

FROM FRESNO TO THE FUTURE

Wendell Bell

The Trek West

I was born in Chicago in 1924 to a nineteen-year-old mother who had dropped out of high school and a nineteen-year-old father who was working as a bricklayer for his contractor father. Home life, so I was told rather than remember, was tumultuous, with occasional parties during which too much alcohol was consumed, often followed by arguments, shouting, and slamming of doors. My maternal grandmother was unhappy too, because my grandfather, a traveling salesman for Marshall Field's department store, had affairs with other women, drank too much, and often responded to her concerns with an angry rant.

My mother and her mother both left their husbands at the same time. They secretly saved money for a year or so, skimming some cash here and there from household accounts, my mother keeping hers hidden in a shoe in her closet. In 1929, when they had had all they could stand of their husbands' behavior, they took me by train to Fresno, California. They picked Fresno because that was where my great-grandfather, A.D. Robinson, had settled. Family lore has it that he first saw Fresno as a young man when he traveled all the way from the Midwest to visit a wine festival. He fell in love with Fresno and swore that some day he would return to live there. After a period of selling portable, manually powered sewing machines on the road, he did move there. For a time he was in charge of the farmers market that was set up twice a week next to the Courthouse Park. Later, he became city license clerk, a job he held for many years, becoming known as "Old Robbie" before he died in his late nineties.

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Wendell Bell joined the Yale faculty in 1963, served at different times as chair, director of undergraduate studies, and director of graduate studies of the Department of Sociology, cofounded the Program of African American Studies, and directed the Comparative Sociology Training Program. He retired from teaching in 1995 but continued his research and was appointed Senior Research Scientist (2000-2005). Earlier, he taught at Stanford University, where he directed the Survey Research Facility; at Northwestern University; and then at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he directed the West Indies Study Program. After serving in World War II, he received his B.A. degree from Fresno State University and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from UCLA. Among other roles, he served as president, Caribbean Studies Association; visiting fellow, Institute of Advanced Studies, Australian National University; and fellow, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. His research ranges from the social areas of American cities and studies of elites, nationalism, and change in the Caribbean to images of the future and their role in decision-making, human values and the good society, inequality and social justice, and the epistemology of futures research. He has published more than two hundred articles and written or cowritten nine books, including *Social Area Analysis*, *Public Leadership*, *Jamaican Leaders: Political Attitudes in a New Nation*, *The Democratic Revolution in the West Indies*, *The Sociology of the Future*, and the award-winning two-volume *Foundations of Futures Studies: Human Science for a New Era*. He has received numerous awards, including a Lifetime Achievement Award from the World Futures Studies Federation in 2005.

Growing Up

Things really started for me in Fresno. That is where I grew up and where my most vivid memories take me. I took for granted, as most of us kids did, the beautiful blue skies, the sunshine, and the views of the snow-capped peaks of the Sierra Nevadas, which loom large in my mind's eye to this day.

My grandmother stayed home and took care of me, while my mother went out to work. Although times were tough, she found a day job as a clerk for the Sun-Maid raisin company and supplemented her pay by checking hats at the local Elks club one or two nights a week. After some months, she got a better job working as a cashier at Hart's Restaurant. (I still drink my morning coffee from a Hart's cup that somehow found its way into our home.) Finally, she became a bookkeeper at a Kut Price Drug-store downtown. Barely, we managed to survive the depression years.

I was oblivious of the worries and struggles these two women faced. In fact, I was having a great time, going to school (Jefferson elementary), which I liked, and playing in the neighborhood with my friends. During childhood and adolescence, of course, family, friends, and teachers dominated my life. But two other things also affected me greatly. The first was reading.

It began with my grandmother reading aloud to me. She started with children's books, but before long she simply picked the books she liked and read to me from those. What she liked best were westerns, from pulp magazines to the novels of Zane Grey. As a result, I was filled with visions of good, self-reliant, loyal cowboys struggling against ruthless villains in an American western frontier that was depicted, I now realize, in quite unrealistic terms.

As I got older, I read more and more on my own. I devoured everything I could lay my hands on, especially stories about World War I, such as the pulp-fiction periodicals *G8 and His Battle Aces* and *Daredevil Aces*. I also read science fiction, starting with the comic strips *Flash Gordon* and *Buck Rogers*, before moving on to novels.

The second thing that influenced me was working. Even in junior high school, my mother didn't like to see me sitting around "doing nothing." She often would see me reading and scornfully say, "Why are you wasting your time reading a book?" Yet she tolerated reading, however reluctantly, and I should probably be grateful for her opposition because it may have motivated my rebellious young self to read all the more.

But she did not tolerate just lazing around. Thus, I was prodded and nagged to get after-school and summer jobs. Looking back, I think that these work experiences were important in making me interested in the inequalities and injustices of race, class, gender, and power in the everyday lives of people and motivating me to understand the world through the eyes of others.

When I started working, at about the age of ten, I sold magazines such as *Collier's* and the *Saturday Evening Post* door to door. On one occasion, I rang the doorbell of a house several times and got no answer. I had had to walk up a few steps onto a porch closed in by a solid wall about four feet high. I gave up waiting for someone to come

to the door and turned to leave, only to find my path blocked by a snarling German shepherd, teeth bared and poised to attack. I froze, scared as never before in my life, not knowing what to do.

A passing motorist saw my plight, slammed on his brakes, jumped out of his car, and shouted, “Here boy, fetch,” pretending to throw something for the dog to chase. The dog turned and ran after what the man appeared to have thrown. I was out of there in an instant and four blocks away before I stopped running. Despite my gratitude to the stranger, I didn’t wait to thank him.

Then I got an after-school job for a candy distributor. I worked in his garage filling small plastic bags with various candies, putting on labels and price tags.

The hard physical labor didn’t start until later, when I got a job one summer digging Johnson grass out of a vineyard. The breadbasket of America surrounds Fresno. Among other things, it produces almonds, apricots, cantaloupes, dates, figs, grapes and raisins, grapefruits, peaches, plums, oranges, walnuts, and watermelons. In summer the temperatures hover in the nineties and can rise above 100 degrees. Tending the fields and crops is hot, hard work.

In the vineyard, I had a workmate whose name sounded to me like “Delipah.” He was an immigrant from India, a Sikh who wore a turban even in the terrible heat. The boss would get us started in the morning and then leave us to do the work. Delipah and I would each pick a row of vines and move down it digging out the Johnson grass. Then we’d go to another two rows, and then to another two, until an entire section was cleared of the grass.

By the time Delipah finished his row, I would be only half finished with mine. So he would come and help me. Two or three times a day he made me go sit for a couple of minutes in the water of a small irrigation ditch to cool off. He even wanted to share his lunch with me, although at the time I didn’t know what I was eating. All summer long, thanks to Delipah, who spoke little English and was barely making a living, I was able to get through the daily work. Needless to say, I was grateful to him – well, except for the lunches. Now, after working in the Caribbean, I would enjoy his food too, because I’ve learned how delicious a roti can be.

Some months later, as Christmas approached, I noticed a short item in the back pages of the *Fresno Bee*. A car just east of Fresno had hit an immigrant from India, a Sikh, by the name of Delipah. He was drunk and walking on the centerline of the road. He died on the way to the hospital. It was a tragic end for a decent human being. I will never forget his kindness to me.

I had lots of other jobs too. I worked another summer in an orchard picking peaches, although more slowly than my Mexican coworkers, so slowly that the boss didn’t know what to do with me. He tried me at several other jobs. One was driving a small tractor through the orchard, pulling four or five small trailers. My job was to make periodic stops and load the boxes filled with peaches onto the trailers, drive to

a large barn, and unload and stack the boxes. That worked out fine for a few days, until I turned too sharply over a small bridge and dumped the trailers and the boxes of peaches into an irrigation ditch. But the boss still didn't give up on me. He handed me a pen and a clipboard and told me to count the boxes of peaches as they came into the barn. What a relief. Finally, there was something I could do right!

That fall, I worked briefly in an olive oil factory after school from four to eleven p.m. I had to wear hip boots so I could jump into a large vat with the stinking remains of the olives after the oil had been squeezed out. My job – a physically demanding one – was to scrape the remains out of the pit and move them to a nearby waste storage area.

I had some relatively easy jobs too: working as a clerk and fountain server at the College Pharmacy on Tulare Street, as a salesman in Harry Coffee's upscale men's clothing store, and cleaning and repairing cash registers for the National Cash Register Company.

Then came more physical labor – working on a bull gang at a warehouse of United Grocers, next to the Santa Fe railroad yard. I had this job just after graduating from high school, mostly while I was waiting to get into the Navy. I emptied freight cars and trucks, moving the contents (from boxes filled with cans of Campbell's soup, olives, carrots, or green beans to 100-pound sacks of sugar and 150-pound sacks of salt), and stacking them in the warehouse, often almost to the ceiling. Eventually, I was promoted to loading the trucks that took deliveries to grocery stores.

Generally, we worked in "gangs" of two, three, or four. The other workers were mostly Italian-Americans, who seemed to have a near monopoly on the warehouse jobs, although there were a few workers with other backgrounds, including at least one migrant from Oklahoma who had come to California to escape the dust-bowl devastation. In the course of working all day – or part of the night while loading trucks – our minds were free and we could talk. So I learned the life stories of most of the people with whom I worked and found them fascinating, if sometimes heartbreaking.

Although mostly uneducated, my coworkers were decent and hard-working people, often skeptical of the motivations and decisions of their managers and employers. I am indebted to them for teaching me how to last through eight hours of hard physical labor. They even did some of the lifting for me in my first few weeks on the job. I am also indebted to them for telling me their stories and showing me something about the common humanity we share. But some of them already seemed totally burned out and defeated in their early or mid-thirties. (One man constantly complained that the work left him so tired that he could no longer make love to his wife.) Thus, they also taught me that I did not want to do that type of work for the rest of my life.

Men of Raenford

Earlier, when I was about thirteen, a friend of mine went off to be a cadet at the Raenford Military Academy, which was located near Encino in the San Fernando Valley, at the edge of the Santa Monica mountains. When he showed me the brochure, I was totally taken by it and started nagging my mother to send me there. She finally investigated Raenford and decided to let me go. The school song started, "Men of Raenford, stand together," but, of course, we were boys and making us men was Raenford's hopeful mission.

I spent a storybook two and a half years at Raenford. I learned close-order drill, became a cadet officer, had mandatory study hall five nights a week, took eight solid courses each term, was active in sports (swimming, basketball, fencing, and football), and went to dances at a local girl's school (where I met the child actress Marcia Mae Jones and had several dates with her). At that time the San Fernando Valley was a paradise, with lots of open space, clean air, and a sense of the magical.

Also, it was glamorous. Raenford was where many members of the motion picture industry sent their children. Most of the students were from the nearby area and went home on weekends. Film stars like Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Taylor, Constance Bennett, and Chester Morris came to pick them up. Darryl F. Zanuck, then head of Twentieth Century Fox, had a polo field within walking distance of the school on which we practiced football. Miss Horton, who ran the dining hall at Raenford, was the sister of the motion picture actor Edward Everett Horton, whom we saw frequently. For our school plays we went to a major-studio costume department to be outfitted and often were directed and coached by people such as Ann Nagel, Tom Brown, and Chester Morris (who taught me how to sing "She's Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage" in drag).

Despite the dazzling Hollywood celebrities, however, what was most significant about Raenford for me was its excellent library. The few students, like myself, who didn't live in the local area spent their weekends at Raenford. We went for hikes, swam in the large outdoor pool, and played basketball. Occasionally, we hitchhiked to Hollywood and saw a movie on Saturday afternoon. But most of all we read, curled up in one of the big leather chairs in the library. In my two and a half years at Raenford, I read hundreds of books and skimmed many more. Each book I opened was like walking through a door into a new world. Being thirteen, I started with *Gray's Anatomy*. I didn't find it very sexy, so I went on to *Bulfinch's Mythology*. Then I tried a great big legal volume on torts, but gave up when I couldn't find anything on tarts.

I toppled through one door after another, reading T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and all of Edgar Rice Burrow's Tarzan series, as well as his books of science fiction. I wanted to read every book in the library. The range was great, including works by Lord Byron, John Dos Passos, James T. Farrell, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ford Madox Ford, Ernest Hemingway, James Hilton, Sinclair Lewis, John P. Marquand, W. Somerset Maugham, Erich Maria Remarque, Mary Shelley, Mark Twain, Jules Verne,

H.G. Wells, Thomas Wolfe, and many others. Also on my reading list were many things that are not considered “literature,” such as Sax Rohmer’s Fu Manchu series.

In 1937 I ran across a new book by J. B. Rhine called *New Frontiers of the Mind*. It was an account of the Duke University experiments in extrasensory perception (ESP). Certain people, Rhine believed, had the power to see things with some faculty beyond the ordinary human senses. The Duke researchers used a set of twenty-five so-called ESP cards—five each of five different symbols. The standard experiment was to put the cards face down in a pile and ask the subject to guess what symbol would be on the next card turned up. A subject could always get five correct, of course, by picking the same symbol for each of the twenty-five cards. But if a subject had extrasensory perception, then he or she ought to be able to pick many more than five correct cards. And Rhine contended that some of his subjects were able to do so consistently.

I was intrigued—more accurately, obsessed—by the possibility. I made a set of ESP cards and began doing experiments using myself as a subject. I must have done hundreds of trials, on one or two occasions getting as many as eighteen or so out of twenty-five cards correct. But the distribution of all the results, according to a math teacher who taught me how to do a statistical analysis of the probabilities, could have happened by chance. I reluctantly decided that I did not have the special faculty of ESP.

But I still didn’t give up. Maybe other people had ESP. So I enlisted the help of some of my fellow cadets and used them as subjects. In one variation on the standard experiment, the subject sat in one room while the cards were turned over in another room down the hall. Signals were passed back and forth when to guess and when to turn over another card. The results did not beat chance. Apparently, none of us had this elusive ESP.

Needless to say, I was disappointed and disillusioned with J. B. Rhine and his experiments. I decided that he was a phony or an incompetent. But the experience taught me a lesson. I became a skeptic and an empiricist. Ever since then, when confronted with claims of truth, I say, “Show me the data.” I want to take a critical look at the methodology and the data before I believe in the results.

Return to Public School

I decided to return to public school in Fresno for my last year and a half of high school. Roosevelt High School was conveniently located just a block from where my mother and her new husband lived. By the time I returned, I had taken most of the courses required for graduation in history, science, mathematics, English, literature, and foreign language, although at Raenford my foreign language was Latin. Thus, I spent a lot of my class time at Roosevelt in subjects such as drama, speech, debate, civics, physical education, band (I played the clarinet), and, oh yes, *girls*.

Coming from a boy’s school, I found the girls at Roosevelt a delightful discovery. In fact, I thought they were all beautiful, joyful, and wonderful, simply bursting with life and sexuality, and I still think so today.

Then came December 7, 1941, and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

In the small shattering of individual lives and plans that ensued, some of my friends and I who were scheduled to open in a school play a few days later were appalled to learn that because of the attack an administrator at Roosevelt had canceled our play. Nonsense, we said, the show must go on. We did make it on stage, after protests, meetings, and appeals.

But the seriousness of events soon caught up with us. We were at war, with Japan in Asia and with Germany and Italy in Europe. Young men from all over Fresno showed up to enlist for military service, including many Roosevelt seniors set to graduate in January 1942. Since I already had enough credits to graduate, I chose to graduate with them, instead of waiting until my scheduled graduation in June. I wanted to enlist too.

When I tried to sign up for the V-5 Naval Aviation Cadet Program, they told me that I was too young and to come back when I was eighteen. I could have joined up as an enlisted man at seventeen in the Navy or other branches of the service, as many of my friends did. But I was determined to be a naval aviator, so I decided to wait until my birthday in September. By then, however, there was a backlog of young men like myself waiting to be called up. Thus, I had another waiting period back home before being called to active duty. I was frustrated by the delay. Some of my buddies were already flying; soon they would be in combat. Looking back, I realize that the delay may have saved my life. I wasn't called to begin training until May 12, 1943.

Flying in World War II and After

I spent three full years on active duty in the Navy. On October 18, 1944, I received my wings of gold and became an ensign – “an officer and a gentleman,” the certificate said. Then I began operational training. In the Navy, I traveled all over the United States, the Bahamas, Cuba, Hawaii, and finally across the Pacific, ending up in the Philippines.

I have many flying stories, but I won't dwell on them here because most of them aren't relevant to the topic of intellectual journeys. Yet several things about my Navy experience are relevant. The first and most important was that I qualified for the GI Bill, which, after the war, would help pay for both my college and graduate school educations.

Second, for a period of some nine or ten months, I served as copilot for a senior officer who was a task unit commander. Working for him gave me insight into the decisions that defined our world in the Navy. Our lives were not governed by God's will or abstract ideals, but by the decisions of fallible human beings with limited knowledge. Sometimes these decisions were mistakes and had to be corrected. It was a constant, continuing process of monitoring the results of decisions and actions, rethinking, and, if necessary, making corrections.

Third, I learned that the success of a mission often depended on the ingenuity of the lower-ranking officers and enlisted men who carried out the orders. If going by the book meant we weren't achieving our objectives, they often threw out the book and improvised. One way or another, in our group they got three squadrons of planes and their crews into the air every morning.

Fourth, when I was a member of a squadron stationed on the Philippine island of Samar, one of our duties was to fly into typhoons, gathering weather information and tracking the eye of the storm. It was largely a forecasting effort. Where was the typhoon going? Would it hit a naval base or any ships at sea? Where would it make landfall? Would it affect any major towns or cities? Both Navy and other officials acted on this information – for example, to order ships and planes moved out of the typhoon’s predicted path and to alert military personnel and civilians. This experience helped to make me a futurist later in my life, because I had witnessed the importance of foresight and early warning – in this case, to prevent damage and loss of life by knowing some small aspect of the probable future.

In those days, we did not have orbiting satellites to track such storms. Instead, Navy pilots headed straight into a typhoon about eight hundred feet above the water, flew around the eye of the storm in winds that sometimes exceeded a hundred knots, and then returned to base to face making a landing in bad weather (low visibility, low ceiling, and rain). Every day, we had a plane going into the typhoon so we could accurately track it.

Generally, the typhoons formed somewhere near Palau. They usually moved west as they became more organized, then turned more or less northwest toward the Philippines. Some made landfall in the Philippines, while others swung still farther north, sometimes even reaching Japan.

Fifth, my Navy training and flying experiences gave me a sense of confidence in my abilities to learn and to function with the best of the other cadets and junior officers. I was only a high school graduate, yet I did as well or better in ground-school classes and in flying than most university graduates, even those from Harvard, Princeton, or Yale. For example, in my first assignment at Flight Training School, I became the cadet battalion commander, largely on the strength of my knowledge of close-order drill. This growing self-confidence considerably raised my expectations for my life after the war, although at first I was focused on becoming an airline pilot.

Sixth, if you’ll excuse the apparent contradiction, flying is a down-to-earth activity. When on a collision course with a mountain, you don’t pause for a philosophical discussion on parallel universes, the postmodern meaning of truth, the ambiguity of assertions about reality, or whether or not a mountain is really real. Hit it and splat, you’re injured or dead! Flying reinforced my empirical bent.

Seventh, and finally, was the devastation of war. Although the fighting had ended by the time I reached the Philippines, its effects were everywhere: the sunken and partially sunken ships in Manila Bay; the destruction still visible in Manila, with occasional piles of rubble and bullet holes in the walls of buildings; displaced people whose homes had been destroyed; Filipinos struggling to find work at the American military bases; families living in caves near our base on Samar; young girls in Cebu City forced into prostitution to make a living for themselves and their families (and a drunken Navy pilot stealing back the money he had paid to be serviced); and unaware

American GI's talking about "gooks" and happily singing, "Oh, the monkeys have no tails in Zamboanga..." while the Filipinos grimaced. Despite my efforts to erase some of these images, I never can forget them.

After the war, I qualified for a commercial pilot's license – unlimited horsepower, land or sea (I had flown flying boats for a period), single or multiengine aircraft. Thus, because of my Navy flight training, I was able to fly any plane that was then available.

For a few glorious months, I earned my living as a commercial pilot. Qualifying for my flight instructor's license within a few days, I worked mostly for Mазzie-Hill Aeronautics at Chandler Field in Fresno. In addition to teaching local businessmen and others to fly, I worked as a charter pilot, flying passengers and ferrying aircraft to various destinations. On weekends, I did stunt flying at air shows. For a time, I piloted the plane for a daredevil known as the "human bat." I'd fly up to about four thousand feet, where he would jump out, spreading his arms and legs to open the sheets of black cloth that were attached to them. Down he would soar, mostly gliding from side to side, until at the last moment he pulled the ripcord on his parachute and landed.

I flew fishermen to the high Sierras, landed in a meadow, and left them there for a week. Sometimes I'd be called in the middle of the night to fly a doctor from Fresno to another town to treat an emergency. I flew some young women who apparently were working as prostitutes to their new locations. On one occasion, I flew a writer to his home on a farm near Porterville, landing in his family's field of watermelons at his insistence and against my better judgment. Then, also at his insistence, I flew back to Fresno (we were in a twin-engine Cessna) with a cargo of some twenty-five watermelons. I helped him put the watermelons into a taxi, which he took to the Hotel Californian. I still can't imagine what he did with them there.

Then there was the carnival motorcycle rider. He rode his motorcycle around the inside of a wooden structure, starting on the floor and gradually gaining speed, until he was going round and round on the walls at a ninety-degree angle to the ground, performing all kinds of stunts. In addition to appearing with the carnival, he had a crew that traveled the racetrack circuit along with two racing cars. On a race day, often a Sunday, I flew from Fresno to the town where his carnival was and then flew him to the town where his crew and racing cars were so that he could compete in some of the races as the driver. After watching him compete in the races, I would fly him back to the carnival. He taught me irony one day when his parting words to me were, "I really admire your courage flying that airplane."

Of course, these experiences taught me many other things as well, especially what a wide range of jobs and people there were in the world. I also learned how interesting and decent most of the people were, even the least educated and most exotic among them.

College and Graduate School

In the latter part of 1946, I enrolled in Fresno State University and loaded up with courses in order to graduate as soon as possible. With the credits I was allowed for my Navy education, it would take me two and a half years. As college demanded more

and more of my time, I gradually stopped flying. In 1947-48, I served as student body president, campaigning with the slogan “Student government is like a kiss; you have to share it to enjoy it,” which at the time I thought was pretty clever.

In a political science class, I met a gorgeous young woman named Lora-Lee Edwards, and within a year we were married. I was very busy at Fresno State making up for lost time and learned a lot from some dedicated teachers, including Prof. Earl Lyon in the English Department. During one important summer, Lora-Lee worked at See’s Candies and let me stay home and read for three uninterrupted months – another mind-expanding learning experience.

How did I end up in sociology? At Fresno State, I majored in social science, thinking that I wanted to go on to law school. Before graduation, however, I changed my mind and told Prof. Lyon that I wanted to do graduate work in English, hoping to become a professor and maybe, eventually, a writer. He talked me out of it. “My field is bankrupt,” he said. “Try sociology, a developing field with a future.”

Although Lyon didn’t say so, he may have thought that I did not have the talent to become a writer. He recommended that I apply to the University of California, Los Angeles, where a former roommate from his graduate school days at UC, Berkeley, Walter Goldschmidt, was on the faculty of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology. Probably not fully understanding the difference, Lyon had said “sociology,” even though Goldschmidt was an anthropologist. As a result, I applied to the program in sociology instead of anthropology. Chance and error, of course, may enter into the best-laid plans, as they obviously did here. Otherwise, I would have ended up an anthropologist-futurist.

After my graduation from Fresno State in 1948, I continued to work selling life insurance for the Occidental Life Insurance Company (a job I had taken after getting married to earn some much needed money) and, additionally, took an independent study course at Fresno State to concentrate on sociology and anthropology. Then, in January 1949, Lora-Lee and I put everything we owned into one old, unreliable, gold Desoto and drove to Los Angeles, where I had been accepted for graduate work in sociology at UCLA. We lived in subsidized veterans housing, popularly known as “Fertile Valley,” and paid our bills with money from the GI Bill and my teaching assistantship. I also worked as an interviewer for the Division of Special Surveys, U.S. Department of Agriculture. They had rigorously drawn probability samples of respondents from throughout the Los Angeles area. Once again, I had close, face-to-face contact with all sorts of people: rich, poor, middle-class, black and white, Latino and Asian, old and young.

An interesting feature of the surveys in which I participated was that they had a futures element. They focused on the possibility of creating something new that did not already exist or at least was not readily available to the general consumer. At the time, for example, orange juice in supermarkets came in cans or, as some people called them, “tins.” Compared to freshly squeezed orange juice, it was pretty awful stuff.

One survey focused on the potential market for a new way of delivering orange juice, as frozen concentrate. The results clearly showed that there was a receptive market for the delivery of orange juice in a way that preserved more of the taste and texture than canning did.

Another study focused on men's summer suits, which, as then made, quickly became a mass of wrinkles on a hot day. One whole page of the interview schedule was devoted to open-ended probing about men's attitudes toward this item of apparel. We began by asking, "How do you want to look in your summer suit?" Then we began to probe, seemingly asking the same question again and again. "What do you mean by that?" "Is there anything else?" "Can you give me an example?" By the time we finished, we had a good idea of how the respondent wanted to look in a summer suit. The results of this study clearly documented the existence of a receptive market for a whole new type of summer suit. As we all know, suits made from new wrinkle-resistant materials were successfully mass-produced and marketed.

Of course, I was also hard at work at my studies and trying to become a sociologist. Finally, the time came to select a dissertation topic. Thanks to Prof. Leonard Broom, my dissertation adviser, I got involved in studying the social areas of Los Angeles and San Francisco, building on the work of Eshref Shevky, who was also one of my professors at UCLA. Among other things, I was able to demonstrate that three major variables (socioeconomic status, familism, and ethnicity) accurately summarized the many social variations among city dwellers and that neighborhoods could be usefully classified into different "social areas" according to these variables. After Shevky and I published our book *Social Area Analysis* in 1955, many other researchers carried out the construction of social areas not only in American cities but also in a comparative framework in many cities throughout the world.

People of the City

When I went to my first full-time academic job at Stanford University in 1952, they put me in charge of directing a new survey research center. In addition to teaching, I was to spend part of my time setting up a data-collection and processing center and facilitating the research of others. With the knowledge gained from a summer trip to the major survey research centers in the United States, subsidized by Stanford, and with the help of some Stanford sociology graduate students, when fall came I was prepared to establish the center.

At the same time, I pursued my own work on social areas. I wanted to go out into the neighborhoods and study the residents directly. Thus, I conducted sample surveys in selected social areas in San Francisco, interviewing hundreds of people about their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. My research showed that many of the generalizations of the time about the lonely, anomic, socially isolated city dweller were oversimplifications. In fact, only a few social areas typically contained such people. Most social areas, to the contrary, were characterized by frequent participation with

neighbors, relatives, coworkers, or other friends, often supplemented by attendance at meetings and events of a variety of formal social organizations, as well as a well-developed sense of community.

Following Shevky, I worked with a theory of social choice, focusing on how people, within the limits of their resources and opportunities, decided to seek certain life styles as evidenced by the types of social areas in which they chose to live. In viewing the cityscape as a product of individual and collective decision-making and deliberate action, I went beyond the theory of city development based on impersonal, unconscious, natural forces associated with the Chicago School of “human ecology.”

After moving to Northwestern University in 1954, I continued my urban research but with a new focus. In the 1950s, as is well known, the United States underwent a large migration to the suburbs. The question was, why are people moving? The standard view at the time, among both sociologists and journalists, was generally negative. Much was being written about “cracks in the picture window,” “split-level headaches,” and “the suburban sadness.” So I did studies in Chicago city neighborhoods of various socioeconomic levels and compared the results with residents in suburbs matched by socioeconomic status. The studies focused on what people liked or did not like about their neighborhoods and why people had moved to the suburbs.

As people were deciding to make a move from the city to a suburb, they knew their present situation in the city and what their past experience had been. They also had an *image of the future*, of what life would be like after moving to the suburbs. What I found, contrary to much of the condemnation of the suburbs, was that most people who moved there were satisfied. They found opportunities for family life. They found more open space, gardens, and lawns. They found safety and better schools for their children. They found a cleaner environment. They found less traffic. They found a social life filled with mostly friendly neighbors and a community of which they felt a part. They moved to the suburbs seeking a better place for their children, a sense of community, and larger and better housing – and that was what they found, and also what they helped to create, once they got there.

In a more general aspect of this work, some of which I carried on later, I tried to show how hope and despair are contingent on a person’s opportunities to achieve his or her life goals. Severe poverty, racial discrimination, and lack of education, for example, reduce people’s choices and desirable alternatives for the future. Clearly, individuals’ images of the future are conditioned by either hope – a belief that the future will be better than, or at least as good as, the present – or despair, which often means a belief that the future will be undesirable.

The Decisions of Nationhood in the Caribbean

In 1956, Lora-Lee and I spent the summer in Jamaica, where I intended to construct the social areas of Kingston. On arriving, however, we found ourselves smack in the middle of Jamaica’s political transition from a British colony to an independent state.

Everyone from sugarcane workers to the merchant elite, and from market women to university professors, seemed to be interested only in what would happen to Jamaica (and to themselves) when the island became politically independent. I confess to becoming totally caught up in their excitement, their hopes, and in some cases their fears for the future. So I switched my research to study the transition to political independence. I did not know at the time that I was signing on for a quarter-century of research in the Caribbean.

During those twenty-five or so years, with the help of both American and West Indian graduate students, I investigated how the decisions of nationhood were being made in former British colonies as they went through the processes of becoming politically independent—from Jamaica in the north through Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, and other territories to Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana in the south. Descendants of African slaves or East Indian indentured laborers numerically dominated the populations of these emergent states.

At UCLA, where I had moved in 1957 and started the West Indies Study Program, we studied the new nationalist leaders in these territories as they set about defining and constructing their new states' futures. In addition to writing constitutions, the leaders chose national mottoes, flags, heroes, flowers, birds, and other symbols that would signify the character and meaning of the new states.

More important, the leaders decided what geographical boundaries their new state would have (e.g., should it be part of a West Indies Federation or “go it alone?”); what kind of government it would have (e.g., a political democracy or not?); what role the government should play in regulating the economy (e.g., how socialist or welfare-statist should it be?); what kind of social structure the new state should have (e.g., how to put an end to racial inequality and create more equal opportunity?); what national character of the people should be encouraged (e.g., should it be an egalitarian and inclusive character freed from the heritages of slavery, indentured labor, and an authoritarian social system?); what new national cultural traditions to foster (e.g., should the African and East Indian origins of the majority of the people be celebrated and should a new national history be written that emphasized the long struggle for freedom against oppression?); and what global alliances the new state should make as it stepped onto the international stage (e.g., should it align with the United States and the West, or with Cuba and the Soviet Union?).

With the help of graduate students from Yale, where I had moved in 1963 and cofounded the Comparative Sociology Training Program, we did follow-up studies to evaluate the performance of the new national leaders after they came to power. We wanted to find out how successful they had been in realizing their preindependence goals and their earlier positive, idealistic images of their new states' futures. To find answers, we looked at changes in the leaders' rhetoric and beliefs, the social legislation they had enacted, and other relevant economic and social indicators.

We concluded that the West Indian leaders, for the most part, had sincerely pursued their images of social justice, equality, and economic development; had passed legislation designed to achieve their goals; and had had some success in achieving them. Where they could make changes by legislation, they often did move toward their goals – for example, in reducing racial discrimination in public places or increasing attendance at primary schools. But on economic issues they faced limitations, because, at least in the short run, they could not create new wealth, make the economy prosperous, or wipe out poverty simply by passing laws. To do these things, they needed more material and managerial resources than they had.

Over the years, we conducted many studies focusing on different issues throughout the Caribbean. Although much of our research centered on leaders, we also studied students, slum dwellers, and workers, often in conjunction with our studies of elites.

To give only one example, in Antigua we asked the new national leaders to identify the greatest problem they faced after independence. We were surprised to find that uppermost in their minds was that black, lower-class Antiguan lacked the work ethic. They attributed this problem to centuries of slavery, during which Antiguan had learned to passively resist their enslavement in a variety of ways.

Our researcher in Antigua designed a study to test the leaders' beliefs and help find a solution to the problem. He received permission to do a study of the workers of the Antigua Sugar Factory and got the supervisors to rate every employee. He then interviewed all the "good" workers (a short list) and a sample of the "poor" workers (a much longer list). His interviews included a time study of each worker's daily activities.

His findings surprised both the factory manager and the supervisors. To oversimplify, he found that the "poor" workers often had "side bets" – that is, outside activities that supplemented their income from the sugar factory, especially during the two or three months of the year when the factory had to lay off most of its employees. These activities ranged from fishing and supplying fish to regular customers, to cultivating a vegetable garden and selling to customers, to driving a taxi or doing some other work related to the tourist industry.

Thus, the "poor" workers actually often showed considerable entrepreneurial zip and willingness to work. They were classified as "poor" workers by their supervisors because in order to keep their side bets going they had to devote some time to them even when the seasonal sugar factory needed their labor. To do so, they would steal time from their factory jobs by sometimes showing up late, leaving early, or missing a day altogether. During that time, however, they were mostly working on their side bets. The leaders' image of the lazy worker was largely a myth. Clearly, establishing a system of flextime would go a long way toward solving the problem, because, as the manager said, he didn't care if a worker did not show up everyday as long as he knew in advance.

Of course, our work on the new states in the Caribbean would have remained logically incomplete without additional comparative work in both the old states and the colonies of other countries that did not choose to become politically indepen-

dent (as control groups). Thus, over the years, we carried out research in the older, independent states of the Dominican Republic and Haiti as well as in the territories of Guadeloupe and Martinique, which had retained their ties to France. We also engaged in more extensive work comparing new and old states throughout other parts of the world.

Being a Citizen

In addition to this research, I engaged in other activities as a professional consultant, a member of the university community, and an ordinary citizen. To give a few examples, I served on the Commission on Connecticut's Future, which explored alternative possibilities for the future of the state. Also, I served as a consultant for many projects, including helping to train Foreign Service officers and Peace Corps volunteers assigned to the Caribbean; preparing a questionnaire for the Educational Testing Service on the global awareness of college students; creating scenarios for the future of prison populations for the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice; analyzing a study of mothers' attitudes for a manufacturer of nonviolent baby animal toys; evaluating methods of culturally appropriate dispute settlement for the judiciary of Hawaii; working with the Hart-Rudman Commission on National Security for the Twenty-first Century; studying how nuclear waste could be stored safely for ten thousand years in the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico for Sandia National Laboratories; profiling the "Unabomber," who had written a treatise on "Industrial Society and Its Future," for the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and working with the Institute for Global Ethics as well as the congressional Office of Technology Assessment.

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Additionally, I carried out other research projects, such as analyzing public leadership for a book of that name, published in 1961 with two of my UCLA colleagues, and carrying out a comparative study of equality and social justice in England and the United States with a group of Yale graduate students.

At the same time, I continued teaching and became involved in university administrative work. At Yale, in addition to serving as director of the Comparative Sociology Training Program, I served as chair of the Department of Sociology from 1965 to 1969. I threw myself into the job and moved the department from three full professors at the start of my chairmanship to ten at the end, as well as hiring many non-tenured faculty members. During those four years, I had little sleep and got relatively little done on my own research.

Later, I served, with less disruption to both my sleep and research, as Yale's director of undergraduate studies for seven years, and then as director of graduate studies for five and a half years. I also served on many committees in Yale College and the Graduate School.

When I joined the Yale faculty in 1963, Yale was entering a period of rapid change. In the following decade or so, the campus was often in turmoil. The protest against the Vietnam War was only one of many issues. For example, students of Yale Col-

lege had traditionally been all male and in other ways, too, were unrepresentative of the American youth population. Some faculty members and administrators sought to bring women and minority undergraduates to Yale; to add more women and minority group members to the Yale faculty; to establish a business school and an Institute for Social and Policy Studies; to create new programs in African American and women's studies; and to set up many other interdisciplinary centers and programs, from studies of the environment to AIDS. Furthermore, despite the existence of a variety of area-studies programs, including the historic Yale-in-China program, Yale at the start of the 1960s was largely a national university. The ensuing decades would transform it into the international and world university that it is today.

It was an exciting time to be at Yale and I was deeply involved in some of these changes—for example, in bringing women to Yale College, in starting the African American Studies Program (the Caribbean connections were critical), in creating more gender and racial diversity among both students and faculty, in promoting cross-cultural research, especially as part of the Council on Latin American Studies, and in cofounding the Yale Collegium on the Future.

Of course, the struggles to control Yale's future precipitated many debates, displays of emotion, and a few tumultuous meetings. Friendships were imposed upon or strained; some timid souls always agreed with the powerful, while perennial rebels pushed a verbal clenched fist into a dean's face; and a few faculty members revealed hidden talents for demagoguery. In the end, although it was sometimes both worrying and entertaining, much of the sound and fury was not very effective.

What mattered was patience, persistence, and polite diplomacy—the usually effective means for negotiation and compromise. Generally, the Yale administration under then President Kingman Brewster provided good leadership and the system of faculty governance worked just about as it was supposed to. One had to discuss why supporting a proposed change was a better moral choice (“For God, for country, and for Yale”) than opposing it. And both the prediction of the consequences of a proposed change and the moral judgment underlying it had to be justified. Usually, it was only then that a faculty majority would reach a decision for or against a proposed change.

Becoming a Futurist

In my own intellectual work, starting about the mid-1960s, I began to explore the general principles of futures thinking and the role of images of the future in decision-making and social action—topics clearly involved in the struggles that were going on in the Yale community. With the publication of *The Sociology of the Future* in 1971, jointly edited with James A. Mau, I started devoting most of my research and teaching to the new field of futures studies. Of course, it was my experience in the new states that had sparked my interest in leadership, social justice, and the future. My field trip to Jamaica in 1956 placed me at the center of a coming future made problematic by the transition to independence. The processes of human construction leading to pol-

ity, society, and culture became transparent. Clearly, in the new states the future was open. What would the new national leaders make of their former British West Indian colonies when they became masters of their own fate? What ought they to do in order to create a good future?

It was as if the mysteries of society and the engines of social change had suddenly been revealed. What was taken for granted in older states and clouded by custom, tradition, and myth as being unquestionable, sacrosanct, and inevitable – even in the first new nation, the United States – was prominently and visibly tenuous and open for revision in the new states. But the future is open in the old states as well. In fact, the future is open nearly everywhere.

Everywhere, people produce some part of the coming future by their acts, whether they are aware of it or not. Everywhere, the images of the future some people hold may clash with images held by others and lead to conflict. Everywhere, the past is finished and cannot be altered, although *ideas* about the past can be changed. And everywhere the future offers possibilities of new and better lives, as well as possibilities of disaster. Among other things, these possibilities are contingent on the choices humans make and the actions they take.

This is not to say that the future always turns out as people hope and plan. There may be unintended, unanticipated, or unrecognized consequences of human action. People don't always know what they are doing. Also, there are natural forces beyond human control. Constant monitoring is necessary, as is a willingness to change one's methods and policies when they are not working as planned.

All of this so impressed me during my research in the new Caribbean states that I have spent more than four decades trying to understand the role of futures thinking in social change – to discover how images of the future are born and shaped, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to learn how images of the future interact with individual and collective beliefs, values, decision-making, and actions to shape the future of individuals, societies, and cultures. I keep asking, what constitutes a “better world” and how can we humans help to bring such a world into reality?

These are issues that I discuss in *Foundations of Futures Studies* (1997). For example, volume 1, *History, Purposes, and Knowledge* (paperback 2003), deals with possible and probable futures and how we can make grounded, reliable, and valid assertions about them. Volume 2, *Values, Objectivity, and the Good Society* (paperback 2004), deals with preferable futures and how we can justify, both rationally and empirically, the assertions about what constitutes the good society.

Since the publication of my *Foundations* volumes, I have continued to work toward the development of futures studies and for increased futures thinking among social scientists, especially sociologists (in the latter case, unfortunately, with limited success). Also, I have continued my exploration of the good society of the future, focusing on universal values and the eternal struggle between good and evil. For example, we know that nearly everyone is capable of evil acts and that ordinary people

engaged in the mundane tasks of everyday life carry out much of the cruelty and violence in the world, even though they may believe they are acting rightly. Using the principles of futures thinking, critical realism, and social inclusiveness, I have tried to show that people can learn to curb their demonization of others and the sometimes terrible escalation of harm to others that it produces and to adopt a code of behavior that emphasizes being responsible for themselves, doing no harm to others, and helping other people when they can.

Conclusion: The Future Is Coming

In looking back on my “intellectual trajectory,” I was surprised to learn how important my early years were in setting the course for the rest of my life. In the simple, everyday experiences of childhood and young adulthood, I can see the beginnings of interests, beliefs, values, and even behaviors that shaped my later years. They included early influences from my mother and grandmother; my calm, decent, and tolerant stepfather, who, though sometimes bemused by my behavior, never said an unkind word to me; classmates who helped me experiment with life, some of whom became lifelong friends; teachers from grade school to graduate school to whom I am forever grateful for their teachings and encouragement; and my personal friends and colleagues.

I was surprised, too, to see how influential my early periods of reading had been. Stepping into a new world by opening the pages of a book was a life-changing event for me. In books, I vicariously experienced identifications, emotions, and judgments over a wide range of human possibilities – weirdness, fantastic environments, subtleties, ironies, tragic hurts, inconceivable cruelties, self-sacrificing kindnesses, bravery and cowardice, monumental awakenings, sordid alienations and heartrending reconciliations, love and sex, wild violence, and gentle understanding and forgiveness. On the one hand, I saw the miserable, disgustingly vile and cruel behaviors humans could sometimes heap upon others. On the other hand, I saw the humanity and empathy that people share, as well as the “magnificent obsession” some exceptional people have in dedicating their lives to helping others.

Working with a variety of people continued my lessons. From these real-life encounters, I learned that nearly anyone can commit a cruel act. Yet I also learned that nearly anyone is capable of kindness and extending a helping hand to others: the stranger who saved me from the vicious dog; my fellow vineyard worker, Delipah, who helped me; the Mexican peach pickers who accepted me; the boss who gave me more than a second chance; the Italian-American warehousemen who shared their life stories with me; the capable and supportive naval aviators and enlisted men who stressed competence and performance; the West Indian nationalist leaders who had such hopeful dreams for the future of their new states and tried so hard to make them come true; and many others. Without them, would my life’s journey have turned out the way it has?

I doubt it. I became a sociologist and a futurist partly because of these people and the experiences I shared with them. Although I have often failed, throughout much of

my adult life I have tried to contribute, even in a small way, mostly through research and teaching, to a sustainable world in which people would coexist in peace, would enjoy freedom and fairness, and would live long, self-directed, socially beneficial, loving, and satisfying lives. Thanks to the love and support of Lora-Lee, my wife of more than sixty years, I have been able to keep trying.

Most important, perhaps, has been the teaching—helping young people move toward their life goals, just as others have helped me. Some of my greatest pleasure comes from learning of the success and accomplishments of former students, always hoping that I had some small part in aiding them along the way. This is especially true of graduate students, many of whom have become friends and professional colleagues and achieved far more in their lives than I have. The irony is, of course, that by any objective assessment I have learned at least as much from them as they have learned from me.

In this brief account, I have had to leave out a great deal. Two other things were so important to me, though, that I must at least mention them. First, Lora-Lee and I took up horsemanship in 1962 and pursued it avidly for twenty-three years, focusing on preparing ourselves in dressage, cross-country, and stadium jumping as well as learning about horse care and barn management, mostly in the United States, but also for extended periods in England and France. This was not “country-club” riding. For Lora-Lee, at least, it became a full-time job at one point. We kept horses at our home (feeding them, mucking out the stables, and so on ourselves) and she taught horsemanship at various stables in the area, at the peak to about two hundred students. I could write a book about what I learned as a sociologist and a futurist by caring for and riding horses—about communication, empathy, and persuasion (unlike an airplane, a horse has a mind of its own).

Second, Lora-Lee is also an artist. She started in batik and then moved to watercolor, teaching both subjects for many decades, mostly full-time after we gave up our horses. Over the years, she expanded my meager knowledge of art and artists, and through her art she constantly challenged me to look at the world and *really see it* in all its awesome complexities, possibilities, and meanings.

With luck, life will go on a bit longer. I am now writing a book entitled *The Future of Human Society* in an effort to bring together some of the lessons I have learned from the various research projects I have done and the travels I have taken. When that is finished, I hope I will have time to finish *Where the Sun Shines Mostly*, which is a memoir. The title comes from something my mother wrote me near the end of her life. I had asked her to tell me some things about her life and her reflections on it. In one letter, she wrote, “Well, one of the things that I think I did right in my life was to take us to where the sun shines mostly.”

Given the fortunate life that I have had, I thank her for seeking a better future out west and taking me with her to grow up in Fresno, California, where the sun—and, indeed, life itself—did shine, mostly.