

LIFE ON THE MOVE

PIARC ESSAY COMPETITIONS

“Infrastructure and Transportation in the 21st century”

for Young Professionals and Graduates

Team “LIFE ON THE MOVE”

Hanna Pikkarainen (b. 1968), architect, M.Sc.

Sini Puntanen (b. 1970), M.Sc.

Mari Siikonen (b. 1966), M.A.

Maija Vähä-Rahka (b. 1969), M.Sc.

Laura Yli-Jama (b. 1969), landscape architect, M.Sc.

Contact:

Laura Yli-Jama

laura.yli-jama@kolumbus.fi

Mari Siikonen

mari.siikonen@creadesign.fi

Sini Puntanen

sini.puntanen@tieh.fi

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ABSTRACT

Transportation has provided people with a means of expanding the spheres in which they live, and of acquiring experiences of many differing kinds. The result has been an ironic loss of contact with our immediate environment - we know better the wonders of distant lands than we do that little wood behind the crossroads at the end of the street. Our closest acquaintances do not live next door - they live somewhere to which we can travel easily by car. Travelling somewhere is an essential part of our freetime pursuits, although doing so means we do not have the time to be at home or to stay in one place. The hunt for experiences is on, at any price. In our search for experiences of the great outdoors and natural sights we inevitably sacrifice a small piece of nature itself through exhaust fumes, noise, and the sprawl of highways.

Transport routes, emissions, and accidents place more limits on life than they create new freedoms. The obstacles are highest for those who do not use a car of their own. The breadth of the living environment of children, the elderly, and the carless is dictated to a great extent by drivers. The time use of these drivers, individuals of productive age, is the measure according to which communities are planned and designed.

Our basic needs a hundred years from now are likely to be much the same as before - things like clean food, an unpolluted environment, a social community and the security it brings, and a meaningful way of earning a livelihood. In the future we shall see a broadening of the choices we can make in the way we lead our lives. People will no longer need to make do with a grim living environment simply because of the inefficiency of the society to do anything about it. Planners will be trained into professionals whose role is to prompt residents to seek out sound and lasting solutions for the spaces they inhabit. The local hindering effects of through-traffic routes will be single-mindedly reduced, and communities reduced in size. Walking and cycling will operate as easily accessible and inexpensive means of transport that also satisfy our need for physical exercise. The apparently insatiable appetite we have for experiences will not necessarily require trips to another continent or hurried visits to enjoy some special-

ized hobby. Experiences gained closer to home and with less time spent in travelling will prove to be qualitatively better.

The society of the future will be a service society, with a developed division of labour - also in the realm of transport. The need for transportation will be supplied by the purchase of services, and not by driving oneself. Public transport will be not simply easy to use, but an effective use of time, and nobody will need to own a car "just to be on the safe side". We shall see the introduction of a trade in emissions permits to limit traffic emissions. The licences to move will be individual and specified, and it will be up to the individual himself to determine if he is to use up his quota on a single flight south or on several short car trips. The price of products in the market will include the environmental effects of their transport from one place to another, and hence trade will be carried on more in know-how and skills than in goods. All of this will in turn raise regional self-sufficiency in production and lessen the need for goods shipments.

We need changes in our planning systems, in order that the society of the future can become more than ideas on paper. It will no longer make sense to have separate boards for highways, railways, or air transport, or for the planning of specific land-areas, but instead issues will have to be dealt with increasingly as complete entities. Shared responsibility can succeed only by emphasising the responsibility of the individual. The jungle of hindrance effects created by transport and the claims it makes on land-use will be replaced by tighter local communities seething with life, from which nobody feels an urge to travel far.

PART I

SULO

Sulo came into the world in 1998. He spends much of his day napping, snugly wrapped inside a warm perambulator, which his mother pushes along as she walks through the park. In the park, the roar of the city comes through to Sulo's ears - though he is barely awake to hear it - as a slightly muffled, but never-ceasing rumbling sound, to be broken up once a week when Sulo is taken to see his grandmother. When they get out of the car in Granny's driveway, there is no rumble, no roar. And that is where the silence stays, with Granny, at her house in the country. When it is time to go back home from their walk, Sulo's mother detaches the top of the pram from its wheels, and straps the well-packed Sulo into the back seat of the car. The hum of the car's heater fan accompanies the muted sounds of the engine, rising and falling as his mother accelerates and slows, gently rocking Sulo back into a deep and dreamless sleep.

Life is easy. Life is comfortable. Work gets done indoors, no dirt and draughts, and you can take the car all the way to the office. Of course, living downtown, all the special shops and boutiques, the cinemas and watering-holes, are right there, within walking distance. But at some point, perhaps after the birth of the first child, the time comes to think of that little house and garden - far from the noise of the traffic and the madding crowd of the city. The urban bustle is stimulating every now and then, and it's fun to play with it in small doses. It's easy to go shopping when you feel like it, and getting the stuff home is a breeze in the back of the hatchback. There's easy access to a whole range of hobbies and interests. When you use a car to get around, you can live life as you choose it, and the car brings a whole new dimension to the children's lives - beyond the yard and the white picket fence. Transport creates new opportunities to experience other slices of the world, to learn of the cultures of other countries. Trips abroad are part and parcel of our freetime activities - that fresh perspective they provide is so good for the children's international outlook, too.

Electronic media also bring into our homes an international breeze that we are less enthusiastic about. The yawning gap in living standards between the rich and poor nations remains a closed book to many a world-citizen, regardless of how many languages he can call upon. The symptoms of impending climatic change being observed in Antarctica do not form part of the social competence of our international cosmopolitan, unlike the recognition of a good French Chardonnay or some American starlets. The ease of modern transportation increases internationalism, but it also opens the way to a very narrow view of the world. Highways, flights and connections lead to those locations where development has pushed ahead the most, to places that are all somehow cut from the same cloth - and thus safe and comfortably familiar to the modern experience-seeker.

Time and distance as such do not limit lives, but in their way traffic routes limit our experience of home and things close to home. A great deal of time is spent in getting from one place to another, and people value time above all other things. Leisure time must be used efficiently, in order to be able to live a diverse life, rich in experiences. An essential part of that free time and holiday time goes in travelling somewhere, although there is never enough time to be at home - or simply to be at rest somewhere.

Transport must be ever more efficient, comfortable and flexible, in order that we might acquire still more experiences, from further afield, and more often. Paradoxically, we find that getting back to nature, "getting into the country", is something that requires a journey, often one made by car. In order to get there we always have to sacrifice a slice of it in the shape of destructive exhaust fumes, noise, and the gradual encroachment of highways on the landscape.

We want alternatives, and we want equal opportunities for all to partake of them. The society based on private motoring has given greater and greater numbers the chance to take up classical ballet, to study Sanskrit, to take their pedigree dogs to shows, irrespective of where they might live. By creating alternatives in this way, we have arrived at a situation where one activity has been replaced by another, and their numbers do not ultimately increase - in fact they decline. As it turned out, the hypermarkets that sprang up on the by-pass or ring road did not supplement the services on offer, they merely replaced the shop on the corner. Pri-

vate motoring led to an increasingly one-sided transport system and to a poverty of alternatives in the way we get around.

Development geared to the maximal exploitation of technology is leading us towards a world in which human activities are made as easy as possible. We constantly develop new equipment and new products that will facilitate our daily round. "Making life easy" is a principle that leaves its mark all over modern industrial product development. It is perfectly justifiable to ease the lives of those individuals who may otherwise have difficulties in coping, through some injury or handicap, but ultimately one has to ask what additional aids are needed by a healthy adult. Many of the technical innovations that we take for granted were originally developed for use in extreme conditions or circumstances. To take one simple example, technical aids are being developed to ease - and enrich - the lives of paraplegia patients or stroke victims. Perhaps a screen-mounted mouse that can be controlled with the movement of the eyes and clicked with a blink will soon replace the mouse on the desktops of the healthy, too. When that day comes, what will we be needing those muscles in the tip of our forefinger for?

The search for the easy has turned against itself. An emphasis on easiness and personal freedom sooner or later involves the limiting of the freedom of other individuals, making their lives more difficult. Freedom carries with it a responsibility - a responsibility for the society and the immediate community - in a broader sense than simply looking after one's own family. The prize to be gained for making compromises in one's personal freedom and easy living is a sense of belonging and the intangible rewards of living together, of being part of a community, and sharing in the sense of security that such belonging brings with it.

MAX

It is a very long way to the housing area nearby. Many small animals have followed their internal programming and attempted to make the trip by the shortest route, with a depressingly low rate of success. Standing at the bus stop, Max feels very small indeed. It is windy, and the harsh roar of the traffic is loud in his ears. The bus brought Max here quickly along the main road; physically he is now close to the place where he is to spend the evening, but crossing those lanes of traffic seems like a complex mathematical equation. Max sets off in the opposite direction to his actual destination, since that is the only choice that offers a pedestrian path to follow. The narrow path that leads from the bus stop straight towards the road does not look like a safe alternative, and in any case its use has apparently been discouraged by barriers that must be walked around. After walking some twenty metres, Max finds himself under a large bridge, where the path forks. The route towards the housing estate leads to an short unlit tunnel or underpass, and in the other direction Max sees a small petrol station. It is already dark, and Max is afraid. He turns towards the petrol station. From there, Max calls a taxi that carries him safely to where he is going, past the grey concrete ramparts erected to reduce the traffic noise, over bridges and flyovers, and finally to his friend's door.

PART II

Towards the way of life of the future

A wealth of scenarios have been offered up for the society of the next century, from the most fantastic of science fiction visions to terrifying images that beggar the imagination of a Kafka or an Orwell. The hopes of what the world will be in a hundred years from now vary according to the individual's cultural background and his or her world of experience.

We are already moving towards a society in which different sub-cultures have radically diverging ways of carrying on their lives. The individual is less and less bound by social class, profession, gender, or the traditional family community in the choice of his or her way of life. More significant determining factors are emerging - personal qualities and ideals. Anyone can choose their professional calling according to their own talents, can make a home in a metropolis, a small town, or in a rural setting, and live in the sort of human community that he finds pleasing.

Although it is true that in many areas of our lives we have this opportunity to make increasingly free and broad choices, the life of the individual is nevertheless still ordered by the great power structures of economy and politics. Freedom is a relative concept.

The basic needs of a happy life will probably not differ greatly in a hundred years from what they have always been. Man requires nourishment, clean air and water, a place to live, a certain social network to belong to, security, and a meaningful way of earning a living. The needs for mental stimuli and the scope "to realise oneself" are both variables dependent on the personal choices and creativity of the individual.

These basic needs, and more particularly the goals of achieving a good living environment tend to be easily blurred, however, by the conditions handed down by streamlined economics or by a large bureaucracy. The development of community structure, and with this the development of the transportation, is channelled inevitably according to those values that currently hold sway within the society. Things cannot happen or be made

to happen unless they are singled out as goals, and unless people commit themselves to achieving them.

LEONID

A five-year-old is really still a child. The fact that he learns to read does not mean that he learns to understand what he is reading. Little Leonid read several lines from the hologram screen on the wall very fluently, and his father only had to correct a couple of words. Leonid, his father, and Leonid's uncle were looking at images on the screen of father's grandparents, who had lived in a concrete-element apartment block, and both of them had owned their own car, running on four wheels with rubber tyres. They would drive their cars here and there in the city, sometimes several times a day. The city centre was full of routes set aside for these cars. The words Leonid's father had to correct were "exhaust fumes" and "digital TV". After his reading practice, Leonid runs to see his cousin Khalim, who lives two blocks away along that grassy pathway that always tickles the soles of Leonid's feet. Leonid has no trouble recognizing Khalim's house; it's the one where the whole top storey is painted bright sunflower yellow, and which has that big moss-covered rock and the three large maple trees beside it. As he runs, Leonid thinks to himself: colours, stones and trees are easier to read than words.

Who designs the community structure?

The needs and dictates of business and commerce produce living environments that lack a human perspective, and do not satisfy those living there. The poorer sections of the society are nudged into the less attractive areas. Those with money or with their hands on the helm of power can choose their environment.

The first condition for a living urban culture is a well-founded and balanced contact between planners and residents, in which the residents are not

mere listeners and driftwood, but active players and subjects in their own environment. The planners are professionals, with a training behind them that helps them help the community to reach its aims of a pleasing and workable living environment. In the post-modern era, heroic architecture forms but a small part of urban planning, and is not the only God to be worshipped.

Aims to be sought in the fields of movement and infrastructure include freedom from noise and from pollution, safety, a visually attractive environment, and connections that operate smoothly. The various functions making up the community structure will be located close to one another. Places of work, schools, and the establishments needed on a regular basis by the residents will be within walking or cycling distance. Transport routes do not form unwieldy obstacles to movement within the community, but rather all areas are easily accessible. Transportation and infrastructure will be developed with an eye to preserving the natural environment. Traffic-related environments become attractive and pleasing elements in the landscape and not simply "necessary evils", space-consuming areas good for nothing else.

The indications are that in the future, as now, traffic planning and the building of roads and other transport links will involve the use of power. Is it possible to plan the ways in which traffic moves without a power struggle? Can the already greatly fragmented process of decision-making be made more coherent? Without goals geared to a common good it is difficult to achieve any kind of overall vision. Such goals are easily threatened by the decision-maker's fears of damage to his or her own personal advantages, the erosion of the authority of his organization.

These days the different forms of transport all have their own administrative machinery; the administrative organs for roads, railways, and air or water traffic make decisions and distribute resources within their own branches and compete amongst themselves for "customers". It is in the interests of each particular instance to swell and strengthen its own organization and to fight for what it sees as its market share.

One way of reducing the fragmented nature of these swollen administrations is to develop for a region one overall umbrella organization to plan and decide on the area's matters. In this scenario, the regional entity

must be of a suitable size that it can be managed comfortably. When the number of administrative units "serving" the region is reduced, there is not the same tendency for a remote and inaccessible power structure. At the same time, people have a greater sense of being able to influence their own environment.

In planning work there is a need to elevate the importance of comprehensive analysis of the effects of any projects, to assess the rightness or otherwise of the direction being taken. Running projects through the decision-making process and getting down to bricks-and-mortar building work cannot be an end in themselves. It is a very human feature in all of us to wish to leave our own thumbprint on history. If in future decades that thumbprint were to be an environmental act rather than a monument, then we would have taken a useful step forward.

The citizen as customer

From the perspective of the citizen on the move, it is things such as personal advantage, the expediency, ease, cost-attractiveness, and comfort of getting around that form the platform for his own choices of transportation. Even in the choice of where he lives, an individual in a hundred years' time is not likely to be any less egocentric or comfort-loving than today. Then again, he may just be a shade more enlightened.

The most important property of the forms of transport offered to the individual is best summed up in the rather clumsy term "desirability". What makes a form of transport desirable are its ease, its speed, and the fact that it does not make too large a hole in the user's pocket. In addition, man has an inbuilt need for physical movement, one that is also significant for our health. People like to move for the sake of moving, even if goods, services, and entertainment could be brought to their doorstep by other means. Going on foot, on a bike, on roller skates, or in a canoe to and from work or on other business is movement from one place to another and simultaneously satisfies our need for exercise.

XAVIER

Xavier's life takes its rhythm from free-time, work, and rest. The rhythm is determined by his employer, and by Xavier himself. His working day today began at home with an electronic teleconference with a client, and will continue with face-to-face negotiations with individuals in the workplace.

The first discussion is in a delicate phase. The norms for trading in emissions permits have not been fully equalized between different areas. At times the opposite side's emissions prices have been only half of Xavier's prices, and the competitive position of information relative to goods is beginning to weaken. Xavier does not feel morally bound to pay a higher price for know-how than for goods, but the tariff principles should be the same for both. That transport licence bought just last week was gnawing at his mind, however. Consumers had not been supplied with imported foodstuffs for some time, and Xavier could not now be completely sure of their sales potential. The pest-repellent and preservative residues associated with long shipments were still fresh in the memory.

Xavier trades in information and know-how, and not in finished products. The trade in emissions permits makes the transport of goods unprofitable, and success in trade goes to the party who can secure most cheaply the know-how required for production. The production of goods takes place locally. The emission permit trade serves as a mechanism to prevent overproduction, since there is no market for excess produce, given that transport elsewhere is no longer a viable alternative. Production is to a great extent based on a closed system of materials recycling, in which only a small fraction of the raw materials used is new. In Xavier's view, life in the local community is now more easy to plan, since if the production needs are precisely defined, then so are the necessary resources, labour force, and raw materials.

The urban ideal

From the viewpoint of moving around, the ideal size for a city will be determined according to internal connections that can be made on foot. Within the community structure this leads to a situation where cities can be close to one another, but are also independently operating units, offering their residents the necessary services and places to work. It will not be essential for people to travel long distances each day, and the time spent in moving from one place to another does not become a burden.

Since the community in question is relatively small, the easiest forms of transport will be walking and cycling. It has been possible to build an attractive environment for this internal movement, as large highways do not break up areas and thereby separate different aspects of the residents' lives from each other. Large transport routes will no longer be needed within the urban structure, as people can get about easily on bikes or on foot. Family capital is not tied up in cars, but instead funds are freely available for the individual to make genuine choices on a daily basis.

With this reorganization of the way we envisage transport and movement, the urban structure can be more tightly-knit - in terms of atmosphere as well as in the physical sense. When the share of motor vehicle traffic declines, the bustling street image is produced by pedestrians, cyclists, streetcars, and the like. The street space can be rearranged into broad pedestrian walkways, cycle lanes, and pleasant areas for people to meet or stop for a while. The atmosphere that we currently admire in a well-ordered pedestrian precinct will become a reality throughout an entire downtown area. The street environment will not be dominated by exhaust fumes and revving engines, but instead perhaps by the sounds of footsteps and the buzz of conversation that is familiar from pedestrian precincts.

Such a city will also offer enjoyable, peaceful surroundings and nature for its residents. The noise nuisance associated with motor traffic is no longer be a problem, and the areas formerly swallowed up by large arterial routes can be used as gardens, vegetable allotments, or green belt parkland areas. The local inhabitants will not have to escape for the weekend to cottages in the country in order to be able to hear birdsong or the lapping of water.

Access between the various city areas will be flexible by means of public transport. Arterial connections radiating from the centre are handled by unhindered mass transit systems. Given the relative smallness of the individual communities, no bulky public transport route network is required, but instead the system can be made to run using a few basic lines, with a correspondingly higher standard of service. Times between departures are short, and there is no need to stand shivering at change-stops, waiting for a connection. The disabled and those with difficulties in getting around will be able to take advantage of small vehicles; electric mopeds, pedal scooters, rollators. Easily accessible services will make it easier to cope at home: the elderly and the handicapped need not so easily become marginalized or alienated from life and the society.

Those coming into the city by car from the countryside will switch to walking or public transport on their arrival. At the major entry points and the termini of city public transport line there will be parking areas and halls, where the parking fees are included in the price of the urban transit ticket. Parking complexes and other central areas will also offer racks of city-bikes that can be freely borrowed for the duration of the stay in town. Use of a car in the city area itself will be relatively difficult, since the streets are divided according to the needs of other users (pedestrians, cyclists and public transport), and there are no parking facilities available.

ELK

One of the basic features of humankind is the elevation of the species at the expense of other life-forms. Human nature may not change, but certain values can. Elk now lives perhaps more dangerously than before, but also more freely, and more naturally, too. Elk does not usually head into town, for the city holds very little to attract one of his kind. In the matter of gathering food, the outskirts of the city provide a considerably more efficient area. To be fair, Elk has upset people's daily lives somewhat by his hanging around on their allotments. The big change affecting Elk's life took place slowly, and was under way already before his birth. His birth itself was a minor miracle, since there was an obstacle to the meeting and mating of elks - in the shape of the elk fences alongside the old highways. The

removal of the barriers was influenced by a change in values - man choosing to place an intrinsic value on life in general.

Long vacation or freetime trips will be made for the most part by public transport. The smooth meshing of the chains of shorter journeys has been developed through overall planning and through information: a trip can be ordered in advance on a turnkey basis.

For trips to sparsely populated areas, individuals will have the opportunity to make use of car-sharing cooperatives. It is not necessary to own a car "just in case", but instead one of the cooperative's cars can be used when the need really arises. The capital costs of such shared vehicles are naturally also divided among a large number of users, in such a way that the costs of motoring fluctuate more or less according to the actual mileage driven. The cooperative is a non-profit organization, set up solely to serve its members.

The service society

The society of the future will be a service society, with a developed division of labour - also in the realm of transport. The hiring of a private chauffeur is regarded today as a luxury, but on the other hand the rediscovery of an old service-form and the purchasing of transport services from a professional may in certain circumstances replace a company car. Equally, travelling by public transport is an effective use of time. You do not need to drive yourself, but can instead concentrate on other things: relaxing, resting, reading, talking on the phone: THIS is luxury!

One of the aces in the public transport deck will be its ease of use. Information on the links in the transport chains will be available using gadgets equipped with GPS satellite positioning systems: the system recognizes your immediate location and after inserting your destination will provide you with routeing and transport alternatives, complete with timetables and prices.

Payment of fares will be carried out with smart cards, which can be charged up beforehand or afterwards. The key issue is that there is no need to pay in concrete terms for the trip when you set off: you just jump aboard and run the card through the reader by the door. The charges

come to your home just like a phone or electricity bill! Nice and easy, and you don't have to fumble for change or run to the bank before you leave! Flexible! And naturally, the same card is good for all the different forms of transport.

WOMAN

One more series of thirty leg lifts with the customised ankle weights and I'll have earned myself a nice warm steam facial, muses the woman. Between Zones I and V on the train, the price of a steam facial is 200 lifts with different sets of smart-weights, or 100 lifts with the big barbells. Cheaper than back in town, she thinks to herself with a sly grin. Besides, on this trip she's already lifted so much that she's paid for her return fare. When you are three months' pregnant as she is, then all you have to do to get your return ticket is 30 energy-units on the exercise-bike. Some days she doesn't feel up to that even, and then she pays the fare out of her energy savings account. After all that physical exertion and the steam facial, she feels like she's on cloud nine, and when she gets to the terminus, the air of the already darkening small town feels soft like velvet on her face. It's already getting late, and the woman sets off on foot towards her home as so many times before. As she crosses an unlit piece of parkland, she meets a group of youngsters, who beckon her to stop. They've been out all evening celebrating the end of the school year, and they have grown hungry. They ask her for directions to the path that leads to the citizens' market garden - they fancy the idea of some grilled turnips. Will there be anyone there at this time of night, wonders the woman. "Sure, sure. The vegetable sellers have their stalls set up day and night all through the summer, and besides, at the night-time rate for a kilo of turnips, we won't have to weed much more than a couple of rows!" The woman points them towards the path and as they head off, laughing among themselves, she remembers wistfully her own graduation two years ago. At that moment a video message from home appears on her wristband communicator. The picture shows a young child sleeping peacefully in his cot. Her husband's voice whispers: "Looks like you'll be home in a minute or two, dear. Dinner's on the table, and I've opened a bottle of Chianti from '97".

The emission permit trade - carrot and stick

In the transitional phase from our present society to the community structure and transport systems of the future, a global trade in emissions permits will be applied to control the exhaust emissions of traffic. The system is based on a scientific determination of the tolerance limits of the planet, and on the distribution of weighting factors equally among all consumers. The individual will be allocated a given mileage, weighted against the relative emission levels of the mode of transport to be used. The individual may decide freely for what sort of trips he or she uses his emission quota or licence. If he wishes, for example, to fly south for a sunshine holiday, this will involve compromises in the choice of individual transport solutions at the local level. Anyone who engages in a lot of productive physical exercise and doesn't use much by way of air travel has the opportunity of selling off his unused licence balance or endowing it to a foundation on behalf of the community. As the funds in the foundation swell, so further licences are issued to the members. The emission quotas for goods transport are correspondingly included in the price of the products being transported and sold.

The system is not 100% fair in operation, and is still based on market forces and economic mechanisms. It has nevertheless been possible to create a system in which the individual's responsibility is clear. Exceeding the licence norms will be a difficult and very laborious process, and endowment is highly regarded on moral grounds.

PART III

PAULINE

Pauline hankers after peace and quiet and pleasant scents. She would very much like to move further away from the city, closer to her friends, but she knows well that such a move would only make her life more difficult. Pauline's life is already a complex round of planning and keeping a careful eye on the clock. Pauline was thrown completely on the mercy of others following her accident. In the period of her recovery she has seen her friends increasingly less often, even though the company would have been more than welcome at home. Pauline can no longer drive the car, which would at least have allowed her to get everywhere, albeit rather slowly in the constant jams.

Pauline could of course also get about slowly on foot. In principle, at least. She can take short trips on her crutches, if she only has the courage to do so. The route, across the few pedestrian flyovers that there are, has to be planned with almost military precision. She has to get home before dark, and there is no room for error in her choice of routes or timing. The biggest risk to her security is other people. Nobody dares stop and offer assistance to a complete stranger, and for a lone walker like Pauline it is open season out there on the streets.

Pauline's evenings are spent these days in her yard, when the traffic noise has subsided a little after those who work in the city have left for their homes outside. Still, she cannot spend very long even there before her eyes start to sting and water. Pauline has continued her sick-leave a couple of times already, for although in all other respects she is fit to work, without a car it is quite impossible for

her to get to the office and back. Pauline cannot understand how one false step could have changed her hitherto easy life so dramatically.

Things may not go quite the way we have planned them. We make wrong decisions, and matters slip out of our control. Globalization and the constant struggle for the growth of faceless markets may well continue to thrive, along with a lack of interest in real human well-being. It is difficult to head off an unwanted direction of development if the individual has no information or strength with which to oppose it. The world may become even more divided between haves and have nots. For the great majority of people, choices of actions may at best be more apparent than real. An unbalanced world also sparks conflicts and sustains ill-will and wars, destroying what we have and stifling the positive that we might have, taking away what faith we hold in life and in forces for good. No amount of technical development can repair wrong political decisions.

The thirst for power for its part prevents the sensible development of decision-making or planning organizations. If organizations cling jealously to their own small plots of authority and fight over resources, planning will never be able to develop into a holistic exercise, greater than the sum of its parts. In this way, systems - and even the community structure as a whole - will be left with functions and states that as it were "fall between the cracks", and do not come within anybody's sphere of responsibility. They will create discomfort and insecurity in their surroundings - and people who fall between the same cracks and get left behind.

Mobility connected with one's livelihood has been respected, even rewarded. It is somehow paradoxical that compensation has been paid for long commuter journeys and even longer trips made on business. Is moving around to be understood as something unpleasant, if the employer is obliged to make it up to the employees in this way? Compensation for the adverse effects of this travelling to the *real* sufferers - to the environment and for example to those living in areas where traffic noise is a constant nuisance - is not something employers even consider.

Even if daily routine journeys may be exhausting, a trip itself can also be an experience. The reason for travel might not be transfer from one place to another or some goal at the other end, but the journey itself. Move-

ment and exercise of one kind or another in the local environment satisfies this need. Equally, a journey into the unknown can be significant. The yearning for somewhere far away does not remain mere longing for some, but stimulates a determination and a need to travel to find some distant "other place". Then again, the need for such travelling will diminish as the mixing of cultures allows one to experience other cultures almost on one's own doorstep. The reduction of travelling is not an end in itself, but nobody need spend their time any longer in routine, boring journeys.

However, only change is constant. It always carries development in one direction or another. The most important issue is to harness that change and to guide it in the right direction, rather than striving for some stable, final, allegedly "good" state of affairs. Predictions of what the future will bring must be questioned and developed. The direction of development can be influenced by political decisions. Progressive democracy is founded on enlightened and moral individuals and not on the eternal and superficial power struggle of political parties. Instead of matter and mammon and titles we must respect the individuals who display the best treatment of other people, animals, and their environment - promoting life. Those with only their own interests at heart should not be rewarded with money or honours.

Our planet's tolerance is not without limits. Man must change his ways if he wishes to stay around. Among other things, this changing of the ways will involve making do with less in the material sphere, and displaying a greater appreciation of intellectual and spiritual values.

The strength of the system described lies in its environmental sustainability. The exploitation of renewable resources together with a far-reaching system of materials recycling will lay the foundations for a viable life for generations to come. Reducing our daily movement can also create the conditions for our being able to make longer journeys in our leisure-time. There is no need, then, for us to abandon completely the idea of encountering new cultures. People will come closer one to another as individuals. The limits on the size of a community promote mixing within that community, and a sense of belonging, so improving the quality of life. Man, the individual, belongs somewhere, and to some community. The sense of rootlessness prevalent in today's world recedes. The feeling of security adds to the individual's sense of well-being.

OLD MAN

An old man sits down on a park bench. It is warm from the afternoon sun. He recalls the roar of the city that he could sense through the walls of his pram in this very park. That roar has been stilled... those good old days, when cars were still cars, and not the solar-powered flying cushions that pass for cars today. They float around as if they had woollen socks on. Things were different when the old man was a baby - back in the days when some Finnish sports hero had just won a motor race in a sleek silver machine that travelled at up to 300 kilometres an hour! Oh, the emissions there were then - those old-fashioned motors still used gasoline in those days. They used to make the stuff out of petroleum - "crude oil" they called it - that they took from under the ground. They stopped using oil, of course, when they realised that life would come to an end if the earth's natural resources all got used up. You can't get speeds like that out of these modern solar and wind-powered engines. One thing the old man has been thinking about a lot on days like this in the evening of his life - where were all those people in such a hurry to get to?