

You and I now live in a Post-Modern age. In the coming of this utterly unique unexpected period of history, there have been four fundamental wildernesses. Each one called for exploration, conquest, and building. Today we face by far the greatest of these wildernesses. Today's wilderness is so intimate to us it can hardly be seen but by the same token it is everywhere to be seen. It is the greatest for with its conquest, the world will have become for the first time in all of time and space, one people.

The Heavens were the first wilderness. Galileo shocked the entire foundations of the Medieval world by claiming that Truth was available to him and his telescope unmediated by the wisdom of the Church on the matter. His Bishop very rightly wrote Galileo to the effect: if this is true, that anywhere at anytime some individual may gain access to Truth so that all of civilization must needs scramble perpetually to know what's what, how, Mr. Galileo, do you propose to hold such a civilization together? Neither Galileo nor we have developed a finished answer to the distinguished Bishop's Question. Nevertheless, Galileo, Kepler, and Copernicus discovered the earth was round and not the center of the solar system thru exploration of the skies.

The Seas were the second wilderness. No sooner did men hear that the globe was there, but they got in ships and sailed around her. Within a hundred years, European shipmen had touched every continent, connecting many strange and differing peoples in one common net of commerce. Many are the songs of joy and woe from those voyages.

The Land was the third wilderness. It was not long discovered when colonies of adventurers launched their fortunes on the unknown of new territory. Soon, even the old cradles of civilization were shaken as industry was invented to help man's conquest of the land. Cruel and hard in some places, benevolent beyond belief in others, the Land made men of them. We know of this great adventure today primarily through the perversions of later years: colonialism, slavery, race prejudice, imperialism. But at its beginning, it was a glorious and awesome undertaking, that for better or worse united the peoples of the globe in a common web of communities. The United States of America was originally 13 Colonies created as a part of this great world-wide adventure of cross-settlement. Much of our traditions are rooted firmly in this conquest of the New Land.

Today, however, we face not the wilderness the Colonies faced, nor the nationhood struggle of 1776, nor the wilderness of the West. Today we face a Fourth Wilderness. When those two astronauts on world-wide color TV stepped out onto the moon and flashed back those pictures of our blue-green globe, all of man's history leapt into a new era. Globality became our wilderness. That was the vision, now the conquest must begin.

I say Globality, not the globe here. Globality is something at the heart of any city of the globe, and this is a globe of cities. Globality is simply the fact of our city neighborhoods. It is two blocks to China, six blocks to Greece. Singapore is Buddhist, Malay, Hindu, and Moslem. Chicago is the second largest Polish city in the world. And, most importantly, most of us did not realize till yesterday, that this was the reality we had on our hands. Most of us have still been living out of those Land Wilderness images and stories and traditions that have not been our Land for two or three hundred years! It is as if America, in this sense, has yet to be discovered. It is not only America; every nation on earth in every one of its cities has the same discovery before it. Even the territory of this new wilderness is unknown. How do you care for neighborhoods of 14 languages? How do you celebrate in a community of 7 continents? How does a community of 37 languages make decisions?

Can you sense the excitement of this. The world has become utterly unknown again, once again! This wilderness is world-wide and less than a block away. Every detail of our everyday lives is lived in this new unknown reality, if only we will see this obvious beyond obvious thing before us. No great mystical reading is required, no special skills, no tradition or background is more appropriate for this. You and I just as we are are what is called for by this Fourth Wilderness. Any man who has wanted to be an adventurer, Here is Your Adventure! Any woman who has wanted an Adventure, Here is your Adventure! It is unknown, utterly primarily unknown what the new creation, the new shape, the new foundation given to this wilderness will be. The work, it is true, is awesome. Millions of problems must be seized in a totality, fundamental images of hope need creation, hundreds of thousands must be catalyzed into work. And, just as the Fremmen in Dune, we who step out into this adventure with tightened belts, bearing the embarrassment and awkwardness of real experimentation, will have to plan deliberately for a fulfillment that won't be visible for hundreds of years. We'll have long been dust, but we'll have Lived the Wilderness that was there, and telling the story of our Great Hour, men will even then remember what it is to create Man.