

NewFutures Conference 2000: Metaphors of Tomorrow

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The year 2000 was numerically significant in the West, counting the years from the birth of Christ. Taiwan is not a Christian nation. Despite that, in Taiwan the year 2000 was more than numerically significant. A threshold was passed through which the annals of history will not soon forget. Without being conquered by a foreign nation, or a foreign Chinese army, and without a violent bloody revolution from within, Taiwan achieved a transition of government in one of the most spectacular elections in modern history. In Johan Galtung's opinion, Chen Shui Bien's acceptance speech was one of the greatest speeches ever made. Johan spoke of Chen's smile, a smile that melted the ice in cross strait relations, a smile that ushered in a new era of warmth within the bitter split between the Nationalists and the Communists. The new government had a short honeymoon period during which the public was approving of the new party, and then the KMT decided to try and impeach Chen for stopping construction on the fourth nuclear power plant in Taiwan. The stock market hit new lows and public approval sagged. Despite public confidence in his character, ordinary people began to question Chen's political savvy and his ability to rule a country of 22 million with unfulfilled dreams of political legitimacy. In a fitting end to a tremendous year Chen went ahead with plans to finally, after more than 50 years of no contact, create cross strait links with the mainland through the small islands of Matsu and Kinmen, a policy referred to as the 'mini three links', slowly beginning the process of reconciliation.

It was in this context that a collection of some of the world's foremost futurists came to Taiwan to discuss global and local issues. Over twenty scholars, writers and officials came to Tamkang University, the home to one of the oldest futures studies programs in the world. It was the 50th

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anniversary of the founding of Tamkang University by Clement Chang, the end of the 20th century, the beginning of a millennium, the start of a new era in Taiwanese politics, and to top it all off, it was the year of the dragon - an auspicious time. It was time for celebration, occasion and reflection, and Clement Chang, a futurist himself, used the opportunity to bring in the foremost thinkers in his favorite field, futures studies. All of this coinciding transcends cosmic synchronicity and is better expressed by the Chinese expression *Yuanfen*. *Yuanfen* is not an objective mechanistic vision of synchronicity, but rather a flexible and subjective view that puts human relations at the center of temporal harmony. Like a solar eclipse in a space-time continuum among peoples, the NewFutures 2000 Conference also coincided with the crossing of great bodies.

While most of the scholars and writers that came to the conference had to travel great distances, the modern aeroplane, because of its speed and capsule-like quality, minimizes the perception of distance and creates the illusion of near-ness. However, beneath the hull of the ship are always endless peoples, places and states, numerous as to be uncountable. Equally so, even though the scholars and writers that came to the conference were here with topics and arguments related to futures studies, under the surface were vast differences of opinion who's foundations are as far apart as islands are to mountains, and oceans are to skies. Some of these futurists even seemed to belong in different galaxies!

While the various futurists that came to Taiwan were very different in their approach and relationship to the future, they are all essentially the same - aspects of a greater whole. Is it enough to simply determine a future? Whether we determine a culture's future normatively or through extrapolation, both approaches, based within the notion that there is just one future, lack. If we are to live in a future of freedom, we must be critical and creative. A complete view of the future must incorporate many ways of thinking. There must be an ethical component to address existential concerns; a philosophic component for epistemological reflection; a political component to address the problem of power; and a methodology of method behind the creating of alternative futures. In short we need an open system approach that constantly can be self critical and creative. In this way, the future no longer simply "is/isn't" but also "can/can't be", "should/shouldn't be", "was/wasn't", and "will/won't be", as well as other grammatical forms. It is this latter approach, un-deterministic, which I believe has the most value for the average person. Futures studies must become more than a deterministic answer - it must open up the future for the person on the street and ultimately liberate them. The liberation of

the future has two aspects; first is the ability to critique existing images and even de-legitimize a given future if necessary; the second is the ability to create futures, normative or extrapolative, that give people power.

There is a parallel between Taiwan and future studies. Taiwan is yet unacknowledged as a legitimate country, futures studies is still unacknowledged as a legitimate discipline. Beyond this, both exist as contradictions, one away from the mainland of Chinese orthodoxy, the other away from the mainland of academic orthodoxy. Futures studies is but a distant archipelago in the great sea of academia, even further removed from the hard ground of the sciences. Equally, it is beyond the sense perception of empiricism that the future (assumed to be singular or linear) can be understood. Just as the Earth was felt to be flat, but finally understood to be round - so should we understand that there isn't one future, determined by one way of thinking, but many, un-bounded by human will and perception.

This essay explores some of the multi-dimensional/critical-creative approaches to the future that were presented in this conference, comparing them with the deterministic approaches - within a framework of metaphors. Later, I situate each scholar within the context of Taiwan. Finally, I argue for the practicality of a multi-disciplined orientation, a 'grammar' so to speak, that opens up the question of the future, liberating people from stifling and dis-empowering representations, and ultimately empowering people in their journey through time.

The Time That Land Forgot

In the physical world experience is direct and context is given, we see mountains, smell forest, hear animals, feel wind - this is our most immediate context, what we are surrounded by. The world of the senses, using the engines of science, has connected this wilderness with vast tracks of rail linking the various domains of the knowable. This rail system, connecting the hard sciences and other soft sciences, is the main traffic way of academic thought. Even the areas that are yet un-integrated or unknown are identified by the taxonomists as such - there is a pin waiting to add them to the butterfly collection. With the positivist's confidence, areas such as neuro-biology, genetics, the birth of the cosmos, quantum physics, and yet unachieved advances in engineering are all under siege and soon to fall to this army of empiricists. And when the tracks are finally laid the great unknown, we are told, will be history.

Is the future, however, just another one of these domains waiting to fall to the armies of science? 'The future can be predicted.' It is a powerful statement to make. It is a statement reflecting a high degree of knowledge and precision. The scientific method requires the ability to predict reliably the outcome of experiments. When Halley predicted the coming of Halley's comet and it came, the debate was over. Likewise, Graham Molitor, the next president of the World Futures Society, believes that the future can be predicted. Through rigorous trend analysis and a grounding in macro-history, he believes the future can be made transparent. He predicted five major overlapping waves that will remake society, starting from a leisure age (2015) to a life sciences wave (2100), to a mega-materials age (2200-2300), to a new atomic age (2100-2500) and finally to a space age almost a thousand years into the future. While we will all never know if Molitor was right, as his predictions encompass a thousand years or more, the assumptions implicit within a professed ability to predict world futures are profound. First, we must accept an inability to change the future, for if the future is predictable then human will is an illusion. Second, if Molitor is accurate in his predictions, then the sixteen plus other futurists in the conference are, by varying degrees of proximity to Molitor's vision, wrong.

One person who certainly disagrees with this vision is Hazel Henderson. Not only is her vision different in content, but she believes that all forecasting is essentially normative. We create the future, end of story. History and the future is a tapestry of collective will. While the nature of the future is a topic to debate, I believe that she practices what she preaches. In her short stay here she arranged a T.V. interview, had me arrange a newspaper interview, and gave counsel to President Chen Shui Bien on issues of green financing, an area the President has been struggling with. In this way she seemed more concerned with what she could make happen rather than an extrapolated future that she could do nothing about. She spoke of a new age of light: the redefinition of progress to include social and ecological capital, an attention economy where we value mental space, cooperative and win-win economic relationships, and information-based economic transactions - a New Economy. She called for a responsible globalization that didn't simply rationalize people and environments in barbaric and unsustainable ways.

Globalization is currently a huge topic for debate, encompassing every layer of every society. On this issue Elisabet Sahtouris had a similar message to Hazel, responsible globalization, but she comes from the per-

spective of the bio-evolutionary sciences. In contrast to Henderson, she sees the future as an extension of what has been billions of years of biological evolution, humanity being one living system within a larger system, the Earth. She took her analogies from the evolution of micro-organisms, which, according to her theory, moved from a state of single cell, purely exploitative relationships, into multi-cell cooperative relationships. She views exploitative forms of globalization as examples of species immaturity, ultimately leading toward the 'demise of our whole civilization' and species extinction. She expressed that the human species needs to mature into a cooperative model of a globalised world, or, in biological terms, a 'healthy living system'. A healthy living system requires the empowered participation and negotiation of mutual self interest among all of its parts, organs, peoples, communities, societies and the Earth itself. While biological evolution can be a model for a human future, I would view it as deterministic. This future isn't open to possibilities outside of Spencerian logic. Human future is either cooperation or extinction; the bifurcation process exists, but its mechanisms are set. Yet the irony of having social Darwinism, a perspective that put humans on par with individual predator-prey relationships turned on its head into a perspective of peace and cooperation is indeed sweet.

One social scientists perspective on the future, that of Lorne Tepperman, was that the future cannot be said to completely exist, or not exist, but essentially lives within what he calls 'fuzzy logic'. The future is probabilistic. One future could be 80% possible, another 70% possible, both being mutually exclusive. The future is neither extrapolative, normative nor imagined - it is all of these things! For Lorne Tepperman, there are so many factors involved in casting a given future, including the cybernetic effects of extrapolation that leads to human action, that chaos theory might be the most appropriate perspective. In a fuzzy future constantly shifting through cybernetic interaction, probabilistic pro-action must cast a wide enough net to plant the seeds for human development. But while Tepperman used chaos theory as a model, for Sesh Velamoor self-organizing criticality is at the very core of change.

Sesh Velamoor maintained that through a process of cybernetic interaction, the future is never preferable or deterministic, but is always a work in progress. Self-organizing criticality is the operant process in the creation of the future - the metaphor of which is the now famous sand-pile, with each player on the global stage a grain of sand. Velamoor critiqued the current obsession with the Gaia hypothesis, and expressed the

centrality of individual actors in creating the future. Within this model, it is the liberty and availability of information about the future that is critical to the rate and direction by which humanity changes. Thus, he proposed a process which enables participation for all those that affect and create the future, that enables informed involvement by increasing and diffusing knowledge concerning humanity's long term future, requires that this knowledge about humanity's future not be given valuation prior to being presented to people, and which allows the participant to draw their own conclusions from the information. While this is a play that never ends, and a future that no-one will ever see, and we are but grains in the sand pile, we are still the main actors.

At the center of the debate about the nature of the future is Richard Slaughter, who spoke about the epistemological challenge facing futures studies. Orthodox science, in not accepting any kind of information that lives outside of the empirically verifiable, has for all practical purposes put the future outside of scientific speculation. He contends that the future is a space that needs to be looked at with scientific rigor. The integral cycle, created by Ken Wilber and applied to futures knowledge by Richard Slaughter, amounts to nothing less than a re-definition of the scientific method. The integral agenda challenges the principle that fact (what is real) must be empirical, opening the realm of scientific scrutiny and legitimation to other domains such as human experience, cultural norms, social structures, human foresight, myth, imagination, and, most ignored by the empiricist, ethics.

The Terra Firma of Ethics

From the interlinked and highly contextualized space of scientific thinking we move to a domain where what is true and what is not true isn't so clear, the vast islands of ethics. While ethics, what a person should/shouldn't do, is an extension of the debate as to what constitutes reality, the subject is far more problematic. There are islanders who believe that right and wrong can be empirically determined, other islanders who derive a sense of right from wrong from a personal feelings of indignation, still others sea farers that examine inequality, some tribes injustice, and some look at ethics as but an illusion, a human created limitation to transcend. These seas are vast and dangerous - and require the most cunning survival skills. Behold! Beyond the calm horizon there is always the storm of sentiment. In our journey to another island we could easily be lost, forever...

Tony Stevenson opened a Pandora's box of ethical questions: Is globalised liberalization of trade and investment fair? Who are the winners and losers of the future? Should university and Olympic sponsorships be provided by corporations that use sweatshop and other exploitative forms of labor? What should be done about the growing digital divide? What is the ethicality of commercial or military sponsorship within scientific research? What is the ethicality of manipulating the genes of human and other biological forms? In partly answering these questions he said that we need a humane face to globalization. Private charity is not enough to remedy the damage that global privatization creates - as most people in developing countries simply do not have the money or information to defend their own livelihoods and ecosystems from the forces of global rationalization - we need public intervention on a large and long term scale. He said that the 'main players' in the global game need to be held to account by 'bystanders' who must demand a socially fair tomorrow.

Ivana Milojevic continued the exploration of the ethicality of globalised exclusion. She asked the question 'is globalization supporting women?' She discovers a sad irony: Not only is it women who suffer the most from global restructuring, but it is women that 'buffer the negative aspects of economic restructuring' - women are supporting globalization! While many of the local services that have traditionally supported women fail with the erosion of the welfare state, in many countries, women are having to travel longer distances to support themselves and their communities, often times in the form of sex tourism, prostitution, domestic workers and mail order brides. While much is being done at the grass-roots level, she asserted that clearly more needs to be done from the powers that be.

The question of whether or not the world's resources should be invested into the disadvantaged has other answers. Walter Kistler spoke about creating a global governance that would, among other things, distinguish the truly great minds of the future and train them in the sciences to continue the march of scientific discovery. In line with this, information technology would help us to understand our genetic heritage leading to genetic engineering and ultimately enhancing the human gene pool. The ethicality of separating the 'smart' from the 'stupid', human genetic manipulation, as well as the definition of 'intelligence' and what constitutes 'progress' was not given exploration. As in the film *Gattacca*, humanity, like a machine, becomes a means to an end, the conquest of space.

While sharing a knowledge of science, Alan Fricker's perspective is diametrically different from Kistler's. Unlike the physical limitations that

have been transcended to put people on the moon and probes on mars, Fricker believes that there are laws and limitations built into our biology that must be observed and cannot be transcended. There exist limitations, he said, at the genetic, ecosystemic, and planetary levels. We must not trespass into a domain that for billions of years has worked beyond the influence of human hands. Instead of a reckless belief in scientific omnipotence, he advocated the principle 'biomemesis' as a way for genetic engineering and other human processes to progress safely and responsibly. Biomemesis is a process by which we can mimic nature and employ nature's ability to sustain itself. By learning how nature adapts to adversity, produces, recycles itself, and forms symbiotic relationships with its parts and the environment, we too can learn to responsibly use the knowledge that we have accumulated over the last century. Even though Fricker did not delve into the ethicality of human justice the way that Stevenson and Milojevic do, he still supplied biology and possibly other sciences with a framework that can distinguish north from south, and a map that may help us navigate our passage through the fierce seas of human conduct and its consequences.

Despite being a social scientist and using an empirical perspective, Wendell Bell did not shirk from the question of right and wrong. Bell, using a post-Kuhnian school of thinking dubbed 'Critical Realism', believes that ethicalities are not simply relative to culture or interpretation, but that what is right and wrong can be determined, or at least defined. However, he 'emphasizes the uncertainty and corrigability of knowledge, and the importance of discourse in arriving at warranted assertions'. This is a strong claim - for ethical questions have plagued humanity from the first time one of us stole a bone from the other. Regardless of the rhetorical nature of 'critical realism' or even its strong claims - Wendell Bell's study on the nature of evil reordered ethical problems dramatically. Exploring images of the future, he found the dominant image among people of the world to be millennialist in character, that of an end of time, an apocalyptic end of history. Bell showed how millennialist and other missionary mindsets often tend to demonize and dehumanize non-believers, or those who are not part of the group. Bell found that the majority of evil done in the world is perpetuated within the pretense of innocence. As is the case with most countries that go to war, or most groups that try to control, exploit or eliminate other groups, although the demonizing group believes itself to be allied with the good, God, or justice, the group is actually exploiting, attacking and killing. This phenomenon is prevalent with many countries and groups that are all too ready to go to war, and

resonates strongly with Johan Galtung's study of peaceful and violent cultures. Despite having reduced ethics to a rather restrictive definition, Bell's perspective was self-critical, revealing and potentially instrumental in peace research.

While the ethicality of education elite, altering our genetic heritage, the militarization/commercialization of scientific research, or the legitimacy of a digital divide that excludes women, minorities and poor can be debated, within peace research, ethics cannot be ignored, and is the solid ground from which peace is built. Ethics in peace research is a terra firma whose soil is based on responsibility and reconciliation. Johan Galtung said that we not only must be responsible for creating peaceful futures, (as there are no longer any acceptable excuses for resorting to war), we must also take responsibility for past transgression against others. Both sides, the victim and victimizer, must take responsibility for reconciliation. The transgressed must take responsibility for demanding reparation and accepting the apology; the transgressor must take responsibility for what was done in the past, acknowledging mistakes done, and actively trying to heal the wounds they have created. In taking responsibility man is agent of history and not just its victim. Human affairs are not simply extensions of environmental or behavioral determinism, as the road to peace is through human initiative and founded on taking responsibility for one's own actions. Environmental determinism, often the excuse of the West in the exploitative colonization of the world, is no longer an acceptable excuse for oppression, genocide and slaughter.

Archipelagos of Time and Distance

Time, and the other three dimensions, is recorded in our memory from only one perspective, one point of reference. History always begins from the subjective, it must be seen, felt and experienced by someone to be told to another. From my-story proceeding to our-story, and then through abstraction, it becomes his-story. Many points of reference blend into a complex history, problematic and difficult to define completely. Unlike science, which also relies on observation, history can never be reduced to law. There is always that other, yet undiscovered, perspective which alters that which we are looking at. Likewise, there is no one unitary perspective that will give the absolute future of a given society, but rather a collage, composition and context which can inform us and make us more successful in our mission to create a future that we all want. If we

want to liberate ourselves from the dogma and limitations of just one perspective, we must travel across islands of collective memory and traverse the great ocean of the interdisciplinary seas - by riding the currents and winds boldly and intelligently. By becoming good navigators within the interdisciplinary seas, between the mainland of science and ethical islands, peninsula of sociology and endless archipelagos of recorded history, the beautiful topography of art and jejune desert of philosophy, and between the fathom-less depths of myth and majestic peaks of imagination, among all these things and more, we can begin to go beyond the limitations of our finite experiences and anthropocentric senses.

Cesar Villanueva uses the metaphor of the eagle to describe a possible new orientation to the future. The eagle is able to soar high above the Earth and has eyes that can see into the distances of tomorrow. The eagle, being at one with the sky and the land can sense if an impending earthquake or typhoon might be coming. He argued that this new sensitivity to the future is necessary for Asian nations to survive and prosper in the coming century. The earthquake represented the imposition of Western values upon antithetical Asian values, shaking the foundations of the an Asian culture. Asia must strengthen and preserve its values, community based and duty bound, he said, against the quickening of Western values: logic/legalism and individualism. The typhoon represented the forces of globalization and technological innovation initiated in the West that is sure to sweep the unprepared into the oblivion of neo-liberal rationalization. Cesar taught of a sensitivity to the future, but also of a sensitivity to self, of knowing who we are and our own limitations.

Instead of teaching teachers the 'future of education', which often times leads to passive acceptance of unquestioned visions, David Hicks spoke about 'futures in education', the liberating of teachers from pre-conceived notions of the future, helping them to do the navigating themselves. In global futures, Hicks said he teaches education students how to come to grips with the complexity of the world, their own feelings, life purpose, and develop a personal relationship to the future beyond fear and confusion, ultimately leading to action. In becoming a teacher, Hicks said he begins by problematizing educational philosophy, global futures, and education's role in response to future challenges. Through personal reflection, global awareness and confidence in identifying educational ideologies, the teacher-to-be gains power in navigating through a transforming educational system in the mist of a transforming world. Through reflexivity and critical awareness of both self and society the teacher is able to go beyond outdated maps of global and educational

change topographies, gaining power in choosing or creating the maps that will help the teacher/captains to reach the far shores of preferred futures for them and their students/sailors.

David Wright, in examining Japan futures, uses various methods to deconstruct the future image creating system that has a stranglehold on communities. He critiqued the outdated 'catch-up and overtake America' model of development, critiqued the governments monopoly on the discourse of the future, which he termed 'futurocracy', critiqued the Japanese myth of uniqueness and racial purity, critiqued a monopolistic exclusion of non-native methods in the framing of problems related to the future, critiqued semiotic forms within the Japanese language that restrict thinking dynamically about the future, as well as fractures within Japanese society that disable communication. The deconstruction of the process in which a future is colonized leads to freedom. Liberated by uncovering and dismantling a myopic power structure, the felt earth is no longer flat, but is understood to be round - and we can sail into the horizon without fear of falling off the edge of the earth.

Beyond this horizon, in a distant hemisphere, we find Richard Slaughter at work, methodically linking together civilizations of thought. The integral cycle, originated from Ken Wilber's integral agenda, further modified by Mark Edwards, and finally applied to futures studies by Richard Slaughter, brings together four hemispheres of knowledge into a total scheme of knowledge creation and verification. Slaughter explained how knowledge can be seen to be created in four major steps. First there is an objective behavioural 'injunctive strand' in which a futures methodology is selected and applied. Second is the subjective intentional 'intuitive strand' in which the results of the work is assembled. Third a subjective and cultural 'interpretive strand' in which the results of the study are subject to thorough interpretation. Finally, within the objective social 'validative strand' the results are confirmed or rejected within a public social platform. Thus having linked the islands with the mainland, the right brain people with the left brain people, the sea lanes are safe to travel on, and the natives in both domains will not eat each other for lunch. We are free to wander the globe and explore the many domains of thought.

But even beyond the safe sea lanes of orthodox thought, we find Johan Galtung on his never ending journey blazing his own trail across oceans of disciplines to discover the ultimate treasure - transformation. Traveling the fierce interdisciplinary seas that includes the historical, ethical, cultural, geo-political, mythical, and the imaginative domains, Galtung's

studies are some of the most challenging and complex for a creative orientation to the future - that could ultimately lead to something we can only discover in ourselves - peace.

Island Culture

Often when we travel, we cross profound distances entering another culture in distant land. But when we cross into another land we also enter another time. Because historical development is not uniform spatially, time travel is part of entering another place and culture. Part of our trip into the determined future, alternative futures, or a willed future is a journey into a new society with a different culture. Therefore, among the futurists at the conference there are some who travel across the vast oceans of time between islands where cultures, past present and future, are revealed.

Wen Hui Tsai called for a transformation of culture within the gerontological domain, arguing that several trends and new findings run counter to the prevailing theory of aging - disengagement theory. Aging populations are living longer and healthier, while lower birth rates means that the year 2000 marked the first time in history that people over 60 outnumbered children 14 and younger (in industrialized countries). Older people in the future should not leave society, as this social construction of retirement has not only now been proven to be unhealthy for the retiree, it is no longer practical at the society wide scale. He calls for an age integrated society and active aging in which the elderly doesn't retire, but simply slows down, retrains, and re-engages within society in a more meaningful and socially holistic fashion. He called for education for the elderly and the end to age segregation. He said that in the future the elderly will require ongoing education in order to be part of a society that is continually changing and marginalising those who cannot find socially useful roles.

Johan Galtung spoke about the distinction between peaceful cultures and violent cultures. He argued that for successful conflict resolution, cultures need to be transformed from violent and aggressive cultures into peaceful cultures. He stressed the need to examine the worldview among different cultures, particularly if those worldviews support or have an interest in solving political problems through force, if there are two worldviews on a collision course and already in contradiction, or if a culture's worldview accepts and legitimates the suppression, domination or subordination of other cultures.

Finally, Elisabet Sahtouris envisioned a species wide transformation from being an immature species that primarily lives off of exploitative relationships, to a mature species that lives in sustainable and symbiotic relationships of mutual self-interest. In evolutionary form, she sees this new species of human cooperation emerging from this crisis of human exploitation.

The Great Depths

Until just recently the oceans were an impassable barrier. For most of human history it has been the realm of the unknown. Therefore, it housed our dreams, fantasies and nightmares. In classic metaphorical terms the deep has represented the subconscious, the subliminal, and the mythic. It is just as well that the collective psyche was only recently discovered in the West as a legitimate field of study, having always belonged to other practitioners of the non-empirical. And just as the subconscious has just been discovered, only recently has the ocean been contextualized into oceanography, and have people ventured into the oceans depths. Yet these realms, one invisible, the other visible, remain unconquered. Although we have penetrated these depths and have begun to understand them, who can live in the ocean? Two thirds of the Earth is covered by ocean, and it is said that we came from the sea, but it is still foreign to us. From the linearity of a mainland connected by rail lines of highly empirically structured thought, across vast expanses of two dimensional space connecting ethical, historical, and cultural, islands of perspective across unstructured sea lanes, we go into the pre-historic depths of three dimensional space ubiquitously encompassing un-thought, assumption, and being in the flowing obscurity of deep water.

It is this realm, the depths of myth, that Sohail Inayatullah chooses to explore. The Jacques Cousteau of futures studies, Inayatullah combines futures studies and myth analysis into a synthesis that reveals critical cultural and civilizational assumptions about reality and the future. As how one frames a question will lead to what answers one gets, Inayatullah's Causal Layered Analysis shows how the deep myths of a given culture are at the root of the culture's worldview and discourse, which eventually gives a culture its image of the future.

Johan Galtung emphasized an understanding of worldview in his peace research. In order to successfully navigate a difficult situation such as Chinese cross strait relations the peace specialist must have understanding of the respective cultures perspective. How a culture defines what is

sacred, its relationship to the environment and the Other, a cultures sense of success and failure, and how that culture frames justice - all these things are necessary studies for the peace specialist in order that he or she may navigate successfully between two warring parties. The peace researcher is a specialist in untangling conflicts of interest that have escalated into meta-conflicts. These meta-conflicts have gone beyond their simplistic origins and now encompass a whole cultural orientation. Like the dream psychologist who probes a persons subconscious depths to locate and help that person purge themselves of their owns snares and demons, the peace specialist must probe the cultures mythic depths to locate all the toxic waste that has been dumped into the oceans of their collective psyche, and eventually help that culture help themselves clean up their meme pools.

The Cloud Islands of the Imagination

Far above the deterministic orthodoxy of the mainland are the cloud islands of thought known as alternative futures. An alternative future is not **the** future. Imagination happens when we liberate ourselves from simply one image of the future. Determinism in both its extrapolative and normative terms stifles the creativity necessary for our hearts to fly into the cloud space of the possible. It is above the clouds that we can see the Earth in all its heavenly beauty, distinguish great mountain ranges from vast deserts, and see the curvature of our spinning sphere. It is through imagination that we can synthesize the possible and by liberating ourselves from a fixation on one future that we can create shared futures. And if we become truly liberated from the claustrophobic confines of ideology, we may even be able to imagine the Earth in all its contradictions and totality.

Lorne Tepperman imagines a future of home health care where the world has a world health monitor, a clearing house for global trends in health, national and global health surveys, national and global health index, home care inventories of resources and technology, and health innovation traineeships, along with a Patient Resource Inventory System (PRIS). In incorporating global trends into a vision of a healthy world Tepperman essentially imagines the infrastructure necessary to create this.

Wen-Hui Tsai, on the other hand, imagines a cultural transformation from a growing older population not aging meekly and decrepitly, but rather becomes integral to the functioning of a healthy society.

Sohail Inayatullah sings the eulogy of the University, and proceeds to do the autopsy and cause of death, walking us through the progressive stages of the disease. Globalization brings in the multinational corporations into the lucrative education market. Once the site of wisdom, moral learning and dissent, education becomes customer-product driven and technical in content. The campus-centric nature of the university is challenged by the internet and off-site learning opportunities. Multiculturalism also challenges the eurocentric humanities and its politics of re-writing history and the purely empirical way of knowing from science. And demands for transparency challenge the elite club nature of the university. The great knowledge centers of yesterday become office space for multinationals. Learning has been de-centered and now takes place unquitously.

Ivana Milojevic, through the creation of the dual scenarios of Globotech and Ecarmony highlights that globalization is not a given, and that we have the power to question and to create the future. Globotech assumes the business as usual future of technological globalization from the powers that be. Ecarmony envisions a transformed world from the grass roots levels that empowers women, ethnic minorities, and the poor. She suggested that women's issues are different from men's, and that women's perspectives need to be included to create a balanced form of globalization.

Cesar Villanueva imagined many different futures for Asia: an Asia.com would mean a technologized Asia that is focused on rationalization and globalization. It is a soul-less Asia where people resemble robots. A Yello Fever Asia is one where mainland China and the many small Asia's dominate. Everybody looks, eats and acts Chinese. While this brings stability it is also a loss of cultural diversity. A Terrorized Asia is one torn by political class and ethnic wars, with people lost in the chaos without any unifying foundations to create a common future by. A Co-existence/Co-development Asia maintains and strengthens local needs and identities, while at the same time strengthening the cohesion of all Asia through mutual self interest, and by developing sound economic structures and profound spiritual transformation.

Galtung said that the unique place that futures studies occupies in the area of peace research is in creating alternative futures. The importance of the role of alternative futures in peace work, he said, is that both sides of the dispute need to be able to find a future that both can live into - a shared future. The problem with simple peace compromises, he said, is

that it leaves both sides feeling unsatisfied and ultimately the victim, furthering the viscous cycle of hurt and hate. Rather, he said, both sides need to start small on small projects that are mutually of value and work toward a future that both can share willingly - shared futures. Alternative peace futures come from the creative space of the imagination, all the while informed by the responsibilities, histories, and hearts of the cultures, so that the created future is not pie in the sky, but truly transcendent. Fittingly he calls his method the "transcend method", with the creation of alternative futures the final component in his ship that allows him not only to sail, submerge, but also fly, transcending the gravitational pull of hate, ignorance, and greed. Specifically for Taiwan Galtung created a six China scenario to transcend the One China thinking that has had the cross straits in a dead lock for over fifty years. The six Chinas would include Taiwan, the Mainland, Tibet, Mongolia, East Turkistan, and Hong Kong. This expanded vision of China would allow tribal elements to co-exist peacefully without sacrificing the integrity of the Chinese nation.

Creative Speculation: With a Disclaimer

I would now like to make my contribution to epistemology in the form of what I might call 'Creative Speculation'. Creative Speculation makes no claim toward any socially validated truth or objectifiable principle. Speculation is the freedom to guess. Creativity is freedom to elaborate and expand on those guesses. In putting the various futurists within the context that they were physically in, the country Taiwan, I can creatively speculate on what those futurists might say to Taiwanese, applying their ideas imperfectly to this particular island nation. However, I must give a strong disclaimer. The following is in no way what those speakers said, but only what they might have said from my particular perspective. Another person doing the same Creative Speculation might get completely different results. The only real way to know what the speakers would say, applying their ideas to the context of Taiwan, would be to simply ask them. However, I have taken the liberty to do my own creative speculation.

- **Walter Kistler** might ask Taiwan to begin sponsoring the NASA led international space station. As Taiwan has been pining for international recognition, why not use President Chen's green silicon island as a platform toward international cooperation by contributing Taiwanese information technology?

• **Graham Molitor** might say that, as Taiwan is a tourism pariah, and the leisure age is fast upon us, Taiwan must become leisure friendly. Perhaps Taiwan should invest in service industry, automation, a beautiful island image, a cleaner environment and safety issues to keep Taiwan's aging population from leaving Taiwan.

• **Wendell Bell** might comment on the Taiwanese propensity to demonize the mainland, making the possibility of war easier and the reconciliation process more difficult. He might try and problematize the good/evil distinction that taints the Nationalist/Communist dichotomy. A Critical Realist approach might reveal Taiwan as much a perpetrator as a victim.

• **Alan Fricker** might ask the Taiwanese to find biomimetic solutions to address their industry need for power, such as solar, wind or geothermal. Recycling industrial waste has been catastrophic in Taiwan until now, and perhaps they could find a biomimetic solution to the cybernetic limitations to recycling industrial pollution responsibly. He might also ask the Taiwanese to take care of the coast-line and its ecosystems, as that will someday take care of Taiwan.

• **Elisabet Sahtouris** might encourage the Taiwanese to look at their relationships with other nations and peoples to ask if whether that relationship is based on exploitation or cooperation. As a solution to international integration with peoples and the environment she might ask them to identify and strengthen holarchical relationships and eliminate non-holarchical relationships. The cross strait problem could be bridged by forming a relationship of mutual self interest with the mainland, but also in sync with Asia and the world.

• **Hazel Henderson** might ask Taiwan to play the lead role in an economic transformation of China, to lead themselves, and to lead China from a brown economy toward a green economy. She might ask Taiwanese people to begin making investments in green technology. By cleaning up China and creating green technology Taiwan could not only make a good buck off of China, but save the rest of the world from ecological disaster.

• **Tony Stevenson** might question Taiwan's role in perpetuating a digital divide. As one of the biggest hardware suppliers in the world, he might ask Taiwanese companies to not simply set up shop in poor countries for their low wages and slack environmental standards, but to be responsible global citizens and also give back to the countries being used in the form of technological and educational development. Globalization could be a opportunity for these companies to teach a man to fish.

• **David Wright**, on the issue of international recognition, might ask Taiwanese to deconstruct the system that has perpetuated a dead-lock for over fifty years. By identifying virtual fractures within Taiwanese society and the global community, the Taiwanese might be able to formulate a way to overcome or compensate for the fractures and to formulate a path toward international recognition.

• **Sesh Velamoor** might recommend that the Taiwanese use their 'green silicon island' vision as a platform to enhance their collective cybernetic capacity. Through being informed about local and global change the Taiwanese might find themselves moved to act not simply in terms of global pariah trying to gain U.N. legitimacy, but global leader, acting on behalf of all nations.

• **David Hicks** might encourage TamKang University and other universities to create reflexive futures learning situations no matter what shape or name the learning is given. He might ask Tamkang university to be the champion for futures studies for all of Taiwan, to train more people the skills necessary in critiquing and formulating visions of the future.

• **Cesar Villanueva** might encourage the Taiwanese to have foresight in the twin issues of globalization, and Western cultural domination. He might add a word of caution in Taiwan adopting open-ended/blank-check free trade, encouraging Taiwanese to take care of those that get displaced. He might also throw in a word of caution in Taiwanese adopting Western values that are out of context in Taiwan.

• **Lorne Tepperman** might say that Taiwan needs to adapt its fledgling social Medicare program to the trends that make the future of Medicare fuzzy. To reduce the possibility to the system becoming hopelessly antiquated, the system could play a probabilistic game by creating many pilot programs and sticking with the ones that work. In this way Taiwanese Medicare could change in a chaotic yet adaptive way. The already prevalent custom of Taiwanese nursing their family members might fit well with a sophisticated HomeCare program.

• **Wen-Hui Tsai** might advise his home country to think ahead to the tax crunch and aging population problems of 20 to 30 years from now by creating new roles for older people to play an active part in society. The communicated experience of the elderly might be the grounding element that Taiwanese needs in a rapid change environment.

• **Ivana Milojevic** might challenge the male chauvinistic character of Chinese familial life. She might also challenge the exploitation of Philippina house maids, and other South East Asians in construction and manufacturing, who are often overworked, underpaid, and sometimes

mistreated. Finally she might critique President Chen's vision of the future, 'green silicon island', as being too narrowly technological or 'Globotech'; advising him to create a vision with a human face.

- **Richard Slaughter** might advise Taiwanese academics to be inclusive of their own Chinese heritage that includes, among other things, medical, ethical and metaphysical elements, and the more recent Western heritage of natural science, into a macro-context of wisdom and knowledge. How can Eastern and Western ways of knowing be integrated?

- **Sohail Inayatullah** might explore the mythic origins of Taiwan's current worldview. He might ask: "what assumptions underpin the current 'green silicon island' vision?" and "what other images of the future have been sidelined, censored, suppressed, de-legitimized, ignored, attacked and why?"

- **Johan Galtung** might explain how tribalization and globalization are two sides to one coin, and that a Six China scenario is neither contradictory toward Taiwanese identity nor contradictory toward mainland nationalism. He might argue that both countries objectives would fit into an expanded vision of China.

Topography Compared: A Grammar of the Future

From a mainland of thought highly contextualized where space and time is determined and what is and is not is connected by a well established railway system linking disciplines in structured patterns - we explored other lands, archipelagos of thought where the question asked is: "what should and should we not do?" These were the original mainlanders only recently displaced by the scientific invaders. But their questions linger like unappeased sprits, haunting the souls of a humanity to be. Although marginalized, we discovered that these displaced island spirits are actually the soul and the soil from which justice and peace may spring. We traveled to other archipelagos - the humanities where the process of time is opened up to the philosophers and we ask: "what is the future"? And we traveled on to lands who's culture alters according to its future history, becoming more foreign with every passing day. We probed the depths of the sea and our own mythic origins, and glided among cloud islands of the imagination where we asked: "what could be?" The question now arises of who we should lend our ear to. Should we listen to the scientists, the ethicists, the philosophers, the culture critics, the mythologists or the imaginists?

I think that there is a 'grammar' to the essence of the future. Within any language's grammar there are different tenses, various forms, modes of expression, and a rich vocabulary that correspond to the meanings being conveyed. In language, should we be confined to one form of expression? We need many to communicate fully. We cannot only live with the imperative tense, just as we cannot simply live with the passive tense. We need to express things as they are, being and becoming just as we need to express how they should be, should have been, or should become. We need to have the flexibility to combine tenses to form complex expression of the future. Future perfect, conditional perfect, subjunctive perfect and other grammatical combinations express relationships not otherwise expressible. 'I like/I don't like', 'I think/I don't think', 'I feel/I don't feel' - could we possibly dispense with these subjunctive forms? Is it possible to simply favor one grammatical form over the other? I think that we need them all - as all of them comprise a working totality of a culture's orientation to what has not yet occurred. Communicating the phenomenal realm taxes our language capacity completely, so we need all of the forms that can express a total relationship of human to future - allowing us to critique or dispense with those images of tomorrow that run counter to our humanity, and alter or create the images of tomorrow that further our humanity.

Could it be that the future is simply a cognitive representation, which mammals tend to conceptualize better than lizards, and that primates do the best job at? How do we know that the future is out there at all? Is our language of the future a work in progress? Are we to be slaves to one representation of the future? Is there but one grammatical form? Couldn't we use the representations that further human freedom, justice, and love? What grammar creates fear and which grammar creates hope? Is the future in our heads or in our hearts? Perhaps they are two sides to the same coin - a Ying and a Yang - the deterministic future and the willed future - both part of the same phenomenon, each strengthening the other - the passive extrapolated cannot exist without the active willed. Perhaps it is none of the above.

Time might be best expressed in other languages yet unexplored, yet un-created, or which still hasn't found us! *Yuanfen* expresses the subjective experience of place and time coinciding with another's subjective experience of place and time. All those present at the conference, though some kind of meaningful interaction with each other, experienced *Yuanfen*. Together we experienced the passing of a millennium, the year of the

dragon, and each other. We are all temporal brothers! How many millions of *Yuanfen* have come before and after us? And yet our visions of past and future are so different! What profound space to explore, each of us communicating our own experiences of time.

Regardless, the future, like reality, needs to be problematic. If it were not it would reflect a lack of depth and dynamism in human thinking and feeling. Our orientation to the future needs too be an open system - non-entropic, growing in sophistication and expanding its ability to help us become. Our understanding needs to facilitate creative destruction, liberating us from monopolistic images, empowering us to create ones that empower us. The future needs to be a book to open, not to close. It needs to be a realm of speculation, not another mystery solved. As we pass through thresholds of time, let's preserve something precious, human curiosity, and have the courage to not answer what need not be answered - what we do not yet know that we still don't know.

INVITATION FOR AUTHORS

The *Journal of Futures Studies* (JFS) is published by the Center for Futures Studies, College of Education, Tamkang University, Tamsui, Taipei, Taiwan. The editors invite contributors in the areas of foresight, forecasting, long-range planning, visioning and other related areas. Contributors should be based on the critical and/or empirical research in the field of Futures Studies. The journal attempts to attract contributors who can offer distinctive viewpoints on a broad range of future-oriented issues. Contributors also should comply with the following guidelines:

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