

the Friday morning, when she was sure he would be gone, she rang up the hotel, and there it was, the soft, cautious American voice. The first few moments were awkward; he protested his pleasure at hearing from her, she kept repeating, I thought you'd be gone. . . . Then she said, "I just wanted to say—about that lunch. You mustn't be taken in—" He was saying, "I've been so indebted to you, Frances, really you've been great."

"—not phonies, no, that's not what I mean, on the contrary, they're very real, you understand?"

"Oh, your big good-looking friend, he's been marvellous. Saturday night we were out on the town, you know." He was proud of the adventure but didn't want to use the word "*shebeen*" over the telephone.

She said, "You must understand. Because the corruption's real. Even they've become what they are because things are the way they are. Being phony is being corrupted by

the situation . . . and that's real enough. They're made out of *that*."

He thought maybe he was finding it difficult to follow her over the telephone, and seized upon the word: "Yes, the 'situation'—he was able to slip me into what I gather is one of the livelier places."

Frances Taver said, "I don't want you to be taken in—"

The urgency of her voice stopped his mouth, was communicated to him even if what she said was not.

"—by anyone," the woman was saying.

He understood, indeed, that something complicated was wrong, but he knew, too, that he wouldn't be there long enough to find out, that perhaps you needed to live and die there, to find out. All she heard over the telephone was the voice assuring her, "Everyone's been marvellous . . . really marvellous. I just hope I can get back here some day—that is, if they ever let me in again. . . ."

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## Waiting for Godot

If he arrives, he cannot be Godot.  
The nearer he comes to us, the less is he Godot;  
And if on arrival he were to introduce himself  
As Godot, we should have to ring for the police.  
He who thinks that he is Godot cannot be Godot.

So why wait? Go to sleep. When you awake it will  
Still be the same scenery. Like the music of  
Bruckner. A cliff of sound; then a comic dive  
By a fully-clothed clown carrying an umbrella.  
You could ring this fool's neck for insisting he's Godot.

No, Godot is the absent one, the poets' tranquil beloved,  
Strolling at dawn through fields of corn,  
Dressed in green, the dew sparkling like Mozart.  
Or a sun-spot like a high-held C in the sky;  
Or decades of light years away, a star.

Gordon H. Dyson

Andrew Shonfield

## Thinking about the Future

"I understand not how the Dreams and Prognostications of madmen (for such I take to be all those that foretel future Contingencies) can be of any great disadvantage to the Commonwealth."

"Yes, yes: know there is nothing that renders Humane Councils difficult, but the uncertainty of future time, nor that so well directs men in their deliberations, as the fore-sight of the sequels of their Actions. Prophesie being many times the principal Cause of the Event foretold. . . ."

THOMAS HOBBS, *Behemoth* (1679)

FUTUROLOGY has become a subject. I have even received an invitation from a German publisher through the post to subscribe to a new *Who's Who of Futurologists*—though he never explained how anyone came to rate an entry in the volume. It seemed an expensive purchase, so I still do not know. The subject itself has a Franco-American parentage, having been largely invented by Bertrand de Jouvenel and developed in a series of studies called "*Futuribles*" initially with the support of the Ford Foundation.<sup>1</sup> But more recently it has become very much an American subject, as witness the work of the Commission for The Year 2000 under the chairmanship of Professor Daniel Bell (in five volumes of mimeographed papers), and the ambitious exercise in systematic speculation by Herman Kahn, with Anthony Wiener and other members of his

Hudson Institute, called *The Year 2000: a Framework for Speculation*.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, these publications are a reflection of a much more widespread intellectual climate in which studies of the future flourish, often with the aid of powerful institutions designed to encourage speculative activities of this kind, like the Stanford Research Institute and the Rand Corporation.

My first question is about the purpose served by these long-range projections. Some reviewers of the Kahn and Wiener book have treated it as if it was a straightforward attempt at prediction, and have then either belaboured the authors for trying to write history in advance or have asserted that they have got their future history all wrong.<sup>3</sup> This is to misconceive the nature of the exercise. If such books were not labelled with the year 2000 or some other date in the 21st Century, but were called instead *Utopia* or *Erewhon* or something of the sort, reviewers might be induced to apply a more appropriate set of criteria. They would ask, first of all, whether the author's account of his imaginary world told them anything new about the *desirable* organisation of society. One of the purposes of putting the story in the far-off future is precisely to throw off some of the intellectual limitations on the discussion of social policy which are imposed by excessive concern with the details of the present situation—or of the one that we conceive to be immediately ahead. Having sloughed off these impedimenta we are better able to think seriously about the essential purposes of social organisation, and above all about the order of priorities that we attach to different objectives. De Jouvenel makes this point in an essay on social forecasting in the latest English book on the study of the future.<sup>4</sup>

But in order to make sense of our preferences we have to proceed to the second stage and build a series of constraints into our invention.

<sup>1</sup> M. de Jouvenel's organisation S.E.D.E.I.S. continues, without Ford Foundation finance, to publish a monthly journal, *Analyse et Prévision*, devoted to the subject.

<sup>2</sup> Collier-Macmillan (1967), New York, \$9.95; London, 63s.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Desmond King-Hele, in *The Listener*, 20 June 1968.

<sup>4</sup> *Forecasting and the Social Sciences*, edited by Michael Young, Heinemann (1968), 35s. This is a first product of the work done by the Committee on the Next Thirty Years, set up by the Social Science Research Council in 1966.