

ADVERTISING, SOCIETY & THE FUTURE

1. There is no such thing as society. There are just individuals and their families. (Margaret Thatcher)
2. Television commercials offer solutions to hundreds of problems we didn't even know we had -- from 'morning mouth' to shampoo build-up -- but nowhere in the consumer culture do we find anyone offering us such mundane necessities as affordable health insurance, childcare, housing, or higher education. The flip side of the consumer spectacle... is the starved and impoverished public sector. We have Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, but no way to feed and educate the one-fifth of American children who are growing up in poverty. We have dozens of varieties of breakfast cereal, and no help for the hungry. (Barbara Ehrenreich)
3. Everything enticing and appealing is located in the (thoroughly private) consumer spectacle. In contrast, the public sector looms as a realm devoid of erotic promise -- the home of the IRS, the DMV, and other irritating, intrusive bureaucracies. Thus, though everyone wants national health insurance, and parental leave, few are moved to wage political struggles for them. 'Necessity' is not enough; we may have to find a way to **glamorize** the possibility of an activist public sector, and to glamorize the possibility of public activism. (Barbara Ehrenreich)
4. Can we envision a society which values -- not "collectivity" with its dreary implications of conformity -- but what I can only think to call **conviviality**, which could, potentially, be built right into the social infrastructure with opportunities, at all levels for rewarding, democratic participation? Can we envision a society that does not dismiss individualism, but truly values individual creative expression -- including dissidence, debate, nonconformity, artistic experimentation, and in the largest sense, adventure.... The project remains what it has always been: to replace the consumer culture with a genuinely **human** culture. (Barbara Ehrenreich)
5. If the present growth trends in world population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion continue unchanged, the limits to growth on this planet will be reached sometime within the next one hundred years. The most probable result will be a rather sudden and uncontrollable decline in both population and industrial capacity. (The Limits to Growth)

6. The environment makes up a huge, enormously complex living machine that forms a thin dynamic layer on the earth's surface, and every human activity depends on the integrity and proper functioning of this machine...This machine is our biological capital, the basic apparatus on which our total productivity depends. If we destroy it, our most advanced technology will become useless and any economic and political system that depends on it will flounder. The environmental crisis is a signal of the approaching catastrophe. (Barry Commoner)

7. We have done this ourselves.... by driving our cars, building our factories, cutting down our forests, turning on air conditioners. (Bill McKibben)

8. Man's efforts, even at their mightiest, were tiny compared with the size of the planet -- the Roman Empire meant nothing to the Arctic or the Amazon. But now, the way of life of one part of the world in one half-century is altering every inch and every hour of the globe. (Bill McKibben)

9. Human beings and the natural world are on a collision course. Human activities inflict harsh and irreversible damage on the environment and on critical resources. If not checked, many of our current practices put at serious risk the future that we wish for human society and the plant and animal kingdoms, and may so alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner we know. Fundamental changes are urgent if we are to avoid the collision our present course will bring. (Union of Concerned Scientists)

10. A crucial problem for the world of the future will be a concern for generations to come. Where will such concern arise? Contemporary industrial man, his appetite for the present whetted by the values of a high-consumption society and his attitude toward the future influenced by the prevailing canons of self-concern, has but a limited motivation to form such bonds. There are many who would sacrifice much for their children; fewer would do so for their grandchildren. (Robert Heilbroner)