s civilization, there is an opposite development unfolding simultaneously: nations and whole regions are reawakening and asserting anew, often quite aggressively, their own ways of life, their unique identity, their traditions, their history, their deities, their habits, their cultures. We may say that the closer our proximity, and the more evident it is that we are all in the same boat, the more vexed we become with one another. Moreover, the common civilization that so dangerously presses us together, provoking the mutual animosities, offers us at the same time the most miraculous modern weapons and makes them widely available.

A way out must therefore consist in a change in the realm of mentality. Such a change must not attempt to impose forcibly one form of spirituality upon everyone else, as it happened in the pursuit of the conquest of America and the spread of Christianity. It must respect the individuality of all different spiritual, religious and cultural traditions.

It is a fact: we are heading irreversibly into a multicultural and multipolar world. Those who do not understand that understand nothing.

But is any regeneration of the human race, revolution in human thought or renaissance of humanity’s sense of responsibility at all thinkable in such a multifarious and multicultural world?

In my free time I enjoy reading books about the origins of humanity, about the most ancient times of humankind and the earliest religiosity, which dates further back than was believed until recently, and about the history of the different religions. Both this reading and my visits to the various continents have strengthened my feeling that the roots or the points of departure of the different religions are in fact much closer to one another than they may appear to be today.
Whatever the different gods look and act like, and whatever rituals or magic people use to approach them, we always find in the deepest roots of all beliefs and religions one and the same thing: they remind us that we are neither the supreme nor the most powerful of all creatures and that the world has a mysterious order of its own which infinitely transcends us and which we should respect. Within this order, everything is recorded in some mysterious fashion, so that nothing once done can be undone. Somewhere beyond our horizon everything is tested for its true worth; we should therefore act responsibly even when no one sees us, and also with regard to posterity.

All religions, the most ancient ones especially, command us to honor the earth on which we live and not to tamper arbitrarily with its endless and manifold riches. These constitute—as today’s ecologists would say—a single interconnected system in which interference with any of its parts, even one that may appear isolated, could cause irreparable damage to the whole.

All religions have embraced the principle of guilt and punishment, that is, the idea that if humans violate the god-given order they will eventually have to pay for it. This awareness of a higher will and higher order, the notion of good and evil forces, as well as many other widespread religious or cultural thoughts, often enshrined in myths or fairy tales, reflect humanity’s deepest archetypal experience of the world and of ourselves. Likewise, the whole moral order—the basis for any possible human coexistence—draws from the many different religions or ethical codes, written or unwritten, very similar points of departure and very similar imperatives: that we should respect the authority of the order of the universe, and of the creatures who embody this order, and that we should not defy their will; that we should honor the family and love our fellow humans; that we should not kill, lie or steal; that a guest coming with good intentions should be given a friendly reception; that self-denial is preferable to self-indulgence; that humans do not live on bread alone, and so on.

For the reasons I mentioned above and many others, emphasis is often placed on the differences between individual religions and cultures rather than on that which they share. Different names of gods, different liturgies, rituals or habits have sparked countless local conflicts or wars, while attempts at multi-religious dialogue are largely confined to the domain of intellectuals.
But if humankind’s only way out of this narrow pass is a far-reaching spiritual regeneration, it must now be a universal regeneration, based on respect for the different religious worlds and emanating from what is common to them all.

It just seems to me that it no longer suffices to seek political reconciliation between people of different denominations or to try to find keys to the future among the instruments of the technical civilization and offer these keys to the various cultures. Nor can we simply copy the expansion of the European, and later Euro-American spirit, set of values, lifestyle and vigor that characterized the birth of this civilization. I am deeply convinced that we must take another course. We should look for the common roots of human spirituality and religiosity, undertake a new reflection of the moral order in them and try to translate the universal moral imperatives of that order into the jointly accepted standards and rules of human coexistence.

It is necessary to restore humanity’s sense of responsibility for this world, and this responsibility must have a metaphysical anchor. Never again will those endeavors be successful which were regarded as forceful imposition of one’s own god upon those of other faiths. They can succeed only when people have understood—to put it very simply—that they all have one God, though He may have a thousand faces, and that their duty is not to convert those who call Him differently, but to respect those different names as well.

You undoubtedly expect me to project these general thoughts into some concrete political suggestions. You may be disappointed, because what I am putting down about their political consequences is also rather general.

1) I believe that the international community should finally say in no uncertain terms that the world is no longer, and will never be again, a sphere of interest of one or two or three great powers but a multi-cultural and multi-polar community in which all must be equal, work together on matters of global concern and jointly confront the common threats.

2) The principles and rules of such cooperation should be based on a “common minimum,” that is, on humanity’s attitude toward ourselves, our fellow humans, the society, the Earth and the world that are shared by all the traditions of culture and civilization that make up the spiritual wealth of the human race today. This means, among other things, that
the interests of all, and of future generations, must not forever take second place to particular interests or immediate preoccupations.

3) These traditions give rise to a general moral order and a sense of responsibility for this world. That, in turn, brings forth many other things: commitment to environmental protection, to social justice, to cultural equality as well as to the agreed standards of human rights and norms of democratic order.

4) The future order of the world should systematically foster association of states and nations on a footing of equality in regional groupings that would constitute a natural bridge between national states and the world community. Such regional alliances must be absolutely equal and must have a chance to cooperate as such, according to the rules which they have agreed to observe.

5) All this should spark a speedy fundamental reform of the United Nations that would provide for adequately proportioned representation of the different continents and spheres of civilization in UN bodies, rid the organization of excessive bureaucracy and enhance its power. The UN should become truly an organization of the people of this planet rather than a domain of governments. It should be able to adopt universally binding norms generated by a sense of global responsibility and have effective instruments to enforce these norms in the public interest.
The World We Have Inherited, Our World Today, and Hopes for the Future

(OPENING SPEECH OF THE FORUM 2000 CONFERENCE IN 1997)

Václav Havel

Our conference follows a series of similar events organized over the years by the foundation established by Marion and Elie Wiesel, some of which I had the honor of attending; it also, however, has unique and individual features distinguishing it somewhat from the mentioned series. I am hinting not only at the items on its agenda, not only at the external framework of the conference and accompanying events, not only at its ambition to establish a certain tradition, but mainly at the circle of its guests. Invitations to this conference have been sent out to about 100 prominent personalities from public life: philosophers, political scientists, politicians, scientists, religious authorities and intellectuals from all cultural regions or areas of civilization in the contemporary world. Of course, not all the invited have been able to attend. Nevertheless, I think that those of you who did find time to travel to Prague are a truly brilliant sample of the people who, on this planet, are engaged in the most fundamental questions of its destiny.

Before I assume the part of a keen listener to your debate, I shall try to outline in a brief, and indeed rather simplified, manner my personal expectations of this conference. Humankind today is well aware of the varied spectrum of threats looming over its head. We know that the number of people living on our planet is growing at a soaring rate and that within a relatively short time we can expect it to number tens of billions. We know that it will be almost impossible to feed so many people. We know that the already deep abyss separating the planet’s poor and rich could deepen further, and dangerously, because of this rapid population growth. We know how difficult it will be for people of various nationalities and cultures to coexist crowded so dramatically
together, and we know how many different kinds of conflicts such a situation can prompt.

It is also a commonly known fact that modern humankind has been destroying the environment on which its existence depends, that it is ever faster exhausting non-renewable sources of energy and other riches of this planet, that its activities are contributing to global warming, to the build-up of the greenhouse effect, to the enlargement of the holes in the ozone layer, and that it is disturbing the balance of all eco-systems. We all know, too, about the danger into which humankind is hurling itself by developing, producing and proliferating nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in general. And finally, we all know about the current, and the expected future rise of social problems, crime, drug abuse, and various forms of human alienation and frustration, in the event of the further concentration of people in large agglomerations, destroying natural human communities and bonds. Any one of us could certainly go on listing similar threats for a long time, describing them in more detail and in rich colors, explaining how deeply they are entwined. Hundreds of books have been written about these threats; some have even become topics of expensive global summits.

I see a large, yet typical, paradox for our era in the fact that although contemporary humanity has been aware of these dangers, it does almost nothing to confront or avert them. It is fascinating how preoccupied people are today with all kinds of catastrophic prognoses. How common it is for titles containing impressive evidence of the disasters into which we are tumbling headlong to become best-sellers? Yet people take very little account of these disasters in their everyday activities. For so many years now this warning data has been taught in schools and yet the effect of this knowledge on human behavior is so small!

Does not every school-child today know that the resources of this planet are limited and that if they are exhausted faster than they are recovered, this would mean we could not but be doomed? And still we continue in our ways and, moreover, we do not even seem perturbed. Quite the contrary. Rising production, and therefore also consumption, is sensed as the main sign of the success of a state, and not only of poor states where such feelings could be justified, but also of the wealthy ones, cutting the branch on which they are sitting by their ideology of stupidly indefinite and senseless growth.