When we consider human history, especially as it played out during the past centuries, there appears to be little hope for a resurgence of healthy communities. Yet I contend that vital communities are the single most important factor in achieving the kind of global society that can produce healthy individuals and inspire human life on earth to be creative and fulfilling. Societies must help each person, not just the privileged few, to be the best he or she can be, and each person must in turn help society to be the best it can be. This simple truism was at the base of the Greek masters’ ethical ruminations and must be considered again today as the world moves toward increased globalism and away from the nation state system, which dominated the recent past.

A revitalized concept of communities is indispensable if we ever should hope to reach Rudolf Siebert’s vision of a reconciled society, what he has called Future III. Instead we are coming ever closer to living in societies resembling Siebert’s horror vision of Future I, the totally administered society. In the developed countries of the industrialized West, participation in the democratic process is ever decreasing, as citizens feel more often than not
being manipulated, cheated, and even tricked into wars. They often feel their hard earned wages being wasted, as their tax contributions, far from helping their needs and the needs of the polis, are turned into weapons of mass destruction or used to feed the hungry coffers of multi national corporations.

On the other hand, the project of Western moral philosophy, I believe, has by and large failed, having not been able whatsoever to anchor ethical reasoning within the confines of the individual’s ontology. While the latest attempts of prominent philosophers such as Jürgen Habermas to develop an ethical framework from an analysis of communicative praxis are promising and point in the right direction, I believe that to achieve a real paradigm change it will require a new foundation of community. Such an idea of community can only come from a reevaluation of our current philosophies of nature and the development of a naturalistic approach to the necessity of community as a prerequisite for human happiness.

Globalization today is on everybody’s mind. Which of three alternative futures will this global society ultimately resemble? Reflecting on philosophical, political, and religious problems of globalization, Tatiana Alekseeva, head of the Department of Political Theory at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, in a recent publication on Democracy and the Quest for Justice (Gay 2004), developed a bold vision for a future global society, well worth considering. She claims that a global society must be based on the “principles of cooperation, mutual help, and justice” (Gay 2004:18). Alekseeva continues:

Not competition between ideas and ideologies, but solidarity, not the clash of civilizations, but their mutual supplementary, not the “balance of power,” but mutual help in terms of Martin Heidegger’s existential of human being ought to become the main features of the new international order (Gay 2004:18).

This vision in mind, Alekseeva analyses current trends in Russia and America. For the immediate interaction of nations, Alekseeva envisions a development along the lines of Rawls’ concept of “overlapping consensus” rather than the development of a new meta-ideology, which would be the result of different opinions and ideas flowing together into a unifying whole. In spite of this caveat, Alekseeva concludes that