

Beyond the Mundane – Towards Post-Conventional Futures Practice

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Abstract

This essay suggests that the futures field has reached a new stage in its development; one that incorporates powerful new tools, frameworks and options. Within this context the paper considers some of the ways that futurists can respond to the global predicament, re-defining what some have called the "resolutique", or arena of possible solutions. Futurists can best contribute by deliberately cultivating 'post conventional' futures practice. The underlying theme of the paper is to consider what it may mean to 'wake up' at the cultural level.

1. Responding to the global predicament

Understanding the past

As all competent futurists know, understanding the present is a *sine qua non* of understanding anything about the future. In turn, to understand the present absolutely requires an historical perspective of some depth. Here is one reason why Futures Studies (FS) in general can be genuinely demanding. One necessarily must be prepared to seek knowledge and insight from many different fields, not merely one or two of them. Furthermore, history understood as facts about the past (my favourite definition of history is "lies about crimes") is relatively unhelpful. You have to get much further into historiography, structuralism, macrohistory and the like to have any chance of really understanding why we live in *this* world, *this* present, rather than all the other multitudinous alternatives that once were possible. So "understanding the past" is not a simple proposition. It is challenging and time-consuming. Better, then, to for-

get the past and just "wing it" from the present, start from today? No, not at all.

If we look back very carefully we can draw insight from a range of sources to gain depth knowledge of the present. I'll briefly mention four. The first is Jared Diamond's attempt to sketch a broad macrohistory of humanity's rise from the distant evolutionary past. His key works draw on many diverse fields to sketch the lines of development, the overshoot and collapse that occurred where local environmental limits were exceeded, the fall and rise of civilisations according to cultural and contingent biological and environmental factors. A second is Jean Gebser's account of stages of interior cultural development. Gebser draws our attention to the underlying patterns of shared consciousness and understanding that make worldviews and cultures possible. He described five broad stages: archaic, magical, mythical, mental and integral. The latter, he stressed, was neither widespread nor certain. He saw it as moving

beyond the mental (rational, intellectual) stage and possibly foreshadowing a more integrated and holistic *modus operandi*. A third approach is to map the interior spaces of individual human development, as has been done by many stage development theorists over the past century or so. This has been accomplished through such disciplines as psychoanalysis, phenomenology, introspective psychology and meditative practice by people as diverse as Freud, Jung, Piaget and Aurobindo. Finally we can glean yet more insight from an understanding of our own individual evolutionary heritage as mirrored, for example, by the "triune human brain" with its instinctual (or reptilian) stem, its "feeling" limbic system and its highly developed cognitive cerebral hemispheres. Simply put, we'll understand the very different evolutionary contributions provided by instinct, feeling and cognition.

Viewed thus – as a complex many-dimensional process – the "waking up" metaphor takes on new meaning. It does not, indeed it cannot, mean a once-only shift from "sleeping" to "waking". In the view taken here, humanity is only part way through an immensely long historical process of slowly "waking up", ie, becoming more conscious, more capable, more integrated. One immediate implication is that, much as we might wish for it, there is simply no prospect of a decisive "breakthrough" to a new and permanent "state of grace", either individually or socially. It follows that there is no single "shift to sustainability", nor is there likely to be what Raskin et al optimistically call a "great transition". Part of our maturing as a species, and as a field of enquiry and action, is to understand our evolutionary background so that our efforts are informed by structural realities, rather than convenient, but culturally partial, fictions.

It follows that, in this context, "waking up" can mean something like "moving on to the next stage". Even that turns out to be no simple matter because there are vital differences between "translation" (re-arranging existing elements) and "transformation" (moving to new levels).¹ At minimum the "waking up" metaphor directs our attention to areas of uneven development in the world, developmental pathologies and processes of integration and growth. I

will comment on each of these very briefly.

Beyond one-sided futures work

In the last fifty or so years FS itself followed a path of increasing integration and development. First there were many attempts to perfect the technique of forecasting. Over time the technique was largely abandoned by futurists – in my view because it "fell silent" when confronted with the human predicament. It was, however, widely adopted in very many instrumental contexts where it remains in wide use. Next came the exploration of divergence in the forward view, mostly through scenarios (which then, as now, were highly successful in ideal conditions and greatly over-hyped, over-used, elsewhere). We then saw the rise of critical FS followed, as I will suggest below, by other developments. While there were always dissenters to this pattern (de Jouvenel, Jungk, Nandy et al.), these earlier stages were preoccupied with understanding and tracking changes in the world "out there". In so doing futures workers overlooked – as many continue to overlook – the very means through which they could know anything at all! That is, the world "in here". This tendency was greatly reinforced by unregarded cultural commitments that had, over three hundred years, repressed the "inner" and pretended that everything and everyone could be reduced to the "flatland" exteriors favoured by empirical science.

The so-called "critical turn" in FS re-focused attention upon the hitherto overlooked interiors, specifically to vital processes of social construction and social legitimation, of the uses and misuses of power, of the underlying dynamics of the entire social world. This arguably lent new strength and forcefulness to well-grounded (ie, critically grounded) futures work. It meant, for example, that processes of meaning making and loss of meaning, of innovation and conflict, could be understood and engaged in much more consciously and purposefully than hitherto. That, indeed, is partly why the T-cycle method was developed. It also meant that work that continued to ignore or overlook the cultural interiors steadily lost credibility.

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It is now clear that we have reached a point where FS has taken yet another significant step forward. In the first section above I drew attention to four domains of development: inner individual, inner collective, external individual and external collective. In turn, each of these domains engages the knowledge and insight of stage development theorists, cultural historians, empirical studies of the human being and empirical accounts of external societal development. These four perspectives are of great value to Futurists and foresight practitioners. They map directly onto the Wilberian four-quadrant model that provides a rich metaperspective that both advances the futures "game" and, at the same time, decisively changes its character. I will shortly illustrate how this occurs. But first, a caveat is due. While new metaperspectives are welcome, they should not be elevated into new orthodoxies. Since all such frameworks both reveal and conceal aspects of the world at the same time, they should each be used for what they reveal and set aside when their inevitable limits are reached.

Seeking depth understanding

A great deal of well-meaning effort has been fruitlessly expended in attempts to understand and solve global issues on the basis of partial understandings and radically limited approaches. It has been lost on the directors of ambitious Futures projects, on UN officials and NGOs alike that "world problems" simply cannot be understood, let alone resolved, on the level at which they are first presented or understood. Nor can the "exterior" of development (terrorism, war, poverty, infrastructure, real living conditions) be improved without deep prior understanding of the human and cultural "interiors" (individual and collective values, ideologies, formations of power and capital). Here are a couple of examples.

Scenario building has been seen for some time as a kind of central "keystone" methodology in the Futures / Foresight domain. But scenarios are only as good as the thinking that goes into them. Most, in my view, are based on inadequate thinking and superficial knowledge. A case in point is the oft-discussed Mont Fleur

scenarios constructed in South Africa. Among those who have written about them is Adam Kahane who states that:

"The Mont Fleur project contributed to the building of a common language for talking across groups about the opportunities and challenges facing the country. This shared understanding ... eventually helped lead to the unprecedented 'miraculous' transition from minority to majority rule in 1994."

But, with a background in Spiral Dynamics Integral (SDI), Don Beck looked at the situation quite differently and also reached different conclusions. From his perspective the participants in the scenario process were operating out of "different worlds of reference". The failure to understand and deal with this "inner" dimension meant that, according to Beck, "the scenario process in South Africa (has) failed in that they did not prepare the society for what was going to happen". Crucially, he adds "my key point is (that) until scenarios deal with the realities of the interiors, along with an understanding of natural habitats, then they will be useless and even dangerous."¹²

Mark Edwards is an integral scholar who has both used and critiqued the four quadrant model and especially Wilber's use of holons. (A holon is a whole and a part of any entity.) He discusses "evolutionary" dynamics (basically the drive to grow, develop, dominate) and a corresponding set of "involutionary" dynamics (the need to integrate, stabilise and sustain). Using this approach he discusses three global developmental pathologies. These are:

- the bias towards a progressive, growth obsessed ... worldview which dominates everything;
- a valuing of the individual and personal freedoms, rights, and responsibilities over and above collective freedoms, rights and responsibilities; and
- an extreme emphasis on a material, external worldview of life and knowledge and a widespread neglect or even denial of the interior dimensions of life and knowledge.

Edwards is able to draw some powerful insights from this "integral developmental"

approach. For example "ultra-technologies have already reached a point of transcendental objectivism that is no longer interested in the health of the subject but only in the emergence of new objects of power for their own sake." Here is a very clear message for the so-called "transhumanists" and any others who would uncritically swallow their fantasies of immortality and power. Edwards stresses the need for "integrally informed" responses to these pathologies. For example, in relation to hyper-materialism, he is clear that the solution is not "some abstract spiritualism but cultural identity and respect for the culture of others". And for Futurists: "our interpreting, visioning and planning of the future must also accommodate the interior spectrum of consciousness, morality, creativity, and interpersonal being if it is to make a healthy contribution to our common future".

The overall significance of these examples could not be clearer. Solutions to global pathologies will not be found through work that ignores the interiors. Rather, the grounds of solutions will emerge through depth understanding, a balance between inner and outer domains and the growth and application of integrally informed futures work.

Clearing the fog

In teaching about social and strategic foresight at the Australian Foresight Institute I have often reflected on the need to "clear the fog" of conventional understanding as a necessary first step to becoming an effective foresight practitioner. Otherwise one is simply playing with, and shuffling, the conventionally known, superficial "frozen" views of power and the "way things are". Then I realised that there was an even simpler way of highlighting the issue. That is, to distinguish between pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional work. Briefly, the former involves the process of "learning the ropes", becoming socialised, competent and qualified in a chosen area. At the conventional stage one has "arrived". One is able to work effectively within a pre-given social or professional environment and is able to solve the routine problems for which the existing culture has solutions. *The drawback to convention-*

al work, however, is that it is immersed in social processes that it cannot see and from which it cannot extricate itself. It has little or no reflexivity or critical "distance". Hence powerfully shaping social, cultural, organisational and value dynamics (for example) all remain "hidden", out of sight.

Post conventional work explores very different territory (and is explored further below). It consciously sees the self as both a product of, and emergent from, the social order. The latter is clearly constructed, partial and certainly problematic in very many respects. Nothing can be taken for granted. Here there is vast openness that, on the one hand, can land one in the misery of existential angst or, on the other, open up one's entire being to a universe of deep significance and rich possibility.

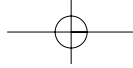
That, in a nutshell, is why we can say that "conventional thinking is thinly disguised power". That is also why routine, conventional futures (what I call "problem oriented" work) is marginally useful at a taken-for-granted social level but unhelpful at more advanced levels. It solves small problems, keeps the wheels turning, but is counter-productive when it comes to dealing with a deeply divided and threatened world. Put simply, it plays with trifles and misses the main game altogether.

Integral futures

At the beginning of Mark Edwards' paper on global pathologies he refers to a central feature of our present world. He writes:

one increasingly pervasive and almost immobilising aspect of life at the beginning of the 21st century is the feeling that the immensely powerful forces which are shaping the social and natural environments of the globe are now out of control of any governing entity.

This is undoubtedly how many people, especially young people, feel. Taken at this particular level of "problem description" there is simply no solution in sight. If our "ways of seeing" are conventional then we will not be able to figure our way out. The global context is a trap for humanity, a civilisational end game. The fact is, however, that "conventional" approaches



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to world issues within FS have barely scratched the surface. Moreover, in this brief overview, "post conventional" has itself been used as a simple label to point toward more the more fruitful areas of understanding and action that are now beginning to emerge. Beyond it, especially in the upper left hand (inner individual) quadrant, lie powers and capacities that have thus far not been seriously considered in the restricted frame of earlier futures work. Yet without venturing very far, it is clear that integral futures brings new gifts to the futures domain. They include:

- a balancing of inner and outer perspectives;
- multiple and yet systematic views of our species' history and development;
- access to the dynamics of social construction, innovation and "deep design";
- aspects of the "deep structures" of more advanced civilisations;
- a new focus on the detailed development of the practitioner (not merely his or her cognitive ability, but other stages, lines etc);
- an "integral operating system" (IOS) and "integral methodological pluralism" (IMP).³

Briefly, the IOS is a way of looking at quadrants, lines, levels, states and stages – all of which are descriptors of aspects of human beings and their world that bring new levels of clarity and integration. The point, however, is not to advance along all states, stages, lines etc. Rather, as mentioned above, it is to seek to be "integrally informed". That is, to understand one's own development in the context of others. Integral Methodological Pluralism is certainly a bit of a mouthful. It is also an approach to adjudicating different knowledge claims from different domains and areas of enquiry. Essentially it provides one way of resolving many of the "paradigm wars" that have plagued so many fields, including ours, in these post modern times.

Futurists and foresight practitioners need access to these new tools, perspectives and

capacities. Like any other tool kit, they are not the whole picture. They too will change, develop and be replaced over time with others. Yet even at this early stage they bestow potent new gifts upon this domain and its hard-pressed practitioners: depth insight, practical wisdom and a durable foundation for productive work.

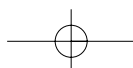
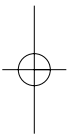
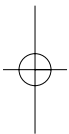
2. Aspects of post conventional futures studies / foresight

The notion of "waking up" has many rich implications. One of them is the clear need to deliberately and patiently critique the current world order. Here the metaphor has been used to outline some suggestions for how futures / foresight practitioners can themselves "move on" both internally (with respect to their own development) and externally (in terms of post-conventional futures work). I've suggested that conventional approaches to world issues within FS have barely scraped the surface. We now turn to an overview of work in progress. That is, work that seeks to be both post-conventional and integrally informed.

What does post-conventional mean?

To be conventional is to operate within pre-defined boundaries according to clearly defined rules using well-known ideas and methods. The bulk of futures work in the world is conventional. It serves well-known needs and clients. It operates in familiar territory: corporations, planning departments, consultancies, government agencies and the like. Conventional practitioners will most likely have a degree, or equivalent experience and a certain amount of training in futures methods such as Delphi, trend analysis and scenarios. They also tend to have a near exclusive focus on the "exterior collective" domain (in integral terms the lower right, or LR, quadrant). *One of the hallmarks of conventional futures work is that it overlooks the interiors.*

On the other hand, post-conventional practitioners in any field clearly understand that the entire external world is mediated constantly by inner structures of meaning and significance, and always has been. Therefore objective accounts of the world are impossible (even within the so-called "hard" sciences). Rather, all



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are situated in subtle but powerful networks that are socially constructed and legitimated over long periods of time. Clearly, therefore, post-conventional work demands more of the practitioner. It means, for example, that a concern with "ways of knowing" becomes unavoidable. Yet I have always maintained that what is lost in naivety is gained in depth knowledge and profound insight – not merely into the currently changing social order but to its possible futures as well.

For many years it felt like an up-hill struggle to show how Critical Futures Studies (CFS) contributes to the development of FS as disciplined enquiry. But over time the penny has dropped and many more people are seeing for themselves how depth insight into the social order provides us with powerful new tools. Despite a recently disappointing book Jay Olgivy summarised the evidence for this view over a decade ago better than anyone else before or since. Yet this was still only a beginning.

Post-conventional, integrally informed, futures

A further step was to begin to correlate different approaches and methods in FS / Foresight work with a deep appreciation of the individual interiors (or upper left, UL) quadrant. One approach was through "spiral dynamics", based on the work of Clare Graves. It depicted a nested series of human operating systems that, as suggested in Part two, provide clues to what is going on "under the surface". The approach can be used as a guide to individual and social interiors but it is not immune to critique and is by no means the only option. In fact there are a number of "stage development" theorists who provide a variety of insights into over twenty distinct "lines" of development in human beings. This means that we can gain greater clarity about our own "ways of knowing", our preferences, strengths, blind spots etc, as well as those of others. Why are these developments significant?

In the first place, they remind us that "successful practice" (whatever that means to different people in different places) is not merely a matter of taking a course or two and mastering

one or more conventional FS techniques. *One of the great discoveries of integral futures work is that it is levels of development within the practitioner that, more than anything else, determine how well (or badly) any particular methodology will be used or any practical task will be performed.* In one sense this is obvious. A naive practitioner will always get inferior results when compared with a practitioner with in-depth personal and professional knowledge. On the other hand, how many professional training programs focus on the interiors at all? There is clearly a major imbalance here that needs to be corrected. Current practice lags a long way behind what we now know to be possible.

Second, we can now see why the earlier tendency to focus on a practitioner's cognitive development and instrumental skill was misleading. To be a success in any field demands far, far more than "mere" cognitive ability and technical competence (as Peter Hayward's work – summarised below – demonstrates). For example, ethical, communicative and interpersonal lines of development are equally vital to the "well rounded" practitioner.

Third, if we see the professional development of practitioners as seeking a balance between "inner" and "outer" factors, we'll be open to the idea of a new relationship between "futures literacy" (in-depth futures understanding) and "futures strategy" (timely and effective action in the world). Moreover "depth" will no longer be synonymous with "academic", "theoretical" or "obscure" (though it can be any or all of these things in the wrong hands). Rather, depth will be seen as one of the main keys to individual and disciplinary development.

The Integral Operating System (IOS) is not for everyone.⁴ Those who do elect to understand and use it will find that the overview it provides of quadrants, waves, lines or streams, states, types and perspectives open up all sorts of options. In time research will reveal some of the combinations of qualities that, it can be argued, help to make a "good futurist" or an effective foresight practitioner. At this stage, however, the key point is to work to become "integrally informed". That means becoming familiar with the Integral perspective and the

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most useful aspects of the IOS. I'm well aware that some of these suggestions may appear challenging, to say the least. So it is useful to consider four specific examples of post-conventional futures work.

3. Post-conventional futures / foresight in practice

Wynberg – integral macrohistory

Andrew Wynberg is a graduate student at the Australian Foresight Institute and, as such, is among the first practitioners to have been trained in Integral Futures / Foresight methods from the outset. His paper on *Using an Integral Perspective to Reconceptualise Macrohistory* reviews the latter as it has been applied to FS by Inayatullah and Galtung. He pays tribute to the way these writers use macrohistory to question dominant perspectives and to bring into play different worldviews, and worldview assumptions, from other cultures. He then views the work of macrohistorians through the lens of the IOS (that is, through lines, streams, states, types etc). One of his conclusions is that "most macro-historical theories do not integrate causes from more than one of the four quadrants". Another is that all but two of those reviewed appear to be operating at the level of mind. (The exceptions are Steiner and de Chardin who are alert to the spiritual development of humankind.) He then comments on some other aspects.

Following the cognitive line as described by Piaget, at least "formop" thinking is required although I suspect that a higher level, perhaps "dynamic relativism" is required to grasp issues across different civilisations. For the moral line, as described by Kohlberg, attainment of the principles of (the) "conscience" level is a necessary precondition for macrohistory to be produced. For the self line, as described by Loveinger, an "autonomous" level of development is required in order to step outside the bounds of what the society of the macrohistorian may have placed on their thinking.

In other words, by considering macrohistory through the lens of the IOS, Wynberg is able to "interrogate the interiors" of this body of

work in sufficient depth both to diagnose some current weaknesses and further develop its strengths for application in a futures context.

Rushkoff – open source democracy

Douglas Rushkoff would not claim to be a Futurist as such, rather an informed commentator on "cyberculture" and the internet. In a paper published by the UK "think tank" Demos, Rushkoff tackles the issue of open source democracy. He discusses three steps in the development of information era autonomy: "deconstruction of content, demystification of technology and finally do-it-yourself or participatory authorship". This is part of a "second Renaissance".

The first Renaissance took us from the position of passive recipient to active interpreter. Our current renaissance brings us from the role of interpreter to the role of author. We are the creators.... We begin to be aware of just how much of our reality is open source and up for discussion.

Or again,

One of the most widespread realisations accompanying the current renaissance is that a lot of what has been taken for granted as "hardware" is, in fact, "software" capable of being reprogrammed. (People) tend to begin to view everything that was formerly set in stone – from medical practices to the bible – as social constructions subject to revision.

From here Rushkoff develops a critique of US media policy (including the "selling" of the Iraq war) and also of the current form of what he calls "globalism". Dismissing Peter Schwartz' aphorism "Open markets good. Closed markets bad. Tattoo it on your forehead", Rushkoff suggests that "the market's global aspirations amount to a whitewash of regional values. They are as reductionist as the tenets of any fundamentalist religion." He continues,

Mistaking the arbitrary and man-made rules of the market place for a precondition of the natural universe, corporate capitalism's globalist advocates believe they are liberating the masses from the artificially imposed restrictions of their own forms of religion and government. Perceiving their

own free market model as the way things really are, they ignore their own fabrications, while seeing everyone else's models as impediments to the natural and rightful force of evolution. As a result, globalism, to almost anyone but a free market advocate, has come to mean the spread of the Western corporate value system to every other place in the world.

Set against this, Rushkoff's essay is about the potential of "new interactive media" to "provide us with the beginnings of new metaphors for cooperation, new faith in the power of networked activity and new evidence of our ability to participate actively in the authorship of our collective destiny." In conclusion he suggests that "our understanding of progress must be disengaged from the false goal of growth" and "be reconnected with the very basic measure of social justice: how many people are able to participate?"

Here, then, is an example of advanced work that looks beneath the surface and questions some of the shaping realities that can now be understood, challenged and subjected to greater democratic openness. While not everyone would agree with Rushkoff's view of the liberating potential of new technology he has certainly set out a strong case for viewing and using it out of a post-conventional perspective in which issues of credibility, legitimation and social construction are clearly highlighted and understood.

Voros – reframing environmental scanning

In earlier times Environmental Scanning (ES) was seen as an activity based on fairly straightforward methods for (a) detecting signals from the environment (b) outlining organisational implications and (c) feeding these into a decision making process. It was described as a "front end" technique that alerted an organisation to external changes and provided time for strategic responses to be developed. So far so good. What had been overlooked, however, was that the world "out there" is framed, conditioned and mediated by the world "in here". But the latter had been largely overlooked. I drew attention to this and proposed that one

use of the four quadrant model could be to develop a new framework for ES in which both inner and outer factors would be considered.

Voros took this a stage further and developed a notation method for clarifying the "filters" at work in the minds of scanners. He writes that "in addition to opening up the view-space being viewed, one needs also to understand the extent and the scope of the 'mind-space' of the scanner doing the viewing, and to take conscious steps to open it up".

What was needed were "models of human consciousness" that would help to reveal the filters that were operating in the scanners' mind. "Informed by this one would then seek to become aware of the potential blind spots we might possess as scanners". The next step is to

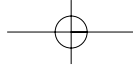
factor these insights into a scanning praxis so as to minimise the "scanning blindness" of the scanning team. In this way a team effort of diverse scanners consciously reflecting on their preferred mind sets, and taking steps to broaden their views, is less likely to miss critical signals than a homogeneous group ... who are unaware of their own potential blind spots...

Clearly ES is an activity that absolutely requires a profound appreciation of human and cultural interiors. Otherwise it cannot be other than an exercise of the 'blind leading the blind'. As Voros says, "scanning the environment ... depends very much on the eye of the beholder ... What that eye sees is conditioned by what lies behind the eye of the beholder; in the interior consciousness of the perceiving subject".

Finally, therefore, the hitherto-unacknowledged reality of "interior consciousness" began to emerge as one of the foundational shaping factors in all Futures / Foresight work. This is shown even more clearly in the last example.

Hayward – resolving the moral impediments to foresight action

In an integral view the nature of the consciousness that is experiencing or directing change is crucial. This has been elegantly demonstrated by Peter Hayward who employed Jane Loevinger's stage development theory to



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show how "the organisational capability to consider future implications (of foresight projects etc) is synonymous with the individual capability of people in that organisation to do that very same thing".

Hayward explores some implications of the role of moral thought in organisations. He argues that "no sustainable change to the organisational stance towards foresight research is possible unless there is adequate moral development in the individuals of that organisation." To be brief, Hayward considers how the first four of Loevinger's stages can be considered "pre-foresight", ie, stages where foresight is simply not possible. These stages are Presocial, Impulsive, Self-Protective and Conformist. The capacity for foresight does, however, emerge at the next stage – that of being Self-Aware. He comments that "the individual now appreciates multiple possibilities in situations, and the understanding of complexity is increasing". He adds that "at the same time that multiple perspectives are considered in the external world, the interiority of the individual begins to examine itself". The "formal appearance" of foresight capability, however, occurs fully at the following stage which is termed "Conscientious". Here are added the powers of "self-evaluation, self-criticism and self-responsibility (and hence) conscience is said to be fully developed". He adds, "the Conscientious individual is confident enough to make individual choices around which group rules or norms will be complied with... A focus on achievement emerges and with it comes long term self evaluated goals and ideals". At this stage what Loevinger calls the "Conscientious ego" corresponds closely with what Piaget termed "formal operational thinking".

Thus far Hayward has identified conventional stages of human development that correlate well with conventional FS. In the next step he identifies the transition that occurs in the shift from formal to post-formal foresight. Loevinger's focus here was on what she called the Autonomous stage at which individuals "can now cope with ... inner conflict; they can accept the inherent contradictions in life and just get on with things. What were seen as 'opposites' at

the earlier stages is now recognized as complexity". Tantalisingly, Loevinger hypothesized yet another stage that she termed "Integrated" in which conflicts are transcended and polarities reconciled.

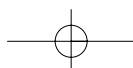
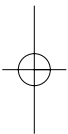
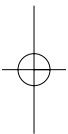
The conclusion is clear. Questions of human developmental stages, of the development of higher order moral, cognitive and other capabilities are central to understanding and dealing with the global problematique in all its guises. These human factors are deeply and profoundly implicated because they evoke different worlds of reference and, properly understood, foreshadow futures that can barely be glimpsed from within the desert of empiricism, the cold clear dehumanised and endlessly replicating technical surfaces of flatland.

Conclusion

In this paper I've tried to show how more advanced forms of futures enquiry and action are being developed that can help us to engage in depth with the multiple crises that continue to threaten our world and its nascent futures. I briefly explored some aspects of "integrally informed post-conventional futures work". To deal with the anticipated criticism that all this is "merely theoretical" examples of work completed and work in progress have been provided.

During 2004 a conference organised by prominent US Futurists considered "the role of technology in creating solutions to the world's problems". This was another in a long series of examples of "looking for solutions in the wrong place". Why? Because it is very difficult indeed to see how in our currently divided world further investments in increasingly powerful technologies that provide what Bill Joy called "enormous transformative power" can possibly generate real solutions. The reverse seems much more likely

Now that terrorists are using mobile 'phones to set off bombs that massacre innocent civilians, it is all too clear that genomics, nanotech and other innovations now being developed will also be misused. HG Wells saw this many years ago, as did Robert Jungk, among others. The questions they raised have



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still not yet been answered. Some of them hit very close to home. Where, we should ask, did "weapons of mass destruction" come from in the first place, if not from the West that shirked its moral responsibility to ban them from the earth when it could? Where are they currently stored and with whose permission?

So the kind of futures work outlined here is not merely theoretical. It is intensely relevant and practical. I have argued that it is necessary to critique the current world order. It is equally necessary to confront the sources of unrestrained power and the mad pursuit of endless material wealth. I believe it was Donella Meadows who said something like "you only have to spend millions marketing something if its worth is in doubt". She had the theory, the tools and the moral courage to say what she truly believed. Now, as futurists and foresight practitioners we need to start looking more deeply into ourselves and into our social contexts to find the "levers of change" the strategies, the enabling contexts, pathways to social foresight.

Post-conventional futures work is not for the faint-hearted but it does suggest a range of constructive responses to a world currently set on the path to oblivion.

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Notes

1. For distinctions between 'translation' and 'transformation' see Frank Visser's site: <http://www.integralworld.org>
2. D. Beck, Personal communication to Alex Burns, March, 2002.
3. See Visser website above (note 1).
4. R. Slaughter, op cit, 2004, chapter 11, Towards integral futures.

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