

# Constructing new life styles

Our evolution is now cultural not biological. It is what is in our heads and how we use this information, not our genetic information, that will be the determining factor of our survival. Cultural evolution requires an informed, literate, and peaceful people. This requires much more than clinics and pamphlets. Huge injections of many kinds of supplies will be required. This is only possible if the world recognizes the state of emergency that exists now.

Economic thinking has come to focus on monetary growth which has pushed all other factors to the periphery of our management decisions. Many are blaming technology and science for today's environmental problems and alienation; but science would not have been "misapplied" if our economic institution were knowledgeable and holistic. To promote the general welfare, economics (household management) must derive from ecology. Such a major reorganization of our affairs will require an unprecedented period of rapid cultural transformation. This requires a general consensus as to the nature of our present situation and a willingness to recognize our dependence on a life support system that is finite.

Some groups still perceive environmental concern as a means to an end such as overthrowing or scoring revenge on all or part of the "establishment". Others simply see it as a movement to force a long overdue cleanup of smoke, smells, and spills. Such positions are not only naive, but are making an adequately clear understanding of the ecological perspective difficult to grasp. The advocate system of settling a dispute in court or justifying a revolt in the streets is an archaic mechanism in the face of the task before us. Everyone is adversely effected and threatened by the inequities generated by a culture that does not understand what it is dependent upon. Only by massive education and through defining new values by which to make decisions and transform our institutions may we assure ourselves of a future.

We now use more energy every day than is available to us from the sun. Not only have we become dependent on finite fossil fuels and are becoming dependent on finite nuclear fuels. There is no way that we can survive such an inequity. We have also restricted our usage of solar energy. We have contaminated the upper atmosphere resulting in the increased reflectance of the earth's atmosphere. This loss has been amplified by increased water vapor at lower levels from irrigation and reservoirs. In addition we have increased the non-utilization of the sunshine that reaches the earth's surface. We have cleared away oxygen producers, green plants, to make room for oxygen consumers, people and their attendant cars, factories, roads, etc. We have also lost agricultural lands to urban sprawl, highways, and airports.

Every animal requires a certain type of dwelling place to protect himself from predators or to moderate the conditions of the environment in which he lives. Man's household is becoming increasingly hostile to him. A continuum exists from a rural house in a non-industrialized country to an apartment in a large industrialized city. It is ironic that western cities are choking and befouling themselves on materials gathered from impoverished regions of the planet.

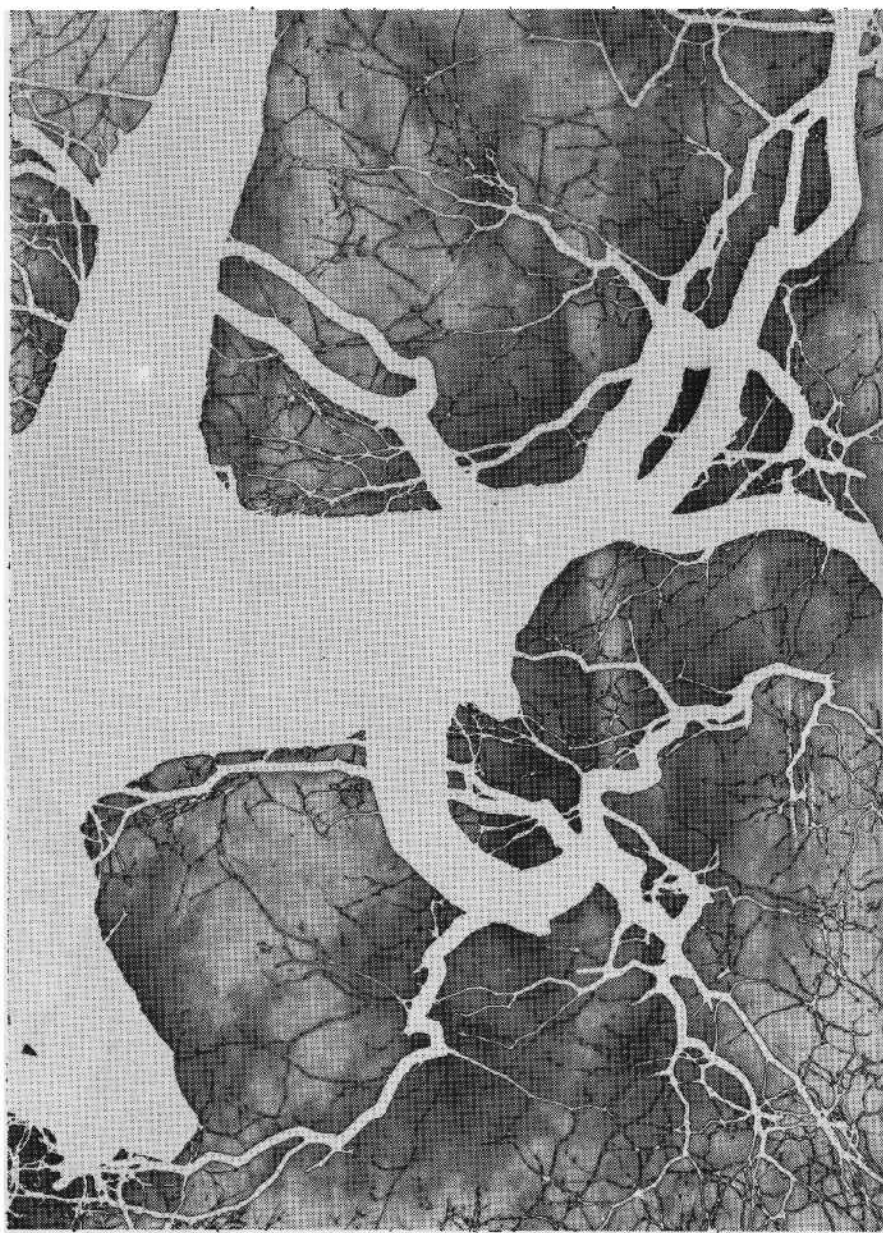


photo: Russell Dian