

READER IN FUTURES STUDIES

MA Unit in Futures Studies
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WELCOME

Welcome to Southern Cross University's MA Unit in Futures Studies. I am Sohail Inayatullah, the designer of this unit. I have been active in futures studies since I took my first unit at the University of Hawaii in 1978 called, "Political Design and Futuristics." It was taught by James Dator, a young but aging hippie professor. Having lived many years in Japan, Dator was convinced that unless individuals thought about and designed their futures they would remain trapped by obsolete pasts. Japan, for him, was the exemplar. The nation learned from many cultures without losing its own culture; was unafraid of technology, indeed, relished in how technology could transform social conditions; and took a long term outlook, a futures generations perspective, in its economic and educational policies. Dator eventually left Japan for Hawaii, a place that itself represented the future--the possibility of paradise on Earth--and began to teach futures studies.

Take a glance at James Dator, "It's Only a Paper Moon" to better understand the influence of technology and Japanese culture on his vision of the future.

I was one of his many students there, but unlike others who graduated to more conventional disciplines, I, along with others also present in this Unit, this Reader, such as Wendy Schultz and Chris Jones, stayed active in futures studies. We continued in the MA program in Alternative Futures and then went on to pursue our doctorates. Wendy Schultz recently finished her PhD after years of consulting work and Chris Jones finished in 1988, writing on the Politics and Futures of Gaia, the first futures oriented doctoral dissertation.

My Ph.D was less futures oriented and more focused on understanding the framework in which a particular spiritual and social philosopher, P.R. Sarkar, thought. I thus focused on a particular vision of history and future then the larger theory and method of the field of futures studies.

I finished in 1990 and moved to Brisbane, Australia in 1994. While in Hawaii I happened to meet Paul Wildman, who upon my arrival in Brisbane, invited me to lecture on futures studies to the faculty of Education, Work and Training at Southern Cross University. I did and this is how this unit was born. Accidental circumstances? Perhaps. But perhaps post-rational synergies. Perhaps, a larger pattern of chaos and complexity? I raise these issues of explanation as a central aim of futures studies is to develop a rich theory of social causation, asking what are the variables that cause individual and social change and what reasons do each one of us give to understanding how things change. Indeed, what are the interpretative strategies we use to make the world more meaningful to us? Futures studies, as I am hinting, is a transdisciplinarian field, touching upon philosophy, economics, political science, history, art, science and simultaneously contesting these fields.

The contribution of SCU, particularly Wildman, to the futures discourse is to see futures studies as futuring, as an active process in which the future is constantly created through Praxis: an interactive development of theory, values, critique and social action.

If you want to already jump to the content of the unit, then immediately proceed to Eleonora Masini's Why Futures Studies?, or if you can wait, then follow the signs through the rest of this introduction.

My introduction here is a tour of this unit. Functioning as a tour guide, I will try and lead you through these writings, prodding you here, providing summaries, asking critical questions, and more importantly, giving you some context for the different writers. Most of them are colleagues or friends or at least thinkers whom I have met in a variety of conferences and lecture series.

The structure of this unit, brilliantly thought up Alan Ellis, is that besides the text, you will have available a photo of the writer and in most cases an audio tape as well. In some cases, such as Phil McNally, you will have a commentary on an earlier piece. McNally's "The Tao of Rights, Bytes and Space," undoes his earlier positions on the rights revolution in general and the rights of robots in particular. You thus have the opportunity to see the evolving thought of particular futurists.

While my text will be linear, I encourage you to move up and down, left and right, skimming here and there, trying to get what is most important to you. Learning the theory behind social sciences, futures research, is important as is learning futures methods, but most important is the internalizing of these theories, methods and approaches in your own work, whether it be in business forecasting, community development, international consulting, or in critical theory. The future, after all, is an open space, a space that must be made personal, decolonised from institutions and structures which intend to make it their own, as well as from theories which claim history and future have ended, that imagination has been stricken from history, leaving only technique, the task of implementing social design. Futures studies, as this tour intends to articulate, is about keeping the future always a step ahead of our desire to totalize, to concretize; after all, as we violate each other and nature, maintaining the dream of a different type of society, of a renaissance that leads to the ever awakening of vision, is a hope that must remain free and open, always more than our ability to attain it.

Part of staying open is being honest, making clear one's own biases. I offer five that have framed my particular, perhaps idiosyncratic, view of futures studies.

First, having grown up in a developmentalist international relations United Nations setting (my father worked as a United Nations' expert), I prefer futures frames that contest the idea of the nation-state, that look for edges and borders out of neo-realism (the theory that argues that only nations and their official functionaries matter). Thus my interest in futures is from the position of the spiritual, the feminine, the chaotic, the metaphorical, and the non-Western.

Second, having grown up in the West and in Pakistan where in the former the vision of a particular group has become universal, that of liberalism, capitalism, and individualistic democracy and where in the latter, the future has been based on the homogeneity of an imagined Islamic history, that is, a mono-cultural view of the future, I long for futures that are committed to the idea that there is no one future but a range of alternative futures. We must consciously focus on examining how the future might be fundamentally different. Our scenarios of the future then should not be minor deviations (as in strategic scenario development) of each other but as dramatically different societal possibilities. We must always include the Other, the different, the wild card, in our forecasts and our visions of a good society.

Third, tired of official discourses of the State, I have worked for years in social movements committed to spiritual, ecological and feminist visions of the future. I am thus convinced that a better society will come about if we allow many ways of knowing to

flourish. I thus prefer visions of the future that allow entry of myth, of pre- and post-rational ways of knowing, that attempt to enrich the metaphors we use to frame social and scientific reality.

See Tony Judge's "*Envisioning Conferencing: Aesthetics of Governance*," for more on metaphors and reality.

In this sense, the style of this unit is not conventional. Its electronic structure allows the Reader to never be concluded. As new articles are written, as you let us know what you prefer, we can change the text, creating perhaps a just-in-time text, ever current, ever open to changing social conditions.

By now you may have noticed how my past has shaped my future. Even as I desire a break from history, the search for a new vision, new practices, I believe we should not remain only in linear stage-like social patterns; rather, the future, as our Maori brothers and sisters remind us, is our past ancestors, as well. The future can curve back into the past, and then return creating a spiral of past, present and future. This becomes the **fourth** assumption, that the shape of the future and the past must be diverse.

See Sohail Inayatullah, "*Sarkar's Spiritual Dialectics*," for cyclical and spiritual futures.

Fifth, finally, having been trained as a political scientist and deeply influenced by post-structural writers such as Michel Foucault, I believe we need to unpack the assumptions of rationality, of order, behind any particular future. We need to ask: whom does that future privilege? What discourses are dominant in any particular rendering of the future? Would you and I be happy in that future? Would others be happy? We thus need to take a critical approach (yet value based) to the study of the future, not merely a culturally relativistic or technical forecasting approach.

To summarize, I prefer futures theories, methods and visions that (1) move outside conventional economic neo-realist frames (2) make implicit the idea that there is not one future but a range of alternative futures, (3) that privilege more than one way of knowing the world, (4) that see history and future as not merely linear but cyclical and spiral, and (5) that examine the assumptions, the politics of the particular future being put forth.

These are my assumptions, however, I have tried to choose writers who differ as well. Some are committed to a particular future, to its realization, others believe that one can be open to too many futures, that there is a time when the future must be closed, when reality must become fixed and known. However, irrespective of the particular frame of the futurists included, each one is a leader in her or his area. Each one has something important to say, I certainly have learned from each one of the thinkers presented. I hope you will as well.

This perhaps is a long enough opening. The essays that follow will give you many more words.

UNIT STRUCTURE

There are three sections to this Unit. The first gives an overview of the methods and theories of futures research. I would recommend reading this section first if you want a general frame of the field. The second section offers specific emerging issues that promise to transform society: robotics, microvita, globalism, genetics. If you are a content person, then read this section immediately. This will help you get a sense of what the future might be like. The third section looks at unconventional visions of the future. If you are a dreamer (but also understand that dreams have a certain aesthetics, a design), then this is the section for you. This section is more culturally diverse than previous sections, having, for example, essays on African, Buddhist, Islamic, and Tantric futures, certainly not worlds that you would get in most neighborhood grocery shops or bookstores.

All three sections put together will give you quite an extensive understanding of theories and methods in the field, emerging issues that will change how we imagine ourselves, and exquisite visions of what many would like the world to be like. However, these sections are not entirely discreet. There is considerable overlapping. For example, some essays in the second section also articulate theories and methods of the field in general as do essays in the visions section.

There is a concluding annotated bibliography of my favorite books and articles that intends to give you a guide for further reading.

As we begin, answer the following questions.

- (1) How do you envision your future in the next five years? Thirty? Are you positive or negative about your future?
- (2) How do you envision the future of the world in the next five years? Thirty? Be as specific as possible? For example, are you positive or negative about the world's future?
- (3) Are these your preferred images or probable images? That is, do you think they will happen or are these visions you want to happen?

If these are difficult to answer, it could be that conventional academia and life itself, does not prepare ourselves for the future, preferring to live in the safety of the past or the convenience of the present. At this stage just try and get something down.

Write your answers down and put them aside until the end of the course. I will ask these questions again at the end of the unit. We will then compare your answers.

Jump in or allow the future to flow with, over or under you, as you like.

I. THEORY AND METHODS OF FUTURES STUDIES

1. Allen Tough, "The Future of Human Civilisation" and "What is Most Important of All," Crucial Questions About the Future, Lanham, UPA, 1991, 1-23.

I first met Allen Tough in Nara, Japan. We had been invited to a conference on the futures of religions. Allen had been invited because of his work on space, having argued that we need to consciously imagine what cultures in space might look like: our own and those of aliens. This exercise of imagination, for Tough, forces us into questioning our norms,

asking what are the values we use to define ourselves and others.

In the section on "*The Future of Human Civilisation*," Allen Tough asks us to think of the Big Picture.

Try and answer his eight fundamental questions as best as you can.

In the section, "What is Most Important of All," Allen Tough asks us to think about the future in terms of future generations, our children's children, and their children, even developing the concept of "equal opportunity for future generations."

Allen does this in terms of scholarship but also he speaks from his heart. The personal, as feminists and yogis have taught us, is the political.

- (1) Are you convinced by his arguments?**
- (2) How can we balance the rights of future generations and our current needs?**
- (3) Who are future generations? Just humans, or plants, animals, ideas and cultures as well?**
- (4) Can you design institutions that can safeguard the rights of the unborn? A court of future generations perhaps?**

2. Richard Slaughter, "Futures Concepts" in Futures (April 1993), 289-331.

While Allen Tough gives us a particular method of futures, that is, asking basic fundamental questions, Rick Slaughter, perhaps the world's leading futurist on educational futures, is more concerned about the knowledge base of futures studies. This concern has come about partly due to his frustration of how academia and government has viewed futures studies, as merely a process. Among other projects, Rick Slaughter has completed a three volume series titled, The Knowledge Base of Futures Studies, wherein he compiles the many methods and theories of future studies as well as the individuals and organizations actively creating the future. For Slaughter, the future must be recovered from the technical, from modernist conceptions of society. We need to recover our lost wisdom. In addition, Slaughter differentiates foresight (a general anticipatory approach to the future) and forecasting (the belief that precise knowing of future events is possible). More important is the task of extending the present. Slaughter also makes the important distinction between futures research, futures studies and futures movements. Put together they define the field. As concerned with creating futures studies as a discipline, Slaughter seeks to bring disciplined futures-oriented inquiry into all our knowing efforts.

Slaughter concludes his article with an agenda for the 21st Century.

- (1) Examine it and write down your own agenda for the next century. Ensure that there are at least five prioritized elements in your agenda.
- (2) Do you believe your agenda is realizable? If not, what needs to be happen to make your agenda into a probable future, instead of merely a preferred vision?

On a personal note, those of you taking this unit in Australia certainly know Rick from his work in educational futures, guest editing of 21C, and his work in developing a futures studies curriculum for the Queensland educational system. Rick Slaughter is also a consulting editor with the journal Futures and has now entered the publishing world through DDM publishers in Melbourne.

I first met Rick in Hawaii in 1985, after reading his critique of conventional futures studies--where he used Habermas to rethink futures studies--I told him that I wished I had written that article. And after listening to his "deconstruction" t-cycle lecture, I better understood the emancipatory dimension of futures studies those of us at the Manoa School of Futures Studies were intent on developing. The particular future Rick lives for is a cross-cultural spiritual society as outlined by Ken Wilber in his Up From Eden.

3. Eleonora Masini, "Why Think About the Future Today," and "Definitions and Characteristics," Why Futures Studies, London, Pluto Press, 1994, 1-26.

Eleonora Masini is a sociologist turned futurist. She has been one of the guiding lights in futures studies for the last fifteen years, taking over from the founding efforts of John McHale, Johan Galtung, and Bob Jungk. Working from Rome, she has been instrumental in developing the world futures studies federation, a global association of academics and activists, and in conducting work with the United Nations on women's images of the future. Her recent work in the past few years has been on the futures of cultures, editing two books on the subject, both available from Unesco publications.

I first met Eleonora Masini in Honolulu, Hawaii in the early 1980's and was touched by her openness and her willingness to spend time with those of us in our early 20s. It is this openness that best characterizes her book, Why Futures Studies?. Its success is partly based on her seeing the futures field not in terms of disciplinary categories but more like a family. Nested in this discourse of a community, is her ability to get to the basics: to ask the fundamental questions.

In her section on fundamental principles, she lists three principles:

- (1) the dilemma in futures studies, the contradictions between our knowledge of the future and our desires and fear of the future;
- (2) the idea that the only sphere of action is the future; and
- (3) the idea of alternative futures.

She defines the field by the following characteristics: transdisciplinarity, complexity, globality, normativity, scientificity, dynamicity, and participation.

What makes her book remarkable is the ability to bring in thinkers from many different traditions to answer the question, "Why futures studies?" She has enriched her European heritage with the visions of others.

As a way to focus, delve on the following questions as you read her article.

- (1) **Are there contradictions in her criteria, for example, between scientificity and globality or scientificity and transdisciplinarity?**
- (2) **How does her mapping of the field differ from Slaughter's? from Tough's? List some differences.**
- (3) **Masini makes the distinction between pessimist and optimist. Which are you? Are you this way only for your own life or for your society and the globe in general?**

4. Wendy Schultz, "Defining Futures Fluency" from Futures Fluency: Explorations in Leadership, Vision and Creativity. Chapter 5. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1995.

Like myself, Wendy Schultz is a third-generation futurist. The first generation comprised women and men who had achieved so much success in their fields, they searched for new horizons to sharpen their skills (Galtung and McHale, for example). The second generation, (Masini and Dator, for example) frustrated with the narrow confines of their own fields, saw in futures studies a way out of the predicament of modernity. The third generation grew up with futures as a field and thus have found it easier to live in the field and to press for transformation in the study of the future.

Wendy Schultz's undergraduate work was in technology and social change. Completing that, she moved to Hawaii on an East-West Centre scholarship. After years of working as a futurist with the Hawaii Research Centre for Futures Studies, primarily conducting futures visioning and forecasting workshops for Hawaii government and businesses, she decided to use all her case studies as data for her doctorate. Her PhD is different from many dissertations in that her central focus was intelligibility, in communicating difficult theoretical concepts to others. In addition, she is concerned with developing simple and elegant methods that can help us envision alternative futures, that can create better--more fulfilling, more participatory, more humanistic--social structures, and that can free bureaucracy from its own iron prison. Wendy Schultz desires to make us futures fluent, comfortable in the new language of futures studies.

Schultz begins with the basic problem in futures studies: there are no future facts. Given this ontological problem, what then can be studied about the future, she asks? While Masini is more philosophically oriented, Schultz is concerned with offering us a series of methods we can use to better understand current images of the future as well as to anticipate the direction and periodicity of trends and cycles. Moving from forecasting

emerging issues, she develops the method par excellence in futures: scenario writing. She concludes with an analysis of strategic planning. On a personal note, Wendy draws much of her inspiration from science fiction, particularly recent television shows such as Star Trek: The Next Generation and Babylon 5. The latter in particular develops scenarios of the future that retain the foibles and pathologies of humans as they march forward into new technological and alien vistas.

After reading her article, answer the following questions:

- (1) What is the difference between emerging issues analysis and trend analysis? Give some examples of each? Is the way this unit being conducted on the world wide web an emerging issue or a trend? Does it matter?**
- (2) What is the difference between scenario development and visioning?**
- (3) How is strategic planning different from visioning?**
- (4) What is the utility of backcasting?**
- (5) If available, watch Joel Barker's instructional vidoes "Paradigms" and "Visions."**

5. Sohail Inayatullah, "Deconstructing the Future," in Rick Slaughter, ed., The Knowledge Base of Futures Studies. Melbourne, DDM Media and Futures Study Centre, 1995.

This article is the best one of the lot (I am smiling as I write this). It is certainly the most difficult going. You will need to read it at least twice. It is difficult because it tries to locate the field within the epistemological debates of our time: positivism versus interpretation versus critical theory, for example. It also contests the traditional view of policy studies and decisionmaking, that more information leads to better decisionmaking; instead, asserting that the matrix of personality, institutional, and class politics frames how decisions are made.

I argue in this piece that there are three types of futures studies: predictive/empirical; cultural/interpretive; and, critical/poststructural. Each type of social science and futures studies ask different questions and is based on different assumptions as to the nature of reality, the nature of truth, the structure of language, and the role of the observer.

I wrote this piece partly after colleagues in the Department of Political Science at the University of Hawaii commented that while they were fascinated by futures studies, they mistrusted it since it was overly business/prediction focused and not grounded in any particular social theory. Drawing from Slaughter's work on Habermas, I first attempted to contextualise the predictive dimension of futures, then I tried to account for non-Western futures studies and thirdly I tried to make links to Foucauldian discourse analysis, to the language of postmodernity. It is the third space, that makes this article difficult, since it forces us out of conventional and comfortable linguistic spaces. For example, instead of forecasting the future of population, we ask how is it that the category of "population" has become valorized in current discourse. However, more important than focusing on any particular perspective, I try and argue that we need to use all three in our futuring. I hope you will find that the time spent in reading this piece is rewarding.

After you have read it twice, answer the following questions:

- (1) **What discourses do you live in that remain uncontested? How you know that?**
- (2) **If prediction is impossible, how can we analyse the future?**
- (3) **Which framework do you prefer? Which do you find most useful for your own work?**
- (4) **What are some other categories of futures studies that Inayatullah has missed?**
- (5) **Compare and contrast the approach taken here with that of Masini's.**

6. Trevor Hancock and Clement Bezold, "Possible Futures, Preferable Futures," Health Forum Journal (March/April 1994), 23-29.

Trevor Hancock, MD and Clement Bezold, President of the Institute of Alternative futures, elegantly describe basic concepts in futures studies, and more importantly, apply them to health futures. This article is a case study then of how to do futures. Both are consultants. Bezold, for example, does forecasting work for numerous pharmaceutical companies. Bezold is also one of the few futurists who is an international corporate consultant and who still retains his social reformer status. I've known Clem for 15 or so years now and watched him struggle in his consulting firm, doing years of non-profit work attempting to get US state governments to take more anticipatory policies, to practice anticipatory democracy, to his current status as successful international consultant. Over the years, he has also become a leader in judicial forecasting, working with American state judiciaries in developing futures commissions. If you want to learn how to do corporate forecasting, Bezold is the one to learn from. His style is soft, asking questions, learning from everyone he meets, and before you know it, he has seduced you into a future you least expected to enter.

This article specifically is important in that it shows how scenarios can be used to help health care professionals make not only better, that is more informed smarter decisions, but wiser decisions.

As you read this piece, answer the following questions.

- (1) Do these scenarios apply to the health and medical profession in your country?
- (2) How do Hancock and Bezold differentiate health from medical futures?
- (3) What is the difference between possible, plausible probable, and, preferable futures?

Design some scenarios for the future of your own area using the possible to preferable categories.

SUMMING UP

The first section focused on the theories and methods of futures studies. Beginning with Tough's call for an integration of futures generations into our day-to-day thinking as well as into the grander questions of the future of human civilisation, we moved to Slaughter's decisive defining of the basic concepts of the futures field and his critique of conventional paradigms in business and government. Masini brought a cross-civilisational approach to basic issues in futures studies and developed fundamental characteristics such as transdisciplinarity and globality. Masini also attempts to answer why we need futures studies. Schultz believes we need futures so that we can enhance our individual lives as well as transform public and private sector organisations and institutions. Schultz believes we must become futures fluent. Her chapter gives us the tools to do so. Inayatullah's essays locates the field in three separate but interrelated discourses: the predictive, the cultural and the critical. Hancock's and Bezold's essay provides a case study in the area of health futures, showing us how forecasting and foresight can be applied to a specific topic.

Summing up activity:

Having read all the essays in this section, answer the following questions:

- (1) **Are there any themes that weave in and out of the works of all the writers? If so, what are they?**
- (2) **List the arguments why futures studies should be used in your area of concern (at university, at your workplace, your family life, your nation)?**
- (3) **What are the limits to the futures approach? Do you think futurists can see these limits or has their perhaps unnatural focus on the future blinded them to these limitations?**

II. EMERGING IDEAS ABOUT THE FUTURE

We now move to the second section of this Reader, emerging ideas about the future. Each essay seriously questions our conventional renderings of social reality, of the content of the future and the frame (scientific, gender, technological, spiritual, for example) that we will use to contextualise it. While the issues raised by the writers may appear to be improbable, I suggest that in fact these are plausible futures. The improbable future is the continuation of the present.

1. Jim Dator, "It's Only a Paper Moon," in *Futures* (December 1990), 1084--1101.

Dator's "It's Only a Paper Moon," can be best summarized by the poem from which the title draws its inspiration:

"It's only a paper moon
Floating over a cardboard sea.
But it wouldn't be make believe
if you believed in me."

For Dator, reality as we have known is undergoing a dramatic change--the real, the natural, the economic are all being mercilessly transformed. We are entering a post-human future inhabited by virtual selves, clones and biologically grown technologies such as the astro-chicken. In this new world, we will all be strangers in a strange land. Should we then revert back to a more "natural" past. Never. For Dator, we have always been an artificial species, through technology changing whatever we could see and touch and in turn being fundamentally changed by technology. We create technology and thereafter it creates us. The solution to the current global crisis is to wisely govern evolution; but not in a linear, mechanistic sense of social engineering but in post-rational quantum, chaotic, self-organized sense, perhaps a feminist design of governance.

Dator has had an incredible influence in futures studies, partly because he heads a Masters level program in Alternative Futures at the University of Hawaii and partly because he has never stayed in intellectual comfort zones, always pushing himself and others into unimaginable discourses. As Dator is fond of saying, "for a forecast to be of any use, it must be considered ridiculous by all who hear it." If you want to be a real futurist then, have thick skin for it is not a field for those who want instant legitimacy. One might become a legend but not in one's own mind or in one's own time. Only in the future.

Answer the following questions as you read his piece:

1. Do you think we should or even can govern human and planetary evolution?
2. How does Dator's vision of the futures ahead differ from that of the Green party/the environmentalist movement?
3. Compare Dator's view with Slaughter's call for foresight. Is foresight the same as governing evolution?
4. Finally do you think that the end of communism destroys all pretences toward ideological debate, with only implementation of the bottom line left? Has politics been reduced to business economics?

2. Phil McNally and Sohail Inayatullah, "The Rights of Robots," in Whole Earth Review (Summer 1988), 2-10.
Commentary by Phil McNally, "The Tao of Rights, Bytes, and Space," July 1995.

This is a joint article written by Phil McNally and myself. Phil focused on the technology, I on the spiritual dimension, and the legal implications were shared words. The idea of this article originated in 1982. The Hawaii judiciary had initiated a futures research program which at that time mainly consisted of emerging issues analysis (later trend analysis was included). Meeting with judges, attorneys, futurists, and court administrators, we attempted to anticipate future legal and social issues. We focused on how new technologies might dramatically transform the courts. While we recognized that artificial intelligence might rationalise legal decisionmaking, thus allowing judges more time for policy, philosophical issues, it suddenly hit us that the most dramatic issue would be the rights of robots. We surveyed the technology literature, but that did not seem enough. We then moved to spiritual and cultural perspectives which argued that everything is already alive. However, most spiritual perspectives only looked as far as animals, plants, and angels. Few, with the exception of Sarkar, make the next conceptual jump and asserted that even the inanimate might become animate and even if not, still the inanimate should be treated with respect.

For us, the issue is how do different cultures construct life and how might technological transformation impact legal systems. Equally important, as we learned from Neal Milner of the Department of Political Science, University of Hawaii, all rights are political victories, rights are not intrinsic, they are gained through social, epistemological and legal struggle.

We have been stunned by the number of times this article has been reprinted and cited. However, in the commentary provided by Phil McNally, he believes that we went too far, believing that granting rights is perhaps not the way to ensure social justice, that we need a new social contract that includes our responsibility to each other as well.

1. **Do you believe robots will have rights one day? If not, why not?**
2. **How have you gained the legal and moral rights you currently have in your community? Did you fight for them or were they given to you?**
3. **What are some other ways to resolve disputes without entering into the rights discourse?**
4. **Watch the following movies: Metropolis, Blade Runner and Demolition Man. Be sensitive to the human/robot distinction. What constitutes aliveness in each movie? Notice how Blade Runner allows an explosion of culture whereas Demolition Man attempts to sanitize culture from the future. Metropolis is stunning for how well it forecasted the future of the City and robotics.**
5. **If you were to direct a movie about the future, what would it look like? what would the key tensions and conflicts be? Keep this question especially in mind as you read the next piece.**

3. Chris Jones, "Seven Tomorrows for Gaia" in Gaia Futures: The Emerging Mythology and Politics of the Earth. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1989.

Chris Jones' doctorate was perhaps the first futures Ph.D ever done. While influenced by Dator's scenario model (continued growth, steady state, collapse and transformation) Jones goes a step further and articulates seven scenarios for the future of Gaia. These scenarios are grand images of the long term future human and post-human future. For Jones, Gaia is a conscious self-regulating process, that is, the planet is alive, existing for herself and not necessarily just for humans. Humans might be an evolutionary mistake, a disease that needs to be destroyed for the sake of the rest of the planet. Gaia is resilient, Gaia is alive, and Gaia is the future. Take a look at the poem Jones begins his section with.

For the Children

The rising hills, the slopes,
of statistics
lie before us.
The steep climb
of everything, going up,
up, as we all
go down.

In the next century
or the one beyond that,
they say,
are valleys, pastures,
we can meet there in peace
if we make it.

To climb these coming crests
one word to you, to
you and your children:

stay together
learn the flowers
go light.

by Gary Snyder

Contrast this with Dator's "It's only a Paper Moon."

Chris Jones is another futurist who lives his future. Active in Green politics for many years, he is now professor at Eastern Oregon State University, where he teaches political science and futures studies. But he does not allow his passion for the valleys and the pastures to dismiss other futures. And this is the richness of Jones' essay: the detail of the scenarios offered, his ability to not sanitize differences, and to take us to futures far away, to the scenarios of "galaxia" and "cosmocracy," for example. Gaian futures, while spiritual, also begin the entry of gender futures into this MA unit, a focus that Eisler and Lennie continue. Jones also does not shy away from myth. Scenarios for him are not merely rational heuristics but deep mythology. Alongside his dissertation, he has developed compelling slide shows and videos on the futures of Gaia. Finally Gaian futures are about making difficult planetary decisions on how we intend to live with the rest of the biosphere. However, this is predicated on the view that the biosphere, Gaia, believes we, as a species, are worthy of life.

The actual scenarios were constructed on a Sunday morning, May 23, 1989 by Chris Jones, Wendy Schultz, Sharon Rodgers, Peter Miller, Greg Aanestad, Robin Brandt, and myself. Chris gave us the outline of his dissertation, and from there we brainstormed and created the seven scenarios as well as incasting categories (location of self, vices, drugs, myths and internal contradictions). We received donuts, fruit and juice as nourishment. It is a testament to Chris's facilitation abilities that what came out was publishable. It remains one of my most exhilarating scenario creation processes.

1. **Contrast Jones' scenario method with that of Bezold's.**
2. **Use the personal/story telling form of scenario writing and write a scenario for the future of the planet different from that given by Jones. Take your story and develop an incasting table around it, that is, flesh out the scenario or scenarios.**
3. **Pay attention to the incasting variables you use: that is, be creative, instead of merely using categories such as government, economy, culture, and family.**
4. **Watch "The Handmaid's Tale". Which myths does it sustain?**
5. **How would government's political, national, strategic, economic policies change under the Gaian paradigm? Would nations still insist on nuclear testing?**

4. **Riane**

Eisler, "Cultural Shifts and Technological Phase Changes: The Patterns of History, The Subtext of Gender, and the Choices of Our Future." in Johan Galtung and Sohail Inayatullah, Macrohistory and Macrohistorians (*forthcoming*).

Eisler is famous for her breakthrough book, The Chalice and the Blade. For Eisler, a macrohistorian and feminist, history is the cycle of two impulses in humans: the desire to dominate and the need to cooperate. She believes that we are moving from a dominator model of society (where violence, reductionism, expansion are paramount) to a partnership model of society (based on cooperatives, mutual respect of cultures and genders, and on the softer aspects of all religions). We are thus shifting out a period of history where we define ourselves by rank to one where we define ourselves by our connectivity to others.

But Eisler's vision of the future is not speculative (or as detailed as Jones'), she brings to it a theory of history. For her, we have moved through various linear phases: the human, the agrarian, the industrial, the electronic, and are now about to enter the stage of human actualisation. But history is not just linear stage-like. Borrowing from Prigogine, she believe we are on the verge of a system transformation. Central to this system transformation will be the elimination of oppression, the economic and spiritual revaluation of women, and the recovery of men of the "feminine" side they have historically distanced themselves from.

However, in this historical march, Eisler retains the value of human agency--system changes occur through a mix of human action and technological/cultural transformation. We can and do influence the future!

- (1) **Do you think she is fair in her analysis of the Post-Shah Iranian culture, of the Masai, or of the Samurai?**
- (2) **How does her analysis differ from the Men's movement which argues that industrialism has robbed men not of their softer side but of their warrior selves, of their courage, making men into mere instruments of the expansion of capitalism and technologism. What is needed then is not for men to recover their feminine but to affirm their masculine, to reappropriate the initiation myths of the warrior that have been so central to us for eons.**
- (3) **What of the Maori and the Aborigine? Are they civilisations that are modelled after the partnership paradigm or the dominator paradigm. How is the women's movement changing their civilisational ethos?**
- (4) **List five trends or events (changes in government policy, changes in how we organize our economy, changes in how we interact, for example) that need to happen for a partnership society to come about.**
- (5) **How do you relate to others: do you try and compete or link with them?**
- (6) **Redesign an institution or structure (the university, the courts, the school system, transportation, or the city) based on the partnership model. What would it look like?**

5. Tony
Steven
son
and

June Lennie, "Emerging Designs for Working, Living and Learning." Research Paper, The Communication Centre, Queensland University of Technology, January 1995.

Tony Stevenson and June Lennie are at the Communication Centre, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane. Stevenson is the director and a close personal friend. We first met at a world futures studies federation course in Dubrovnik on Visions of Culture in the Next Century. We have taught futures studies courses together in Fiji, Bangkok, Malaysia and Andorra over the past few years. Tony is committed to action learning models of pedagogy, believing that we have to transform how we learn. Preferring partnership models, he conducts his courses in such a way that students become responsible for their own learning, for their own life, indeed, self-mastery becomes more important than the particular content of the future understudy. He takes this view of education to communication futures, arguing for futures that are more open, more interactive, more participatory, committed to creating a conversation between those of different genders, civilisations, and histories. Tony Stevenson is currently the secretary-general of the world futures studies federation and responsible for the 1997 gathering/conference titled: "Global Conversations: What you and I can do for future generations."

June Lennie, a researcher at the Communication Centre, is more concerned with how technology exclude females, not only with respect to access but with the deeper issue of

design. Asserting that computers are "male" in their design, she argues for futures in which women create technology thus realistically allowing for the possibility of partnership and for connectivity.

In their essay, they argue that we need to move out of the current "Conventional Age" and avoid the "Artificial Age" and thus enter a true "Communicative Age."

What is unique about Stevenson and Lennie is that they are not seduced by new communication technologies nor are they convinced that we will necessarily move to a communicative age. An artificial age where social hierarchies and surveillance systems become even stronger is also a possibility, they assert. However, as Australians, they remain positive and are committed to processes (action learning, revitalizing conversation, involving and valuing women) that encapsulate the futures they profess.

1. **How is the Artificial Age different from Dator's vision of the end of the natural?**
2. **Do you think the authors adequately deal with violence and power, with the desire to use technology to either commodify the Other or to control the Other, as we are seeing throughout the world?**
3. **How is the metaphor of the communicative age different from that of the Information age or post-industrial society?**
4. **What are some alternative metaphors to the "information super highway" that better describe the communicative age: netweaving instead of networking, perhaps? Other metaphors?**
5. **Which of Jones' Gaia scenarios fits into Stevenson's and Lennie's.**
6. **Given the currency of "cyberspace" and "virtual reality" as well as development in genetics, isn't the "artificial age" scenario the most likely? If not, why not?**

6. Acarya Rudreshananda Avaduta, "Microvita and the Future of Science." Research Paper, Microvita Research Institute, Mainz, Germany, May 1995.

Rudreshananda Avadhuta is a unique social thinker/futurist. In addition to his doctorate in Psychology from Stanford, he holds a Masters degree from MIT in Physics, and is an avadhuta--an advanced meditation teacher for Ananda Marga. Clearly, he has not led the conventional life of an academic.

His research interests show this well. Rudreshananda attempts to rethink science through the introduction of Microvita theory, which he believes will create the new paradigm of science. Microvita are both physical and conceptual entities that organise energy. Positive microvita enhance health and negative lead to disease. Microvita theory hopes to unite spiritual and materialist conceptions of life and more fully explain the transmission of ideas and social evolution. Clearly his ideas are unconventional and empirical proof for them is just being discovered (at the level of health remedies). However, they are important in that while a universal phenomena, their existence is hypothesized from the perspective of a non-Western science, in this case, the indigenous Indian science of Tantra. Normal Western science steeped in materialistic conceptions of life would be unable to articulate such a theory.

That Rudreshananda is leading research and popularizing microvita theory is not accidental. I've met him numerous times, first in Copenhagen at a meeting on spiritual futures, and then again on a plenary together at a meeting in New Delhi, India in 1992 on Sarkar's contribution to spiritual and social transformation. Our last meeting was in Turku, Finland at a world futures studies federation conference on "Coherence and Chaos in Our Uncommon Futures," where we discussed spiritual perspectives of chaos theory. Committed to more than discussion, Rudreshananda taught a meditation class at the quiet room on the conference site. In addition to his strong academic credentials, Rudreshananda practices a special type of meditation that uses microvita to enhance inner and outer well-being. This makes him rare in that not only does he live his future but the future lives in him. Meeting him you sense this man has discovered something unique that could potentially transform the future of humanity.

As you read this piece, first read it through the eyes of the writer, attempt to enter his categories, his view of reality.

- (1) Then ask yourself what are the implications of the Microvita worldview? How would health, institutional religions, day-to-day life be transformed? How might your life be transformed if microvita theory became the accepted paradigm.
- (2) How would the microvita revolution impact on Hancock's and Bezold's health/medicine scenarios?
- (3) How do you think traditional scientists would react to Rudreshananda?
- (4) Relate Rudreshananda's work to Sheldrake's as well as Willis Harmon's work at the Institute of Noetic Science. Would Darwin's theory of evolution have to be reconsidered?
- (5) Now use your own categories. What seems unbelievable in microvita theory? What is its doxa, its own unstated assumptions?

7. Tony Judge,
"Envisioning Conferencing: aesthetics of governance." Research Paper. Union of International Associations, Brussels, Belgium, January 1995.

Tony Judge is a transplanted Australian living in Belgium. I first read his work in the late 1970's and was stunned at the depth of discourse. He wasn't merely interested in starting a new social movement, or glorifying a particular ideology. Rather his concern was how the design of our social and institutional structures impoverish us. Borrowing from Buckminster Fuller, Judge suggests we need organisational designs which use tension and disagreement to create higher levels of efficacy, of, paradoxically enough, unity. Instead of trying to straitjacket the future, we need metaphors that liberate. For example, instead of the organisational pyramid, why not the sphere? Instead of one-way models of truth, why not the model of traffic, where the desire for different directions is accommodated. Judge borrows from non-Western traditions, such as Jainism and Buddhism where contradictions live side by side and where the real is not true or false but more like onion--with layers upon layers of reality.

This piece by Judge begins to address conferencing of the future, asking how can we make individual and group meetings more productive, more insightful, more joyous, that is, less boring and ineffective. He examines how conference structure, room design, individual positioning all create conditions in which individuals and groups feel defeated, puzzled why the nobler reasons of why they came to meet were not realized. Judge offers us some avenues, some escapes out of these no-exits.

Tony Judge as well does not merely write and then forget about his talk. At a meeting in Budapest on "Linking the Future with the Present" in the governance section, he noticed that the room was structured with fixed chairs. The chairperson demanded to sit up front and control the proceedings. Speakers were thus forced into a formal lecture, question, thank you and goodbye role. Tony immediately contested this structure. The Chair of course was insulted and was unable to see that how we had organised ourselves would not lead to a discussion on rethinking governance. He mocked our efforts to transform the social and cultural milieux. As expected, the meeting was a disaster except in the mind of the Chairperson.

However, Tony has not given up in his efforts to transform the metaphors that we live by, that create the possibility of "us." I consider his work among the most valuable contributions to thinking about the future. If we experimented with his ideas, we would risk a lot, but who needs tired old paradigms anyway? Do you?

1. **How does the title immediately disrupt our conventional understandings of government (the aesthetics of governance)? Develop some similar disruptive strategies in your own work.**
2. **Using Inayatullah's model what type of futures does Judge engage in? Why?**
3. **If we use non-scripted metaphors (from the arts for example) how will we be able to manage the new complexities that arise from these possibilities?**
4. **How does Judge's call for using the methods of dance, art, acting differ from action learning?**
5. **Design a meeting (research paper, dinner, relationship) using Judge's alternative design principles?**
6. **Why are we unable to enter new metaphors? Which metaphors do you construct your reality around? List five. Now comes the hard part. Give five alternative metaphors for the five you have listed. For example if one is: I work five days and then rest on the weekend, how else might you redesign your week (and why choose week as an operating metaphor)?**

SUMMING UP

This second section focused on emerging ideas that might dramatically change how we organise our self, work, play, reality, science, economy as well as these categories themselves. Dator asserts that the natural has always been artificial and thus we must govern evolution, wisely that is. Is this possible? If so, what are some appropriate governance designs, one might ask? McNally and Inayatullah argue that rights are gained through political struggle and that given developments in artificial intelligence and the turn to more spiritual perspectives on what is, robots will soon have legal rights? But will humans? That question is taken up by Chris Jones--Gaia has prior rights to humans, he asserts--who gives us seven scenarios of the future of Gaia. As important as the insights he gives us into our planetary futures is the technique of his scenario writing. Eisler is less focused on scenarios and more on giving us an alternative macrohistory. For her, the pattern of history is multidirectional with linear phases and punctuated equilibrium. But the central variable in her history and thus her future is the shift from dominator to partnership models of gender and social organisation. Stevenson and Lennie agree that a shift is eminent but believe that it is communication technology that is the central variable

in creating this new society. They suggest three practices which will increase the possibility of a "Communicative Age." These are action learning, recovering the lost art of conversation, and involving and revaluing women. Rudreshananda gives us a dramatically different model on how to potentially do this. This is microvita theory, which asserts that the minutest forms of life are both consciousness and matter--they can spread ideas and create technologies. Judge steps back and asks what are the metaphors we use to engage in this discussion. Why is it that when we meet to change the world we use tired meeting designs. He offers new communicative technologies for the future that will transform how it is that we create "we."

Summing up Activity:

Now that you are beginning to feel comfortable in the futures discourse, go out and find five emerging issues that we have not covered (such as the changing structure of world population--younger, urban, non-white, for example). Remember these should be provocative, but you should be able to give logical reasons why you have chosen them, even if you arrive at the emerging issue intuitively. Share them with others in the MA unit.

III. VISIONS OF THE FUTURE

This third section gives us visions of the future outside of conventional constructs of modernity. Without compelling visions of the future, civilisations tend to decline, as Fred Polak has argued in his seminal work, The Image of the Future. Without visions, we are unable to pull ourselves forward, we remain caught in the day-to-day. It is vision perhaps which is the most important contribution of futures studies to society. Visions allow us to imagine the fantastic, to critique the present, and then to create the impossible. Whether for a corporation, a nation, or a community, it is vision that creates the future. Of course there are visions and there are visions. For a vision to succeed it must have legitimacy amongst its interpretive community, it must touch upon the physical (deal with material reality), mental (have some bearing to conventional views of rationality) and spiritual (ennoble people); it must be neither too far into the future (and thus appear utopian, unreachable) nor too near term (and thus be fraught with emotional ego-politics); it must define the role of leadership, the vanguard; and it must be mythical (touching some deep unconscious metaphorical level of what it means to be human and our role in history and future). To succeed, a vision must enable each one of us to transform self and society.

The essays that follow all move in that direction. However, these are not political visions (to get someone elected) rather they give us different variants of the future: some through the visions of other cultures (Sardar), some through scenario writing (Sogolo), and some through historical analysis (Wallerstein). Each one certainly contests the vision we live in.

1. Johan Galtung, "Visioning a Peaceful World," in Glen Paige and Sarah Gilliatt, Buddhism and Nonviolent Global Problem-Solving. Honolulu, Hawaii, Spark Matsunaga Institute for Peace, University of Hawaii, 1991, 35-60.

Johan Galtung is one of the modern founders of the field of futures studies, although he is better known as one of the founders of Peace studies. He is fluent in nine or so languages, winner of the Right Livelihood Award (the alternative noble), and professor at numerous universities. He is most famous for "Structural Theory of Imperialism" and for his work on self-reliant alternative economic development. I've known Galtung for almost two

decades. First, just admiring from a distance, then having him supervise my doctoral dissertation (along with Dator, Shapiro, Stauffer and Bobilin), completing a book with him, and then as a close family friend. I have been amazed by his productivity, willingness to champion causes far before their time, and his personal efforts to develop inner peace. For many academics, as well as global personalities, fame often leads to arrogance. This has not happened to Galtung. He has stayed gentle, inspiring young and old. I hope this piece will inspire you.

This article by him is important in that it does not shy away from questions of national power, disarmament, and violence. Galtung articulates four types of power: military, economic, cultural and political and develops negative and positive peace dimensions for each type of power. He moves up and down layers of social and global space: from the nation-state up to world cosmology, to civilisational cosmology. Borrowing from Buddhism, he gives us an eightfold path for problem-solving. This essay is rich in that it weaves together many aspects needed to create a new global governance system, instead of just focusing on one variable, as most are apt to do. His conclusion is equally inspiring. "Abolition of war is similar to what the people fighting slavery and colonialism, abject exploitation and patriarchy were and are up against. They won or are winning. We live in their utopia, which then proved to be a realistic utopia (eutopia). So is ours: a concrete utopia for peace."

Visions then are very real and decisive factors in transforming history.

Read his essay at least twice. You will be rewarded by the many levels of analysis there.

- (1) **Do you think war can be eliminated? Reduced?**
- (2) **Apply Galtung's model of power to your institution, organisation or family. How do these forms of power circulate? Which dominates in your environment?**
- (3) **Design a world government/governance system. Would you have houses? a world militia? What would be the role of other forms of organisation (communities, etc)?**

2. Sohail Inayatullah, "Sarkar's Spiritual-Dialectics: An Unconventional Vision of the Future," *Futures* (February 1988), 54-65.

While Galtung uses Buddhism for his vision of the future, Sarkar bases his spiritual-technological vision of the future on Tantra. Sarkar lived from 1921-1990 and was the controversial founder of Ananda Marga, a social spiritual movement. Sarkar spent seven years in prison for his beliefs and fasted on a glass of milk plus vitamins for most of his time in jail. After a change in government in India, he was released.

I wrote my doctorate dissertation on him, comparing him to grand thinkers from Sinic, Western, Islamic and Indic traditions, concluding that he ranks as one of the most important thinkers and activists in history. I met him in 1989 when I spent a week at his centre in Calcutta. His intellectual genius was matched by his spiritual presence. He radiated warmth and light. Nothing disturbed him, nothing bothered him, but this does not mean he was passive. He was fearless and committed to transforming not only India but the world.

This essay outlines his social and spiritual philosophy. What is unique about Sarkar's social movements is that they have never shied away from laying bare exploitation, they are not yuppie new age spiritual movements. However, his vision is not about electoral politics either, it is about personal transformation, social service to the needy, and about developing a new form of leadership, the sadvipra. A sadvipra is a wise leader who serves other, is courageous, has developed his or her intellect/intuition, and is innovative--thus blending worker, warrior, intellectual and entrepreneurial types of activity and power.

Finally, Sarkar's vision of the future, while fundamentally spiritual, sees technology as potentially a positive factor. He does not desire to return to romantic pasts. Indeed, since his theory of history is cyclical, there is no need to go back, the past will reappear soon enough. However, in addition, to history, there is human agency. It is humans who must act to change oppressive conditions, thus creating a progressive evolutionary spiral. As with Galtung, Sarkar is incredibly optimistic writing that: "I know that a gloriously brilliant chapter will also come after the endless reproach and humiliation of the neglected humanity of today." We should expect no less from a vision.

- (1) **How does Sarkar's vision differ from Galtung's. What are their points of agreement?**
- (2) **Contrast Dator's view with Sarkar's view of social and spiritual governance? Are they similar?**
- (3) **Is Sarkar's vision only appropriate for India or does it have universal applicability?**
- (4) **Do you feel that the future will be as positive as Sarkar envisions it will be?**
- (5) **Will capitalism collapse, transform, or continue as it is?**

3. **Z i a**
Sardar, "Asian Cultures: Between Programmed and Desired Futures," in Eleonora Masini and Yogesh Atal, The Futures of Asian Cultures. Bangkok, Unesco, 1993, 37-56.

Zia Sardar is known for his caustic wit more than any spiritual qualities. For Zia, there are already too many people trying to be spiritual and not enough who are tough, critical, and say what they think (and when no one is looking help others). Zia, however, does. When others are too polite to criticize a terrible speech or a less than brilliant article, Zia does not shy away. At one conference, where the organisers had put more emphasis on the briefcases that participants were to receive than the actual content of the meetings, he stood up and, in front of the entire audience, let the organisers know that they represented the tragedy of the present and the future. Zia does not tolerate mediocrity, nor does he create any himself.

Sardar, perhaps more than anyone else, has been the leader of the renaissance in Islamic intellectual thought, of the project of rescuing Islamic epistemology from tyrants, modernists, and political opportunists. In a dozen plus books, Zia has managed to spell out what the world would be like if it followed the original message of Islam, the Islamic paradigm. However, he is not after any new believers. He argues that there is enough to do internally in Islamic civilisation. It must be revitalised from within and of course from without, saved from the reductionist, materialistic, patriarchal, hierarchical, violent values of Western science and secularism.

Choosing an essay from Zia has not been an easy task as he has written so much. The essay included was part of a larger UNESCO project on the futures of cultures. Zia's essay, as the title tells us, is about the tension between the future given to us and the futures we might desire. The future we are given to us is the postmodern culture of style, of simulcra, of the commodification of self and spirit, of the consumption of the soul, and the cannibalization of the Other, of the non-West. More important than the suffocating past and the fragmented present (fossilized alternatives and the Singaporization of Asia) that the non-West lives under, are desired futures. For Sardar these must be systematically planned and created. In his preferred future, Sardar stresses cultural autonomy, the creation of a non-Western science, and seeing the self not through the eyes of the Other but through Asian paradigms, through more authentic historical cultural categories. Asian cultures to survive must embrace and transform their histories, otherwise they will become even more diminished than they are now.

- (1) Do you believe your future is programmed by external forces? how about your culture's future?
- (2) Analyse the frames Sardar uses to talk about culture: the postmodern, the modern and the historical. What is your definition of culture?
- (3) Which of the three programmed scenarios do you think is most likely (more of the same; fossilization of alternatives; and balkinisation) for Asia? Are these relevant to your interpretative community (whether nation, family, business or educational institution)?
- (4) Do you think desired futures are created through such rational, planning methods as Sardar suggests or are there other forces at work (the mythical, the metaphorical, leadership, for example)? Make a list of the factors needed to create desired futures?
- (5) Sardar also works for BBC as a interviewer and director. See if you can find his "Faces of Islam" at your local library. Look through some of the segments.

4. Godwin

Sogolo, "Scenarios on the Futures of Africa," Paper Presented to the UNESCO Meeting on the Futures of Cultures, Bangkok, February, 1993.

Godwin Sogolo is a philosopher and Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Sogolo manages to be a futurist and philosopher in a situation where the present is often urgent, where decisions are made not with an eye to the needs of future African generations but with the blinded gaze of the political expediency of the present. For this alone, he should have our respect.

Sogolo's essay, also input into the UNESCO Futures of Cultures project, reminds us that without an understanding of the colonial constraints of history, futures studies is mere fantasy. Sogolo gives us three scenarios: the first is the assimilation of African culture by Western civilisation (through military, political, economic and cultural imperialism). This he believes is not only undesirable but unlikely given the strength of core African culture. The second scenario is a reversion to past glories through cultural revivalism. While this is an important strategy to recover dignity, it is impossible given the pervasiveness of science, technology and globalism--Africans can never go home again. Sogolo then gives us a third scenario, his preferred alternative: Continuity-in-change. In this vision, Africa absorbs globalism but without damaging the essence of African identity. Through the examples of religion and medicine he shows us how this might be possible.

- (1) Compare Sogolo's scenarios with that of Sardar's. Are their desired futures similar?
- (2) Will globalism allow Continuity-in-change or is it too late? Are the processes of westernisation so deep that the only future is continued colonialisation.
- (3) Will Africa create futures beyond poverty, borrowing models perhaps not from the West but from other traditions?
- (4) What are some specific strategies that flow out of Sogolo's preferred scenario?
- (5) Watch the insightful documentary, The Africans by Ali Mazuri.

5. Immanuel Wallerstein, "World System and Civilisation," *Development* (1/2, 1986), 114-119.

For Immanuel Wallerstein, the problem with much of forecasting and historicising is that our unit of analysis is incorrect. We focus on nations or individuals or even communities instead of examining the larger economic/cultural/political system. Wallerstein is founder of world systems theory (borrowing from Braudel), one of the most important theoretical constructs to appear in the last few decades.

Wallerstein marshalls impressive evidence to argue that we live in an integrated world economic system, capitalist in nature with a hierarchal international division of labor, which originated in the 15th century. Historically, there have been only three types of systems: mini-systems (or cultural systems), world-empires and world-economies. The fifteenth century saw the end of a world-empire and the beginning of a world-economy, in which the definition of civilised became based on the core center of the capitalist world economy--Europe.

Problems with socialist visions of the future or any vision of the future are that they assume some type of national or communal or cultural sovereignty, thus believing that by capturing State power, social and economic transformation will be possible. But the predominance of capitalist exchange relations makes this impossible. The only realistic vision however is not the continuation of the world capitalist system (which he regards as fundamentally flawed since it cannot deal with world poverty but only with the accumulation of capital) but its total transformation. The carriers of the future system, for Wallerstein, are the anti-systemic social movements, those committed to not merely capturing State power or economic power, but to transforming the entire structure.

This is a challenging essay, to be read at least twice, if not more. Wallerstein has a vision of the future--although not too well spelled out--that emerges from the historical economic structures. The challenge is to create a system that is both complex and egalitarian, not complex and exploitive.

I heard Wallerstein speak in the 1980's when he gave a series of lectures on historical capitalism at the University of Hawaii. Whether or not you agree or disagree with his vision, the central point is that the complex systems view he gives us allows us to see why most strategies (sovereignty, values) cannot work since they do not transform the system as whole. Brilliant stuff.

- (1) How does Wallerstein relate technology, economic systems, and individual choice?
- (2) What are the alternative futures ahead based on his model?
- (3) Use his theory of three systems and apply it to your own organisational structures? That is, use systems thinking to better understand the cultural (mini-systems), the political (world-empires), and the economic (world-economy).
- (4) What is lacking or missing in his analysis?

6. Sohail

Inayatullah, "Framing the Time and Shape of the Future: A Post-Development Vision of the Future," in Rick Slaughter, ed., The Knowledge Base of Futures Studies. Melbourne, DDM Media and Futures Study Centre, 1995.

This essay is less concerned about giving a specific vision and more about providing a set of criteria of what is needed for efficacious models and visions of the future. To do this, I first examine the basic shapes of the future: the linear, the cyclical and the spiral as well as the cultural ontologies that underlie them. Next I map the metaphors of time, examining how different cultures construct time, arguing that scientific and modern time is only one way of "timing" the world. Visions of the future outside modernity and postmodernity must elaborate different temporal spaces: timeless spiritual time, lunar time, seasonal time, for example. Central to cultural autonomy is recovering how a civilisation "timed" the world. The last part of this essay examines how the paradigm of development has reinscribed linear, State-based, technocratic, and social Darwinian discourses on to the body of visions of the future. The characteristics of a post-development vision are offered: (1) spiral, (2) ecologically sensitive, (3) gender cooperation, (4) growth and distribution, (5) epistemologically pluralistic, (6) diverse organisational structures, (7) reintegration of the transcendental, (8) the individual in the context of the collective and (9) a balance between agency and structure, possibility and history.

This criteria is contextualised around three concepts: (1) prama, or dynamic balance, (2) neo-humanism that transcends traditional humanistic ethics and (3) a progressive use of resources and capabilities.

- (1) Categorize earlier authors (Galtung, Sarkar, Sardar, Sogolo, Wallerstein) along the models given in terms of the shape (linear, cyclical, spiral) and time of the future they use.
- (2) Are there additional points to the nine given which you believe are necessary for a post-development vision of the future? or do you believe a post-development vision of the future is not necessary?
- (4) How would your economic locality, region or nation look different if these nine principles as well as the three organising concepts were used?
- (4) Do you think time is socially constructed/culturally relative or do you believe that there is still some type of foundational, universal time?
- (5) Why does Inayatullah keep on using his essays in this Reader? Is it ego, or are they actually developing the knowledge base of futures studies?

7. Ashis Nandy, "Evaluating Utopias," in Tradition, Tyranny and Utopias. Delhi, Oxford, 1987, 1-19.

This essay by Ashis Nandy does not give another vision of the future, rather he seeks to examine the costs of visioning the future. Nandy's fear is that the utopia of today will become the nightmare of tomorrow. For Ashis, too often our utopias (such as Marxism or liberalism) are closed system, seeing the other through their own blinded eyes and not allowing a conversation with and between other cultures and utopias. For Ashis, utopias allow easy entry but no easy escapeways out of their structure. We can enter a vision of the future but rarely are escapeways built so that we can exit.

Ashis Nandy is a fellow and director of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in Delhi, a research institution which has quickly come to be recognized as one of the leading centres in the world of third world critical theory. Ashis has attempted to develop a theory of critical traditionalism as an antidote to the irrationality of progress, of the science and technology revolution. While not a Gandhian, for Nandy, Gandhi was the critic par excellence, not of technology, but of the hopelessness, the fatigue, and the neurosis of modern life.

Ashis' research, as a psychologist, has ranged from books on the Tao of Cricket, where he unravelled the relationship between colonialism, sports and morality to The Intimate Enemy where he explored how we internalise our enemy.

I met Ashis Nandy in Hawaii in 1984 while I was helping out with a world futures studies federation conference on "Hawaii in the Global Futures." Since then we have met numerous times and I have heard many of his speeches. At a Barcelona conference on the futures of democracy, he began not by addressing the audience but by addressing the city itself, seeing Barcelona as a rightful living participant in the conference. Whilst a jet-setter, Ashis remains fundamentally local and Indian. Wherever one sees him, he is rarely in the Conference or meeting hall, rather, he is having tea, gupshupping (an urdu term meaning talking story or having a good time with his mates) in the cafeteria. For Ashis, it is through these conversations that one learns about the Other, not through the more formal proceedings. Whenever he see you, he will say, "let us sit down and talk," whether on a chair or on the grass outside the conference hall. Every time I meet Ashis I know I will learn a lot, not in terms of new maps of the future or in terms of scenarios but in terms of how I think. A recent piece of his says it all when he reminds us that Coca-Cola is a way of

thinking not merely a thought--whether we develop a national coca-cola as Indians and Yugoslavs attempted, or compete with Coca-Cola (as Pepsi has done) or prefer fruit juice (the health alternative) it is still Coke that frames our thinking. The paradox of modernity becomes his central point in analysing visions of the future. He asks: Do these visions liberate or do they close the future? Do they allow conversations with other futures or are they closed systems?

As you read Nandy's piece, use his questions to analyse the visions given:

- (1) Do they allow pathways out? Are they open enough to allow new futures to emerge?**
- (2) Have the contradictions been resolved or have contradictions been allowed to creatively generate new possibilities?**
- (3) Will the visions you have begun to create liberate only yourself and become the nightmares of others'? have you designed pathways out of your vision. Have the visions shown in this Reader allowed escapes?**
- (4) Do you think utopias can have conversations with each other?**
- (5) In what way is futures studies itself a hegemonic discourse that in fact does not open the future but closes it. If so, what are the reasons to continue studying the future?**

Sohail

Inayatullah, "Annotated Futures Bibliography," The Communication Centre, Queensland University of Technology, January 1995.

This bibliography contains my favourite books. It is meant to help you in your search for additional material in the field. I encourage you to make your own annotated bibliography as you venture onwards.

- (1) What are the assumptions and values contained in this bibliography?
- (2) What would be your assumptions if you did one?

SUMMING UP

This section examined visions of the futures from different cultural perspectives. Borrowing from Buddhism, Galtung offered us a design for global governance. Using indigenous Indian philosophy, Tantra, Sarkar gave us a spiritual-technological spiral vision of the future predicated on a new type of leadership. Sardar, borrowing from Islamic epistemology, offers us a desired vision for the future of Asian cultures, a vision that must be actively planned and created lest the programmed vision come to be, thereby diminishing the Asian self. Sogolo offers us three scenarios of Africa's future: assimilation by the West, cultural revivalism and his preferred: Continuity-in-change. The first he does not believe will come about because of the strength of core African culture, the second is useful as strategy to achieve cultural autonomy but it does not adequately deal with globalism. The third is the most likely and for Sogolo, his preferred vision. Using world systems theory, Wallerstein gives us alternative futures to that of world capitalism: one is a break up into mini-systems which he believes will be unlikely save for a nuclear war; the second is a transformation into a different type of global system, ideally one that is global, pluralistic and egalitarian where one civilisation does not impose its views of what it means to be civilized on others. This is his hope with the carriers being the global family of social movements. But it might be that the present will just continue, making life for a few wonderful, but for most terrible. Inayatullah examines the shape and time of the future, offering a criteria for a post-development vision of the future as well as the central concepts in such a vision. Ashis Nandy, less concerned with giving a new vision, than with ensuring that current visions do not lead to tyranny, asks us to demand that we assure that all visions allow conversations with other utopias, that points of entry and departure be made safe, so that we do not continue to brutalize the Other in the name of yet another utopia.

By now you are full-fledged futurists or have decided that the futures discourse does not offer anything new, that incremental decisionmaking is more appropriate than long term visioning. If you are the latter, even as we live day to day it is visions that keep us alive, that pull society forward, that create new myths. If you have been seduced into the futures discourse above, then I hope you will continue to find other entry points into the future and to remember that the best way to predict the future is to create it.

Remember those questions that I asked you at the beginning of this unit. Try answering them again.

- (1) How do you envision your future in the next five years? Thirty? Are you positive or negative about your future?
- (2) How do you envision the future of the world in the next five years? Thirty? Be as specific as possible? For example, are you positive or negative about the world's future?
- (3) Are these your preferred images or probable images? That is, do you think they will happen or are these visions you want to happen?

But the important task is the following:

Design your vision of the future. What would the polity look like, the economy, the role of women, for example. Write it in such a way that you would want to live in that future. It is easy to write dystopias or utopias (a no-place or perfect place) but much harder to create eutopias (good possible places). What are the escapeways out of your design? Write it as a scenario from the first person or draw it if you prefer. As much as possible bring in the theories and methods from the first section, the emerging issues from the second section, and the visions offered from the third.

Good luck in
your future
futures activities.

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