



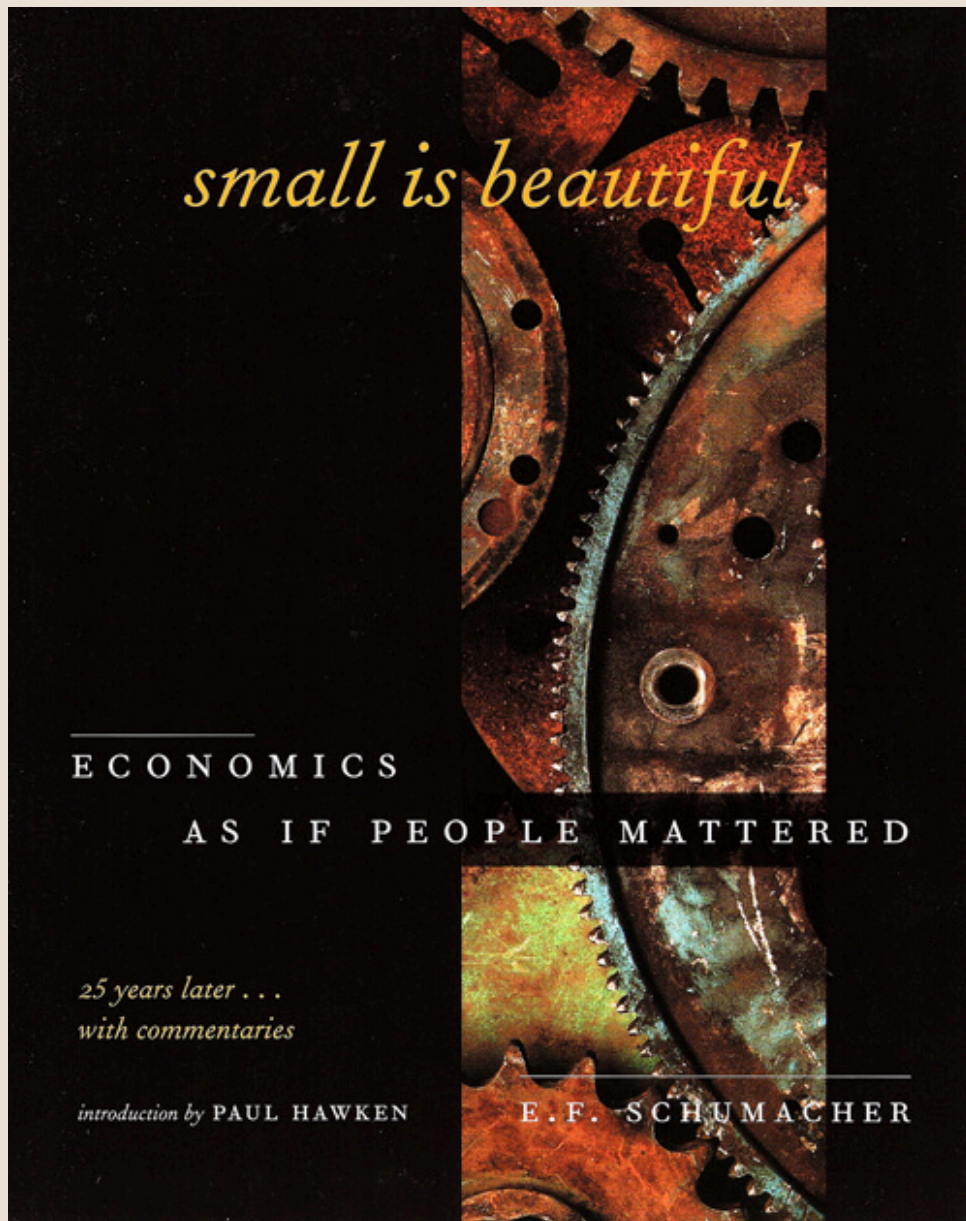
Zitate zum Thema „Klein ist schön“

Was den ersten Lesern von „Small is Beautiful“ so offensichtlich erschien, erscheint der Welt von heute immer noch schmerzhaft undurchsichtig. Als das Buch zum ersten Mal veröffentlicht wurde, glaubten viele, dass sich Veränderungen durch Einsicht, Logik, Mitgefühl und Vernunft ergeben würden. Immer mehr scheint es, dass Veränderungen eintreten werden, nachdem wir jede andere Theorie von Gier und Gewinn erschöpft haben und die Winde der Veränderung nicht mehr metaphorisch sind, sondern fünf Hurrikane, die ganze Regionen zerstören. Dass die Welt so immun gegen ihre eigenen Verluste werden sollte, schien vor 25 Jahren unvorstellbar. Jetzt, da wir wieder gelernt haben, wie bemerkenswert stumpfsinnig die Menschheit sein kann, wenn sie von finanziellem und materiellem Gewinn geblendet wird, müssen wir das Licht umso heller auf die Einzigartigkeit und Voraussicht von Schumachers Arbeit und Vision richten.

-Paul Hawken in „Small is Beautiful: Wirtschaft, als ob Menschen wichtig wären: 25 Jahre später ... mit Kommentaren“

Unsere Lieblingszitate aus „Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Matters“ von E. F. Schumacher: 25 Jahre später ... mit Kommentaren

mit Kommentaren von David Brower, Hazel Henderson, Wes Jackson, Jane Jacobs, Satish Kumar, George McRobie, Helena Norberg-Hodge, David Orr, Kirkpatrick Sale, Robert Swann, Susan Witt und anderen.



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Kapitel 1: Das Problem der Produktion

Der Großteil der Umweltbewegung vertritt einen utilitaristischen Ökologieansatz, der besagt, dass wir die Umwelt schützen müssen, weil sie für die Menschen nützlich und vorteilhaft ist. Schumachers Ansatz war, dass wir uns aus tiefer Ehrfurcht vor der Umwelt um sie kümmern müssen. Ich nenne Schumachers Ansatz zur Umwelt „ehrfürchtige Ökologie“.

Die respektvolle Ökonomie und Ökologie sagen, dass man seine Grenzen kennen und lernen muss, innerhalb dieser Grenzen zu leben. Dann wird alles recycelt und regeneriert. Mahatma Gandhi sagte, es gebe auf der Welt genug für jedermanns Bedürfnisse, aber nicht genug für jedermanns Gier. Unsere moderne Dinosauriergesellschaft ist zu einer gierigen Gesellschaft geworden und wir wissen nicht, wann genug genug ist.

- Satish Kumar in „ Small is Beautiful: Wirtschaft, als ob Menschen wichtig wären: 25 Jahre später ... mit Kommentaren“

Einer der verhängnisvollsten Irrtümer unserer Zeit ist der Glaube, das „Problem der Produktion“ sei gelöst.

Das Aufkommen dieses so ungeheuerlichen und so tief verwurzelten Irrtums ist eng mit den philosophischen, um nicht zu sagen religiösen, Veränderungen in der Einstellung des Menschen zur Natur während der letzten drei oder vier Jahrhunderte verbunden ... Der moderne Mensch erlebt sich nicht als Teil der Natur, sondern als eine äußere Kraft, die dazu bestimmt ist, sie zu beherrschen und zu besiegen. Er spricht sogar von einem Kampf mit der Natur und vergisst dabei, dass er, wenn er den Kampf gewinnen würde, auf der Verliererseite stehen würde.


Die Illusion unbegrenzter Macht, genährt durch erstaunliche wissenschaftliche und technologische Errungenschaften, hat gleichzeitig die Illusion hervorgebracht, das Produktionsproblem gelöst zu haben. Letztere Illusion beruht auf dem Versäumnis, zwischen Einkommen und Kapital zu unterscheiden, obwohl dieser Unterschied am wichtigsten ist. Jeder Ökonom und Geschäftsmann kennt diesen Unterschied und wendet ihn gewissenhaft und mit beträchtlicher Subtilität auf alle wirtschaftlichen Angelegenheiten an – außer dort, wo er wirklich wichtig ist: nämlich beim unersetzlichen Kapital, das der Mensch nicht geschaffen, sondern nur gefunden hat, und ohne das er nichts tun kann.

...wir sind von der Realität entfremdet und neigen dazu, alles als wertlos zu betrachten, was wir nicht selbst gemacht haben.


...wir haben uns zwar Mühe gegeben, einen Teil des Kapitals zu schaffen, das uns heute bei der Produktion hilft – ein großer Fundus an wissenschaftlichem, technologischem und anderem Wissen, eine aufwendige physische Infrastruktur, unzählige Arten hochentwickelter Kapitalausstattung usw. – aber all das ist nur ein kleiner Teil des Gesamtkapitals, das wir einsetzen. Weitaus größer ist das Kapital, das uns von der Natur und nicht vom Menschen zur Verfügung gestellt wird – und wir erkennen es nicht einmal als solches. Dieser größere Teil wird jetzt mit alarmierender Geschwindigkeit aufgebraucht, und deshalb ist es ein absurder und selbstmörderischer Irrtum, zu glauben und auf dieser Grundlage zu handeln, dass das Produktionsproblem gelöst sei.


Ist es nicht offensichtlich, dass unsere gegenwärtigen Produktionsmethoden bereits an der Substanz des Industriemenschen zehren?


Die Substanz des Menschen kann nicht am Bruttosozialprodukt gemessen werden.

 *Statistiken beweisen nie etwas.*



 *...einer der verhängnisvollsten Irrtümer unserer Zeit ist der Glaube, das Problem der Produktion sei gelöst. Diese Illusion ... beruht hauptsächlich auf unserer Unfähigkeit zu erkennen, dass das moderne Industriesystem mit all seiner intellektuellen Raffinesse genau die Grundlage aufzehrt, auf der es errichtet wurde. Um es mit den Worten der Ökonomen auszudrücken: Es lebt von unersetzlichem Kapital, das es freudig als Einkommen betrachtet.*

 *Und was ist mein Argument? Einfach, dass unsere wichtigste Aufgabe darin besteht, unseren derzeitigen Kollisionskurs zu verlassen. Und wer ist da, um diese Aufgabe zu bewältigen? Ich denke, jeder von uns, ob alt oder jung, mächtig oder machtlos, reich oder arm, einflussreich oder nicht einflussreich.*

 *Über die Zukunft zu reden ist nur dann sinnvoll, wenn es zu sofortigem Handeln führt.*



Wir müssen noch lernen, friedlich zu leben, nicht nur mit unseren Mitmenschen, sondern auch mit der Natur und vor allem mit den höheren Mächten, die die Natur und uns geschaffen haben. Denn wir sind gewiss nicht durch Zufall entstanden und haben uns gewiss nicht selbst geschaffen.

Jetzt, da der Mensch die physischen Mittel zur Selbstvernichtung entwickelt hat, ist die Frage des Friedens offensichtlich wichtiger denn je in der Menschheitsgeschichte. Und wie könnte Frieden geschaffen werden, ohne eine gewisse Sicherheit der Dauerhaftigkeit unseres Wirtschaftslebens zu haben?

Kapitel 2: Frieden und Beständigkeit

Um eine nachhaltige wirtschaftliche Entwicklung der Gemeinschaft zu erreichen, müssen nachhaltige Beschäftigung und wirtschaftliche Nachfragesteuerung (EDM) betont werden. Nachhaltige Beschäftigung umfasst: Abfall in Ressourcen umwandeln (z. B. Recycling); Verbesserung der Effizienz in Bezug auf Energie und Materialien; Umstellung auf eine stärkere Nutzung erneuerbarer Energiequellen; Steigerung der Eigenständigkeit der Gemeinschaft (z. B. Nahrungsmittel- und Energieproduktion); und nachhaltige Bewirtschaftung natürlicher Ressourcen (z. B. Gemeinschaftsforstwirtschaft). EDM verlagert unseren Schwerpunkt der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung von der traditionellen Sorge um die Steigerung des Wachstums auf die Verringerung der sozialen Abhängigkeit vom Wirtschaftswachstum.

- Mark Roseland in „Small is Beautiful: Wirtschaft als ob Menschen wichtig wären: 25 Jahre später ... mit Kommentaren“

Es ist klar, dass die „Reichen“ dabei sind, die Welt ihrer einmaligen Gabe an relativ billigen und einfachen Brennstoffen zu berauben. Ihr anhaltendes Wirtschaftswachstum führt zu immer exorbitanteren Ansprüchen, mit dem Ergebnis, dass die billigen und einfachen Brennstoffe der Welt leicht teuer und knapp werden könnten, lange bevor die armen Länder den Reichtum, die Bildung, die industrielle Entwicklung und die Macht der Kapitalakkumulation erlangt haben, die für die Anwendung alternativer Brennstoffe in nennenswertem Umfang erforderlich sind.

...dass das Wirtschaftswachstum, das aus ökonomischer, physikalischer, chemischer und technologischer Sicht keine erkennbaren Grenzen hat, aus umweltwissenschaftlicher Sicht zwangsläufig auf entscheidende Engpässe stößt. Eine Lebenseinstellung, die Erfüllung im zielstrebigem Streben nach Reichtum sucht – kurz gesagt, Materialismus – passt nicht in diese Welt, weil sie in sich selbst kein begrenzendes Prinzip enthält, während die Umgebung, in die sie eingebettet ist, streng begrenzt ist.

Die moderne Wirtschaft wird von rasender Gier angetrieben und schwelgt in einer Orgie des Neids. Dies sind keine zufälligen Erscheinungen, sondern die eigentlichen Ursachen ihres Expansionserfolgs. Die Frage ist, ob diese Ursachen auf Dauer wirksam sein können oder ob sie den Keim der Zerstörung in sich tragen.

Wenn menschliche Laster wie Gier und Neid systematisch gefördert werden, ist das unvermeidliche Ergebnis nichts weniger als ein Zusammenbruch der Intelligenz. Ein von Gier oder Neid getriebener Mensch verliert die Fähigkeit, die Dinge so zu sehen, wie sie wirklich sind, sie in ihrer Ganzheit und Vollständigkeit zu sehen, und selbst seine Erfolge werden zu Misserfolgen. Wenn ganze Gesellschaften von diesen Lastern infiziert werden, können sie zwar erstaunliche Dinge erreichen, werden aber zunehmend unfähig, die elementarsten Probleme des alltäglichen Lebens zu lösen.

...Die Grundlagen des Friedens können nicht durch universellen Wohlstand im modernen Sinne gelegt werden, denn ein solcher Wohlstand kann, wenn er überhaupt erreichbar ist, nur durch die Kultivierung menschlicher Triebe wie Gier und Neid erreicht werden, die die Intelligenz, das Glück, die Gelassenheit und damit die Friedfertigkeit des Menschen zerstören.

*Niemand arbeitet wirklich für den Frieden,
wenn er nicht in erster Linie an der
Wiederherstellung der Weisheit arbeitet.*

*Aus ökonomischer Sicht ist Beständigkeit der
zentrale Begriff der Weisheit. Wir müssen uns
mit der Ökonomie der Beständigkeit befassen.*

*Mit dem Ausschluss der Weisheit aus
Wirtschaft, Wissenschaft und Technologie
konnten wir vielleicht eine Zeit lang
durchkommen, solange wir relativ erfolglos
waren. Doch jetzt, da wir große Erfolge erzielt
haben, rückt das Problem der spirituellen und
moralischen Wahrheit in den Mittelpunkt.*

*Die Kultivierung und Ausweitung von
Bedürfnissen ist das Gegenteil von Weisheit.
Es ist auch das Gegenteil von Freiheit und
Frieden. Jede Steigerung der Bedürfnisse führt
tendenziell zu einer stärkeren Abhängigkeit von
äußeren Kräften, über die man keine Kontrolle
hat, und verstärkt daher die Existenzangst. Nur
durch eine Reduzierung der Bedürfnisse kann
man eine echte Verringerung jener
Spannungen fördern, die die eigentlichen
Ursachen von Streit und Krieg sind.*

Die Weisheit verlangt eine neue Ausrichtung von Wissenschaft und Technologie auf das Organische, das Sanfte, das Gewaltlose, das Elegante und Schöne. Frieden ist, wie oft gesagt wurde, unteilbar – wie könnte dann Frieden auf einem Fundament aus rücksichtsloser Wissenschaft und gewalttätiger Technologie errichtet werden?

Dass seelenzerstörende, sinnlose, mechanische, monotone und schwachsinnige Arbeit eine Beleidigung der menschlichen Natur ist, die zwangsläufig und unvermeidlich entweder Eskapismus oder Aggression hervorbringt, und dass kein noch so großes „Brot und Spiele“ den angerichteten Schaden wiedergutmachen kann – das sind Tatsachen, die weder geleugnet noch eingestanden werden, denen jedoch ein unabänderliches Schweigen entgegenschlägt – denn sie zu leugnen wäre zu offensichtlich absurd, und sie einzugestehen hieße, das zentrale Anliegen der modernen Gesellschaft als Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit zu verurteilen.

Die Vernachlässigung, ja Ablehnung der Weisheit ist so weit gegangen, dass die meisten unserer Intellektuellen nicht einmal die leiseste Ahnung haben, was der Begriff bedeuten könnte. Daher neigen sie immer dazu, eine Krankheit zu heilen, indem sie ihre Ursachen verstärken. Da die Krankheit dadurch verursacht wurde, dass man zuließ, dass Klugheit die Weisheit verdrängte, wird keine noch so kluge Forschung eine Heilung hervorbringen. Aber was ist Weisheit? Wo kann sie gefunden werden? Hier kommen wir zum Kern der Sache: Man kann in zahlreichen Veröffentlichungen darüber lesen, aber man kann sie nur in sich selbst finden.

[Die Erkenntnisse der Weisheit] ... ermöglichen es uns, die Hohlheit und grundlegende Unzulänglichkeit eines Lebens zu erkennen, das in erster Linie dem Streben nach materiellen Zielen gewidmet ist und das Spirituelle vernachlässigt. Ein solches Leben bringt zwangsläufig Mensch gegen Mensch und Nation gegen Nation auf, denn die Bedürfnisse des Menschen sind unendlich und Unendlichkeit kann nur im spirituellen Bereich erreicht werden, niemals im materiellen.

Wie können wir Gier und Neid entwaffnen?
Vielleicht indem wir selbst viel weniger gierig
und neidisch sind; vielleicht indem wir der
Versuchung widerstehen, unseren Luxus zu
Bedürfnissen werden zu lassen; und vielleicht
indem wir unsere Bedürfnisse sogar genau
prüfen, um zu sehen, ob sie nicht vereinfacht
und reduziert werden können.

Ein Gramm Praxis ist im Allgemeinen mehr
wert als eine Tonne Theorie.

Kapitel 3: Die Rolle der Ökonomie

Schumacher argumentierte, dass die
Rentabilität allein kein ausreichendes Maß
dafür ist, ob etwas „wirtschaftlich“ ist oder
nicht. Es bedarf einer neuen
Wirtschaftstheorie, die nicht nur die
Rentabilität einer bestimmten Aktivität
berücksichtigt, sondern auch ihre
Auswirkungen auf Menschen und Umwelt,
einschließlich der Ressourcenbasis.

- George McRobie in „ *Small is Beautiful:
Wirtschaft als ob Menschen wichtig wären: 25
Jahre später ... mit Kommentaren*“

Die Ökonomie ... behandelt Güter nach ihrem Marktwert und nicht nach dem, was sie wirklich sind. Dieselben Regeln und Kriterien gelten für Primärgüter, die der Mensch aus der Natur gewinnen muss, und für Sekundärgüter, die die Existenz von Primärgütern voraussetzen und aus ihnen hergestellt werden. Alle Güter werden gleich behandelt, denn der Standpunkt ist grundsätzlich der der privaten Profitmacherei, und das bedeutet, dass es der Methodologie der Ökonomie inhärent ist, die Abhängigkeit des Menschen von der natürlichen Welt zu ignorieren.

Der Markt ... stellt nur die Oberfläche der Gesellschaft dar und seine Bedeutung bezieht sich auf die momentane Situation, wie sie dort und dann existiert. Es gibt keine Erforschung der Tiefen der Dinge, der natürlichen oder sozialen Tatsachen, die ihnen zugrunde liegen. In gewisser Weise ist der Markt die Institutionalisierung von Individualismus und Verantwortungslosigkeit. Weder Käufer noch Verkäufer sind für irgendetwas außer sich selbst verantwortlich.

...die Herrschaft der Quantität feiert ihre größten Triumphe auf dem „Markt“. Alles wird mit allem anderen gleichgesetzt. Dinge gleichzusetzen bedeutet, ihnen einen Preis zu geben und sie dadurch austauschbar zu machen. In dem Maße, in dem das ökonomische Denken auf dem Markt basiert, nimmt es dem Leben seine Heiligkeit, denn an etwas, das einen Preis hat, kann nichts Heiliges sein.

Um nicht-ökonomische Werte in den Rahmen der wirtschaftlichen Kalkulation zu pressen, verwenden Ökonomen die Methode der Kosten-Nutzen-Analyse. Diese wird allgemein als eine aufgeklärte und fortschrittliche Entwicklung angesehen, da sie zumindest einen Versuch darstellt, Kosten und Nutzen zu berücksichtigen, die sonst völlig außer Acht gelassen würden. Tatsächlich handelt es sich jedoch um ein Verfahren, bei dem das Höhere auf das Niveau des Niedrigeren reduziert und das Unbezahlbare mit einem Preis versehen wird. Sie kann daher niemals dazu dienen, die Situation zu klären und zu einer aufgeklärten Entscheidung zu führen. Sie kann lediglich zur Selbsttäuschung oder zur Täuschung anderer führen; man muss nur den unermesslichen Kosten und Nutzen geeignete Werte zuschreiben, um die gewünschten Ergebnisse zu erzielen. Die logische Absurdität ist jedoch nicht der größte Fehler dieses Unterfangens: Noch schlimmer und zivilisationszerstörerischer ist die Behauptung, dass alles einen Preis hat oder, mit anderen Worten, dass Geld der höchste aller Werte ist.

Eine Ausweitung der menschlichen Fähigkeit zur Erzeugung sekundärer Produkte ist nutzlos, wenn ihr nicht eine Ausweitung seiner Fähigkeit vorausgeht, der Erde primäre Produkte zu entziehen. Denn der Mensch ist kein Produzent, sondern nur ein Umwandler, und für jede Umwandlungsaufgabe benötigt er primäre Produkte.

...der Aufwand, der nötig ist, um einen Lebensstil aufrechtzuerhalten, der auf ein optimales Konsummuster abzielt, ist wahrscheinlich viel geringer als der Aufwand, der nötig ist, um den Drang nach maximalem Konsum aufrechtzuerhalten.

Da es immer mehr Beweise für eine Verschlechterung der Umweltbedingungen gibt, insbesondere der belebten Natur, werden die gesamte Sichtweise und Methodik der Wirtschaftswissenschaften in Frage gestellt. Das Studium der Wirtschaftswissenschaften ist zu eng und zu fragmentarisch, um zu gültigen Erkenntnissen zu führen, es sei denn, es wird durch ein Studium der Metaökonomie ergänzt und vervollständigt.

Kapitel 4: Buddhistische Ökonomie

Fritz verbrachte seine gesamte Freizeit in Burma damit, den Buddhismus zu studieren. Seine Wochenenden verbrachte er in einem Kloster und lernte bei buddhistischen Gelehrten. „Dann begann ich mich zu fragen“, sagte er, „wie eine buddhistische Ökonomie aussehen würde. Und ich kam zu dem Schluss, dass sie das genaue Gegenteil unserer westlichen Ökonomie wäre.“

Erstens, so argumentierte er, würde eine buddhistische Herangehensweise an die Wirtschaft zwischen Elend, Genügsamkeit und Überfluss unterscheiden. Wirtschaftliches Wachstum wäre nur bis zur Genügsamkeit gut. Grenzenloses Wachstum und unbegrenzter Konsum wären verheerend. Zweitens würde eine buddhistische Wirtschaft fest auf erneuerbaren Ressourcen basieren: eine Ökonomie der Beständigkeit. Im Gegensatz dazu basiert die westliche Wirtschaft auf der rücksichtslosen Ausbeutung nicht erneuerbarer Ressourcen und kennt keine Grenzen für Produktion und Konsum – ein nicht nachhaltiges System.

- George McRobie in „ Small is Beautiful: Wirtschaft als ob Menschen wichtig wären: 25 Jahre später ... mit Kommentaren“

Ökonomen selbst leiden, wie die meisten Fachleute, normalerweise an einer Art metaphysischer Blindheit, da sie davon ausgehen, dass ihre Wissenschaft absolute und unveränderliche Wahrheiten ohne jegliche Voraussetzungen sei.

Aus buddhistischer Sicht hat die Arbeit mindestens eine dreifache Funktion: Sie gibt dem Menschen die Möglichkeit, seine Fähigkeiten zu nutzen und zu entwickeln. Sie befähigt ihn, seine Ich-Bezogenheit zu überwinden, indem er sich mit anderen zu einer gemeinsamen Aufgabe zusammenschließt. Und sie bringt die Güter und Dienste hervor, die für eine lohnende Existenz notwendig sind.

Daher ist es klar, dass sich die buddhistische Ökonomie stark von der Ökonomie des modernen Materialismus unterscheiden muss, da der Buddhist das Wesen der Zivilisation nicht in einer Vervielfachung der Bedürfnisse, sondern in der Läuterung des menschlichen Charakters sieht.

Aus buddhistischer Sicht stellt dies die Wahrheit auf den Kopf, indem Güter als wichtiger als Menschen und Konsum als wichtiger als kreative Aktivitäten betrachtet werden.

Der Grundgedanke der buddhistischen Ökonomie ist daher Einfachheit und Gewaltlosigkeit. Aus der Sicht eines Ökonomen liegt das Wunderbare an der buddhistischen Lebensweise in der völligen Rationalität ihres Musters – erstaunlich kleine Mittel führen zu außerordentlich zufriedenstellenden Ergebnissen.

Der Besitz und Konsum von Gütern ist ein Mittel zum Zweck, und die buddhistische Ökonomie beschäftigt sich systematisch mit der Frage, wie man vorgegebene Ziele mit minimalen Mitteln erreichen kann.

Aus der Sicht der buddhistischen Ökonomie ist daher die Produktion aus örtlichen Ressourcen für den örtlichen Bedarf die rationalste Art des Wirtschaftslebens, während die Abhängigkeit von Importen aus der Ferne und die daraus resultierende Notwendigkeit, für den Export zu unbekanntem und weit entfernten Völkern zu produzieren, höchst unwirtschaftlich und nur in Ausnahmefällen und in kleinem Maßstab gerechtfertigt ist.

Die moderne Ökonomie unterscheidet nicht zwischen erneuerbaren und nicht erneuerbaren Materialien, da ihre Methode darin besteht, alles über einen Geldpreis gleichzusetzen und zu quantifizieren.

Nicht erneuerbare Güter dürfen nur dann verwendet werden, wenn sie unverzichtbar sind, und dann nur mit größter Sorgfalt und sorgfältigster Sorge um ihre Erhaltung. Sie achtlos oder verschwenderisch zu verwenden, ist ein Akt der Gewalt, und obwohl völlige Gewaltlosigkeit auf dieser Erde vielleicht nicht erreichbar ist, besteht für den Menschen dennoch die unausweichliche Pflicht, bei allem, was er tut, das Ideal der Gewaltlosigkeit anzustreben.

Da die weltweiten Ressourcen an nicht erneuerbaren Brennstoffen - Kohle, Öl und Erdgas - äußerst ungleichmäßig über den Globus verteilt sind und ihre Menge zweifellos begrenzt ist, ist es klar, dass ihre immer schnellere Ausbeutung einen Akt der Gewalt gegen die Natur darstellt, der fast unvermeidlich zu Gewalt zwischen den Menschen führen muss.

Bevor sie die buddhistische Ökonomie als nichts weiter als einen nostalgischen Traum abtun, sollten sie vielleicht darüber nachdenken, ob der von der modernen Ökonomie vorgezeichnete Weg der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung sie wirklich dorthin führen wird, wo sie wirklich sein wollen.

Es geht darum, den richtigen Entwicklungspfad zu finden, den Mittelweg zwischen materialistischer Sorglosigkeit und traditionalistischer Bewegungslosigkeit, kurz gesagt, den „richtigen Lebensunterhalt“ zu finden.

Kapitel 5: Eine Frage der Größe

Fritz' täuschend einfache, aber prophetische Fragen zum Maßstab gewinnen an Bedeutung. Jahrzehnte später erweisen sie sich als Kernfragen nicht nur kommerzieller Wettbewerbsvorteile, sondern auch geeigneter Technologie und angemessener Lebensgrundlagen - Fragen, von denen die Zukunft der Welt abhängt. Die nächste industrielle Revolution, die sich jetzt abzeichnet - ein Kapitalismus, der sich nach dem angemessenen Wert des natürlichen und menschlichen Kapitals verhält - wird den bescheidenen Ökonomen EF Schumacher endlich als einen seiner Seher, Inspiratoren und Retter anerkennen.

- Amory Lovins in „Small is Beautiful: Wirtschaft, als ob Menschen wichtig wären: 25 Jahre später ... mit Kommentaren“

Auch heute noch wird uns im Allgemeinen erzählt, dass gigantische Organisationen unausweichlich notwendig seien. Bei genauerem Hinsehen fällt jedoch auf, dass, sobald Großes geschaffen wurde, oft ein energischer Versuch erfolgt, Kleinheit innerhalb der Größe zu erreichen.

...es ist wahr, dass alle Menschen Brüder sind, es ist aber auch wahr, dass wir in unseren aktiven persönlichen Beziehungen tatsächlich nur für einige wenige von ihnen Brüder sein können und dass wir dazu aufgerufen sind, ihnen gegenüber mehr Brüderlichkeit zu zeigen, als wir jemals der gesamten Menschheit zeigen könnten.

Economics, which Lord Keynes had hoped would settle down as a modest occupation similar to dentistry, suddenly becomes the most important subject of all.

There is no such thing as the viability of states or of nations, there is only a problem of viability of people: people, actual persons like you and me, are viable when they can stand on their own feet and earn their keep. You do not make non-viable people viable by putting large numbers of them into one huge community, and you do not make viable people non-viable by splitting a large community into a number of smaller, more intimate, more coherent and more manageable groups.

The economic calculus, as applied by present-day economics, forces the industrialist to eliminate the human factor because machines do not make mistakes, which people do. Hence the enormous effort at automation and the drive for ever-larger units. This means that those who have nothing to sell but their labor remain in the weakest possible bargaining position.

The conventional wisdom of what is now taught as economics bypasses the poor, the very people for whom development is really needed.

The economics of giantism and automation is a leftover of nineteenth-century conditions and nineteenth-century thinking and it is totally incapable of solving any of the real problems of today. An entirely new system of thought is needed, a system based on attention to people, and not primarily attention to goods—(the goods will look after themselves!). It could be summed up in the phrase, "production by the masses, rather than mass production."

What is the meaning of democracy, freedom, human dignity, standard of living, self-realization, fulfillment? Is it a matter of goods, or of people? Of course it is a matter of people. But people can be themselves only in small comprehensible groups.

Chapter 6: The Great Resource - Education

Revitalizing local economies means rethinking education - examining the connection between ever greater

specialization and increasing dependence on an ever larger economic arena. Today, modern education is training children around the world for the centralized global economy. Essentially the same curriculum is taught in every environment, no matter what the cultural tradition or local resources.

Promoting regional and local adaptation in the schools would be an essential part of the revitalization of local economies. Training in locally-adapted agriculture, architecture, artisan production, and appropriate technologies suited to the specifics of climate and local resources would further a real decentralization of production for basic needs. Rather than educating the young for ever greater specialization in a competitive, 'jobless growth' economy, children would be equipped for diverse economic systems that depended primarily, but not exclusively, on local resources. This, of course, would not mean that information about the rest of the world would be excluded. On the contrary, knowledge about other cultures and cultural exchange programs would be an important part of the educational process.

- Helena Norberg-Hodge in *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries*

All history – as well as all current experience – points to the fact that it is man, not nature, who provides the primary resource: that the key factor of all economic development comes out of the mind of man.

At present, there can be little doubt that the whole of mankind is in mortal danger, not because we are short of scientific and technological know-how, but because we tend to use it destructively, without wisdom. More education can help us only if produces more wisdom.

On the basis of experience and conscious thought small ideas may easily be dislodged, but when it comes to bigger, more universal, or more subtle ideas it may not be so easy to change them. Indeed, it is often difficult to become aware of them, as they are the instruments and not the results of our thinking—just as you can see what is outside you, but cannot easily see that with which you see, the eye itself.

The way in which we experience and interpret the world obviously depends very much indeed on the kind of ideas that fill our minds.

The essence of education...is the transmission of values, but values do not help us to pick our way through life unless they have become our own, a part, so to say, of our mental make-up. This means that they are more than mere formulae or dogmatic assertions: that we think and feel with them, that they are the very instruments through which we look at, interpret, and experience the world.

When people ask for education...I think what they are really looking for is ideas that would make the world, and their own lives, intelligible to them. When a thing is intelligible you have a sense of participation; when a thing is unintelligible you have a sense of estrangement.

What is at fault is no specialization, but the lack of depth with which the subjects are usually presented, and the absence of metaphysical awareness.

We have become confused to what our convictions really are. The great ideas of the nineteenth century may fill our minds in one way or another, but our hearts do not believe in them all the same. Mind and heart are at war with one another, not, as is commonly asserted, reason and faith. Our reason has become so beclouded by an extraordinary, blind, and unreasonable faith in a set of fantastic and life-destroying ideas inherited from the nineteenth century. It is the foremost task of our reason to recover a truer faith than that.

The typical problems of life are insoluble on the level of being on which we normally find ourselves. How can one reconcile the demands of freedom and discipline in education? Countless mothers and teachers, in fact, do it, but no one can write down a solution. They do it by bringing into the situation a force that belongs to a higher level where opposites are transcended—the power of love.

It is only when we can see the world as a ladder, and when we can see man's position on the ladder, that we can recognize a meaningful task for man's life on earth.

The true problems of living...are always problems of overcoming or reconciling opposites. They are divergent problems and have no solution in the ordinary sense of the word. They demand of man not merely the employment of his reasoning powers but the commitment of his whole personality.

...ideas are the most powerful things on earth...

What is to take the place of the soul and life-destroying metaphysics inherited from the nineteenth century? The task of our generation, I have no doubt, is one of metaphysical reconstruction... Our task – and the task of all education – is to understand the present world, the world in which we live and make our choices.

Chapter 7: The Proper Use of Land

Agriculture, Schumacher argued, must learn from nature and work with nature, and learn also how to protect the wider environment and all that lives within it. This requires a shift from industrialized chemical farming to organic husbandry. The mass production of throwaway products based on fossil energy, capital, and chemical intensive forms of production, whether in manufacture or agriculture, is no longer possible or acceptable. This view would be consistent with most interpretations of deep ecology.

*- George McRobie in **Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries***

There is no way to affix a price for a way of life. And that, perhaps more than anything else, encapsulates the struggle of the White Earth Anishinaabeg people with the U.S. government, logging companies, and wild rice tycoons. For a hundred years, native people have been saying that their way of life - their land, trees, and very future - cannot be quantified and is not for sale. For that same amount of time, government and industry accountants have been picking away, trying to come up with a formula to compensate Indians. There seems to be no meeting of minds, nor will there be in the next generations.

*- Winona Laduke in **Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries***

There are always some things which we do for their own sakes, and there are other things which we do for some other purpose. One of the most important tasks for any society is to distinguish between ends and means-to-ends, and to have some sort of cohesive view and argument about this.

We can say that man's management of the land must be primarily orientated towards three goals – health, beauty, and permanence. The fourth goal – the only one accepted by the experts – productivity, will then be attained almost as a by-product.

...we should be searching for policies to reconstruct rural culture, to open the land for the gainful occupation to larger numbers of people, whether it be on a full-time or a part-time bases, and to orientate all our actions on the land towards the threefold ideal of health, beauty and permanence.

We know too much about ecology today to have any excuse for the many abuses that are currently going on in the management of the land, in the management of animals, in food storage, food processing, and in heedless urbanization. If we permit them, this is not due to poverty, as if we could not afford to stop them; it is due to the fact that, as a society, we have no firm basis of belief in any meta-economic values, and when there is no such belief the economic calculus takes over.

Nature, it has been said, abhors a vacuum, and when the available "spiritual space" is not filled by some higher motivation, then it will necessarily be filled by something lower – by the small, mean, calculating attitude to life which is rationalized in the economic calculus.

In the simple question of how we treat the land, next to people our most precious resource, our entire way of live is involved, and before our policies with regard to the land will really be changed, there will have to be a great deal of philosophical, not to say religious, change. It is not a question of what we can afford but of what we choose to spend our money on. If we could return to a generous recognition of meta-economic values, our landscapes would become healthy and beautiful again and our people would regain the dignity of man...

Chapter 8: Resources for Industry

*The mainstream view of the environment today is sharply different from what it was when Schumacher wrote *Small is Beautiful*.*

At that time, environmental problems were almost universally regarded as minor, technical, soluble, and politically uncontentious. They were considered by-products of economic growth and social progress that would be duly solved by further applications of growth and progress. Today, throughout the industrialized world, governments and parties of both left and right now acknowledge that environmental problems are indeed very serious, requiring solutions that are not merely technical, and may not be available at all without significant social and economic change.

*- Mark Roseland in *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries**

The most striking thing about modern industry is that it requires so much and accomplishes so little. Modern industry seems to be inefficient to a degree that surpasses one's ordinary powers of imagination. Its inefficiency therefore remains unnoticed.

It might be said that energy is for the mechanical world what consciousness is for the human world. If energy fails, everything fails.

Chapter 9: Nuclear Energy – Salvation or Damnation?

Ecological design is a comparatively new discipline involving more than using solar and wind energy in lieu of fossil fuels or nuclear power. It has been codified as a scientific discipline and successfully implemented in a number of fields. Predicated upon an unprecedented partnership with the natural world, ecological design has generated a science of stewardship and new and hybrid forms of technology. This technology, literally drawing on the intelligence encoded in the processes of evolution, incorporates elements from the living world in the form of thousands of selected organisms, These are inoculated into a contained ecosystem which is designed to perform a specific task.

Harnessing natural intelligence in this way is a new step in the co-evolution of human and natural systems. This partnership of human ingenuity and resilient biological self-organization, maintenance, and repair has the potential to replace the present industrial systems and technological infrastructure with sustainable living technologies - the potential foundation for an economics of permanence.

*- Nancy Jack Todd in **Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries***

Even an economist might well ask: what is the point of economic progress, a so-called higher standard of living, when the earth, the only earth we have, is being contaminated by substances which may cause malformations in our children or grandchildren?

To mention these things, no doubt, means laying oneself open to the charge of being against science, technology, and progress. Let me therefore, in conclusion, add a few words about future scientific research. Man cannot live without science and technology any more than he can live against nature.

[Scientists] must work on public opinion, so that the politicians, depending on public opinion, will free themselves from the thralldom of economism and attend to the things that really matter. What matters, as I said, is the direction of research, that the direction should be towards non-violence rather than violence; towards an harmonious cooperation with nature rather than a warfare against nature; towards the noiseless, low-energy, elegant and economical solutions normally applied in nature rather than the noisy, high-energy, brutal, wasteful, and clumsy solutions of our present-day sciences.

Chapter 10: Technology with a Human Face

Schumacher believed that making things with your hands and physical labor not only provides employment and houses, food, clothes, shoes, and furniture; it also heals your psyche by using the imagination and creativity. Work fulfills many functions - spiritual, creative, economic, and social. Many benefits of economic activity are lost when we only work on a computer and consume mass-produced goods.

- Satish Kumar in *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries*

In the past few decades we have created a culture of overconsumption. We consume far more than we need and can afford. By doing so, we work extremely hard to justify or get the means to buy gadgets that we don't need. This overconsumption is related to the housing market, which perpetuates the notion that the only house to buy or start life with must be huge and lavish. And people accept this norm without seeing that it is unnecessary.

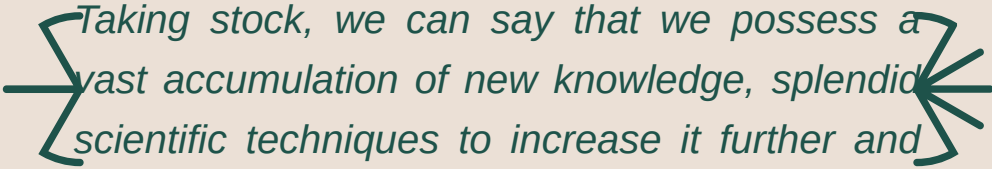
- Avi Friedman in *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries*

If technology is felt to be becoming more and more inhuman, we might do well to consider whether it is possible to have something better - a technology with a human face.

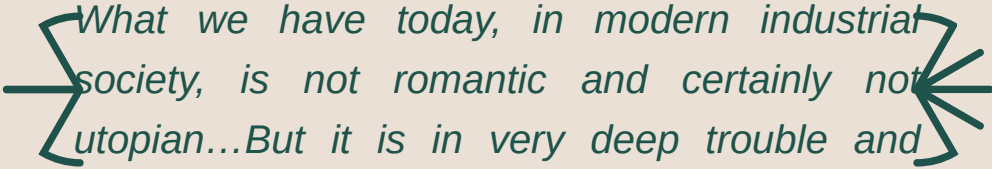
Nature always...knows where and when to stop. Greater even than the mystery of natural growth is the mystery of the natural cessation of growth. There is measure in all natural things - in their size, speed, or violence. As a result, the system of nature, of which man is a part, tends to be self-balancing, self-adjusting, self-cleansing.

There is nothing in the experience of the last twenty-five years to suggest that modern technology, as we know it, can really help us to alleviate world poverty, not to mention the problem of unemployment... we had better face the question of technology - what does it do and what should it do? Can we develop a technology which really helps us to solve our problems - a technology with a human face?

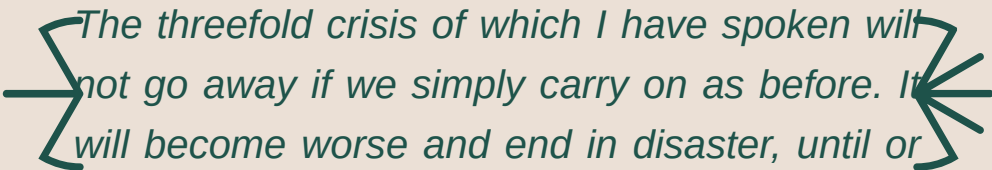
We may say, therefore, that modern technology has deprived man of the kind of work that he enjoys most, creative, useful work with hands and brains, and given him plenty of work of a fragmented kind, most of which he does not enjoy at all...we might do well to take stock and reconsider our goals.



Taking stock, we can say that we possess a vast accumulation of new knowledge, splendid scientific techniques to increase it further and immense experience in its application. All this is truth of a kind. This truthful knowledge, as such, does not commit us to a technology of giantism, supersonic speed, violence, and the destruction of human work-enjoyment. The use we have made of our knowledge is only one of its possible uses and, as is now becoming ever more apparent, often an unwise and destructive use.



What we have today, in modern industrial society, is not romantic and certainly not utopian...But it is in very deep trouble and holds no promise of survival. We jolly well have to have the courage to dream if we want to survive and give our children a chance of survival.



The threefold crisis of which I have spoken will not go away if we simply carry on as before. It will become worse and end in disaster, until or unless we develop a new life-style which is compatible with the real needs of human nature, with the health of living nature around us, and with the resource endowment of the world.

...the present consumer society is like a drug addict who, no matter how miserable he may feel, finds it extremely difficult to get off the hook. The problem children of the world – from this point of view and in spite of many other considerations that could be adduced – are the rich societies and not the poor.

...the poverty of the poor makes it in any case impossible for them successfully to adopt our technology. Of course, they often try to do so, and then have to bear the most dire consequences in terms of mass unemployment, mass migration into cities, rural decay, and intolerable social tensions. They need, in fact, the very thing I am talking about, which we also need: a different kind of technology, a technology with a human face, which, instead of making human hands and brains redundant, helps them to become far more productive than they ever have been before.

Although we are in possession of all requisite knowledge, it still requires a systematic, creative effort to bring this technology into active existence and make it generally visible and available. It is my experience that it is rather more difficult to recapture directness and simplicity than to advance in the direction of ever more sophistication and complexity.

...it takes a certain flair of real insight to make things simple again. And this insight does not come easily to people who have allowed themselves to become alienated from real, productive work and from the self-balancing system of nature, which never fails to recognize measure and limitation.

In our work with the developing countries we are at least forced to recognize the limitations of poverty, and this work can therefore be a wholesome school for all of us in which, while generally trying to help others, we may also gain knowledge and experience of how to help ourselves.

...it takes a good deal of courage to say "no" to the fashions and fascinations of the age and to question the presuppositions of a civilization which appears destined to conquer the whole world; the requisite strength can be derived only from deep convictions. If it were derived from nothing more than fear of the future, it would be likely to disappear at the decisive moment.

The power of ordinary people, who today tend to feel utterly powerless, does not lie in starting new lines of action, but in placing their sympathy and support with minority groups which have already started.

...the modern tendency is to see and become conscious of only the visible and to forget the invisible things that are making the visible possible and keep it going.

...a technology with a human face, is in fact possible; that it is viable; and that it re-integrates the human being, with his skillful hands and creative brain, into the productive process. It serves production by the masses instead of mass production.

Chapter 11: Development

Conventional development thinking

implicitly defines equity as a problem of the poor. Facing the gap separating the rich from the poor, developmentalists perceive this gap as a deficit of the powerless and not as a fault of the powerful. They launch themselves into raising the living standards of the poor toward the level of the rich. They work for lifting the bottom rather than lowering the top. However, with the emergence of biophysical limits to growth, the classical notions of justice, which were devised in a perspective of finitude and not in a perspective of infinity, acquire new relevance: justice is about changing the rich and not about changing the poor.

As our research has shown, if industrialized countries aspire to become good global neighbors, they will have to reduce their resource consumption by a factor of 10 within the next 50 years.

No doubt, this enormous challenge would amount to a civilization transition of sorts, bringing both technological talents and new public virtues to bear. But sufficiency has been the hallmark of justice before the dreams of infinity took over; it is bound to become the axis around which any post-developmental notion of justice will revolve. From now on, justice is about taking less rather than giving more.”

- Wolfgang Sachs in *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries*

...we tend to think of development, not in terms of evolution, but in terms of creation.

That the developing countries cannot do without a modern sector, particularly when they are in direct contact with the rich countries, is hardly open to doubt. What needs to be questioned is the implicit assumption that the modern sector can be expanded to absorb virtually the entire population and that this can be done fairly quickly.

Development does not start with goods; it starts with people and their education, organization, and discipline. Without these three, all resources remain latent, untapped, potential.

If aid is given to introduce certain new economic activities, these will be beneficial and viable only if they can be sustained by the already existing educational level of fairly broad groups of people, and they will be truly valuable only if they promote and spread advances in education, organization, and discipline...It follows from this that development is not primarily a problem for economists, least of all for economists whose expertise is founded on a crudely materialistic philosophy.

Chapter 12: Social and Economic Problems Calling for the Development of Intermediate Technology

The central tenet of appropriate technology

(AT) is that a technology should be

designed to fit into and be compatible with

its local setting. Examples of current

projects generally classified as AT include:

passive solar design; active solar collectors

for heating and cooling; small windmills to

provide electricity; roof-top gardens and

hydroponic greenhouses; permaculture;

and worker-managed craft industries. There

is general agreement, however, that the

main goal of the AT movement is to enhance

the self-reliance of people on a local level.

Characteristics of self-reliant communities

that AT can help facilitate include: low

resource usage coupled with extensive

recycling; preference for renewable over

nonrenewable resources; emphasis on

environmental harmony; emphasis on

small-scale industries; and a high degree of

social cohesion and sense of community.

*- Mark Roseland in **Small is Beautiful:***

Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years

Later...with Commentaries

In today's terminology, appropriate technologies (AT) are those products and processes that promote sustainable livelihoods and reorient development strategies toward increased employment, enhanced income and gender equity, the protection and rehabilitation of the biophysical environment, and the provision of basic needs. Many AT practitioners today describe what they do as community economic development.

- Mark Roseland in *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries*

I am concerned here exclusively with the problem of helping people in the non-modern sector...[because] all successes in the modern sector are likely to be illusory unless there is also a healthy growth—or at least a healthy condition of stability—among the very great numbers of people today whose life is characterized not only by dire poverty but also by hopelessness.

It is necessary, therefore, that at least an important part of the development effort should by-pass the big cities and be directly concerned with the creation of an "agro-industrial structure" in the rural and small-town areas.

The task, then, is to bring into existence millions of new workplaces in the rural areas and small towns. That modern industry, as it has arisen in the developed countries, cannot possibly fulfill this task should be perfectly obvious. It has arisen in societies which are rich in capital and short of labor and therefore cannot possibly be appropriate for societies short of capital and rich in labor.

The bigger the country, the greater is the need for internal "structure" and for a decentralized approach to development. If this need is neglected, there is no hope for the poor.

I believe, therefore, that the best way to make contact with the essential problem is by speaking of technology: economic development in poverty-stricken areas can be fruitful only on the basis of what I have called "intermediate technology." In the end, intermediate technology will be "labor-intensive" and will lend itself to the use of small-scale establishments

I say, therefore, that the dynamic approach to development, which treats the choice of appropriate, intermediate technologies as the central issue, opens up avenues of constructive action, which the static, econometric approach totally fails to recognize.

The poor can be helped to help themselves, but only by making available to them a technology that recognizes the economic boundaries and limitations of poverty—an intermediate technology.

Chapter 13: Two Million Villages

Our growth economy is based on greed and envy stimulated by aggressive advertising to levels beyond that provided by original sin. Our modern alchemists, the economists, promise to transmute the sinful dross of private greed into the virtuous gold of public riches by the catalyst of the market, guided by their invisible hand. But even when the invisible hand produces wealth, private greed ultimately finds a way to defeat it, by concentrating increasing riches in visible but fewer hands. To meet the still unmet needs of the poor we are urged to give still freer rein to greed by allowing the consumption of natural and social capital and falsely counting it as income. Greed thus takes from the future as well as the present.

*- Herman Daly in **Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries***

Schumacher hoped for pluralistic economic systems rather than a global monoculture, which is the hallmark of industrial society.

Today wherever you go, you find the same market economy - the same kind of food, clothes, and buildings, such as Coca-Cola and McDonald's. Schumacher did not want any one economic model. He liked to see cultural and economic diversity worldwide.

*- Satish Kumar in **Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries***

Social cohesion, cooperation, mutual respect, and above all, self-respect, courage in the face of adversity, and the ability to bear hardship—

all this and much else disintegrates and disappears when these "psychological structures" are gravely damaged. A man is destroyed by the inner conviction of uselessness. No amount of economic growth can compensate for such losses—though this may be an idle reflection, since economic growth is normally inhibited by them.

The common criterion of success, namely the growth of GNP, is utterly misleading and, in fact, must of necessity lead to phenomena which can only be described as neo-colonialism.

Methods of production, standards of consumption, criteria of success or failure, systems of values, and behavior patterns establish themselves in poor countries which, being (doubtfully) appropriate only to conditions of affluence already achieved, fix the poor countries ever more inescapably in a condition of utter dependence on the rich.

The best aid to give is intellectual aid, a gift of useful knowledge. A gift of knowledge is infinitely preferable to a gift of material things.

Before we can talk about giving aid, we must have something to give. We do not have thousands of poverty-stricken villages in our country; so what do we know about effective methods of self-help in such circumstances?

Yet it remains an unalterable truth that, just as a sound mind depends on a sound body, so the health of the cities depends on the health of the rural areas. The cities, with all their wealth, are merely secondary producers, while primary production, the precondition of all economic life, takes place in the countryside.

There is no answer to the evils of mass unemployment and mass migration into cities, unless the whole level of rural life can be raised, and this requires the development of an agro-industrial culture, so that each district, each community, can offer a colorful variety of occupations to its members.

Economic development is something much wider and deeper than economics, let alone econometrics. Its roots lie outside the economic sphere, in education, organization, discipline and, beyond that, in political independence and a national consciousness of self-reliance.

Chapter 14: The Problem of Unemployment in India

In designing sustainable communities, we made a community effort to think small. We found that to use land efficiently to build small homes, we didn't have to consume great tracts of land. We didn't have to build complicated infrastructures that consume a lot of energy, require many roads, and need many trees. And yet in most of our developments, there was enough space available for people to grow their own food.

*- Avi Friedman in **Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries***

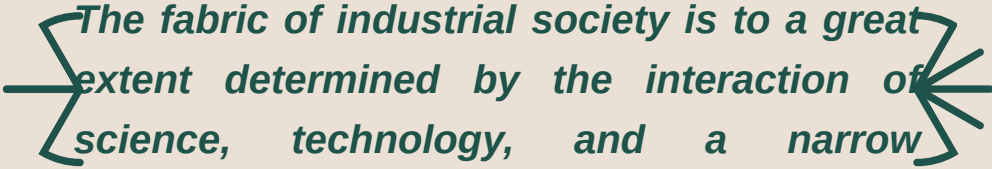
Can we establish an ideology, or whatever you like to call it, which insists that the educated have taken upon themselves an obligation and have not simply acquired a "passport to privilege"? ...It is, you might well say, an elementary matter of justice.

As far as simple products are concerned—food, clothing, shelter, and culture—the greatest danger is that people should automatically assume that only the 1963 model is relevant and not the 1903 model; because the 1963 way of doing things is inaccessible to the poor, as it presupposes great wealth.

So let's not mesmerize ourselves by the difficulties, but recover the common-sense view that to work is the most natural thing in the world. Only one must not be blocked by being too damn clever about it...It is a fixation in the mind, that unless you can have the latest you can't do anything at all, and this is the thing that has to be overcome.

The really helpful things will not be done from the centre; they cannot be done by big organizations; but they can be done by the people themselves.

Chapter 15: A Machine to Foretell the Future?



The fabric of industrial society is to a great extent determined by the interaction of science, technology, and a narrow economic paradigm - an interaction that is leading to ever-greater centralization and specialization. Since the Industrial Revolution, the perspective of the individual has become more limited while political and economic units have grown larger. I have become convinced that we need to decentralize our political and economic structures and broaden our approach to knowledge if we are to find our way to a more balanced and sane society. In Ladakh, I have seen how human-scale structures nurture intimate bonds with the earth and an active and participatory democracy, while supporting strong and vital communities, healthy families, and a greater balance between male and female. These structures in turn provide the security needed for individual well-being and, paradoxically, for a sense of freedom.

The emerging global economy and the growing domination of science and technology are not only severing our connection to nature and to one another but also breaking down natural and cultural diversity. In so doing, we are threatening our very existence.

It is in robust, local-scale economies that we find genuinely “free” markets; free of corporate manipulation, hidden subsidies,

waste, and immense promotional costs that characterize today's global market.

Decentralization is a prerequisite for the rekindling of community in Western society. Mobility erodes community, but as we put down roots and feel attachment to a place, our human relationships deepen, become more secure, and as they continue over time, more reliable.

*- Helena Norberg-Hodge in **Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries***

Economics, and even more so applied economics, is not an exact science; it is in fact, or ought to be, something much greater: a branch of wisdom.

I thus come to the cheerful conclusion that life, including economic life, is still worth living because it is sufficiently unpredictable to be interesting.

In his urgent attempt to obtain reliable knowledge about his essentially indeterminate future, the modern man of action may surround himself by ever-growing armies of forecasters, by ever-growing mountains of factual data to be digested by ever more wonderful mechanical contrivances: I fear that the result is little more than a huge game of make-believe and an ever more marvelous vindication of Parkinson's Law. The best decisions will still be based on the judgments of mature non-electronic brains possessed by men who have looked steadily and calmly at the situation and seen it whole.

Chapter 16: Towards a Theory of Large-Scale Organization

The real problems facing this planet are not economic or technical, they are philosophical,' said Schumacher. Our high capital, low labor philosophy is pauperizing North America with downsizing and rationalizing for 'efficiency.' In the long run, this philosophy will be very costly and inefficient because it will destroy our consumer base, self-respect, and other delicate psychological structures of society. It is now also destroying our tax base - making governments helpless and irrelevant - just at a time when a damaged society needs more support.

*- Robert Bateman in **Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries***

As the world enters its third millennium seemingly afflicted with ever-larger institutions, has the Schumacher legacy

been repudiated? Not at all. True, Bigness seems to be on the march. But operating underneath galloping globalism, men and women in thousands of local communities are acting bravely in his tradition to create human scale institutions, appropriate technology, community land trusts, environmental improvement, local currencies, cooperatives, alternative health care, new energy technologies, home food production, rewarding self-employment, and entrepreneurship. The forces of the global economy, the great corporations, the international labor unions, the mega-universities, the mass media, are really powerless to stop this movement toward a new society. Indeed, the wonders of new technology have opened new possibilities for the decentralist movement.

The one exception is the baneful influence of Big Government. Even as new opportunities appear for a decentralist future, Big Government constantly centralizes power over its subjects, pries into their privacy, confiscates their earnings, regulates their every activity, dictates their choices, removes what once were local civic decisions to higher and more distant bureaucracies, and all too often -alas- stifles the upwelling energies of the human spirit.

- John McClaughry in *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries*

Undoubtedly this is all a problem of communications. But the only really effective communication is from man to man, face to face.

Nobody really likes large-scale organization, nobody likes to take orders from a superior who takes orders from a superior who takes orders...Even if the rules devised by bureaucracy are outstandingly humane, nobody likes to be ruled by rules, that is to say, by people whose answer to every complaint is: "I did not make the rules: I am merely applying them."

Yet it seems, large-scale organization is here to stay. Therefore it is all the more necessary to think about it and to theorize about it. The stronger the current, the greater the need for skillful navigation.

The fundamental task is to achieve smallness within the large organization.

Ideals can rarely be attained in the real world, but they are none-the-less meaningful. They imply that any departure from the ideal has to be specially argued and justified.

Intellectual confusion exacts its price. We preach the virtues of hard work and restraint while painting utopian pictures of unlimited consumptions without either work or restraint.

If our intellectual leaders treat work as nothing but a necessary evil soon to be abolished as far as the majority is concerned, the urge to minimize it right away is hardly a surprising reaction, and the problem of motivation becomes insoluble.

Excellent! This is real life, full of antinomies and bigger than logic. Without order, planning, predictability, central control, accountancy, instructions to the underlings, obedience, discipline—without these, nothing fruitful can happen, because everything disintegrates. And yet—without the magnanimity of disorder, the happy abandon, the entrepreneurship venturing into the unknown and incalculable, without the risk and the gamble, the creative imagination rushing in where bureaucratic angels fear to tread—without this, life is a mockery and a disgrace.

Chapter 17: Socialism

It is now abundantly demonstrated that neither the capitalist nor the state socialist economies can create viable conditions for the people of the world, nor have they been able to help developing countries to determine their own destinies. Capitalism is able to create an abundance of goods and services, but only by undermining future resources, creating increasing pollution, widening the gap between rich and poor, and unhealthily concentrating wealth and power in fewer hands. The statement 'living off the future inheritance of our children' sums it up. Endeavors through regulatory forces or wider shareholding in ever-larger corporations are largely ineffective.

*- Godric Bader in **Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries***

Both theoretical considerations and practical experience have led me to the conclusion that socialism is of interest solely for its non-economic values and the possibility it creates for the overcoming of the religion of economics.

The strength of the idea of private enterprise lies in this terrifying simplicity. It suggests that the totality of life can be reduced to one aspect —profits.

In this respect, the idea of private enterprise fits exactly into the idea of The Market, which, in an earlier chapter, I called "the institutionalization of individualism and non-responsibility."

[There exists a] modern trend towards total quantification at the expense of the appreciation of qualitative differences; for private enterprise is not concerned with what it produces but only with what it gains from production.

The point is that the real strength of the theory of private enterprise lies in this ruthless simplification, which fits so admirably also into the mental patterns created by the phenomenal successes of science.

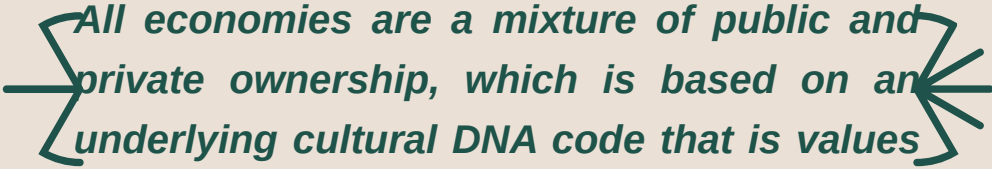
If [businessmen] themselves pursue objectives other than that of profit-making, they cannot very well argue that it becomes impossible to administer the nation's means of production efficiently as soon as considerations other than those of profit-making are allowed to enter.

But while all fanaticism shows intellectual weakness, a fanaticism about the means to be employed for reaching quite uncertain objectives is sheer feeble mindedness.

What is at stake is not economics, but culture, not the standard of living but the quality of life. Economics and the standards of living can just as well be looked after by a capitalist system, moderated by a bit of planning and redistributive taxation. But culture and, generally, the quality of life, can now only be debased by such a system.

Socialists should insist on using the nationalized industries not simply to out-capitalize the capitalists—an attempt in which they may or may not succeed—but to evolve a more democratic and dignified system of industrial administration, a more humane employment of machinery, and a more intelligent utilization of the fruits of human ingenuity and effort.

Chapter 18: Ownership



All economies are a mixture of public and private ownership, which is based on an underlying cultural DNA code that is values and goals of the citizens of a society. In the United States, an example of public/private ownership is the Internet, which was funded by U.S. taxpayers and would not have happened otherwise. The Internet has become a platform in this country for private companies to tap an enormous amount of subsidized growth, which is still untaxed. One of the very contentious issues over the next few years will be whether to continue the subsidizing of Internet-based companies and electronic commerce to the detriment of brick and mortar, local businesses and local tax bases.

*- Hazel Henderson in **Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries***

The issue today goes beyond principles of ownership to rechartering corporations.

Corporate charters were once based on an implicit social contract that they operate for the public good, which has been forgotten. We don't have to look hard to notice the public harm of allowing corporations to have all of the freedoms of an individual without any of the responsibilities.

*- Hazel Henderson in **Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries***

I have argued all along, no system of machinery or economic doctrine or theory stands on its own feet: it is invariably built on a metaphysical foundation, that is to say, upon man's basic outlook on life, its meaning and its purpose.

I have talked about the religion of economics, the idol worship of material possessions, of consumption and the so-called standard of living, and the fateful propensity that rejoices in the fact that "what were luxuries to our fathers have become necessities for us."

The answer is self-evident: greed and envy demand continuous and limitless economic growth of a material kind, without proper regard for conservation, and this type of growth cannot possibly fit into a finite environment.

When we move from small-scale to medium-scale, the connection between ownership and work already becomes attenuated; private enterprise tends to become impersonal and also a significant social factor in the locality; it may even assume more than local significance.

In small-scale enterprise, private ownership is natural, fruitful, and just.

In large-scale enterprise, private ownership is a fiction for the purpose of enabling functionless owners to live parasitically on the labor of others. It is not only unjust but also an irrational element which distorts all relationships within the enterprise.

Chapter 19: New Patterns of Ownership

The community land trust concept offers a practical way to take land off the market and place it into a system of trusteeship on a region-by-region basis. The goods created by an individual as a result of labor applied to land - the harvest from a garden, the home built of wood from the forest, the sweater knit from spun wool - is rightfully private property and may appropriately be traded as commodities. However, the land itself and its resources, which are earth-given and of limited supply, should be held in trust by the regional community and their use allocated on a limited basis for present and future generations.

*- Robert Swann in **Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries***

The truth is that a large part of the costs of private enterprise has been borne by the public authorities—because they pay for the infrastructure—and that the profits of private enterprise therefore greatly overstate its achievement.

Now, one does not have to be a believer in total equality, whatever that may mean, to be able to see that the existence of inordinately rich people in any society today is a very great evil.

In other words, everybody claims to achieve freedom by his own "system" and accuses every other "system" as inevitably entailing tyranny, totalitarianism, or anarchy leading to both.

All the indications are that the present structure of large-scale industrial enterprise, in spite of heavy taxation and an endless proliferation of legislation, is not conducive to the public welfare.

Epilogue

Consciences are being stirred across the world. Ethics are being taught in business schools. Market economics, currency speculation, soil vitality, air pollution, the destruction of historic social cultures and marginalization of human relationships are all under intense discussion in the media and elsewhere. The continuing violence to the human condition and its environment is being challenged, but often the answer is to apply further violence as a restraint.

Possibly even more insidious is the violence that results from the pressure for more intensive growth via capitalism and the many forms of privatization. The real fact of economic life is that the world's resources (notably fossil fuels, minerals and the land, dependent on sun, rain, wind) are the seedbed of the future, and must be husbanded, recycled, and replaced as one conserves capital, not expended as income.

*- Godric Bader in **Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered: 25 Years Later...with Commentaries***

In the excitement over the unfolding of his scientific and technical powers, modern man has built a system of production that ravishes nature and a type of society that mutilates man.

There has never been a time, in any society in any part of the world, without its sages and teachers to challenge materialism and plead for a different order of priorities... Today, however, this message reaches us not solely from the sages and saints but from the actual course of physical events. It speaks to us in the language of terrorism, genocide, breakdown, pollution, exhaustion.

Needless to say, wealth, education, research and many other things are needed for any civilization, but what is most needed today is a revision of the ends which these means are meant to serve.

It is of little use trying to suppress terrorism if the production of deadly devices continues to be deemed a legitimate employment of man's creative powers. Nor can the fight against pollution be successful if the patterns of production and consumption continue to be of a scale, a complexity, and a degree of violence which, as is becoming more and more apparent, do not fit into the laws of the universe, to which man is just as much subject as the rest of creation.

Die Umweltverschmutzung muss unter Kontrolle gebracht werden, und die Bevölkerungszahl sowie der Ressourcenverbrauch müssen in Richtung eines dauerhaften und nachhaltigen Gleichgewichts gelenkt werden.

Überall fragen die Menschen: „Was kann ich eigentlich tun?“ Die Antwort ist so einfach wie beunruhigend: Jeder von uns kann daran arbeiten, sein eigenes inneres Haus in Ordnung zu bringen. Die Anleitung, die wir für diese Arbeit benötigen, können wir nicht in Wissenschaft oder Technologie finden, deren Wert ganz und gar von den Zielen abhängt, denen sie dienen; aber wir können sie immer noch in der traditionellen Weisheit der Menschheit finden.

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140 Jug End Road
Great Barrington, MA 01230
Google Karte
(413)-528-1737
E-Mail

Kontaktieren Sie uns

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