

Letters to the Editor

Dear Vivian,

It is autumn of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) year. I am haunted by Orwell, nuclear holocausts and ecological suicide. Yet the sun shines mellow and the world goes on about it's business.

IT is a term used to cover computers, robots and all aspects of electronic data collection, storage, processing and subsequent actions. **IT** is the magic black box of this decade. It is big business and a growth economy. It is now possible for robots to weld 50 times as fast and more accurately than a man; computers can work out calculations at speeds which are almost unimaginable and Artificial Intelligence (AI) theorists predict that computers will function as well as if not better than our best brains in most activities.

At a recent series of seminars on the Social and Political Implications of **IT** it was suggested the **IT** revolution would make the industrial revolution seem like a historical hiccup. Most experts in the field are confident that within the next decade life will be transformed. The speed of change is clearly exponential and almost all writing on the subject includes a reservation on accuracy due to the speed of developments.

IT will play its part in health, education, sport, play, business, the home and almost anything else one

can imagine. Whether we are ready for it or not, there is so much momentum there is little doubt it will happen. The relationship of self to society and state will change; this deduction is made due to the fact that it will be so easy to demonstrate the reality of state or individual power within a social context. The mere fact that it can be done will ensure that it is.

For example there are already a great many users of Prestel and the other viewdata systems of the BBC and ITV. These users can obtain information on a wide variety of subjects easily by pressing a button. The information is constantly updated so that the display on the tube (TV for example) is accurate at the time of access. Furthermore they can respond to that information and instruct the computer to accept their instruction and act accordingly. You can order goods from stores for delivery, check your account, pay bills and within reason credit your account. Many information providers have classified information which is only available to preselected enquirers.

It is utterly feasible that this type of service will be common in most businesses within the decade. It is also probable it will exist in most homes, libraries and CAB's. It might possibly be provided like the present public phone box. It is equally possible that the vast amount of manual and clerical work will be handled by robots and computers.

The implications of this IT revolution are many. One very simple and basic one is to actually start thinking about what we want and how to get it. Equally we must consider the danger to others alive, or to be born, from our decisions. We must also think of the dangers of being greedy because anger and fear produce reactions.

In the political sphere it will be possible to express opinions on all issues quickly and cheaply. Perhaps even vote. We could devise means to choose policies and people rather than parties. The nuclear disarmament lobby could get much support for defensive-only armaments.

In the field of employment it seems inevitable an understanding be reached on the difference between work, employment and vocation.

In the social sphere there must be a return to personal responsibility and power to match it.

In the education sphere there can be massive transformation. I would not dare to speculate.

We who must do this, must act fast. Yet we are still unable to find ways to stop starvation while wasting massive amounts of food. We are still unable to prevent the slaughter of innocent people. Grades of citizenship make more of a gradation than exists. Centres of influence should be related to public interest.

Yet as likely as not the decisions will be made by default or vested interests.

The possibility of broadening 'Self and Society' have been considered. The need for an organisation or society has been suggested. What do you think? Do write to me or the editor with your views.

Mark Matthews
London NW1

Dear Sir,

As an actor, I have become increasingly aware of the complete lack of plays dealing with personal growth and transformation, with psychological or spiritual regeneration. There must be many people today who are writing from their own personal experience of such occurrences. But where are the plays?

If any of your readers have such material, either as a full length play or a one-acter, would they care to get in touch with me? There is every possibility that if I can find the right material, I could arrange for a professional production.

Scripts could be sent to 15 Ladybridge Rd, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire, SK8 5BL (with stamped self addressed envelope for return), where I will give them very careful consideration.

I am, yours faithfully,

Alan Rothwell
Cheshire