

AP Seminar Performance Task 2: Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation

Directions and Stimulus Materials

January 2019

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Introduction

This performance task, highlighted in bold below, is one of three parts of the overall assessment for AP Seminar, and one of two performance tasks. The assessment for this course comprises the following:

Performance Task 1: Team Project and Presentation

- › Component 1: Individual Research Report
- › Component 2: Team Multimedia Presentation and Oral Defense

Performance Task 2: Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation

- › **Component 1: Individual Written Argument**
- › **Component 2: Individual Multimedia Presentation**
- › **Component 3: Oral Defense**

End-of-Course Exam

- › Part A: Three Short-Answer Questions (based on one source)
- › Part B: One Essay Question (based on four sources)

The attached pages include the directions for Performance Task 2, information about the weighting of the task within the overall assessment, and detailed information as to the expected quantity and quality of work that you should submit.

Also included are the stimulus materials for the task. These materials are theme-based and broadly span the academic curriculum. After analyzing the materials, develop a research question that suits your individual interest based on a thematic connection between at least two of the stimulus materials. Your research question must be rich enough to allow you to engage in meaningful exploration and to write and present a substantive, defensible argument.

AP Seminar Performance Task 2: Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation

Student Version

Weight: 35% of the AP Seminar score

Task Overview

This packet includes a set of stimulus materials for the AP Seminar Performance Task 2: Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation.

You must identify a research question prompted by analysis of the provided stimulus materials, gather information from a range of additional sources, develop and refine an argument, write and revise your argument, and create a presentation that you will be expected to defend. Your teacher will give you a deadline for when you need to submit your written argument and presentation media. Your teacher will also give you a date on which you will give your presentation.

Task Components	Length	Date Due (fill in)
Individual Written Argument	2000 words	
Individual Multimedia Presentation	6–8 minutes	
Oral Defense	Respond to 2 questions	

In all written work, you must:

- ▶ Acknowledge, attribute, and/or cite sources using in-text citations, endnotes or footnotes, and/or through bibliographic entry. You must avoid plagiarizing (see the attached AP Capstone Policy on Plagiarism and Falsification or Fabrication of Information).
- ▶ Adhere to established conventions of grammar, usage, style, and mechanics.

Task Directions

1. Individual Written Argument (2000 words)

- › Read and analyze the provided stimulus materials to identify thematic connections among the sources and possible areas for inquiry.
- › Compose a research question of your own prompted by analysis of the stimulus materials.
- › Gather information from a range of additional sources representing a variety of perspectives, including scholarly work.
- › Analyze, evaluate, and select evidence. Interpret the evidence to develop a well-reasoned argument that answers the research question and conveys your perspective.

- › Throughout your research, continually revisit and refine your original research question to ensure that the evidence you gather addresses your purpose and focus.
- › Identify opposing or alternate views and consider their implications and/or limitations as you develop resolutions, conclusions, or solutions to your research question.
- › Compose a coherent, convincing and well-written argument in which you:
 - ◆ Identify and explain the relationship of your inquiry to a theme or connection among at least two of the stimulus materials prompted by your reading.
 - ◆ Incorporate at least one of the stimulus materials.
 - ◆ Place your research question in context.
 - ◆ Include a variety of perspectives.
 - ◆ Include evidence from a range of sources.
 - ◆ Establish an argument that links claims and evidence.
 - ◆ Provide specific resolutions, conclusions and/or solutions.
 - ◆ Evaluate objections, limitations or competing perspectives and arguments.
 - ◆ Cite all sources that you have used, including the stimulus materials, and include a list of works cited or a bibliography.
 - ◆ Use correct grammar and style.
- › Do a word count and keep under the 2000-word limit (excluding footnotes, bibliography, and text in figures or tables).
- › Remove references to your name, school, or teacher.
- › Upload your document to the AP Digital Portfolio.

2. Individual Multimedia Presentation (6–8 minutes)

- › Develop and prepare a multimedia presentation that will convey your argument to an audience of your peers.
- › Be selective about the information you choose for your presentation by focusing on key points you want your audience to understand.
- › Design your oral presentation with supporting visual media, and consider audience, context, and purpose.
- › Prepare to engage your audience using appropriate strategies (e.g., eye contact, vocal variety, expressive gestures, movement).
- › Prepare notecards or an outline that you can quickly reference as you are speaking so that you can interact with supporting visuals and the audience.
- › Rehearse your presentation in order to refine your design and practice your delivery.
- › Check that you can do the presentation within the 6- to 8-minute time limit.

- › Deliver a 6–8 minute multimedia presentation in which you:
 - Contextualize and identify the importance of your research question.
 - Explain the connection between your research and your analysis of the stimulus materials.
 - Deliver an argument that connects claims and evidence.
 - Incorporate, synthesize and interpret evidence from various perspectives.
 - Offer resolutions, conclusions, and/or solutions based on evidence and consider the implications of any suggested solutions.
 - Engage the audience with an effective and clearly organized presentation design.
 - Engage the audience with effective techniques of delivery and performance.

3. Individual Oral Defense (two questions)

Defend your research process, use of evidence, and conclusion(s), solution(s), or recommendation(s) through oral responses to two questions asked by your teacher. Be prepared to describe and reflect on your process as well as defend and extend your written work and oral presentation.

Sample Oral Defense Questions

Here are some examples of the types of questions your teacher might ask you during your oral defense. These are *examples only*; your teacher may ask you different questions, but there will still be one question that relates to each of the following two categories.

1. Reflection on Research Process

- › What information did you need before you began your research, and how did that information shape your research?
- › What evidence did you gather that you didn't use? Why did you choose not to use it?
- › How valid and reliable are the sources you used? How do you know? Which sources didn't work?
- › How did you select the strategies you used to gather information or conduct research? Were they effective?
- › How did your research question evolve as you moved through the research process? Did your research go in a different direction than you originally planned/hypothesized?
- › What information did you need that you weren't able to find or locate? How did you go about trying to find that information?
- › How did you handle the differing perspectives in order to reach a conclusion?

2. Extending argumentation through effective questioning and inquiry

- › What additional questions emerged from your research? Why are these questions important?
- › What advice would you have for other researchers who consider this topic?
- › What might be the real-world implications or consequences (influence on others' behaviors or decision-making processes) of your findings? What are the implications to your community?
- › If you had more time, what additional research would you conduct related to this issue?
- › Explain the level of certainty you have about your conclusion, solution, or recommendation.
- › How does your conclusion respond to any of the other research or sources you examined?
- › How did you use the conclusions and questions of others to advance your own research?

AP Capstone™ Policy on Plagiarism and Falsification or Fabrication of Information

A student who fails to acknowledge the source or author of any and all information or evidence taken from the work of someone else through citation, attribution or reference in the body of the work, or through a bibliographic entry, will receive a score of 0 on that particular component of the AP Seminar and/or AP Research Performance Task. In AP Seminar, a team of students that fails to properly acknowledge sources or authors on the Team Multimedia Presentation will receive a group score of 0 for that component of the Team Project and Presentation.

A student who incorporates falsified or fabricated information (e.g. evidence, data, sources, and/or authors) will receive a score of 0 on that particular component of the AP Seminar and/or AP Research Performance Task. In AP Seminar, a team of students that incorporates falsified or fabricated information in the Team Multimedia Presentation will receive a group score of 0 for that component of the Team Project and Presentation.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE MOVEMENT OF IDEAS

*Edward Kessler**

Abstract:

The Social Media has become an important part of our (online) lives, in an incredibly short period of time. This paper will explore to what extent it contributes to fostering interfaith dialogue. Its impact depends on the people who use it - and how they use it. The Social Media challenges traditional hierarchies (including religious hierarchies) because control moves from website owners to users which means that “everyone is a publisher and everyone is a critic.”

Although the less personal nature of online communication makes it easier for information to be distorted, there are examples of good practice to promote interfaith dialogue. The Social Media can also overcome ignorant stereotypes and combat prejudice, (although it is also (ab)used to promote prejudice).

In interfaith dialogue, the Social Media needs to provide a safe space for users, to facilitate trust and to help users feel a sense of connection with the ‘other’. Although this can be more easily achieved in a face-to-face encounter because the ‘virtual world’ will only ever be virtual, the Social Media should be integrated into interfaith dialogue so that it not only contributes to positive political change but also to furthering inter-religious understanding.

The ‘Facebook’ Generation

The term ‘social media’ refers to the use of ‘web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue’. This definition is provided by a well-known example of modern technology – Wikipedia – established in 2001. Only a decade later, Wikipedia provided users with 19 million articles from 91,000 contributors in over 200 languages.

Google, famous for its web search engine, is also worth mentioning. In 2010, only 12 years after incorporation, unique visitors of Google surpassed one billion for the first time, up from 931 million unique visitors a year earlier. In 2011 there was an average of two million Google searches per minute and

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when I searched ‘interfaith dialogue’ in September 2011, I could have chosen any one of 1,940,000 Google results.

These two examples may help you understand the seismic and generational shift which has taken place since 1990, less than one generation ago, when Tim Berners-Lee, a British scientist, invented the World Wide Web and helped it become operational. Although Wikipedia and Google are part of the second phase in the evolution of the internet, see below, they are not the most recent. There have so far been three phases:

1. 1980s – **One-to-One** connections: e.g., e-mail (in 2010, 107 trillion emails were sent, an average of 294 billion per day; 89% spam)
2. 1990s – **One-to-Many** connections: e.g., webpages (such as Wikipedia and Google available to countless ‘websurfers’ at the same time)
3. 2000s – **Many-to-Many** connections, also known as ‘social media’: e.g., Facebook (established 2004), YouTube (established 2005) and Twitter (established 2006).

This third and most recent phase in the evolution of the internet, the initiation of social media is still therefore just over 5 years old. Still an infant, but we can be sure that the landscape will be different in another 5 years and even more important.

This paper will focus on the third phase, the ‘many to many connections’, which has generated global attention, especially from the traditional media, for its contribution to societal upheavals, including the Arab Spring. The UK witnessed the role played by the social media during a tumultuous period in August 2011, when we experienced 4 days of riots. At the time, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, raised the possibility (11th August 2011) of seeking to ban the use of Twitter, Facebook and Blackberry Messenger, all of which were used by rioters. He sensibly decided against taking this course of action, probably because it would have ended in failure, as did the attempts by certain former Middle Eastern rulers to block the internet and control all forms of media (for example, Egypt blocked the internet on 27th January but re-opened it on 2nd February 2011).

Social media sites have grown exponentially in the last 5 years and control has moved from website owners (dominant in the 1990s) to website users (dominant today). This means the social media is not just a communication tool; it is also a connection tool. It enables affiliation, interest group formation and solidarity in new ways; ways that do not conform to existing social groups or geographic locations.

This means that ‘everyone is a publisher and everyone is a critic’. In other words, we are witnessing a massive and revolutionary democratisation of information. Sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, have no editors and users

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are expected to edit inappropriate or inaccurate content. This collaborative process demonstrates the challenge to traditional hierarchies: individuals communicate their own interpretations (of events and texts), rather than rely on the accounts of their leaders, religious or political.

A 2011 report from the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University¹ indicated that the proliferation of information also shapes religious identity. For example, Peter Mandaville, of the Center for Global Studies at George Mason University, has observed that many young Muslims find information from a multitude of sources with varying perspectives on their faith². Indeed, religious activists and intellectuals from all faiths (and none) are establishing their own websites and Facebook pages in order to communicate their own interpretation of their faith (and/or ideology).

This transformative development has massive implications for religious authority. Let us take Christianity as an example. Just a couple of generations ago, among communities in the West at least, the priest was not only the moral and spiritual authority — the representative of the ‘true religion’ and its ‘true scriptures’ — but also probably the most educated. He (almost certainly it was a he) spoke with authority on a wide variety of issues that were important to the society of his day.

Contrast that with today’s situation. Rarely are priests approached as figures of authority, except perhaps within their own congregation. The internet and social media are primary authorities for information, with the traditional media (radio, television newspapers, and the cinema) a distant second. For many American Christians, www.Beliefnet.com (‘Your Trusted Source for Free Daily Inspiration & Faith’) is a bigger authority on matters of Christian belief and practice than a priest. According to Philip Clayton writing in the *Princeton Theological Review* (2011)³, whilst 40 years ago people were influenced in their judgements about religious matters by their priest and editorials in the religion section of their local newspaper; today online blogs which congregants choose to follow are a far greater influence. Blogs offer an opportunity to express personal spiritual beliefs and practices and reinforce the move to a democratisation of religious expression and demonstrate social media’s challenge to traditional authority.

Opinions of the social media also tend to align with their generation and area of expertise. For example, more experienced and older faith leaders believe that the ‘impersonal’ nature of online communication significantly limits the potential for substantive dialogue, stressing the importance of being able to physically see and hear the Other in an offline context. Younger and less experienced interfaith leaders tend to view new social media more positively, as a tool for initiating, building and maintaining positive dialogue.

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Unfortunately, democratisation of information and the increase in user-generated content also make it easier for misinformation and negative content to proliferate online. In addition, access to a huge array of media makes it easy for local issues to attract global attention and, for example, a controversy in one region of Pakistan or India can have a significant impact on the streets of Bradford or London just a few hours later. In the Woolf Institute's training of Metropolitan Police Officers, the speed of the continental transfer of tension has become a topic of increasing interest.

Although, as I will outline below, the social media has the potential to foster interfaith dialogue and to spread individual freedom, it has an equal capacity to reinforce pack identities and mob rule. Negative consequences are equally part of the potential of the social media exemplified by a coarsening of debate and increasing polarisation that have grown directly from a fashionable political incorrectness on websites where anonymity is guaranteed. Indeed, there is even a temptation among mainstream websites to cut moderate posts in favour of the extremes, for the sake of generating controversy and greater publicity. Is it a coincidence that the tone of public debate in the US over the last 10 years has become increasingly adversarial and 'loud'? The 'one-way conversation' is becoming the norm and examples of genuine public dialogue have diminished significantly.

It is my view that anonymity is a key part of a process of debilitation which harms society. Psychologists have applied the Jungian term, 'Individuation', which refers to the concealment of identities when social norms are withdrawn. Individuation occurs when we sit behind the wheel of a car and abuse the driver in front/behind of us; it is what motivates football supporters to shout abuse or hatred at the opposition team and its fans, and/or the referee. And it is why under the cover of an alias – surrounded by 'virtual strangers' – conventionally restrained individuals act in a different manner than in the real world.

Another relevant and related term is 'disinhibition', which enables people to post comments that they would not normally [say] in the real 'face-to-face' world. Disinhibition is also demonstrated by all too common examples of harsh criticism, anger, hatred and threat. It is easy to visit the dark underworld of the internet (such as websites devoted to pornography and violence), which might not be visited in the 'real world' (Cf. John Suler, <http://users.rider.edu-suler/psycyber/disinihibt.html>). The ubiquity of anonymity, as well as the language of the mob, leads to increasing individuation and disinhibition and in this respect, social media could be described as a wilful contributor.

Consequently, the ordinary rules of behaviour are suspended, especially when people believe they are anonymous and no longer take responsibility for their words. Their actions are fostered by anonymity as well as asynchronicity

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and the lack of face-to-face encounter. The suspension of the normal rules of behaviour is a particular topic of concern in the UK, illustrated by the 2011-12 Leveson enquiry into the media following the controversies about media intrusion into peoples' personal lives and the furore surrounding the closure of the *News of the World*.

Jimmy Wales, founder of Wikipedia (which he suggested was the most hopeful experiment in human collective knowledge) has argued that the internet would benefit from a voluntary restraining authority. It was the case of the blogger Kathy Sierra that caused Wales and others to propose in 2007 an unofficial Code of Conduct (especially on blog sites), which would outlaw anonymity. Kathy Sierra was randomly targeted by an anonymous mob that posted [disturbing] images of her in various websites and was issued death threats. She wrote on her own blog, 'I'm at home with my doors locked, terrified. I am afraid to leave my yard. I will never feel the same. I will never be the same.'⁴

One simple antidote rests in the old-fashioned idea of standing by your own name. Adopt a pseudonym and you are not putting much of yourself on the line. Put your name to something and your words carry responsibility. As Schopenhauer said 'anonymity is the refuge for all literary and journalistic rascality. It is a practice that must be stopped. Every article, every newspaper should be accompanied by the name of its author; and the editor should be made strictly responsible for the accuracy of the signature. The freedom of the press should be thus far restricted... the result of such a measure would be to put to an end two-thirds of newspaper lies, and to restrain the audacity of many a poisonous tongue.'⁵

The internet amplifies Schopenhauer's concern many times over. There are repressive regimes when anonymity is a pre-requisite of freedom, and occasions in democracies when anonymity must be preserved; it is generally clear when these reservations might apply. A Code of Conduct should commend genuine authorship of postings and those who fail to do so should be viewed with more suspicion than those who put their name to their words.

The anonymous trend in the social media, as well as the less personal nature of online communication, makes it easier for information to be distorted or misinterpreted. It also impacts on interfaith dialogue in many ways, not least because it adds to the confusion of the meaning of the word 'dialogue' and the nature of dialogue activity. A casual conversation (face-to-face or online) between Jews, Christians and Muslims that may add up to no more than a loose restatement of entrenched theological positions is sometimes claimed to be dialogue. It is not!

Equally, any communication between persons of differing religious points of view is sometimes also described as dialogue. It is not – dialogue is not simply synonymous with communication. For dialogue to take place, there

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must be a genuine hearing of the Other. This is not always a concern amongst users of the social media and once a message is posted online, control is lost and one has to accept that someone else may interpret what you are trying to achieve [as] something else.

Ironically, a consequence of the huge array of online communities and the ease of finding those with specific interests is a tendency to self-select into like-minded groups, lessening the opportunity to encounter and learn from those with different perspectives and opinions, and be exposed to other voices. Online communication and social media allow niche communities to exist with little or no interference from society and sectarian factions reproduce themselves easily.

Yet, these new technologies have propelled an already interconnected world to connect to an even greater diversity and number of people, places and ideas. For example, mobile phones were introduced into Egypt in 1998. By 2002, there were 3 million subscribers, by 2006 it had reached 16 million and by 2009, 42 million. According to the Egyptian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, the number of mobile phone subscribers had reached 71.5 million in January 2011, resulting in a penetration rate of 91.5%.

Mobile phones are of course personal, with continuous access, interactive and capture the social context of the media where the user and sender are not fixed. Thus, they help ensure that new social media is not only a versatile and important part of our online lives but also demonstrate that websites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube enable users to communicate, engage, and create content and information at an unprecedented level of speed and accessibility.

There are more than 800 million active Facebook users, of whom more than 50% log onto Facebook every day. There are more than 70 languages available on Facebook and more than 75% of users are outside the United States. Many synagogues, churches, mosques and other faith communities use Facebook to build a sense of community within the parish, providing updates on the community and a forum where members can reach out to one another for support. 'MyChurch' is Facebook's leading religious application. These increasingly include podcasts of sermons (called 'Godcasts'), easily downloaded by congregants and listened to during periods of leisure. Facebook provides a network for users to join or create groups and is ideal for holding discussions within a trusted circle of friends. However, these closed networks do not make it an effective tool for engaging the wider public.

YouTube reached over 700 billion playbacks in 2010 when more than 13 million hours of video were uploaded. In 2011, an average of 48 hours of video was uploaded every minute, resulting in nearly 8 years of content daily. Synagogues regularly use YouTube to upload songs and liturgies so

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that congregants can learn the necessary tunes and words before Shabbat or special services. Although YouTube may successfully engage and share content in a public space, its public commenting format makes it a less than ideal tool for dialogue.

As for the youngest of the three, Twitter, by the end of 2011 there were 200 million accounts, and an average of 140 million tweets sent per day and the number of twitter users increases by 300 000 every day. Considering the fact that the first tweet was sent on 21 March 2006, (by Jack Dorsey [@jack]), this represents astonishing growth. However, of all the social media, Twitter is probably most limiting in terms of fostering interfaith dialogue because of its 140 character per post limit and its one-way communication channel.

At the very least, the examples from Facebook, YouTube and Twitter demonstrate that the social media, this new medium, provides new ways of discussion. As we have seen, some social media call for very brief content – perhaps a few dozen words – some call for longer content, for videos and pictures for analysis.

It is clear that what used to be called ‘the mainstream media’ is struggling to adapt to the new social media realities. It is not just the economic challenge of competing with free content online (similar challenges are faced by traditional publishers of books). Just a few years ago a newspaper journalist wrote one story, finished it, turned it in and it appeared in print the next day. Today, she is simultaneously writing a long story and posting very small parts of it on social media throughout the day. The journalist then reacts to comments from readers and news sources and continues to adapt and repost the story. She may be posting words, sound, picture and video. Consequently, previous distinctions between print, TV, radio and wire service are increasingly meaningless.

We see the same challenges for religious communities in their use of the social media. Some tools are used for very brief reminders, updates and calls for action. Some are more spiritual – religious communities offering prayer services via Facebook, calling for followers to help the unfortunate via Twitter, posting religious ceremonies on YouTube – and linking them all together, and to their websites, blogs and mobile phones.

This demands a new kind of literacy: a capacity to be fluent in many forms of communication. The medium calls for new ways to be in discussion and religious communities need to develop a capacity to be in those discussions.

Although these changes are astonishing and even revolutionary, social media do not create physical revolutions. People create revolutions, not the technology they use. The internet has no other purpose than to dispense data, to spread information. It has no ethics, no values. It does not espouse moral principles or any principle for that matter. The web is neutral. It is nothing more than a machine, a tool that can be used for positive or negative purposes.

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Thus, social media in themselves have no inherent positive or negative influence on interfaith dialogue. Their impact depends solely on the people who use them—and how they use them. In other words, it is not the medium itself but the motives of its users that is important. For example, a tractor is a tool. As a tool it can be used to tend fields and haul fruit and vegetables from the field, yet it can also be used to destroy fields and demolish all means to bring food to the hungry.

What is different, and observed with some trepidation by all political leaders (especially more despotic leaders) as well as excitement among their citizens, is that the social media can easily be used as a tool to organise and promote meetings, demonstrations, create channels to bypass traditional state control of the media (as well as religious hierarchies) so others in their countries (as well as their co-religionists), and the outside world can see what is going on. Social media has enabled people to break state censorship and intrinsically has the infrastructure to disseminate far, fast and wide. Social media has no respect for borders or doctrines. What happens in Morocco, Egypt and Libya is heard in real time and emulated, in Syria for example. Social media enables ordinary people to tell their story to others in their country, among the faithful; and to the world.

Although the outcome of such use for political purposes appears to be relatively new, the seeds of activism have been consistently sown for the past two decades with rising access to the internet, the end of government control over the mainstream media, and the growing availability of new levels of individual freedom of expression. Perhaps the greatest sense of empowerment has come through the ability to use cyberspace as a location for doing what might not otherwise be done in reality: assemble to discuss ideas, concerns and complaints, and to share frustrations, while also providing the social networking opportunity to unite, strategise and plan for change. In cyberspace, the social restrictions that exist in reality in some places—such as gender segregation—disappear, providing groups of people who might otherwise never meet and converse with the opportunity to connect and recognise what they share in common. It is noticeable, for example, how many women were involved in the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarek in Egypt.⁶

There are many lessons to be discerned from the successful use of social media in garnering change. The first is that information technology today is used by such a wide variety of people that no one has a monopoly over how it is used or for what purpose. This is expected to have a permanent impact on how countries are perceived. In the past, governments were able to maintain relative levels of control over the image of their countries, often focusing on artistic or scientific achievement. Today's reality of a variety of voices shaping that image—most of which lie outside of the government—carries the potential for a less cohesive or positive picture.

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As for the implications for interfaith relations, the social media can make a valuable contribution. For example, in the United States, many Muslim websites have been established to confront harmful anti-Muslim stereotypes that have emerged since 9/11. American Muslims are using social media to help others understand their faith and to promote a positive image of Islam. For example, the website www.AltMuslim.com was established in 2001 to promote awareness amongst Muslims and non-Muslims about issues regarding the Muslim world. It now has a readership of 2 million and is at the forefront of an emerging independent Muslim media in the West.

The social media can demonstrate that Jews, Christians and Muslims share many of the same reasons (both positive and negative) as to why it is important to engage in dialogue. Some may start for defensive reasons; to respond to the ignorant and negative stereotypes. A lack of knowledge provides a seedbed for prejudice, demonstrated by increasing antisemitism anti-Christian prejudice and Islamophobia, both outside and inside our communities. For example, the Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement at the University of Southern California has developed a text Compendium (<http://cmje.org>) and provides an information service about Islam and Judaism.

The fact that social media will continue to evolve and extend its reach, its influence will expand. It will be a fundamental failure if we fail to grasp its potential – but we do need to understand both its opportunities and limitations and to be familiar with its forms.

Although online communication is of a less personal nature and a virtual world will only ever be ‘virtual’, social media should be integrated into interfaith dialogue and I have shown examples of good practice promoting dialogue and inter-religious understanding. Social media can connect users with those with whom they cannot physically communicate. I cannot call the Archbishop of Canterbury every day and ask him for his views on a certain event and theological conundrum, but I can follow him on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/#!/lambethpalace>); or Lord Sacks, (<http://twitter.com/#!/chiefrabbi>); or Professor Tariq Ramadan (<http://twitter.com/#!/tariqramadan1>).

However, although the social media provides an excellent learning opportunity from those who have a different perspective than you, in reality does it happen very often? When virtual communities are formed, how often do we include those who we disagree with? How often do Israelis and Palestinians follow each other on Twitter or friend each other on Facebook?

Studies indicate that a majority of people tend to join social networks of like-minded individuals. The overall trend is that people talk to people with whom they agree. There is not much interaction between the Salafis, the Sufis, the Shi’as. The technology may exist but you still need someone with the will, curiosity and empathy.

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This leads me to the conclusion that it is not the medium itself but the motives of users that are most important. Successful interfaith dialogue depends less on the medium and more on the substance of the conversation. The three phases of the internet evolution have no inherent positive or negative power. Online tools themselves do not make people more or less tolerant. Their impact depends on the people who use them—and how they use them.

Further Reading

Princeton Theological Review on faith and social networking
http://www.princetontheologicalreview.org/issues_pdf/current.pdf

Bridging Babel: New Social Media and Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding
<http://repository.berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/UGFNewSocialMedia.pdf>

Technology and the public sphere: the power of social media
www.gpia.info/files/u1392/Shirky_Political_Poewr_of_Social_Media.pdf

Notes

1. Bridging Babel: New Social Media and Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding, available at: <http://repository.berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/UGFNewSocialMedia.pdf>
2. Ibid.
3. Princeton Theological Review on faith and social networking, available at: http://www.princetontheologicalreview.org/issues_pdf/current.pdf
4. See debate at: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=9642178>
5. *The Art of Controversy: and other posthumous papers*, Arthur Schopenhauer. (trans. T. Bailey Saunders), London, New York: S. Sonnenschein & Co., p 39.
6. See, for example, Nadine Sika and Yasmin Khodary, 'One Step Forward, Two Steps Back? Egyptian Women within the Confines of Authoritarianism.' *Journal of International Women's Studies* 13 (5), 91–100.

Looking for The Gulf Motel

By Richard Blanco

From *Looking for the Gulf Motel*, 2012

Marco Island, Florida

There should be nothing here I don't remember . . .

The Gulf Motel with mermaid lampposts and ship's wheel in the lobby should still be rising out of the sand like a cake decoration. My brother and I should still be pretending we don't know our parents, embarrassing us as they roll the luggage cart past the front desk loaded with our scruffy suitcases, two-dozen loaves of Cuban bread, brown bags bulging with enough mangos to last the entire week, our espresso pot, the pressure cooker—and a pork roast reeking garlic through the lobby. All because we can't afford to eat out, not even on vacation, only two hours from our home in Miami, but far enough away to be thrilled by *whiter* sands on the *west* coast of Florida, where I should still be for the first time watching the sun set instead of rise over the ocean.

There should be nothing here I don't remember . . .

My mother should still be in the kitchenette of The Gulf Motel, her daisy sandals from Kmart squeaking across the linoleum, still gorgeous in her teal swimsuit and amber earrings stirring a pot of *arroz-con-pollo*, adding sprinkles of onion powder and dollops of tomato sauce. My father should still be in a terrycloth jacket smoking, clinking a glass of amber whiskey in the sunset at the Gulf Motel, watching us dive into the pool, two boys he'll never see grow into men who will be proud of him.

There should be nothing here I don't remember . . .

My brother and I should still be playing *Parcheesi*,
My father should still be alive, slow dancing
with my mother on the sliding-glass balcony
of The Gulf Motel. No music, only the waves
keeping time, a song only their minds hear
ten-thousand nights back to their life in Cuba.
My mother's face should still be resting against
his bare chest like the moon resting on the sea,
the stars should still be turning around them.

There should be nothing here I don't remember . . .

My brother should still be thirteen, sneaking
rum in the bathroom, sculpting naked women
from sand. I should still be eight years old
dazzled by seashells and how many seconds
I hold my breath underwater—but I'm not.
I am thirty-eight, driving up Collier Boulevard,
looking for The Gulf Motel, for everything
that should still be, but isn't. I want to blame
the condos, their shadows for ruining the beach
and my past, I want to chase the snowbirds away
with their tacky mansions and yachts, I want
to turn the golf courses back into mangroves,
I want to find The Gulf Motel exactly as it was
and pretend for a moment, nothing lost is lost.

Speech to United Nations General Assembly

Margaret Thatcher

November 8, 1989

Mr President, it gives me great pleasure to return to the Podium of this assembly. When I last spoke here four years ago, on the 40th anniversary of the United Nations, the message that I and others like me gave was one of encouragement to the organisation to play the great role allotted to it. Of all the challenges faced by the world community in those four years, one has grown clearer than any other in both urgency and importance—I refer to the threat to our global environment. I shall take the opportunity of addressing the general assembly to speak on that subject alone.

INTRODUCTION

During his historic voyage through the south seas on the Beagle, Charles Darwin landed one November morning in 1835 on the shore of Western Tahiti.

After breakfast he climbed a nearby hill to find advantage point to survey the surrounding Pacific. The sight seemed to him like “a framed engraving”, with blue sky, blue lagoon, and white breakers crashing against the encircling Coral Reef.

As he looked out from that hillside, he began to form his theory of the evolution of coral; 154 years after Darwin’s visit to Tahiti we have added little to what he discovered then.

What if Charles Darwin had been able, not just to climb a foothill, but to soar through the heavens in one of the orbiting space shuttles?

What would he have learned as he surveyed our planet from that altitude? From a moon’s eye view of that strange and beautiful anomaly in our solar system that is the earth?

Of course, we have learned much detail about our environment as we have looked back at it from space, but nothing has made a more profound impact on us than these two facts.

First, as the British scientist Fred Hoyle wrote long before space travel was a reality, he said “once a photograph of the earth, taken from the outside is available ... a new idea as powerful as any other in history will be let loose”.

That powerful idea is the recognition of our shared inheritance on this planet. We know more clearly than ever before that we carry common burdens, face common problems, and must respond with common action.

And second, as we travel through space, as we pass one dead planet after another, we look back on our earth, a speck of life in an infinite void. It is life itself, incomparably precious, that distinguishes us from the other planets.

It is life itself—human life, the innumerable species of our planet—that we wantonly destroy. It is life itself that we must battle to preserve.

For over forty years, that has been the main task of this United Nations.

To bring peace where there was war.

Comfort where there was misery.

Life where there was death.

The struggle has not always been successful. There have been years of failure.

But recent events have brought the promise of a new dawn, of new hope. Relations between the Western nations and the Soviet Union and her allies, long frozen in suspicion and hostility, have begun to thaw.

In Europe, this year, freedom has been on the march.

In Southern Africa—Namibia and Angola—the United Nations has succeeded in holding out better prospects for an end to war and for the beginning of prosperity.

And in South East Asia, too, we can dare to hope for the restoration of peace after decades of fighting.

While the conventional, political dangers—the threat of global annihilation, the fact of regional war—appear to be receding, we have all recently become aware of another insidious danger.

It is as menacing in its way as those more accustomed perils with which international diplomacy has concerned itself for centuries.

It is the prospect of irretrievable damage to the atmosphere, to the oceans, to earth itself.

Of course major changes in the earth's climate and the environment have taken place in earlier centuries when the world's population was a fraction of its present size.

The causes are to be found in nature itself—changes in the earth's orbit: changes in the amount of radiation given off by the sun: the consequential effects on the plankton in the ocean: and in volcanic processes.

All these we can observe and some we may be able to predict. But we do not have the power to prevent or control them.

What we are now doing to the world, by degrading the land surfaces, by polluting the waters and by adding greenhouse gases to the air at an unprecedented rate—all this is new in the experience of the earth. It is mankind and his activities which are changing the environment of our planet in damaging and dangerous ways.

We can find examples in the past. Indeed we may well conclude that it was the silting up of the River Euphrates which drove man out of the Garden of Eden.

We also have the example of the tragedy of Easter Island, where people arrived by boat to find a primeval forest. In time the population increased to over 9,000 souls and the demand placed upon the environment resulted in its eventual destruction as people cut down the trees. This in turn led to warfare over the scarce remaining resources and the population crashed to a few hundred people without even enough wood to make boats to escape.

The difference now is in the scale of the damage we are doing.

VAST INCREASE IN CARBON DIOXIDE

We are seeing a vast increase in the amount of carbon dioxide reaching the atmosphere. The annual increase is three billion tonnes: and half the carbon emitted since the Industrial Revolution still remains in the atmosphere.

At the same time as this is happening, we are seeing the destruction on a vast scale of tropical forests which are uniquely able to remove carbon dioxide from the air.

Every year an area of forest equal to the whole surface of the United Kingdom is destroyed. At present rates of clearance we shall, by the year 2000, have removed 65 per cent of forests in the humid tropical zones.

The consequences of this become clearer when one remembers that tropical forests fix more than ten times as much carbon as do forests in the temperate zones.

We now know, too, that great damage is being done to the Ozone Layer by the production of halons and chlorofluorocarbons. But at least we have recognised that reducing and eventually stopping the emission of CFCs is one positive thing we can do about the menacing accumulation of greenhouse gases.

It is of course true that none of us would be here but for the greenhouse effect. It gives us the moist atmosphere which sustains life on earth. We need the greenhouse effect—but only in the right proportions.

More than anything, our environment is threatened by the sheer numbers of people and the plants and animals which go with them. When I was born the world's population was some 2 billion people. My [Michael Thatcher] grandson will grow up in a world of more than 6 billion people.

Put in its bluntest form: the main threat to our environment is more and more people, and their activities: The land they cultivate ever more intensively; The forests they cut down and burn; The mountain sides they lay bare; The fossil fuels they burn; The rivers and the seas they pollute.

The result is that change in future is likely to be more fundamental and more widespread than anything we have known hitherto. Change to the sea around us, change to the atmosphere above, leading in turn to change in the world's climate, which could alter the way we live in the most fundamental way of all.

That prospect is a new factor in human affairs. It is comparable in its implications to the discovery of how to split the atom. Indeed, its results could be even more far-reaching.

THE LATEST SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE

We are constantly learning more about these changes affecting our environment, and scientists from the Polar Institute in Cambridge and The British Antarctic Survey have been at the leading edge of research in both the Arctic and the Antarctic, warning us of the greater dangers that lie ahead.

Let me quote from a letter I received only two weeks ago, from a British scientist on board a ship in the Antarctic Ocean: he wrote, "In the Polar Regions today, we are seeing what may be early signs of man-induced climatic change. Data coming in from Halley Bay and from instruments aboard the ship on which I am sailing show that we are entering a Spring Ozone depletion which is as deep as, if not deeper, than the depletion in the worst year to date. It completely reverses the recovery observed in 1988. The lowest recording aboard this ship is only 150 Dobson units for Ozone total content during September, compared with 300 for the same season in a normal year." That of course is a very severe depletion.

He also reports on a significant thinning of the sea ice, and he writes that, in the Antarctic, "Our data confirm that the first-year ice, which forms the bulk of sea ice cover, is remarkably thin and so is probably unable to sustain significant atmospheric warming without melting. Sea ice, separates the ocean from the atmosphere over an area of more than 30 million square kilometres. It reflects most of the solar radiation falling on it, helping to cool the earth's surface. If this area were reduced, the warming of earth would be accelerated due to the extra absorption of radiation by the ocean."

"The lesson of these Polar processes," he goes on, "is that an environmental or climatic change produced by man may take on a self-sustaining or 'runaway' quality ... and may be irreversible." That is from the scientists who are doing work on the ship that is presently considering these matters.

These are sobering indications of what may happen and they led my correspondent to put forward the interesting idea of a World Polar Watch, amongst other initiatives, which will observe the world's climate system and allow us to understand how it works.

We also have new scientific evidence from an entirely different area, the Tropical Forests. Through their capacity to evaporate vast volumes of water vapour, and of gases and particles which assist the formation of clouds, the forests serve to keep their regions cool and moist by weaving a sunshade of white reflecting clouds and by bringing the rain that sustains them.

A recent study by our British Meteorological Office on the Amazon rainforest shows that large-scale deforestation may reduce rainfall and thus affect the climate directly. Past experience shows us that without trees there is no rain, and without rain there are no trees.

THE SCOPE FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTION

Mr President, the evidence is there. The damage is being done. What do we, the International Community, do about it?

In some areas, the action required is primarily for individual nations or groups of nations to take.

I am thinking for example of action to deal with pollution of rivers—and many of us now see the fish back in rivers from which they had disappeared.

I am thinking of action to improve agricultural methods—good husbandry which ploughs back nourishment into the soil rather than the cut-and-burn which has damaged and degraded so much land in some parts of the world.

And I am thinking of the use of nuclear power which—despite the attitude of so-called greens—is the most environmentally safe form of energy.

But the problem of global climate change is one that affects us all and action will only be effective if it is taken at the international level.

It is no good squabbling over who is responsible or who should pay. Whole areas of our planet could be subject to drought and starvation if the pattern of rains and monsoons were to change as a result of the destruction of forests and the accumulation of greenhouse gases.

We have to look forward not backward and we shall only succeed in dealing with the problems through a vast international, co-operative effort.

Before we act, we need the best possible scientific assessment: otherwise we risk making matters worse. We must use science to cast a light ahead, so that we can move step by step in the right direction.

The United Kingdom has agreed to take on the task of co-ordinating such an assessment within the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change, an assessment which will be available to everyone by the time of the Second World Climate Conference next year.

But that will take us only so far. The report will not be able to tell us where the hurricanes will be striking; who will be flooded; or how often and how severe the droughts will be. Yet we will need to know these things if we are to adapt to future climate change, and that means we must expand our capacity to model and predict climate change. We can test our skills and methods by seeing whether they would have successfully predicted past climate change for which historical records exist.

Britain has some of the leading experts in this field and I am pleased to be able to tell you that the United Kingdom will be establishing a new centre for the prediction of climate change, which will lead the effort to improve our prophetic capacity.

It will also provide the advanced computing facilities that scientists need. And it will be open to experts from all over the world, especially from the developing countries, who can come to the United Kingdom and contribute to this vital work.

But as well as the science, we need to get the economics right. That means first we must have continued economic growth in order to generate the wealth required to pay for the protection of the environment. But it must be growth which does not plunder the planet today and leave our children to deal with the consequences tomorrow.

And second, we must resist the simplistic tendency to blame modern multinational industry for the damage which is being done to the environment. Far from being the villains, it is on them that we rely to do the research and find the solutions.

It is industry which will develop safe alternative chemicals for refrigerators and air-conditioning. It is industry which will devise bio-degradable plastics. It is industry which will find the means to treat pollutants and make nuclear waste safe—and many companies as you know already have massive research programmes.

The multinationals have to take the long view. There will be no profit or satisfaction for anyone if pollution continues to destroy our planet.

As people's consciousness of environmental needs rises, they are turning increasingly to ozone-friendly and other environmentally safe products. The market itself acts as a corrective the new products sell and those which caused environmental damage are disappearing from the shelves.

And by making these new products widely available, industry will make it possible for developing countries to avoid many of the mistakes which we older industrialised countries have made.

We should always remember that free markets are a means to an end. They would defeat their object if by their output they did more damage to the quality of life through pollution than the well-being they achieve by the production of goods and services.

On the basis then of sound science and sound economics, we need to build a strong framework for international action.

It is not new institutions that we need. Rather we need to strengthen and improve those which already exist: in particular the World Meteorological Organisation and the United Nations Environment Programme.

The United Kingdom has recently more than doubled its contribution to UNEP and we urge others, who have not done so and who can afford it, to do the same.

And the central organs of the United Nations, like this General Assembly, must also be seized of a problem which reaches into virtually all aspects of their work and will do so still more in the future.

CONVENTION ON GLOBAL CLIMATE

The most pressing task which faces us at the international level is to negotiate a framework convention on climate change—a sort of good conduct guide for all nations.

Fortunately we have a model in the action already taken to protect the ozone layer. The Vienna Convention in 1985 and the Montreal Protocol in 1987 established landmarks in international law. They aim to prevent rather than just cure a global environmental problem.

I believe we should aim to have a convention on global climate change ready by the time the World Conference on Environment and Development meets in 1992. That will be among the most important conferences the United Nations has ever held. I hope that we shall all accept a responsibility to meet this timetable.

The 1992 Conference is indeed already being discussed among many countries in many places. And I draw particular attention to the very valuable discussion which members of the Commonwealth had under the [Mahathir bin Mohamad] Prime Minister of Malaysia's chairmanship at our recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

But a framework is not enough. It will need to be filled out with specific undertakings, or protocols in diplomatic language, on the different aspects of climate change.

These protocols must be binding and there must be effective regimes to supervise and monitor their application. Otherwise those nations which accept and abide by environmental agreements, thus adding to their industrial costs, will lose out competitively to those who do not.

The negotiation of some of these protocols will undoubtedly be difficult. And no issue will be more contentious than the need to control emissions of carbon dioxide, the major contributor—apart from water vapour—to the greenhouse effect.

We can't just do nothing. But the measures we take must be based on sound scientific analysis of the effect of the different gases and the ways in which these can be reduced. In the past there has been a tendency to solve one problem at the expense of making others worse.

The United Kingdom therefore proposes that we prolong the role of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change after it submits its report next year, so that it can provide an authoritative scientific base for the negotiation of this and other protocols.

We can then agree to targets to reduce the greenhouse gases, and how much individual countries should contribute to their achievement. We think it important that this should be done in a way which enables all our economies to continue to grow and develop.

The challenge for our negotiators on matters like this is as great as for any disarmament treaty. The Inter-governmental Panel's work must remain on target, and we must not allow ourselves to be diverted into fruitless and divisive argument. Time is too short for that.

Before leaving the area where international action is needed, I would make a plea for a further global convention, one to conserve the infinite variety of species—of plant and animal life—which inhabit our planet.

The tropical forests contain a half of the species in the world, so their disappearance is doubly damaging, and it is astonishing but true that our civilisation, whose imagination has reached the boundaries of the universe, does not know, to within a factor of ten, how many species the earth supports.

What we do know is that we are losing them at a reckless rate—between three and fifty each day on some estimates—species which could perhaps be helping us to advance the frontiers of medical science. We should act together to conserve this precious heritage.

BRITAIN'S CONTRIBUTION

Every nation will need to make its contribution to the world effort, so I want to tell you how Britain intends to contribute, either by improving our own national performance in protecting the environment, or through the help that we give to others, and I shall tell you under four headings.

First, we shall be introducing over the coming months a comprehensive system of pollution control to deal with all kinds of industrial pollution whether to air, water or land.

We are encouraging British industry to develop new technologies to clean up the environment and minimise the amount of waste it produces—and we aim to recycle 50 per cent of our household waste by the end of the century.

Secondly, we will be drawing up over the coming year our own environmental agenda for the decade ahead. That will cover energy, transport, agriculture, industry—everything which affects the environment.

With regard to energy, we already have a £2 billion programme of improvements to reduce acid rain emissions from our power stations. We shall be looking more closely at the role of non-fossil fuel sources, including nuclear, in generating energy. And our latest legislation requires companies which supply electricity positively to promote energy efficiency.

On transport, we shall look for ways to strengthen controls over vehicle emissions and to develop the lean-burn engine, which offers a far better long-term solution than the three-way catalyst, in terms of carbon dioxide and the greenhouse effect.

We have already reduced the tax on lead-free petrol to encourage its use. That is an example of using market-based incentives to promote good environmental practice and we shall see whether there are other areas where this same principle can be applied.

With regard to agriculture, we recognise that farmers not only produce food—which they do with great efficiency—they need to conserve the beauty of the priceless heritage of our countryside. So we are therefore encouraging them to reduce the intensity of their methods and to conserve wild-life habitats.

We are planting new woods and forests—indeed there has been a 50 per cent increase in tree planting in Britain in the last ten years.

We also aim to reduce chemical inputs to the soil and we are bringing forward measures to deal with the complex problem of nitrates in water. All that is part of our own ten-year programme coming up to the end of the century.

Third, we are increasing our investment in research into global environmental problems. I have already mentioned the climate change centre that we are establishing.

In addition we are supporting our own scientists', and in particular the British Antarctic Survey's crucial contribution to the World Ocean Circulation Experiment, as well as the voyages of our aptly-named research ship, the 'Charles Darwin'.

We have also provided more money for the Climate and Environment Satellite Monitoring Programmes of the European Space Agency.

Fourth, we help poorer countries to cope with their environmental problems through our Aid Programme.

We shall give special help to manage and preserve the tropical forests. We are already assisting in twenty countries and have recently signed agreements with India and Brazil.

And as a new pledge, I can announce today that we aim to commit a further £100 million bilaterally to tropical forestry activities over the next three years, mostly within the framework of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan. That is what we are doing in Britain under those four headings. All of those things.

CONCLUSION

Mr President, the environmental challenge which confronts the whole world demands an equivalent response from the whole world. Every country will be affected and no one can opt out.

We should work through this great organisation and its agencies to secure world-wide agreements on ways to cope with the effects of climate change, the thinning of the Ozone Layer, and the loss of precious species.

We need a realistic programme of action and an equally realistic timetable.

Each country has to contribute, and those countries who are industrialised must contribute more to help those who are not.

The work ahead will be long and exacting. We should embark on it hopeful of success, not fearful of failure.

I began with Charles Darwin and his work on the theory of evolution and the origin of species. Darwin's voyages were among the high-points of scientific discovery. They were undertaken at a time when men and women felt growing confidence that we could not only understand the natural world but we could master it, too.

Today, we have learned rather more humility and respect for the balance of nature. But another of the beliefs of Darwin's era should help to see us through—the belief in reason and the scientific method.

Reason is humanity's special gift. It allows us to understand the structure of the nucleus. It enables us to explore the heavens. It helps us to conquer disease. Now we must use our reason to find a way in which we can live with nature, and not dominate nature.

At the end of a book which has helped many young people to shape their own sense of stewardship for our planet, its American author quotes one of our greatest English poems, Milton's "Paradise Lost".

When Adam in that poem asks about the movements of the heavens, Raphael the Archangel refuses to answer. "Let it speak", he says,

"The Maker's high magnificence, who built

So spacious, and his line stretcht out so far,

That Man may know he dwells not in his own; An edifice too large for him to fill,

Lodg'd in a small partition, and the rest

Ordain'd for uses to his Lord best known."

We need our reason to teach us today that we are not, that we must not try to be, the lords of all we survey.

We are not the lords, we are the Lord's creatures, the trustees of this planet, charged today with preserving life itself—preserving life with all its mystery and all its wonder.

May we all be equal to that task.

Thank you Mr President.

SPECIALSECTION

PERSPECTIVE

The Urban Transformation of the Developing World

Mark R. Montgomery

Sometime in the next 20 to 30 years, developing countries in Asia and Africa are likely to cross a historic threshold, joining Latin America in having a majority of urban residents. The urban demographic transformation is described here, with an emphasis on estimates and forecasts of urban population aggregates. To provide policy-makers with useful scientific guidance in the upcoming urban era, demographic researchers will need to refine their data sets to include spatial factors as well as urban vital rates and to make improvements to forecasting methods currently in use.

By 2030, according to the projections of the United Nations (UN) Population Division (1), each of the major regions of the developing world will hold more urban than rural dwellers; by 2050 fully two-thirds of their inhabitants are likely to live in urban areas. The world's population as a whole is expected to undergo substantial further growth over the period, almost all of which is expected to take place in the cities and towns of poor countries. The total urban population of these countries was estimated by the UN Population Division to have been 1.97 billion persons in the year 2000, but that total is projected to increase to 3.90 billion by 2030 and further to 5.26 billion by 2050. This will be an enormous change in both relative and absolute terms. The urban demographic transformation influences and is influenced by four allied trends in economic development worldwide: globalization, which binds cities to each other through international networks; the decentralization of governments of poor countries, which is placing greater responsibilities on local and municipal governments (2); evolving international development strategies to fulfill the Millennium Development Goals, which explicitly recognize urban as well as rural poverty (3); and the urban implications of global climate change, which is likely to put large coastal city populations at risk from flooding, storm surges, and other extreme weather events (4, 5).

In spite of its centrality to economic development, the urban transformation of poor countries has somehow largely escaped the attention of the demographic research community. When it has focused on urbanization, the demographic literature has tended to overstate the role being played by very large cities and has underemphasized the importance of small- and medium-sized cities. The literature has also given insufficient weight to urban natural increase versus rural-to-urban migration as a source of city population growth.

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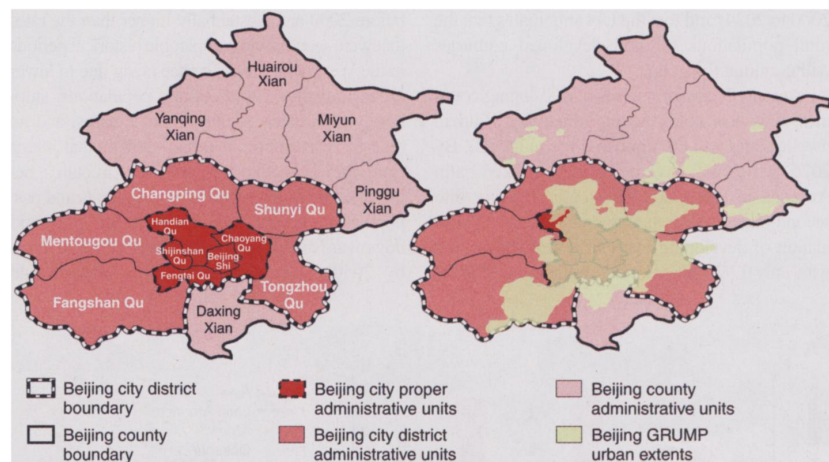


Fig. 1. Administrative Districts of Beijing Province, China.

There are policy opportunities here that warrant far more attention than has been given to date (6). In turning belatedly to urbanization, demographers have brought one important issue to the forefront: the poor performance of the methods currently being used to forecast city and urban growth in developing countries (2, 7).

Urban and City Definitions

Much of what is known about the demography of the urban transition stems from research conducted by the UN Population Division, which since the 1970s has been the sole source of internationally comparable city and urban estimates and projections. The main challenge for its analysts is that of heterogeneity: The national definitions that yield these data vary substantially across countries and over time.

Beijing offers one example of the difficulties (8, 9). For the year 2000, the population of “Beijing” was reported by Chinese authorities to be 11.5 million people. But depending on how the city boundary is drawn, the estimate could have been as low as 8.5 million had the boundary encompassed only the administrative units of the

city proper (depicted in darkest shading in the left-hand side of Fig. 1). The official definition also includes the populations of surrounding city districts, which contain more rural than urban residents but are functionally linked to the city proper. Multiple social, economic, administrative, and political judgements come into play in the formulation of such city definitions, and it is not obvious that the adoption of any single definition is advisable. Although the conventional urban-rural distinction still retains value, a consensus is emerging that future classification schemes will need to reserve a place for third categories and degrees of urban-ness, as well as the rural and urban ends of the spectrum (10–12).

Although an international database that would allow for consideration of multiple definitions is not yet in hand, a template for this work has been developed by the Global Rural-Urban Mapping Project (GRUMP), which combines detailed administrative boundary data with urban and rural population counts for all countries and which has supplemented these data with imagery derived from remote sensing and other geographically coded sources (13, 14). A sample of the GRUMP results can be seen in the right-hand side portion of Fig. 1, in which the irregularly shaped areas depicted in light shading indicate where the urban concentrations of population are located in Beijing province as determined by satellite observation of night-time lights (15). In this case, the physical proximity of lights might serve as a proxy for social, economic, and administrative interaction. New measures such as these may aid in the development of alternative urban and city definitions (16, 4, 17–19).

The Urban Population Transition

The following analysis has its basis in an October 2006 update of the UN Population Division's

Cities

cities database (1). Although the units in which city and town populations are recorded vary a good deal and systematic biases have plagued urban and city population forecasts based on these data, there is little disagreement about the broad patterns and trends.

During the period 2000–2024, the world’s total population is projected to grow by 1.76 billion persons, with some 86% of this growth expected to take place in the cities and towns of developing countries (Fig. 2A). These near-term prospects stand in sharp contrast to what was experienced from 1950 to 1974, an era when rural growth still exceeded urban. The projections suggest that relatively little additional rural growth will occur in developing countries (an increase of some 190 million rural dwellers in total from 2000 to 2024) and that the UN anticipates that the rural populations of more-developed countries will continue to decline.

Among the major regions of developing countries, Asia now holds the largest number of urban dwellers and will continue to do so (Fig. 2B). By 2025, Africa will have probably overtaken Latin America in terms of urban totals, moving into second place among the regions. (The urban population of developing Oceania is also shown, but with only 1.92 million urban residents as of 2000

and 6.47 million urban dwellers projected for 2050, the totals for this region are hardly perceptible.)

In the 1950s, 1960s, and well into the 1970s, regional urban growth rates (Fig. 2C) approximated 4% per annum, although declines were already making an appearance in Latin America. Had the growth rates of this early era been sustained, the urban populations of the three regions would have doubled roughly every 17 years. By the year 2000, however, urban growth rates had fallen considerably in each of the three major regions. As Fig. 2C indicates, further growth rate declines are forecast for the first few decades of the 21st century, with urban Latin America projected to approach a state of zero growth. Much as with population growth rates overall in developing countries, the urban growth rates in force before 2000 are substantially higher than the rates that were seen during comparable historical periods in the West, with the difference being due to lower urban mortality in present-day populations, stubbornly high urban fertility in some cases, and a built-in momentum in urban growth that stems from the distinctive age and sex structures bequeathed by in-migration of young adults and past population growth (2). Even if the projected downward trends in growth rates come to pass, by 2050 urban growth rates in Africa would

remain about 2% per annum, a rate that would double the urban population of that region in 35 years.

In each of the developing regions, the urban percentage is advancing in a seemingly inexorable fashion, and by 2030 urban majorities are projected to emerge in both Asia and Africa. Despite what is often assumed, when compared with the historical experience in Western countries, these decade-to-decade changes in urban percentages—sometimes termed the pace of urbanization—are not especially large (2). The literature exhibits some confusion on this point, often failing to distinguish rates of urban growth, which are rapid by historical standards, from the pace of urbanization, which falls well within the historical bounds.

What has no historical parallel is the emergence of hundreds of large cities, especially in Asia and Latin America, which each have several cities above 10 million in population. This remarkable feature of the urban transition has attracted a great deal of interest and seems to have fostered the impression that most urban residents in the developing world live in huge urban agglomerations. In fact, of all urban residents in cities of 100,000 and above in the developing world, only about 12% live in megacities, i.e., about 1 in 8 of

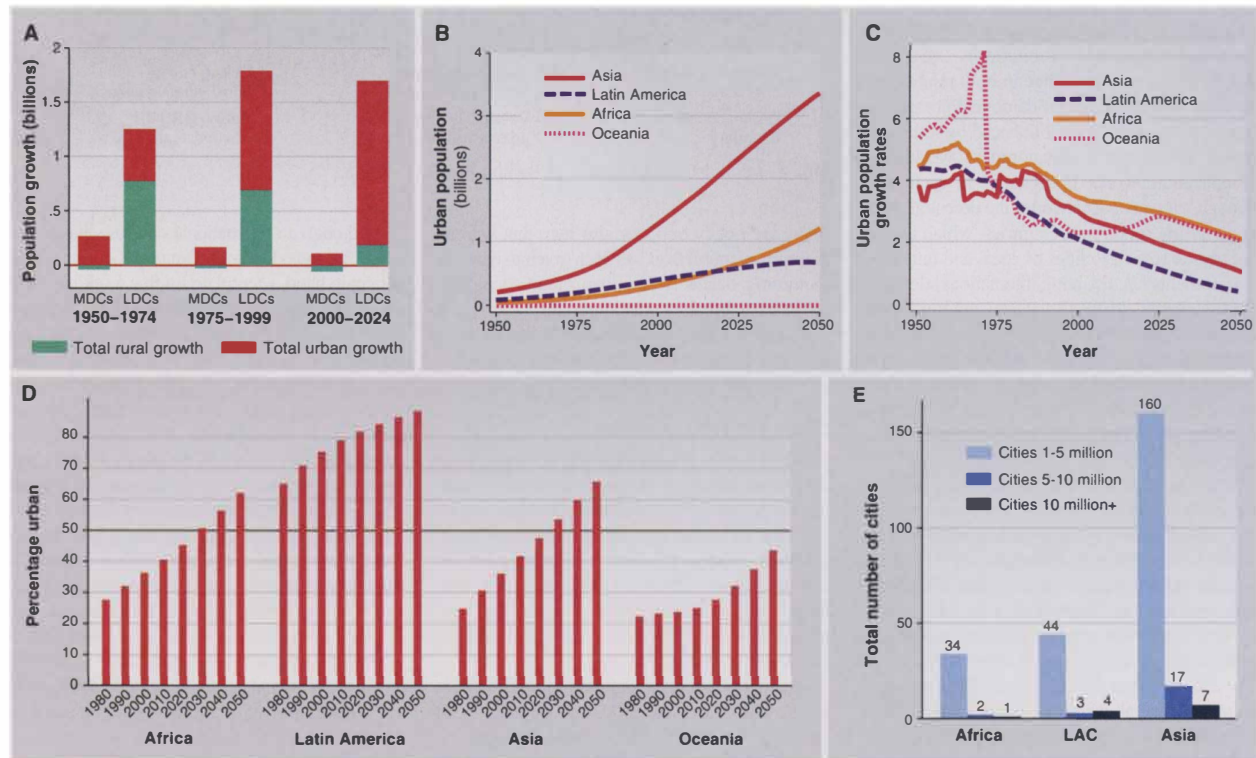


Fig. 2. (A) Urban population growth in more-developed countries (MDCs) and less-developed countries (LDCs), 1950–2024. **(B)** Total urban population by region in developing countries. **(C)** Growth rates of total urban population by region in developing countries. **(D)** Increasing percentage urban in developing countries. **(E)** Number of cities of 1 million residents or more in developing countries in 2000 by region.

SPECIAL SECTION

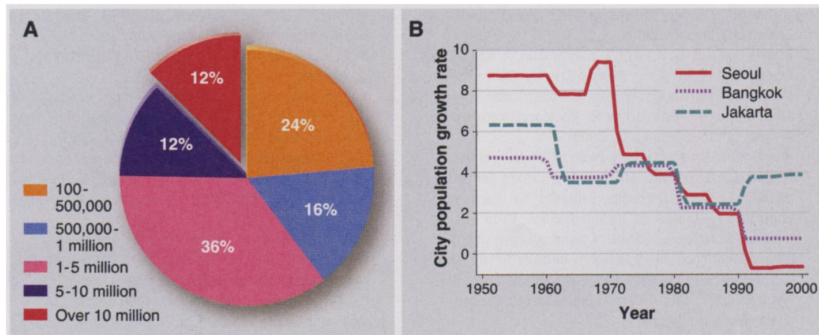


Fig. 3. (A) Distribution of urban population by city size in developing countries in 2000. **(B)** City growth rates for Seoul, Bangkok, and Jakarta, 1950–2000.

urban residents (Fig. 3A). Smaller cities are generally less well provided with basic services than large cities, such as improved sanitation and adequate supplies of drinking water (2). Rates of fertility and infant and child mortality in small cities can be little different from the rates prevailing in the countryside. Their municipal governments seldom possess the range of expertise and managerial talent found in the governments of large cities. Yet in an era of political decentralization, these smaller cities are increasingly being required to shoulder substantial burdens in service delivery and take on a larger share of revenue-raising responsibilities (2). Given all this, it is surprising how often small cities have been neglected in policy discussions (20).

The empirical record suggests that various social and spatial feedback mechanisms cause large cities to exhibit declining rates of population growth, as illustrated by the cases of Jakarta, Seoul, and Bangkok (Fig. 3B). In offering explanations, urban economists emphasize how increases in city size drive up rents and the many costs of congestion, discouraging prospective migrants and encouraging business relocation. Urban geographers stress the difficulties of locating and measuring the growth of large cities, noting that faster population growth at an urban periphery, which may not necessarily be recorded in growth rate statistics, often accompanies slower growth in the city center.

Another plausible explanation that receives far too little attention is that city growth rates are driven down over time by declines in urban fertility rates. Research by the UN Population Division, based on a sample of countries providing two or more national censuses, allows urban population growth rates to be divided into a natural urban growth component (the difference between urban birth and death rates) and a residual that combines net migration with spatial expansion (21).

The details are complicated and the sample of countries small; nevertheless, the results are strikingly at odds with the usual perception of the sources of urban growth. In developing countries, about 60% of the urban growth rate is attributable to natural growth; the remaining 40% is due to migration and spatial expansion. Recently, a very similar rule was established for India over the 4 decades from 1961 to 2001, with urban natural growth again accounting for about 60% of the total [p. 32 of (22)]. Not surprisingly given its low fertility levels, the tight controls that kept migration in check until the 1980s, and the subsequent unleashing of migration, China presents something of an exception. There, the UN's estimate puts the contribution of natural urban growth at about 40% of the growth rate total.

Many developing-country policy-makers have expressed greater concern about rates of city growth in their countries than about national population growth, and they have not infrequently acted on such concerns with aggressive tactics aiming to expel slum residents and repel rural-to-urban migrants (6). It is therefore surprising how little attention has been paid to a growth-rate policy of a very different character: urban voluntary family-planning programs. Over the past half-century, such programs have compiled an impressive record across the developing world in

facilitating fertility declines and reducing unwanted fertility. Empirical analysis of developing-country city growth and fertility suggests that when national total fertility rates decline by one child, this is associated with a decline of nearly 1 percentage point in city population growth rates for that country (23). Family-planning programs offer an effective and humane alternative to the ineffective and brutalizing measures that have been applied all too often.

Forecasting City Growth

The performance of the UN urban and city population forecasts leaves much to be desired: As Table 1 indicates, they have consistently projected growth rates (and thus population sizes) that are too high (2, 7). The mean percentage forecast errors are large for the 20-year- and 10-year-ahead forecasts; for example, the 20-year-ahead forecast for Latin America, made in 1980, proved to be 19.8% too high when the region's 2000 urban population was finally counted. The tendency to overproject is not evident in the UN's forecasts of total population at the national level, and it persists despite the insertion of an algorithm in the city forecasting model designed to slow projected growth rates as city size increases. Diagnosing the source of these errors is difficult given that the UN's method makes no use of fertility or mortality rates (which the UN projects in separate exercises) and has not yet incorporated spatially disaggregated data such as shown for Beijing (Fig. 1). Alternative forecasting methods are now being actively explored (7, 23).

If the details remain in doubt while these scientific issues await resolution, at least the broad outlines of future urbanization can be perceived from the UN figures, as can the items in the research agenda that urgently need attention if demographic data and methods are to provide useful scientific guidance. Perhaps the greatest need on the demographic front is to ensure that the censuses regularly fielded by developing countries are analyzed at the level of small geographic units and the results placed in the hands of the local and municipal governments that will need to make use of such data to effectively plan for the pace and spatial distribution of future growth. Remote-sensing methods can serve as a valuable supplementary tool, if not in estimating population as such, then in monitoring the spatial spread of city populations in the intercensal periods.

Table 1. Urban population forecast errors for the year 2000 [from (2)].

	Mean percentage forecast errors		
	1980–2000	1990–2000	1995–2000
East Asia and Pacific (EAP)	3.9	26.7	–2.8
EAP excluding China	18.4	9.8	–0.4
Latin America and Caribbean	19.8	5.4	–0.9
Middle East and North Africa	13.3	6.8	8.5
South Asia	27.2	19.7	2.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	21.8	23.4	5.5
	<i>Level of development</i>		
Low	23.1	18.3	3.2
Lower middle	6.9	26.1	–1.3
Lower middle excluding China	25.6	9.9	3.7
Upper middle	12.8	8.9	0.8

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“Letter from Birmingham Jail”

By Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

16 April 1963

My Dear Fellow Clergymen:

While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities “unwise and untimely.” Seldom do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view which argues against “outsiders coming in.” I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. We have some eighty five affiliated organizations across the South, and one of them is the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. Frequently we share staff, educational and financial resources with our affiliates. Several months ago the affiliate here in Birmingham asked us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct action program if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented, and when the hour came we lived up to our promise. So I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here.

But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their “thus saith the Lord” far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial “outside agitator” idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.

You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city’s white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self purification; and direct action. We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard, brutal facts of the case. On the basis of these conditions, Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the latter consistently refused to engage in good faith negotiation.

Then, last September, came the opportunity to talk with leaders of Birmingham's economic community. In the course of the negotiations, certain promises were made by the merchants—for example, to remove the stores' humiliating racial signs. On the basis of these promises, the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to a moratorium on all demonstrations. As the weeks and months went by, we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. A few signs, briefly removed, returned; the others remained.

As in so many past experiences, our hopes had been blasted, and the shadow of deep disappointment settled upon us. We had no alternative except to prepare for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and the national community. Mindful of the difficulties involved, we decided to undertake a process of self purification. We began a series of workshops on nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves: "Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?" "Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?" We decided to schedule our direct action program for the Easter season, realizing that except for Christmas, this is the main shopping period of the year. Knowing that a strong economic-withdrawal program would be the by product of direct action, we felt that this would be the best time to bring pressure to bear on the merchants for the needed change.

Then it occurred to us that Birmingham's mayoral election was coming up in March, and we speedily decided to postpone action until after election day. When we discovered that the Commissioner of Public Safety, Eugene "Bull" Connor, had piled up enough votes to be in the run off, we decided again to postpone action until the day after the run off so that the demonstrations could not be used to cloud the issues. Like many others, we waited to see Mr. Connor defeated, and to this end we endured postponement after postponement. Having aided in this community need, we felt that our direct action program could be delayed no longer.

You may well ask: "Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word "tension." I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood.

The purpose of our direct action program is to create a situation so crisis packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

One of the basic points in your statement is that the action that I and my associates have taken in Birmingham is untimely. Some have asked: “Why didn’t you give the new city administration time to act?” The only answer that I can give to this query is that the new Birmingham administration must be prodded about as much as the outgoing one, before it will act. We are sadly mistaken if we feel that the election of Albert Boutwell as mayor will bring the millennium to Birmingham. While Mr. Boutwell is a much more gentle person than Mr. Connor, they are both segregationists, dedicated to maintenance of the status quo. I have hope that Mr. Boutwell will be reasonable enough to see the futility of massive resistance to desegregation. But he will not see this without pressure from devotees of civil rights. My friends, I must say to you that we have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and nonviolent pressure. Lamentably, it is an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was “well timed” in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word “Wait!” It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This “Wait” has almost always meant “Never.” We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that “justice too long delayed is justice denied.”

We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at horse and buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, “Wait.” But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six year old daughter why she can’t go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five year old son who is asking: “Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?”; when you take a cross county drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading “white” and “colored”; when your first name becomes “nigger,” your middle name becomes “boy” (however old you are) and your last name becomes “John,” and your wife and mother are never given the respected title “Mrs.”; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of “nobodiness”—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather paradoxical for us consciously to break laws. One may well ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all."

Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. Segregation, to use the terminology of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, substitutes an "I it" relationship for an "I thou" relationship and ends up relegating persons to the status of things. Hence segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound, it is morally wrong and sinful. Paul Tillich has said that sin is separation. Is not segregation an existential expression of man's tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness? Thus it is that I can urge men to obey the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court, for it is morally right; and I can urge them to disobey segregation ordinances, for they are morally wrong.

Let us consider a more concrete example of just and unjust laws. An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is difference made legal. By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal.

Let me give another explanation. A law is unjust if it is inflicted on a minority that, as a result of being denied the right to vote, had no part in enacting or devising the law. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up that state's segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout Alabama all sorts of devious methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which, even though Negroes constitute a majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered. Can any law enacted under such circumstances be considered democratically structured?

Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I have been arrested on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is nothing wrong in having an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First-Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest.

I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a higher moral law was at stake. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience.

We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was “legal” and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was “illegal.” It was “illegal” to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler’s Germany. Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers. If today I lived in a Communist country where certain principles dear to the Christian faith are suppressed, I would openly advocate disobeying that country’s antireligious laws.

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro’s great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen’s Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to “order” than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: “I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action”; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man’s freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a “more convenient season.” Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

In your statement you assert that our actions, even though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence. But is this a logical assertion? Isn’t this like condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery? Isn’t this like condemning Socrates because his unswerving commitment to truth and his philosophical inquiries precipitated the act by the misguided populace in which they made him drink hemlock? Isn’t this like condemning Jesus because his unique God consciousness and never ceasing devotion to God’s will precipitated the evil act of crucifixion? We must come to see that, as the federal courts have consistently affirmed, it is wrong to urge an individual to cease his efforts to gain his basic constitutional rights because the quest may precipitate violence. Society must protect the robbed and punish the robber.

I had also hoped that the white moderate would reject the myth concerning time in relation to the struggle for freedom. I have just received a letter from a white brother in Texas. He writes: “All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two thousand years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth.” Such an attitude stems from a tragic misconception of time, from the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.

You speak of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist. I began thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency, made up in part of Negroes who, as a result of long years of oppression, are so drained of self respect and a sense of “somebodiness” that they have adjusted to segregation; and in part of a few middle-class Negroes who, because of a degree of academic and economic security and because in some ways they profit by segregation, have become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred, and it comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up across the nation, the largest and best known being Elijah Muhammad’s Muslim movement. Nourished by the Negro’s frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination, this movement is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incorrigible “devil.”

I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need emulate neither the “do nothingism” of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle.

If this philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood. And I am further convinced that if our white brothers dismiss as “rabble rousers” and “outside agitators” those of us who employ nonviolent direct action, and if they refuse to support our nonviolent efforts, millions of Negroes will, out of frustration and despair, seek solace and security in black nationalist ideologies—a development that would inevitably lead to a frightening racial nightmare.

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom, and something without has reminded him that it can be gained. Consciously or unconsciously, he has been caught up by the Zeitgeist, and with his black brothers of Africa and his brown and yellow brothers of Asia, South America and the Caribbean, the United States Negro is moving with a sense of great urgency toward the promised land of racial justice. If one recognizes this vital urge that has engulfed the Negro community, one should readily understand why public demonstrations are taking place. The Negro has many pent up resentments and latent frustrations, and he must release them. So let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides—and try to understand why he must do so. If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat but a fact of history. So I have not said to my people: “Get rid of your discontent.” Rather, I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled into the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action. And now this approach is being termed extremist.

But though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you.” Was not Amos an extremist for justice: “Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream.” Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel: “I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” Was not Martin Luther an extremist: “Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God.” And John Bunyan: “I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience.” And Abraham Lincoln: “This nation cannot survive half slave and half free.” And Thomas Jefferson: “We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal . . .” So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary’s hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime—the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment. Perhaps the South, the nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.

I had hoped that the white moderate would see this need. Perhaps I was too optimistic; perhaps I expected too much. I suppose I should have realized that few members of the oppressor race can understand the deep groans and passionate yearnings of the oppressed race, and still fewer have the vision to see that injustice must be rooted out by strong, persistent and determined action. I am thankful, however, that some of our white brothers in the South have grasped the meaning of this social revolution and committed themselves to it. They are still all too few in quantity, but they are big in quality. Some—such as Ralph McGill, Lillian Smith, Harry Golden, James McBride Dabbs, Ann Braden and Sarah Patton Boyle—have written about our struggle in eloquent and prophetic terms. Others have marched with us down nameless streets of the South. They have languished in filthy, roach infested jails, suffering the abuse and brutality of policemen who view them as “dirty nigger-lovers.” Unlike so many of their moderate brothers and sisters, they have recognized the urgency of the moment and sensed the need for powerful “action” antidotes to combat the disease of segregation.

Let me take note of my other major disappointment. I have been so greatly disappointed with the white church and its leadership. Of course, there are some notable exceptions. I am not unmindful of the fact that each of you has taken some significant stands on this issue. I commend you, Reverend Stallings, for your Christian stand on this past Sunday, in welcoming Negroes to your worship service on a nonsegregated basis. I commend the Catholic leaders of this state for integrating Spring Hill College several years ago.

But despite these notable exceptions, I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church. I do not say this as one of those negative critics who can always find something wrong with the church. I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen.

When I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama, a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained glass windows.

In spite of my shattered dreams, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership of this community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, would serve as the channel through which our just grievances could reach the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed.

I have heard numerous southern religious leaders admonish their worshipers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers declare: "Follow this decree because integration is morally right and because the Negro is your brother." In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churchmen stand on the sideline and mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: "Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern." And I have watched many churches commit themselves to a completely other worldly religion which makes a strange, un-Biblical distinction between body and soul, between the sacred and the secular.

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: "What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices when the lips of Governor Barnett dripped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when Governor Wallace gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?"

Yes, these questions are still in my mind. In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love. There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love. Yes, I love the church. How could I do otherwise? I am in the rather unique position of being the son, the grandson and the great grandson of preachers. Yes, I see the church as the body of Christ. But, oh! How we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and through fear of being nonconformists.

There was a time when the church was very powerful—in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being “disturbers of the peace” and “outside agitators.” But the Christians pressed on, in the conviction that they were “a colony of heaven,” called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be “astronomically intimidated.” By their effort and example they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests.

Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an archdefender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church’s silent—and often even vocal—sanction of things as they are.

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today’s church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust.

Perhaps I have once again been too optimistic. Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world? Perhaps I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual church, the church within the church, as the true ekklesia and the hope of the world. But again I am thankful to God that some noble souls from the ranks of organized religion have broken loose from the paralyzing chains of conformity and joined us as active partners in the struggle for freedom. They have left their secure congregations and walked the streets of Albany, Georgia, with us. They have gone down the highways of the South on tortuous rides for freedom. Yes, they have gone to jail with us. Some have been dismissed from their churches, have lost the support of their bishops and fellow ministers. But they have acted in the faith that right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. Their witness has been the spiritual salt that has preserved the true meaning of the gospel in these troubled times. They have carved a tunnel of hope through the dark mountain of disappointment.

I hope the church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour. But even if the church does not come to the aid of justice, I have no despair about the future. I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are at present misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with America’s destiny. Before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson etched the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence across the pages of history, we were here. For more than two centuries our forebears labored in this country without wages; they made cotton king; they built the homes of their masters while suffering gross injustice and shameful humiliation—and yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to thrive and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands.

Before closing I feel impelled to mention one other point in your statement that has troubled me profoundly. You warmly commended the Birmingham police force for keeping “order” and “preventing violence.” I doubt that you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes. I doubt that you would so quickly commend the policemen if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you were to watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls; if you were to see them slap and kick old Negro men and young boys; if you were to observe them, as they did on two occasions, refuse to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together. I cannot join you in your praise of the Birmingham police department.

It is true that the police have exercised a degree of discipline in handling the demonstrators. In this sense they have conducted themselves rather “nonviolently” in public. But for what purpose? To preserve the evil system of segregation. Over the past few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. I have tried to make clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or perhaps even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends. Perhaps Mr. Connor and his policemen have been rather nonviolent in public, as was Chief Pritchett in Albany, Georgia, but they have used the moral means of nonviolence to maintain the immoral end of racial injustice. As T. S. Eliot has said: “The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason.”

I wish you had commended the Negro sit inners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation. One day the South will recognize its real heroes. They will be the James Merediths, with the noble sense of purpose that enables them to face jeering and hostile mobs, and with the agonizing loneliness that characterizes the life of the pioneer. They will be old, oppressed, battered Negro women, symbolized in a seventy two year old woman in Montgomery, Alabama, who rose up with a sense of dignity and with her people decided not to ride segregated buses, and who responded with ungrammatical profundity to one who inquired about her weariness: “My feet is tired, but my soul is at rest.” They will be the young high school and college students, the young ministers of the gospel and a host of their elders, courageously and nonviolently sitting in at lunch counters and willingly going to jail for conscience’ sake. One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judaeo Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Never before have I written so long a letter. I’m afraid it is much too long to take your precious time. I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else can one do when he is alone in a narrow jail cell, other than write long letters, think long thoughts and pray long prayers?

If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me.

I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil-rights leader but as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother. Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood,

Martin Luther King, Jr.

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King, Martin Luther Jr. "Letter from the Birmingham jail." In *Why We Can't Wait*, ed. Martin Luther King, Jr., 77-100, 1963.

Gaming Can Make a Better World

By Jane McGonigal at TED2010

The video of this TED talk can be viewed at the link below.

https://www.ted.com/talks/jane_mcgonigal_gaming_can_make_a_better_world

Blowin' in the Wind

Multiple recordings of this song are available online; it is recommended you listen to the song if possible.

By Bob Dylan

How many roads must a man walk down
Before you call him a man?
Yes, and how many seas must a white dove sail
Before she sleeps in the sand?
Yes, and how many times must the cannonballs fly
Before they're forever banned?
The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind
The answer is blowing in the wind

Yes, how many years must a mountain exist
Before it is washed to the sea?
Yes, and how many years can some people exist
Before they're allowed to be free?
Yes, and how many times must a man turn his head
And pretend that he just doesn't see?
The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind
The answer is blowing in the wind

Yes, How many times must a man look up
Before he can really see the sky?
Yes, and how many ears must one man have
Before he can hear people cry?
Yes, and how many deaths will it take till he knows
That too many people have died?
The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind
The answer is blowing in the wind

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