

# The Foresight Principle

## Cultural Recovery in the 21st Century\*

R.A. Slaughter

This summary of Richard Slaughter's work was prepared by Jan Lee Martin as a teaching/learning aid for members of the Futures Foundation and others. It has been reviewed and approved by Dr Slaughter

**Part I**

### ESTABLISHING THE CONTEXT: BEYOND THE INDUSTRIAL WORLDVIEW

<p><b><u>Chapter One</u></b> <b>LOOKING BACK</b></p> <p>Looking back at the way our thinking has been shaped helps us to understand the limitations of the worldview we inherited in the world we are now creating for the future.</p>	<p><b><u>The Medieval worldview</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earth at the centre of the Universe</li> <li>• Man at the centre of the earth, in charge</li> <li>• Knowledge based on authority (of religion, of tradition)</li> <li>• Nature alive, vital, with intrinsic meaning</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>The Enlightenment</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bacon - scientific experiment</li> <li>• Descartes - atomism, nothing more than the sum of the parts, body/mind split</li> </ul> <p>These formed the basis for a mechanical worldview.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Galileo - experimentation, manipulation distancing of subject and object</li> <li>• Newton - solar system as vast machine to be turned to human use</li> </ul> <p>Thus a philosophy of nature based on reason, manipulation and control. Fundamental shift from "why?" to "how?"</p>
<p><b><u>The Industrial Revolution</u></b></p> <p>New ideas about work, about people in their environment, about time, about money.</p> <p>The new thinking is made manifest in the way people live and work, increasingly expressed in the things they <i>do</i>.</p>	<p><b><u>Events as markers of change</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WWI ended the optimism of the Victorian era. "The Great War"</li> <li>• WWII shattered hope of "never again". Confidence gave way to doubt.</li> <li>• Hiroshima ended the war, began an era of growing despair.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Consequences of industrial culture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift from thinking to acting, increased discounting of inner reality</li> <li>• Technical/rational dynamic overtook human/cultural aspects of life</li> <li>• focus on "doing" instead of "being", creating things</li> </ul>	<p><i>Achievements of industrial age</i></p> <p>Enormous achievements, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• transport</li> <li>• personal and public health</li> <li>• food production and storage</li> <li>• water, sewage and other services</li> </ul> <p>Miracles of infrastructure and enterprise.</p>
<p><i>The costs of the industrial age</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forests</li> <li>• Rivers, seas</li> <li>• Native peoples</li> <li>• flora and fauna</li> </ul> <p>Damage now larger scale, faster pace Critical pollution of environmental support systems - eg. oceans, air.</p>	<p><b><u>The metaproblem</u></b></p> <p><b>Fundamental issue is the dominance of instrumental rationality</b> ("<i>a powerful cognitive system which matches means to assumed or pre-given ends</i>").</p> <p><u>We need this ability but must understand its limitations.</u></p>
<p><b><u>Instrumental rationality -</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• includes no notion of limits</li> <li>• has no way to see except the mechanical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- planet as a resource for use by man</li> </ul> </li> <li>• no dimension but the physical: no ethics, values, meaning</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Reductionism and loss of the transcendent</u></b></p> <p>Thus the world of the industrial age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognises only what can be measured</li> <li>• disregards other qualities.</li> </ul> <p>(Eg. economics, markets, people as 'consumers', 'human resources')</p>
<p><b><u>Science, technology for irrational ends</u></b></p> <p>Powerful technologies linked with inadequate worldviews or primitive human impulses become subversive.</p> <p>So if science and technology are to help solve the metaproblem they need to be reconstructed on non-instrumental basis.</p>	<p><i>Lewis Mumford,</i> <i>(of modern weapons systems):</i></p> <p><b><i>"The means are rational, but the ends are entirely mad".</i></b></p>

<p><b><u>Desacralisation of nature</u></b></p> <p>Move from medieval thinking to the new ideas of the Enlightenment did get rid of much ignorance and superstition, but there has been a tragic consequence.</p> <p>Loss of sacred reverence for nature removed its protection, allowed the conversion of nature into a resource for the use of man.</p>	<p><b><u>"Having" instead of "being"</u></b></p> <p>Modern culture features powerful mercantile influences. There is not yet a countervailing force to advertising. Personal success seen as "having".</p> <p>But this is a risky path: needs/wants multiply. And the world can't keep meeting them. "Being" is more secure: life, consciousness, awareness.</p>
<p><b><u>Chapter Two</u></b> <b>LOOKING AROUND</b></p> <p>Futurists argue that some important aspects of the western industrial worldview are defective. If this is so, it would be apparent in our institutions and the way they respond to current realities and future needs. Let's look at some of them.</p>	<p><b><u>Politics and governance</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the political process meeting the needs of society?</li> <li>• Do we have politicians of the calibre we need?</li> <li>• Do they address adequate dimensions of time and space?</li> <li>• Should we review the motives (and rewards) of political leaders?</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Economics</u></b></p> <p>National accounting systems based on GNP are inadequate to today's needs -- and tomorrow's,</p> <p>We need new indicators, new concepts of value, new ways to respond to change. Such indicators, concepts and strategies are available but tend to be marginalised.</p>	<p><b><u>Education</u></b></p> <p>Western education systems are based on medieval models, developed in the industrial age.</p> <p>Subjects look back, not forward.</p> <p>Young people feel anger and despair, in part because they know the educational system is irrelevant to their needs.</p>
<p><b><u>Commerce</u></b></p> <p>Commerce today is too compulsive, too damaging. Marketing and merchandising -- very powerful, very successful -- have sold materialism to the world.</p> <p>Perhaps the most successful industry is the "unreality industry" (<i>Mitroff &amp; Bennis</i>).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materialism</li> <li>• Consumption</li> <li>• Ego gratification</li> <li>• Distraction</li> </ul> <p><i>"A gilded deception being exerted on entire populations"</i>.</p> <p>We need a different view of commerce</p>

<p><b><u>The media</u></b></p> <p>The media powerfully affect what, how and why people think. They offer an "ersatz reality".</p> <p>News media are attracted to the dramatic, the visual, the negative.</p> <p>Especially for young people, futures seem dark and violent, disempowering. Images are confused: good/evil; right/wrong; science and magic are interchangeable.</p>	<p><b><u>Why are institutions out of step?</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roots in an earlier age</li> <li>• Specific interests, low-level values</li> <li>• Change is slow in institutions</li> <li>• Turbulent times create problems for leaders</li> <li>• Faulty assumptions in western industrial worldview... eg. 'me', 'mine', 'now'</li> </ul> <p>They are attempting to move into the future without foresight.</p>
<p><b><u>Chapter Three</u></b> <b>LOOKING FORWARD</b></p> <p>So what can we know about the future?</p> <p>What are the real 'megatrends'?</p> <p>How can one study futures?</p>	<p><b><u>What can we know about the future?</u></b></p> <p>Empirical science says that because the future doesn't exist, it can't be studied.</p> <p>This is a <u>category error</u> (<i>when criteria for one domain are wrongly read onto another</i>).</p> <p>But futures are not in the empirical domain, so empirical criteria don't apply.</p>
<p><u>Conjecture as art</u>: de Jouvenel suggested futures work be seen as conjectures instead of knowledge and facts. In this view, the act of studying futures is a construction in the present within human minds.</p>	<p>Ogilvy says it belongs in humanities, with its cargo of values.</p> <p>Already linguistics, semiotics, critical theory, hermeneutics are leading this way.</p>
<p>Dominant (US) tradition has been empiricist, analysing data, refining tools for forecasting and prediction.</p> <p>Some good work, but areas overlooked include questions of language, meaning, conflict, and social construction of reality.</p>	<p>This tradition fails to examine deep causes beneath problems - eg. language tradition, epistemologies.</p>

<p>The essence of futures study is not predicting or forecasting, but scholarship.</p> <p><b>Therefore we see futures as a field of scholarship overlapping other fields of scholarship.</b></p>	<p>Social systems too complex for prediction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predictions can be made with technical and physical systems</li> <li>• They can be used informally in everyday life.</li> <li>• But predictions unwise in futures.</li> </ul> <p>Also if accurate prediction were possible, that would suggest we have no choices.</p>
<p>Instead futures study produces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an informed overview of present structures and processes,</li> <li>• which can be used to paint a broad picture of the near future.</li> </ul> <p>So futurists study..back, around, forward. Skim and scan and look for signals within framework of scholarship.</p>	<p><b><u>How can we study the future?</u></b></p> <p>Simple analogy.. city pedestrian crossing. Everyone scanning (detecting), interpreting, choosing, acting in continuous feedback loop.</p> <p>But in social systems we are not doing this, or doing it blindly.</p>
<p>So how to bring futures into institutions and government?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study continuities (some things don't change)</li> <li>• Monitor events and processes (change)</li> <li>• Construct pictures</li> <li>• Explore and discuss choices.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Whole point of studying futures is not to predict but to understand alternatives as a context for choices.</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>The futures field</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An interdisciplinary field of inquiry, richly interconnected</li> <li>• Primary resources are language, concepts, metaphors</li> <li>• Human brain/mind system, not limited to "creature present" of other species</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Theories, ideas, images</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symbolic building blocks used to create bigger concepts... eg. post-industrial society, information age, wise culture</li> <li>• Images of the future - conscious and unconscious - are both ubiquitous and understudied.</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Literature and practitioners</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These images move into productive relationships in literature (futures &amp; fiction)</li> <li>• Practitioners provide the human, intellectual and applied energy.</li> </ul> <p>There is a growing number of organisations and networks working to focus attention on the future.</p>	<p><b><u>Methodologies, tools &amp; practices</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scanning and interpreting</li> <li>• Scenario analysis</li> <li>• Cross-impact matrices</li> <li>• Delphic surveys</li> <li>• Forecasting and strategic management (to inform and influence planning)</li> <li>• National and global modelling</li> <li>• Positive critique and analysis of discourse.</li> </ul>
<p>Some specific sequences combine elements - eg.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Prospective" (M.Godet)</li> <li>• "Issues Management" (J. Coates)</li> <li>• "Quest" (S. Enzer &amp; B. Nanus)</li> </ul> <p><u>Futures tools</u> are simplified methodologies or applications from them -- eg. timelines... futures wheels.... space/time grids... simple technology assessment ... strategies for responding to fears.</p>	<p><b><u>Social movements and innovations</u></b></p> <p>These are closely related to futures work... a social manifestation of changes that futurists can foresee and understand.</p> <p>They include the peace movement, green movement, women's movement, animal rights, responsibility for future generations, and the fast-growing not-for-profit and non-government organisations.</p>
<p><b><u>Long-term Outlook</u></b></p> <p>Set aside Naisbitt's <i>Megatrends</i>... biased and not grounded. Better references are Lester Brown's <i>Vital Signs</i>, James Dator's "<i>tsunamis of change</i>". Dator identifies key areas as demographics, economics, environment, technology and globalisation. The World Future Society's World 2000 is useful but not comprehensive.</p>	<p><b><u>World in Crisis: six 'Negatrends'</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time needed to see and fix worldview deficiencies</li> <li>• Global economy doesn't work well</li> <li>• Failure to resolve "global problematique"</li> <li>• Technical innovation creates new dilemmas</li> <li>• Inadequate ethical basis (and unsustainable)</li> <li>• Inadequate investment in foresight.</li> </ul>

**Technology is over-valued,  
language, meaning and  
conflicting interests  
are overlooked.**

Denial and distraction don't erase our deep knowledge that something is seriously wrong.

Industrial era ethics:

- pragmatism
- utilitarianism
- competitive individualism
- marketing

Spiritual vacuum.

**Part 2****APPLYING AND EXTENDING FORESIGHT**

<p><b><u>Chapter Four</u></b> <b>WHAT IS FORESIGHT?</b></p> <p>Commonsense. Experience (interaction of memory and foresight, identity and purpose) is read upon yet undetermined situations, to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• avoid dangers</li> <li>• reduce risks</li> <li>• manifest highest potential</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Foresight as process</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessing consequences of present decisions, actions</li> <li>• Avoiding problems through early warning and guidance</li> <li>• Pro-active strategies (present implications of possible future events)</li> <li>• Envisioning desired futures -- intersects with creative and visioning work.</li> </ul>
<p>At individual level, thinking about futures is apparently effortless. But in fact is complex.</p> <p>Analogy: vision... we are not conscious of highly complex biological processes. Even experts specialise, e.g. optometrists, eye surgeons, lens makers.</p> <p>On larger scale, need to understand these complex systems. This not just a matter of technique. Need balance of rational, social, ethical.</p>	<p><b><u>Traditional understandings</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Look before you leap"</li> <li>• "Forewarned is forearmed"</li> <li>• "A stitch in time saves nine"</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Accepted uses of individual foresight</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Storage of food</li> <li>• Construction of defences</li> <li>• Design of tools and buildings for future use</li> <li>• Weather</li> <li>• Personal transitions</li> <li>• Planning a journey</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Fragmented foresight at social level</u></b></p> <p>We already have isolated examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• insurance, security</li> <li>• police/emergency services</li> <li>• armed forces</li> <li>• hospitals, preventive health programs.</li> </ul>	<p>Wider response takes longer. Eg. the ozone problem was identified in 1974. World action resulted in 1990.</p> <p>Time frames of physical effects on the planet are out of step with those of governments and decision-makers.</p>



<p><b><u>Barriers to wider use of foresight</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future discounting (often by default)</li> <li>• Empiricist fallacy</li> <li>• Sense of disempowerment (and reality avoidance)</li> <li>• Belief that time and space perspectives are fixed</li> <li>• Fear of foresight (wrong, or too hard)</li> <li>• Cost of foresight.</li> </ul>	<p>From horse and cart to superhighway --</p> <p>Foresight takes on added urgency in times of rapid change plus uncertainty.</p> <p>You could safely doze while driving a horse and cart. You can barely blink while driving on a superhighway.</p> <p>Braking distance increases with speed. Our societies are travelling fast and our view of the future is limited. This is a dangerous habit!</p>
<p><b><u>Chapter 5</u></b> <b>TOWARDS MORE FAR-SIGHTED INSTITUTIONS</b></p> <p>Failure to address the future is a systematic malfunction.</p> <p>We need an informed and collective view of the future as the velocity of change increases.</p> <p>It is not enough to monitor external trends. This works in limited contexts but has neither depth nor insight into complex systems to guide public policy and reform the big institutions.</p> <p>Need facts <i>and</i> changing ideas.</p>	<p><b><u>Some trends</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interconnection - local/global</li> <li>• material growth meeting limits</li> <li>• industrial age chronic problems not resolved as new generation of difficulties emerges</li> <li>• Third World development pressures</li> <li>• marginalised people</li> <li>• environmental erosion / population explosion</li> <li>• new technologies promise and create solutions</li> <li>• fossil fuels -- cost will promote 'soft energy'</li> </ul>
<p><u>Critically important messages from these:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• our institutions are out of touch</li> <li>• we need to look and steer more carefully</li> <li>• business-as-usual no longer works</li> <li>• we could "overshoot &amp; collapse" - social and environmental sub-systems at risk</li> <li>• need to establish sustainability as central socio-economic-political goal.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Old industrial certainties impede social learning - eg.:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unlimited growth</li> <li>• unqualified optimism</li> <li>• nature as a resource</li> <li>• science and technology as primary concerns</li> </ul> <p>But these are changing.</p>

**Ideas in transition**

**Ideas in decline**

**Resurgent ideas**

Industrial worldview  
 Full employment  
 Nature a resource  
 Development = progress  
 Growth is good  
 Exploitation  
 Technology is neutral

Renewed worldview  
 Redefine employment  
 Nature a community  
 Development problematic  
 Qualitative growth  
 Sustainability  
 Technology has embedded social,  
 political interests  
 Decline of nation state  
 Unity of subject and object  
 Unitary reality  
 Recovery of sacred  
 Long-term thinking  
 Wide implementation of foresight

Dominance of nation state  
 Subject/object  
 Fragmented reality  
 Loss of sacred  
 Short-term thinking  
 Lack of foresight

Decline of old ideas accompanied by rise in new - eg.:

- sustainability to stewardship
- "economics of permanence"
- dualism to interpenetrating systems and flows of energy, materials, significance
- meaning everywhere replaces meaninglessness
- notion of design reappearing in unlikely places, eg. cosmology
- "re-enchantment" of the world -- rediscovery of the sacred
- foresight itself.

**Reinventing politics and governance**

- different time frames for different purposes eg.  
*building - 100 years*  
*plutonium disposal - 250,000 years*
- institutional innovations - councils for consultation and guidance
- new generation of politicians
- economics of permanence, post-material
  - restore, conserve, heal, cultural and artistic values, revalue instead of discounting future
- foresight & educational innovation (future is the real business of education)

Commerce for human needs in a fragile world... move from "consumer" to broader view of being human and meeting human needs.

A new ethic for business activity based on low-impact, long-term use and sustained yield.

**Media in transition**

Media respond to dramatic, visual, negative. Like people, respond to events more than processes.

But with new graphic power we can illustrate processes now. Good news is making news. We can now explore alternative futures.

<p><b><u>Chapter Six</u></b>  <b>EXTENDING FORESIGHT: ANALYSIS, IMAGINATION, SOCIAL IMAGING</b></p> <p>Use analysis <i>and</i> imagination  Slaughter's divergence map illustrates span of work and scenarios.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breakdown scenarios</li> <li>• Repressive (over-managed) societies</li> <li>• Business-as-usual</li> <li>• Ecological decentralist</li> <li>• Transformational societies</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>QUEST tool</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation</li> <li>• Environmental scanning workshop</li> <li>• Intermediate analysis and report</li> <li>• Strategic options workshop</li> <li>• Follow-up work.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Speculative imagination</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fiction</li> <li>• science-fiction</li> </ul>	<p><i>Imaging as social or group process:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Options and possibilities offer choices</li> <li>• Use active, shaping components of human consciousness (and discourse)</li> <li>• imaging is central to many vocations - builder, architect, engineer. Writer, painter, sculptor.</li> <li>• But grand visions have become rare in the 20th century.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Beyond Utopia and Dystopia</u></b></p> <p>From utopia to dystopia:  Sir Thomas Moore "<i>Utopia</i>" 1516  H.G. Wells "<i>A Modern Utopia</i>" "1905  E.M. Forster "<i>The Machine Stops</i>" 1909</p> <p>Like optimism and pessimism, utopia and dystopia are ambiguous: need to interpret carefully.</p>	<p>Popular images of the future are becoming more negative.</p> <p>Capacity to imagine new and different futures has declined. Need social processes to encourage people to do so.</p> <p>There are grounds for re-establishing more constructive views.</p>

<p><b><u>Futures workshops</u></b></p> <p>These are presented in different ways. Some are exploratory, open. Some are structured. Some are both.</p> <p>Some are rational/logical, some emotional/intuitive, some are both.</p> <p>Others address underlying issues like dealing with fears.</p>	<p><b><i>Chapter Seven</i></b>  <b>WHY WE NEED INSTITUTIONS OF FORESIGHT</b></p> <p>We are plunging blindly into a challenging, unstable period.</p> <p>Alternatives are cultural maturity or collapse.</p> <p>We can choose a wise culture, or face a new Dark Age by the 22nd century.</p>
<p><b><u>Why a Dark Age?</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ruined ecosystems</li> <li>• mined-out resources</li> <li>• planetary pollution</li> <li>• disease</li> <li>• violence</li> <li>• decay, entropy</li> </ul> <p><i>"A planet so ruined by... thoughtless, short-term exploitation and damage that its ability to support human and other life has rapidly declined".</i></p>	<p><b><u>Seven Institutions of Foresight (1995)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congressional Clearing House on the Future &amp; Congressional Institute for the Future (USA)</li> <li>• Foresight Institute (USA)</li> <li>• Global Network on Responsibilities to Future Generations (UNESCO, Malta)</li> <li>• Council for Posterity (UK)</li> <li>• Commission for the Future (Australia)</li> <li>• Institute for 21st Century Studies/ Millenium Institute (USA, Sweden)</li> <li>• International Futures Library (Austria)</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Contributions of these institutions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• raising issues, highlighting dangers, alternatives, choices</li> <li>• publicising emerging pictures</li> <li>• contributing to knowledge about foresight</li> <li>• identifying dynamics and policy implications</li> <li>• identifying aspects of new order, agenda-setting</li> <li>• helping social innovation</li> <li>• helping overcome fears, empower</li> <li>• helping organisations evolve</li> <li>• providing shelters for futures work.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Pointers for future foresight work:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• outreach to build constituencies</li> <li>• quality control</li> <li>• communication (eg. electronic network)</li> <li>• in-depth research</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Costs and benefits:</u></b></p> <p>Example: Application for funding to help Melbourne graffiti kids, \$A40,000 against estimated cost to community of their activities \$A500,000. Request denied. Real cost to community 1994 was \$A12m.</p>

<p>Another example:</p> <p>The Swift-Tuttle comet in 1992 came close enough to pose significant threat of collision (which could have destroyed civilisation). It will come close again in 2126 and in 3044 the risk of a direct hit is thought to be high.</p> <p>Astronomers have been unable to get funding to identify such objects in time to act.</p>	<p><u>The foresight imperative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our species has compromised the environment so future viability cannot be assumed.</li> <li>• Short-term, untenable, ideologies, value and systems and belief systems have unacceptable costs.</li> <li>• Widespread implementation of foresight may provide powerful stimulus for system change.</li> </ul>
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**Part 3****CULTURAL RECOVERY IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

<p><b><i>Chapter 8</i></b> <b>STRATEGIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE</b></p> <p>Young people feel fear... and this is justified.</p> <p>They seek avoidance and diversion, but this is not enough.</p> <p>Living in the transition between eras is uncomfortable. But there are ways to deal with this.</p>	<p>Six response strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the effects of youth media</li> <li>• Change fears into motivations, increase sense of empowerment</li> <li>• Explore social innovations</li> <li>• See future as part of present</li> <li>• Use futures concepts, tools, ideas</li> <li>• Design your way out of industrial era</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Chapter 9</i></b> <b>ASPECTS OF A RENEWED WORLDVIEW</b></p> <p>How does one reconstruct a culture? Or does the very idea suggest an overblown self-confidence?</p> <p>We need to remember that humans can play an active role in shaping their present and future.</p>	<p><b><u>The central idea of the foresight principle is that humans are creators of culture, makers of meaning, conscious agents in the historical process.</u></b></p>
<p>Processes of meaning-making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using cultural editing</li> <li>• renegotiating meanings</li> <li>• encouraging social learning and social innovations</li> <li>• balancing instrumental rationality with participating consciousness.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>New or renewed worldview commitments</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop a global, systemic view (noting that IT agendas are subverted by vested interests)</li> <li>• take a broader view of time... matching time frames to activities, consciously</li> <li>• recover a sense of the future</li> <li>• repair damage, reduce risk</li> <li>• create sustainable economies</li> <li>• find new purpose and meanings</li> <li>• recover intrinsic value</li> <li>• move towards a new world view.</li> </ul>

<p><b><i>Chapter 10</i></b> <b>TOWARDS A WISE CULTURE</b></p> <p>Is it time to move beyond instrumental labels?</p> <p>Instead of "industrial age", "information age", why not a desirable human quality?</p> <p>Why not wisdom?</p>	<p>The transpersonal perspective offers a new view of the possibilities of human growth towards wisdom (homo gestalt).</p> <p>Humanistic psychology reaches beyond behaviourism and psychoanalysis.</p> <p>Perhaps we need a new map of knowledge. (See Ken Wilber, <i>Up From Eden</i>).</p>
<p><i>A persistent theme of futures work is the struggle between human intention and abstract imperatives arising from technical systems.</i></p> <p><i>This needs more public discussion, but the issue is badly fudged in education and the mass media.</i></p>	<p>The idea of separate selves is a western myth. We are immersed in a diverse web of being that is constantly inter-acting.... flows of food, energy, oxygen, relationships move through the web.</p> <p>This connectedness can be experienced directly. The experience has been reported by mystics and others for centuries.</p>
<p>Our modern understandings have moved from behaviourism and psychoanalysis on to humanistic psychology... to the level beyond self-realisation identified by Maslow as self-transcendence.</p>	<p>Wilber traces growth --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• subhuman, subconscious, pre-personal period of early ages</li> <li>• into spiritual awareness and transpersonal flights</li> <li>• to openness, clarity, awareness.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Human consciousness at this level should be at the centre of our future vision.</u></b></p> <p><b><u>We must shift the focus of concern from technocratic to human growth and development.</u></b></p>	<p>Homo gestalt offers a vision of what we may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• intrinsic value as a living reality</li> <li>• full systems consciousness</li> <li>• engaging in the present by empathising with past and future.</li> </ul> <p>Such a being would have outgrown low-level motives (eg. fear, anger). Gender is transcended. "Inner" and "outer" are fused in a rich tapestry of unfolding meaning.</p>

<p><b><u>The broader map of knowledge</u></b></p> <p>Wilber offers a framework for examining distinct ways of knowing and being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• body (eye of flesh) - empirical, operates on nature, perceives external world of space, time, objects</li> <li>• mind (eye of reason) - ideas, images, meanings, concepts (theory, history, insight), knowledge of philosophy, logic, mind</li> <li>• spirit (eye of contemplation) - goal is suchness; realm, transcendence; knowledge of transcendent realities.</li> </ul>	<p>These are categories of being which are distinctly different.</p> <p>Criteria from lower categories cannot be read onto high categories with any meaning (hence "category errors").</p> <p>Physical (eg. emotional) responses are often incompatible with rational thinking and behaviour.</p> <p>Nor can we apply rational judgements to the spiritual realm.</p>
<p><b><u>We can develop wisdom</u></b></p> <p><i>We can develop wisdom at the individual level, at the institutional level (especially through new approaches to education and the use of fore-sight), and at the social level.</i></p>	<p><b><i>Conclusion:</i></b> <b>THE PROMISE OF THE 21ST CENTURY</b></p> <p>The millennium may be a pivot point in history. It leads us to look back 100 years, and forward 100 years.</p> <p>It highlights our 200-year-present.</p> <p>This perspective catches the imagination.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The end of the 19th century was characterised by optimism and hope.</li> <li>• The 20th century has been harrowing.</li> <li>• As we enter the 21st century we have a deep knowledge that everything is at stake.</li> </ul>	<p>Some people argue that we will continue to cope with problems as they arise... that mankind is clever enough to work out a way.</p> <p>This is a dangerously sanguine view. Never before in history have there been</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• so many people</li> <li>• such powerful tools and technologies</li> <li>• such a change of scale in activity</li> <li>• planetary life-support systems in such a compromised status.</li> </ul>



<p><b><u>This is the pivotal psychological reality of our time (Macy).</u></b></p> <p><b><u>With few exceptions, previous generations always assumed that other generations would follow.</u></b></p> <p><b><u>We can no longer do this.</u></b></p>	<p>Therefore it seems clear there is no transcendent principle which dictates that the experiment of life on planet Earth must succeed.</p> <p>Indeed, the species is in great peril. We face unprecedented challenge.</p>
<p><b><u>The new century offers a chance to take stock. To review options. To discuss and create the promise of the 21st century.</u></b></p> <p><b><u>The single greatest impediment to the future is the defective worldview beneath the surface of our societies.</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Higher levels of existence are ignored or misrepresented.</u></b></p>	<p>Human development can reverse the loss of meaning. No upper limits to human capacity have been established. New dimensions of significance lie ahead of us.</p> <p>Focussing on external realities to the exclusion of inner growth has been almost fatally damaging to human existence.</p> <p><i>"There needs to be within the knower something adequate to that which is to be known" (Schumacher).</i></p>
<p>Many scenarios for the future are discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• radioactive desert</li> <li>• life-support systems destroyed</li> <li>• the "high frontier" (space)</li> <li>• advances in biotechnology (DNA, nanotechnology, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>But the fatal flaw is that all these fail to address human motives.</u></b></p>	<p>When primitive motives are associated with powerful technologies, the result is long-running disaster.</p> <p>But when higher motives apply, many problems disappear.</p> <p>There are new concerns to be addressed: ethical issues, the notion of 'enoughness', identification with the natural world, interest in future generations.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>WHEN THE RIGHT RELATIONSHIP IS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN PEOPLE, CULTURE, TECHNOLOGY, A NEW WORLD OF OPTIONS EMERGES.</u></b></p>	<p>We can't go back.</p> <p>We must create a new synthesis.</p> <p>We can't find answers solely in rational intelligence.</p> <p>Most of what we need lies in human and cultural development, in the ability to learn from the past and the future.</p>

<p><b>It is time to explore the heights of human ability and potential.</b></p>	<p><b><u>WE NEED TO ADD FORESIGHT AND WISDOM TO THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF SCIENCE, MACHINES AND RATIONALITY.</u></b></p>
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A revised version of this work, however, along with many others, is available on a CD-ROM – *Towards A Wise Culture*, published by Foresight International, PO Box 793, Indooroopilly, Queensland 4068, Australia.