

# CREATIVE EXCHANGE AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE BETWEEN STATES

HOWARD L. GARDNER

The parts of a stable atom are better integrated than the cells of an animal organism. The cells of an animal organism are better integrated than two persons in love. Two persons in love are better integrated than any two-nation states that have cordial relations with one another. In short, the processes of physical and biological evolution on our planet have produced relatively stable forms of dynamic equilibrium at the levels of atoms and animals organisms — whereas the relations between persons and the relations between nations-states are relatively unstable, unintegrated, and even destructive. *How can we make them less destructive, more stable and better integrated, so that the integration is not inertial but is creative, not oppressive, but instrumental to the fulfillment of individual persons and nations-states?*

It is necessary first to distinguish three complex events: creative exchange, the creative event, and the creation of the world of value.

Creative exchange is the reciprocal expression and reception of qualities and meanings by two persons in such a way that their minds, their interpsychic relations, and their perspectives of the world are created anew. To some degree persons can voluntarily and consciously intend and control such exchange; they can, for example, exert effort to speak and to listen effectively. At the same time, as Henry N. Wieman has pointed out, persons are limited in their power to create new perspectives. A "creative event" transforms man's awareness and personality in a way that man's knowledge and intention cannot do. "Man cannot exercise his imagination to envision what is inaccessible to the imagination prior to the transformation which gives his mind the added reach."<sup>1</sup> *The emerging of new perspectives, the expanding of the appreciable world, and the deepening of communally shared perspectives — all comprising the "creative event" — are, in their concrete content and form, unpredictable and to some extent uncontrollable. Man does exercise control at the point where he does or does not provide the conditions conducive to the working of the creative event — the physical, biological, and psychic conditions.*

However, the creative event alone is not enough to produce an objective world of value. Even if conditions are conducive to the working of the creative event, it remains man's responsibility to *act* upon the newly created perspectives. *And to act in a way that advances value, he requires reliable criteria and directives of value. There are two such directives: (1) provide those conditions that will facilitate the creative event, and (2) provide those conditions that will facilitate the creative advance of man. The first directive alone does not give guidance about decisions concerning man and his environment in an objective world of value. Man must choose. He must choose to understand and to produce the conditions conducive to the creative event. Forced to act, he must also choose for specific guidance among those perspectives generated by the creative event. It is not sufficient to say he must choose those perspectives which conduce to the working of the creative event: for the creative event alone generates a range of perspectives which may be used for good or*

evil purposes. And it provides no guidance as to what man ought specifically to do about changing himself and his world. Man must decide what kind of persons, what kind of world, at that time and place, so far as he can tell, will be fulfilling for man. On the other hand, the second criterion alone may easily pass over an important consideration, namely, that to survive and to fulfill himself, man as individual and species must recognize that his reality and value consist not in the seemingly secure, fixed ago, class, or nation-state but in his self-giving to creativity on which he depends for his genuine security and fulfillment.

The creation of a world of value means (1) those processes which change things and events and produce man-to-man and man-to-nature relations so that man's generic potentialities as man are progressively realized; it means those processes by which man's needs are progressively fulfilled. It means (2) that these processes increasingly produce relations of mutual reinforcement and enhancement between persons and persons and persons and non-human nature. It means (3) that these processes include the "creative event" plus the actions of persons and the events of non-human nature. Let me explain these three meanings.

1 Individual man is characterized by a certain structure of possibilities which define him as a member of a distinctively *human* species. Man has the potentialities for feeling, thinking, and acting in particular ways. He is potentially emphatic, communicative, linguistic, co-operative, playful, conscientious, individualized, thoughtful, dominant, detached, committed, etc. Someone may answer that he is also potentially indifferent, uncommunicative, domineering, etc. These latter potentialities, however, are not universal, are not necessary to his *human* nature, and diminish and destroy his very life. In Fromm's terms, they are "secondary" potentialities.<sup>2</sup> These human potentialities are rooted in man's biological needs and his social and ecological relations, and they are evoked, shaped, and fulfilled in certain of the biologic individual's relations with others and with nature. Such relations may be summed up under the term "fulfilling exchange". To survive as an organism — i. e., to eat, drink, shelter himself, protect himself from injury, etc. — the individual must interact in mutually reinforcing ways with other persons and the natural world. Moreover, to elaborate, differentiate, and integrate his potentialities as not merely an organism but a *human* organism, he must undergo exchange of just that kind which is conducive to such development. Man may of course have destructive interactions with nature and with other persons: he may erode the soil, kill the plant and animal life, and pollute the water and air; and he may one-sidedly dominate, submit to, or withdraw from others. Such interactions do not promote the realization of man's generic potentialities, and they do *not* fulfill his human needs.

2 Creative exchange produces increasingly reinforcing relations between persons at the level of qualitative meanings (perspectives).

Creative communication from one person to another by means of linguistic signs which signify felt qualities (sense, images, emotions, etc.) and their relations to one another involves the innovating of perspectives, the integrating of them within the person, the extending of the world as felt and understood, and the increasing of the domain of shared perspectives. All

such creativity, however, remains at the level of perspectives. It is psychic and interpsychic transformation of a creative kind. The perspectives thus generated and integrated are not evil in themselves but evil becomes a function of such perspectives when man uses them to obstruct the working of creativity.<sup>3</sup>

3 By the same token, perspectives not only carry a quality of intrinsic good when they are entertained; they become instrumentally good in so far as they stimulate and guide man to change himself and the real world in ways that support and release this psychic and inter-psychic creativity. A material world of a certain kind is essential for such support and release. That world must include man's interpenetration with the ecological environment in ways that discern and develop the elaborate web of relations that sustains the order of inorganic nature, living things, and man. It must include the bodily interactions of men and societies in ways that sustain personality materially ("economically" in the narrow sense). This material, ecological, economic base, essential to the creative event and man's fulfillment, must be developed out of man's decisions and responsibility. Awareness of what is to be done, and perspectives guiding action, must be generated in the sensitive and responsive exchange of perspectives, the integration of perspectives in individual persons, and the development of an integrated and common plan of action in dealing with specific conditions. And this psychic and interpsychic creativity must be followed by an integrated common action that produces conditions promoting better interpersonal exchange, the freer working of the creative event, the fulfillment of the generic needs of persons, and mutually reinforcing material relations between persons and persons and persons and environment.

In most parts of the contemporary world the primary obstructions to the creative fulfillment of men are material. Most people are hungry, poorly clothed and sheltered, ill, exposed to the adversities of nature, and unemployed, poorly paid, or otherwise lacking the means for material improvement. The pervasive cause behind such material deprivation is feudalism, capitalism, or some combinations thereof which produces the material and psychic exploitation of the great masses by foreign imperialists with spies and armies, local landlords and capitalists, comprador classes, and parasitic groups who attach themselves to the ruling class.<sup>4</sup> Such rule is accompanied and reinforced by a rule at the level of perspectives: the masses are imprisoned in illiteracy, or else the idea-media are dominated by the ideas of the ruling class, suppressing (but not forever) radical and humanistic ideas among the masses.

In such regions, where the masses are both materially and psychically dehumanized, the cause is not removable by mere perspectives isolated from action nor by mere action unguided by perspectives. Because man is a psychomaterial being and because his deprivation is both material and psychic, a transformation of his deprivation requires an interpenetration of perspectives and economic system, of theory and practice. Perspectives expressed, shared, and integrated among the masses must pertain to the material conditions of their own oppression and liberation; as they guide collective action with respect to changing material conditions, these changed conditions will in turn release new perspectives in a creative dialectic of ideas and actions. This revolutionary liberation of man is a special case of his generic liberation which has occurred throughout history.

As Wieman has pointed out, man is limited in his power to create new perspectives and to control the "creative event" that transforms man's awareness and mind and personality in a way that man cannot. The implications of this insight are far-reaching for man in the modern world. Self-centeredness for personality, nation, of class is an error. Man's fulfillment lies in the direction of his self-giving to a natural creativity that innovates, integrates, and socializes perspectives. In the rhythm of his living, man receives, mediates (meditates), and acts; he is dependent, detached, dominant; he is created and he creates. Powerful men under capitalism have tended to suppress the first phases of this rhythm. Their excessive dominance has become domination, aggression, and exploitation. Their creativity has produced a military-industrial complex, armed with the atomic bomb and chemical and biological weapons, and, in the case of the United States, aimed at dominating many parts of the world. The growing power of such technology threatens to destroy mankind as some men make personal, national, and class power the center of their lives and forget that the right use of power is to fulfill the demands of a total ecological and humanized system of which man is a part. A necessary step in this fulfillment is the elimination of class dominance and unchecked national sovereignty.

Individual man is a dependent and also independent variable in a vast and complicated social-ecological system. While man depends on the creative event, for example, for the transformation of his mind, he also depends on man's collective action in collaboration with non-human nature in order to create a world in which the demands of the whole ecological system are progressively fulfilled. Awareness of our dependency on nature and the creativity that works in nature and society over and beyond our power to imagine or make carries with it a corresponding responsibility to provide the conditions for supporting and releasing that creativity for ourselves and our posterity. Man has a power to create the conditions of society and non-human nature which hinder or facilitate his fulfillment. Without man's own progressively transformed reasons to it, and without man's transformed understanding and practice with regard to making the conditions on the planet more conducive to his fulfillment-man will destroy himself.

For billions of years of physical and biological evolution on our planet, creative forces have been rearing the human organism toward the height where it has arrived today. With its unique selective sensitivity to the qualities and forms of the environment, with its brain's power to store information, with the brain's cells' capacity to communicate with one another and to integrate items of information in new forms, with its reflexive and instinctive responses of adjustment to the world, with its sensitivity and responsiveness to other persons, with its capacity for language-systems and for linguistic communication, with its manual and motor abilities — this organism, our very own, is uniquely equipped to create a world of value. The whole of the evolutionary past seems to have been preparing this species to assume the task of feeling, understanding, and organizing a new world of value throughout the whole planet. We still have much to learn in realistically and constructively using this equipment with which we have been endowed. But the direction of creative fulfillment is indicated in our empathic and sensitive bodies, in our marvellously intricate brains where intrapsychic creativity takes place, in our social needs and

dispositions, in our deep love of nature, and in our collective power to plan and to act.

Under favorable conditions the brain in the human body functions efficiently as a receptacle for the innovative and integrative work of creativity. But the development of creative relations between persons, between societies, and between persons and societies in relation to external nature, is more difficult to achieve. It requires the guiding, voluntary activity of the brain and the cooperative activities of individual personalities and of governments of national states. Such are the tremendous tasks now facing mankind on our planet.

## II

Let us now turn to one of these tasks, that of improving the relations between states of different social systems, to examine the bearing of what we have said about creative exchange upon the question of peaceful coexistence between states.

A nation-state is a group of persons occupying a common territory and sharing a common tradition, common language, common interests and values, and common government. A certain minimum of creative exchange and common action among such persons is requisite to national unity. The interests and values of a given nation or government, however, may clash with those of another nation or its government. What to do in the event of such clash? A common response to such clash in the past has been international war. Thinkers have thus suggested rules or laws which ought to govern the behavior of nations and their governments in their relations to one another. Sir Thomas Barclay has summarized "the three chief principles of interstate intercourse . . . on which international law is based" as follows:

1. Recognition of each other's existence and integrity as states.
2. Recognition of each other's independence.
3. Recognition of equality, one with another, of all independent states.<sup>5</sup>

Such principles are general and abstract; they require interpretation in concrete circumstances. For example, what are the limits of national sovereignty, which the first principle upholds? And when do the internal changes of a state (upheld by the second principle) begin to affect contiguous states? Nevertheless, such principles specify some of the minimal conditions for peaceful coexistence between states.

Lenin employed the concept of peaceful coexistence between different social systems because he saw that a socialist state in a world of capitalist and feudal states must accommodate itself to the political realities and must do all it can to reduce the possibilities of war and hence the destruction of socialism. Peaceful coexistence for him meant the renunciation of offensive war as an instrument of national policy, the use of negotiation in international disputes, mutual respect for the sovereignty, independence, and equality of states, the promotion of trade and other economic exchange between states, and cultural exchange. Thus peaceful coexistence in Lenin's sense has the negative purpose of preventing war and the positive purpose of building bonds of mutual support between peoples.

The success of both purposes of peaceful coexistence requires creative exchange between persons in governments in different nation-states and between citizens in different nation-states. It also requires constructive and common action by governments and citizens of different nation-states. Whether governments engage in peaceful coexistence depends too on the widespread and felt demands of their citizens for it: a democratic nation is likely to demand it, an undemocratic one, not.

The process of settlement of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 is an example of how communication between government leaders can produce a solution to a problem where the otherwise undeterred clash of national interests might issue in the destruction of mankind. The result of the communications between President Kennedy and Premier Krushchev was an agreement that Kennedy would lift the American blockade of Cuba and promise that there would be no invasion of Cuba by the U. S. or anyone else, while Krushchev would remove the Soviet missiles and bombers from Cuba. Kennedy's decision in turn was influenced by the creative exchange of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council. At first, as Robert F. Kennedy pointed out in *Thirteen Days*, almost everyone wanted the President to order an air attack on the missile sites. Two men dissented — Robert Kennedy and Robert McNamara. Gradually their minority viewpoint came to prevail. But what if they had not dissented? And what if the President had not encouraged dissent and open discussion of the alternatives? And what if President Kennedy and Premier Krushchev had not communicated so as to get each other's perspective and reach a practical agreement? The world of mankind might well have been blown to bits.

Abstention by nations from the violation of other nations' land, sea, and air space is a basic condition for the building of constructive relations of value between nations. Without that, the peoples of the violated nation are impeded in their freedom to develop creatively in their own way. (On the interpersonal level, the counterpart is the bodily or mental domination of one person and his living space by another.) The invasion of the United States' armed forces into countries in southeastern Asia is an example of the flagrant violation of other nations' space. Four million vietnamese have been killed, maimed or made homeless by that invasion. The Israeli invasion and occupation of Arab countries in 1967 is another example.

The solution to violations of this kind does not lie in a utopian criticism of nationalism or in proposals for a nationless world. In fact, since World II, with the decline of colonialism, nations and sentiments of nationalism have increased. The solution lies in agreement of government to honor the principles of international law in which the integrity, independence, and equality of other nation are respected. Such agreement, if it is to be enforceable morally and militarily, must be the outcome of the consultation, discussion, and creative exchange of government leaders. People throughout the world are agglomerated into nations, and national loyalties often run counter to ideological or religious one—think of the national differences among communist states; national differences among Christians, and national differences among capitalists. Demonic nationalism wherein a nation regards itself as an ultimate value and authority is a great evil and it may yet destroy us. But we must

now seek not to eliminate nations but to modify men's and governments' supreme loyalty to their nations in the direction of a loyalty to the fulfillment of all men and to the creative exchange and cooperation necessary to achieve that.

To do that, government must not only abide by the elementary principles of international relations. They must promote positive relations between their nations and other nations. Economic trade, cultural and scientific, exchange, competition in sports, and joint work on common problems are pathways toward such positive relations.

Consider, for example, the position of the United States toward China. For twenty-three years the government of the United States has refused to recognize the existence of the People's Republic of China, a nation comprising one-fourth of the world's population. This is a violation of the most elemental conditions of international relations, for it is a denial of the very existence of an independent and long established state. But in addition, and as a consequence, there is no trade between the two nations and virtually no communication in scientific, cultural, and other areas. This absence of intercourse, which has been both instrument and consequence of the American governmental policy of the isolation and containment of Chinese communism, has dislocated American relations with many other Asian nations. It has been a causal factor in destructive and futile wars of American aggression in Korea, Vietman, <sup>7</sup> and other southeastern Asian nations. A result has been ignorance and prejudice among the American people about China and other Asian countries, making it difficult for a public to develop a leverage of criticism against the inhuman policies of its government in Asia. A similar ignorance prevails in the United States with respect to Latin America, accompanying the exploitation in the decade of the 1950's when U.S. firms invested \$6,179 million in Latin America but took home \$11,083 million. <sup>8</sup>

The initiation and expansion of activities of economic and cultural exchange depends on the cordiality of government leaders toward such activities, and on the creative exchange and cooperation of lower-echelon persons in government as well as leaders in industry and business, culture, science, and other areas. That leadership can open the way for trade, travel, and other communications between citizens of different nations. The massive and creative exchange of citizens of one nation with citizens of other nations will help to forge the ties that will bind the peoples of the world into an emerging unity in thought and practice.

The mutual reinforcement of nation-states is necessary and important for all states. But the big powers have a special role to play in providing leadership, a worthy example, and a climate of good will in the world for other nations. The peace and cooperation between nations in the last half century have been jeopardized by the antagonism between capitalist and communist states, particularly between the Soviet Union and the United States. Today this antagonism has reached the point where these two superpowers possess the nuclear power to destroy the peoples of the world many times over. It is therefore vitally important that their leaders and peoples reach understanding and practice cooperation. Some advances have already been made in this direction—the International Geophysical Year (1957-1958), the Antarctica

Treaty, the International Years of the Quiet Sun (1964-1965), the US-USSR agreement on cultural and scientific exchange (1958), the US-USSR limited nuclear test-ban treaty (1963, the treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (approved by the UN General Assembly, 1968), and the US-USSR plans for an international docking system for spacecrafts (1970). Relative to what must be done for man's survival and fulfillment, these are small beginnings. But they indicate what cooperation is possible when persons of different nations have the readiness to enter into genuine creative exchange.

Men in government normally do not and cannot advance far beyond what the perspectives of their people will tolerate in dealing with other governments and nations. Creative exchange and cooperation between citizens of different nations are therefore important in advancing peaceful coexistence and constructive relations between nations. Such relations can not only encourage friendly relations among governments; if extensive, they can help to prevent government from backsliding into hostile attitudes and policies when the people themselves demand a continuance of good relations with other nations.

A large number of persons in the world today are friendly toward strangers from other nations and are ready to enter into creative exchange and even cooperation with them. Most persons recognize the dangers and evils of war and the necessity for international cooperation in dealing with the world-wide problems of war, poverty, illiteracy, pollution, and the like. What, then, are the obstructions to developing this reservoir of concern and good will in the direction of the creation of a world of value? Let us list the obstructions at the level of government first, and then the obstructions at the level of people-to-people exchange, with a suggestion of solutions in each case.

1) Unchecked, anarchic national sovereignty. Nation-states have and ought to have a certain kind of self-determination or sovereignty. To exist, they must maintain this integrity, this continuity in space-time, and this inviolability against interference and domination from the outside and against division from the inside. (Even so, such "sovereignty" is not ultimate; to be justified, it must serve the fulfillment of man). But such sovereignty for nations is quite different from the freedom to do as they please in their relations with other nations. Here, today, the latter kind of sovereignty of nations can mean only one thing: vast destruction. The only rightful sovereignty for persons and nations is the creation of an ecosystem of value, with its demands for man's commitment to creative exchange, the creative event, and cooperative activity toward human value. National and class arrogance are a threat to the existence of the species. We must educate ourselves and others as to the causes, conditions, and removal of this threat.

2) War as a way of expansion of the nation, and the institution of armaments. Most of the \$200 billion per year spent on armaments by the nations is spent by the United States and the Soviet Union. It is imperative for these government and others to take steps together toward peaceful coexistence and disarmament. As citizens and as governments we must seek peaceful ways of settling disputes between nations, especially between the large nations (as they are influential in determining policy for small nations).



We must educate our fellow citizens and our governments about the dangers of armaments and war and the necessity and promise of peaceful coexistence. Since the end of World War II the United States has spent \$1,000 billion on warfare—an effort which has simultaneously sought to extend the empire of high finance around the world and to halt “communism”—meaning by the latter any reformist government such as those in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic, overthrown by U. S. aid.

3) The dominance of material motives. All nations, large and small, drive to *maintain their own security and safety*. In a world of scarcity where the fulfillment of material needs (food, shelter, clothing, etc.) becomes a source of anxiety, this drive can easily lead to the effort to dominate the land, resources, and peoples of other nations, especially where the latter are less powerful and are nearby. The extreme case of such domination is imperialism, colonialism, and war. The United States today is the capital illustration of this. One solution of this dominance of material motives is the organization of production and distribution of material goods and services in ways that make enough available for all persons on the planet. The most probable and humanistic way of doing this is socialism. And the only way of preventing government in socialist nations from becoming exploitive of other nations is to develop a genuine democracy there, that is, methods of creative exchange and cooperation for the fulfillment of man.

4) The inertial, impersonal, and uncreative character of large governmental systems. Bureaucratic imperviousness to innovation and change seems to characterize all governments of any size. This is one reason why the momentum of the machinery of armament and war is difficult to arrest: it is connected to the *complex and ponderous machinery of big government*. Solution: much more democratic, creative government at local levels, and more responsiveness of big government to the people at the local levels.

5) The concentration of economic and political power and hence of basic decision-making in the hands of a few persons. A certain hierarchy of power and responsibility for decision-making is inescapable in any large social system. The first solution is to socialize the basic means of production and distribution in society. Such public ownership and control removes one form of economic power from a small class of men. In a socialized economy, it is then necessary to maintain so far as possible the channels of communication between leaders and led, experts and laymen, experienced and inexperienced, parents and children, governors and people.

6) Governmental restrictions on travel, cultural exchange, communication, and other conditions necessary for creative exchange between persons of different nations.

Let us now look at the obstructions to a better world at the level of people-to-people exchange.

1) Ignorance and stereotypical prejudices concerning other nations and the peoples of other nations. Most people in the world remain bound to their national territories. They are thus prey to the prejudices of their national tradition, the news media, and political propaganda within their own nation. Solution: many-dimensional education about other nations and peoples, correspondence, friendship societies toward other nations.

2) Lack of time and money for travel to other nations. Solution: lifting the level of the economy and socializing benefits, releasing the energies of people for wider creative exchange.

3) Ethnocentrism. Solution: education in the cultures of other nations and in the importance of creative exchange among peoples.

4) The language barrier. Solution: teach languages to children at the age when they can easily learn them.

5) Non-creative forms of communication. Much of our daily speech is a phatic routine for locating us in a fixed relation to other persons, relieving anxiety, or passing the time. Some communication is exploitive and manipulative, playing on the emotions and impulses of others in order to get what we want from or through them. Some communication is expressive of pervasive preoccupations of ego-resentment, ambition, dread, greed, etc. Solution: give creative exchange the right-of-way in human relations; cultivate it in families, neighborhoods, nations, and governments; make it central in education.

These suggestions for the improvement of communication across the boarders of nations may not appear relevant to the masses who are hungry, houseless, sick, and illiterate. Revolution and economic liberation seem to be their prime task. Yet enlightened and humanistic perspectives are requisite for the guidance of all social change, and perspectives arise and are partially tested through communication. Much of the revolutionary ferment in the world today is the consequence of the new modes of communication—the press, radio, television—which have brought the most advanced ideas from afar into the most backward areas. Action, whether revolutionary or otherwise in intent, is blind and doomed to failure if it is not guided by informed and humanistic perspectives. Perspectives, however noble in aim, are empty and ineffective if they are not constantly applied and tested in social practice.

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1 Henry N. Wieman, *The Source of Human Good*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946, p. 76.
- 2 Erich Fromm, *Man For Himself*. New York: Rinehart, 1947, p. 218.
- 3 *The Source of Human Good*, pp. 102-104.
- 4 For the facts on U. S. exploitation in Latin America, see John Gerassi, *The Great Fear in Latin America*. New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1965.
- 5 "International Law, Public," *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Chicago, London, Toronto: William Benton, 1959, p. 525.
- 6 I. F. Stone, *The Hidden History of the Korean War*. New York: Monthly Review, 1952, 1969.
- 7 Robert Scheer, *How the United States Got Involved in Vietnam*. Santa Barbara: The Fund for the Republic, 1965. Franz Schurann, Peter Dale Scott, and Reginald Zelnik, *The American Policy of Escalation in Vietnam*. New York: Fawcett, 1968.
- 8 William Appelman Williams, *The Great Evasion*. Chicago: Quadrangle 1964, p. 63.