

Civilizational futures within the integral futures framework: the plural quadrants

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Abstract

Purpose – Expanding on the findings of the SOPIFF research project, this paper aims to identify eight futures schools of thought, which are analyzed and critiqued through an integral framework. As “Part II” of a previous publication, it seeks to focus on the lower (plural) quadrants.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper adapts Ken Wilber’s integral theory to clarify various philosophical orientations to the future. It also adapts Fredrich Polak’s approach to futures as a matter of “social critique and reconstruction”; however, the approach is global, civilizational, and integral, so it proposes civilizational critique and integral reconstruction as a method for evaluating futures schools of thought.

Findings – The IF framework is found to be a valuable theoretical and analytical tool for clarifying images of the future; it shows lines of development within each quadrant and interactions between quadrants, illustrating the effectiveness of the four-quadrant approach.

Research limitations/implications – It further illuminates the “global problematique” expressed in the SOPIFF project and proposes the IF framework as a way to interpret those research findings.

Practical implications – This approach to futures/foresight studies broadens the range and offers more depth to conceptions of the future, so it should help to develop/improve futures methodologies/practices in general.

Social implications – Civilizational critique and integral reconstruction of images of the future imply unprecedented social change.

Originality/value – The paper should help futurists to see and interpret the “bigger picture” of civilizational futures through revealing the “crack” of the modern image of the future, how it relates to the current world crisis, and what is needed to heal the crack, so a new vision of a preferred future can emerge.

Keywords Society, Social change, Philosophical concepts

Paper type Research paper

Futures schools of thought as shifting images of the future

Because of his ground-breaking, monumental study on the relationship of a society’s image of the future to the rise and fall of civilizations, Fred Polak (1971) is often considered to be the ideological “father” of futures studies. In *The Image of the Future*, Polak was greatly concerned that the modern image of the future was “under attack” and thus unable to propel human civilization forward into the realm of the “other.” In effect, for Polak, the modern image of the future was “severely dislocated” or “cracked” while the prospects for healing this crack did not seem propitious. Thus, wondered Polak, without a viable image of the future, how could a society or civilization meet the challenge of the future to realize itself in time? (Polak, 1971, p. 14, 222)[1].

Polak’s philosophical turmoil about the fractured image of the future in modern times is reflected in the birth of futures studies in the 1950s. In the US the emerging

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military-industrial complex of the Pentagon viewed the future through the lens of developing a long-term strategy to win the Cold War. Also, the rapid acceleration of the rise and fall of corporations brought about the realization of the corporate need to capture future markets as a means of long-term survival. At the same time, advances in science and technology were also rapidly accelerating to bring about profound social changes; the future seemed imminent, and those who could not adapt to these changes were trapped in a state of “future shock.”

While Polak was writing his treatise on the importance of the image of the future, Harrison Brown (1956), a professor of geochemistry at the California Institute of Technology, in *The Challenge of Man's Future*, from an entirely different perspective, focused on the material conditions within industrial civilization through the dynamic interactions of population growth, the depletion of natural resources, and the accumulation of destructive impacts on the environment. Then with the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962, the environmental movement was born, and many became concerned about the long-term effects of the “progress” of industrial civilization: the rapid changes wrought on nature; the quality of life in an increasingly dependent, passive, materialist society; and the future of humankind under the accelerating conditions of population growth, natural resource depletion, and pollution (Carson, 1962). Subsequently, ten years after *Silent Spring* was published, the Club of Rome sponsored a study by Dennis and Donella Meadows (along with J. Randers and W.W. Behrens III) (Meadows *et al.*, 1972), which used computer modeling of dynamic systems to simulate interactions and the exponential growth of five variables: world population, resources depletion, industrialization, pollution, and food production. The conclusion of the study depicted an “overreach and collapse” scenario of industrial civilization during the twenty-first century.

Such was the general backdrop concerning “the future” when the first futures studies program in the US came into existence in the early 1970s at the University of Massachusetts. During those early days of academic futures studies, according to Dr Chris Dede (currently a professor at Harvard), discussions concerning the future conceptualized into three main schools of thought: the “positive extrapolists,” “negative extrapolists,” and “transformationalists.” By the time I enrolled in the futures studies program at the University of Houston – Clear Lake in the late 1980s, these same schools of thought dominated the discourse about the future. Some of the major examples of the positive extrapolist futures schools of thought can be found in the writings of H. Khan, J. Simon, A. Toffler, and R. Kurzweil (“before the Singularity” – P. Bishop)[2]. Additionally, examples of the negative extrapolist futures schools of thought can be found in the writings/studies of P. Ehrlich, The Club of Rome, Dennis and Donella Meadows, L. Brown, and B. McKibben, while examples of the transformationalist schools of futures thought can be found in the writings of W. Harmon, R. Theobald, O. Markley (also a futures studies professor at UHCL during that time), V. Vinge, and R. Kurzweil (“again, after the singularity” – P. Bishop).

In “Part I” of this paper (published last fall), I briefly described the contradictory, antagonistic positions of the positive and negative extrapolist schools of thought; however, since the two major futures schools of thought (along with the “third school,” the “transformationalists”) are foundational with respect to futures studies ideology and the image of the future of human civilization, I will elaborate more about them, especially in light of Polak's interpretation of the “cracked” modern image of the future. Furthermore, I will relate how these futures schools of thought have expanded (or further “fractured” – depending on your point-of-view) since the 1980s to the present-day eight futures schools of thought, which will then be identified and analyzed within the integral futures (IF) framework. Although in “Part I” I focused on the four futures schools of thought (Techno-futures, Transhuman Singularity, Anti-civilizationalists, and Spiritual Transformationalists) within the “singular” quadrants of the IF framework, I will briefly summarize those and then continue with the discussion concerning the four futures schools of thought (Global Empire, Global Sustainable Development, Permaculture, and Earth Community/Great Transition Initiative) within the “plural” quadrants of the IF framework.

Positive extrapolist, negative extrapolist, and transformationalist schools of futures thought

In the late 1980s it became apparent that the three futures schools of thought revealed a severely fractured, dislocated image of the future, as each school seemed thoroughly entrenched in its own version of the future. In particular, the two main schools (the positive and negative extrapolists) held seemingly irreconcilable, polar opposite images of the future with the main point of contention revolving around the question of technology. For the positive extrapolists, technology was mostly a good thing, as the main driver of the future; in fact, for many positive extrapolists, man's relationship with technology was considered essential to the evolution of humankind, having even a transforming impact on what it means to be human. Of course, there were some differences on this matter; for example, even though all positive extrapolists were techno-enthusiasts, embracing technology as mostly "a good thing," and perhaps even instrumental to the evolution of humankind and human civilization, some futurists such as Ray Kurzweil went a step further and became more emphatic about technology's power to transform human nature. Though some positive extrapolists were not yet comfortable or enthusiastic about this direction of futures thought, transhumanism does seem to be the implicit, inevitable conclusion of positive extrapolism and the techno-enthusiast image of man's future.

Furthermore, most techno-enthusiasts seemed quite oblivious to the negative side-effects of industrial civilization, possessing "great faith," as it were, in the powers of science and technology to resolve the accelerating global problems linked with the expansion or "globalization" of industrial civilization. The great faith of the positive-extrapolists was the main point of contention by those with a very different image of the future – the negative extrapolists. The latter critiqued positive extrapolism's "great faith" as an example of scientism, which tends to blind itself to the positive feedback loops of industrial civilization. In other words, the negative extrapolists were skeptical about the ability of science and technology to resolve the exponential side-effects of population growth, massive natural resources depletion, and eco systems destruction (due to pollution, ozone depletion, and global warming); moreover, they concluded that unless humankind takes an active and even urgent interest in addressing this global systems crisis in ways that involve more than just waiting and hoping for the great powers of science and technology to resolve them – then an overshoot-and-collapse scenario of human civilization (accompanied by environmental/eco-systems collapse) on a grand scale seems unavoidable.

The "other" futures school of thought, the transformationalists, is often thought of as the "third way" or "alternative futures," which largely viewed the global crisis of humanity as an identity crisis involving a paradigmatic shift of consciousness. This school, largely influenced by the new age movement, was more accepting and sensitive to the spiritual nature and common spiritual inheritance of humanity. Though not adhering to any particular religion or theology, the transformationalists, nevertheless, recognized spirituality as essential to human evolution and often saw the current crisis as an essentially spiritual crisis due to the dominating influence of scientific-materialism and one-dimensional consumerism as the predominant, defining way of life in capitalist society. Regarding the question of the relationship of technology to human evolution and the crisis of civilization, with the exception of Ray Kurzweil's positive extrapolist version of the transformation of human nature via technology, transformationalist thought was generally more in line with the conclusions of the negative extrapolists in that it too foresaw the inevitable collapse of industrial civilization and was likewise skeptical about the powers of science and technology (S&T) to resolve these global problems in a way that would bring about the necessary shift to a new paradigm. Since scientism and materialism inform the underlying, fundamental assumptions about the meaning of life within industrial civilization, without a change of these assumptions, the needed shift of paradigms cannot take place, regardless of the ever-increasing "progress" of S&T: we may only "progress" externally while, internally-speaking, the human consciousness and spirit lag behind and is even repressed, trapped, and mummified within a one-dimensional existence; as external structures solidify through the progress of S&T, following the mandate of world capitalism in a spiritually-suppressing, materialist,

consumer-based culture, even human nature is reinvented in the image of its machine, as automatons of a machine civilization. In this image of the future, the “transformation” of human nature indeed takes place as the transhumanists envision, but it is a transformation that emasculates spirituality.

From three to eight futures schools of thought

The three futures schools of thought were not only an expression of different positions regarding the relationship of humankind to technology; they were at the same time themselves indicative of the fractured image of the future of human civilization. Moreover, this process of disassociation and fracturing of the image of the future has continued through to the present time. For example, I mentioned that though many of the positive extrapolists were not quite ready to embrace the transhuman/singularity image of the future, this image of the future was, nevertheless, the inevitable and logical conclusion of techno-futures, and as a matter of fact, now represents a transformation of futures thought within the techno-enthusiast camp of positive extrapolism.

On the other end of the spectrum, the negative extrapolist camp of futures thought formed the image of global sustainability as the operative concept propelling the next stage of global consciousness, one that will have to go beyond Americanized globalization and empire (another futures school of thought, which became apparent and crystallized after the end of the Cold War). Negative extrapolists also linked up with localized organic farming communities such as “permaculture,” seen as experiments in sustainable living that might be replicated globally. Thus, from these new types of alternative communities, who held a strong connection to the Earth, a new culture could emerge to inform the next stage of planetary consciousness and paradigm shift – the new image of the future as global sustainable development.

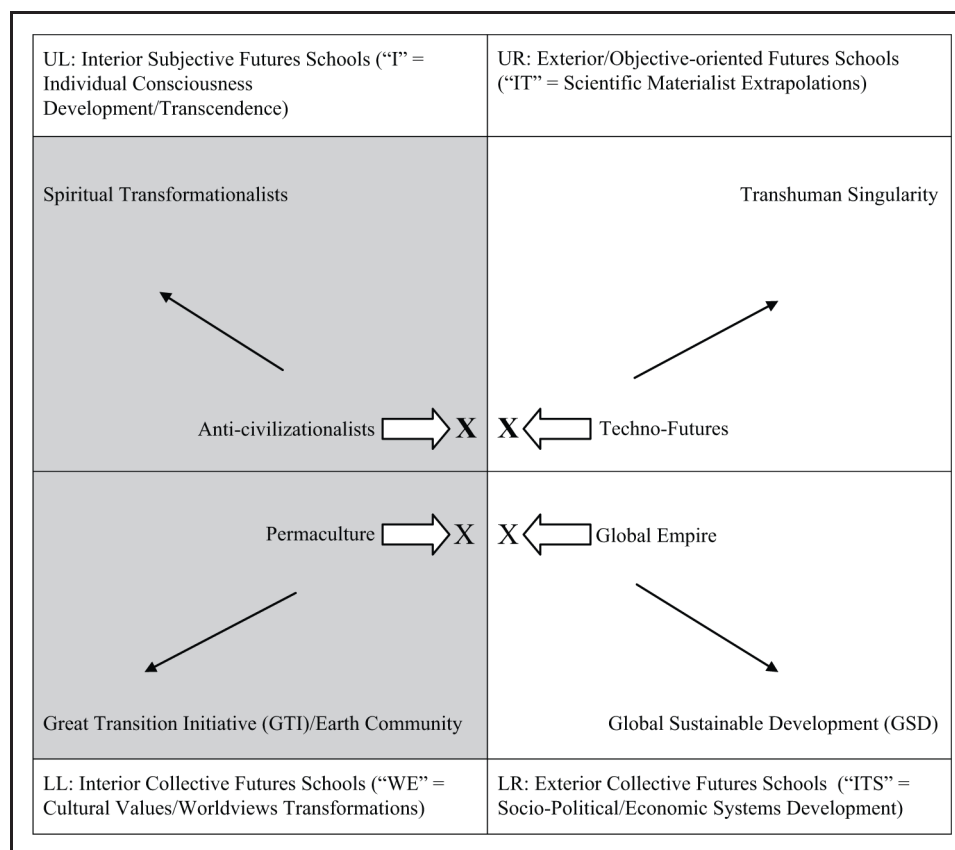
However, this new, alternative culture and worldview could not emerge without including the transformationalist spirituality of the individual. The transformationalist school of futures thought had strong connections to positive existentialists and postmodernists such as Theodore Roszak and Colin Wilson, writers who had experienced existential angst but had not succumbed to nihilism; rather, they reaffirmed spirituality as essential to the evolution of humankind and its future civilization. Like Soren Kierkegaard, such individuals held searing critiques of mainstream religious establishments and the pseudo-spiritual teachings and empty rituals that were blinding and brainwashing the masses, and yet they also held scientific materialism with as much contempt for its reductionism and wholesale denial of spirituality. Furthermore, the great spiritual teachers who have appeared throughout human history, such as Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, St Francis, Ghandi, Paramahansa Yogananda, and other saints and sages throughout history, were not regarded by transformationalists merely as obscure (hence irrelevant) figures of the past – instead, they were seen as luminaries of the future, as the lighthouses and pathways of human evolution.

Thus, in “Part I” of this paper, I refer to the transformationalists as “spiritual transformationalists” and placed them within the upper left (UL) quadrant of the IF framework, which operates as a kind of “map” of the future, at least in terms of images projected for the future of human civilization. Moreover, the IF framework sheds more light on the origin of the “cracked” image of the future that Polak lamented, and also reveals how new, alternative images of the future are emerging to challenge stories of the future that have thus far dominated discourse.

You will notice in the Figure 1 that the spiritual transformationalists are positioned in the UL quadrant as a development of anti-civilizationalists.

As was pointed out in “Part I,” the upper, singular quadrants focus on “man,” and the anti-civilizationalists appear in direct opposition to “techno-futures”; likewise, in the lower, plural quadrants, “permaculture” also appears in direct opposition to “global empire.” These left hand futures schools of thought have emerged out of a sense of an alienated future, as a result of the repressive “flatland” perspectives of techno-futures and global empire in the right hand quadrants; unless these emerging, alternative images of the future

Figure 1 Futures schools of thought within the integral framework

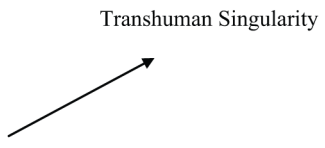


are able to develop within their respective quadrants, there is no chance of reconciliation with their "nemesis" schools of thought in the right hand quadrants. Moreover, it is not that these schools (especially those in the right hand quadrants) are mere reflections of the present, as one might at first glance assume; of course, they are certainly firmly grounded in the present, as they should be, yet they also, at the same time, project images of the future of human civilization. In the left hand quadrants, however, anti-civilizationalists and permaculture emerge as rejections of predominate futures images in the right hand quadrants because of one-dimensional "flatland" perspectives and empire domination schemes, which have historically denied and suppressed left hand, alternative futures images. That is why both anticivilizationalists and permaculture appear to be non-progressive and even futureless; they both represent postmodern rejections of the modern image of the future.

One must consider how "flatland" has affected images of the future[3]; that is why these futures schools within the IF framework do not necessarily correspond to a "normal" integral framework. Instead, the IF framework as presented reveals how Polak's "cracked" image of the future is actually the result of a right hand quadrant appropriation of the image of the future, resulting in a one-dimensional flatland image of techno-futures and globalized empire domination (see Figure 2). Thus, the futures schools of thought (in Figure 1) within the left hand quadrants are nascent images of the future, which are not mere correlates of right hand quadrants (what would be the case in a normal world rather than "flatland"), but are instead the emergence of alternative futures, as antitheses of the right hand schools of thought concerning the future of human civilization.

Having posited these eight futures schools of thought within the IF framework, it is also important to explain how they interact (or fail to interact) with one another and, more important, how they should develop and interact to realize the future of humankind. For this

Figure 2 The future of flatland civilization

UL: Interior Subjective Futures Schools ("I" = Individual Consciousness Development/Transcendence)	UR: Exterior/Objective-oriented Futures Schools ("IT" = Scientific Materialist Extrapolations)
This quadrant has been totally reduced to a mere shadow of the Right Hand quadrant futures schools of thought. Spirituality has been systematically denied and suppressed or else represented as pseudo-spirituality, which is but a shell or caricature of authentic spirituality. Consciousness has been mechanized and flattened such that it merely replicates advances in artificial intelligence: just as machine consciousness is made to replicate human consciousness, so human consciousness is manufactured in the image of the machine.	 <p style="text-align: right;">Transhuman Singularity</p> <p>Techno-Futures</p>
A materialist and consumerist culture expresses values that conceive the public good as a mere shadow-reflection of the corporate good. The "good" of the corporation is determined by the "goods" it produces, which are "good" for the individual to purchase and consume; thus, the individual exists merely to serve the interests of the corporation, which has become a global empire in a flat world.	<p style="text-align: center;">Global Empire of the corporatocracy in an unsustainable technological society = THE COLLAPSE OF INDUSTRIAL CIVILIZATION (GSD is an impossibility)</p>
LL: Interior Collective Futures Schools ("WE" = Cultural Values/Worldviews Transformations)	LR: Exterior Collective Futures Schools ("ITS" = Socio-Political/Economic Systems Development)

purpose, an integral reconstruction of the image of the future is part of an important, vital task to heal the divisions within futures studies and help crystallize the image of the future of human civilization, for as Fred Polak convincingly argued, without a clear vision of its future, human civilization will fail to meet the challenge of the future and will collapse.

This paper assumes that we now stand at an unprecedented historical and evolutionary juncture, and time is not in our favor: to delay, hesitate, or refuse to choose at this critical point in time also represents a choice that will only serve to perpetuate the negative impacts of the collapse already under way. The hope of humanity now lies in crystallizing its vision of the future so that this collapse will not be too devastating. For this purpose, an integral vision of the future represents a bridge for the reconstruction of the image of the future of civilization on the principles of sustainability and restoration in an earth community rather than on the militarism and domination schemes of global empire. Thus, this "great transition" from global empire to global sustainable development (GSD) recognizes that the predatory and runaway capitalism of industrial civilization has wrought the irresponsible, wanton destruction of the environment, ecosystems, indigenous peoples, and other species while pursuing a futureless-minded depletion of essential natural resources.

The time of the twenty-first century perhaps represents the greatest challenge of human civilization and evolution in the history of humankind. In order to meet this challenge, wise foresight must be developed to crystallize its image of the future before it is too late. The following offers an outline of the global crisis and a framework by which the various schools of thought regarding the future can be identified, analyzed, and critiqued; however, "social critique," as Polak would have it, is only half of the formula for authentic prognosis – the other

half being that of “reconstruction” of the image of the future, a task that the IF framework has the capacity to accomplish.

World systems analysis: the crisis of global capitalism

In consideration of the global problematique as a civilizational challenge, a study by Immanuel Wallerstein (2004) illustrates the nature of the looming crisis of western industrial civilization. In the final chapter of *World Systems Analysis*, Wallerstein makes a strong case that the present world capitalist system is in a serious crisis that does not appear to have a resolution; thus, it is not merely a “difficult period,” since if the difficulty can be resolved in some way, it does not constitute a true crisis: “True crises are those difficulties that cannot be resolved within the framework of the system, but instead can be overcome only by going outside of and beyond the historical system of which the difficulties are a part” (p. 76). In technical language, the system bifurcates, which is accompanied by wild oscillations as it becomes more and more chaotic. The members of this system are:

... called upon to make a historical choice about which of the alternative paths will be followed, that is, what kind of new system will be constructed. Since the existing system can no longer function adequately within its defined parameters, making a choice about the way out, about the future system (or systems) which are to be constructed, is inevitable ... The process of bifurcation is chaotic, which means that every small action during this period is likely to have significant consequences. We observe that under these conditions, the system tends to oscillate wildly. But eventually it leans in one direction. It normally takes quite some time before the definitive choice is made. We can call this a period of transition, one whose outcome is quite uncertain. At some point, however, there is a clear outcome and then we find ourselves ensconced in a different historical system (pp. 76-77).

Wallerstein asserts the uncertainty and unpredictability during this period of transition[4]. The outcome cannot be predicted because it depends on the choices that humanity collectively makes in the near future; thus, while time still allows, it is the task of futurists to clarify those choices and their possible outcomes and then outline the new emerging system, which will replace the world capitalist system[5].

While Wallerstein devotes much analysis to the internal contradictions (human-human) of the world capitalist system[6], he does not devote near as much analysis of the external contradictions (human-nature) of industrial civilization, which also constitute a crisis, one that is perhaps even more severe than the internal contradictions. Upon analysis of the external contradictions, we encounter a similar mentality as that of the endless accumulation of capital since the external contradictions, likewise, are marked by the endless growth and exploitation of natural resources, accompanied by endless waste and pollution of the ecosphere and global environment, in an exponential race to an eventual breakdown, collapse/crash scenario.

From the singular quadrants to the plural quadrants within the IF framework

In “Part I” (2009), the focus of this paper was on the singular quadrants of the IF framework, an analysis of futures schools of thought as they pertained to “man” in the singular in relation to civilization. These are the upper quadrants that have respective internal and external correlates, also including a line of development within each quadrant. However, these are incomplete without consideration of the plural correlates, and some of these obviously spill over into the plural quadrants such that the distinction between the two can become blurred. For example, even though Techno-futures is focused on man in the singular in the UR quadrant, technological systems form the base of much of the economic, social, and political systems of industrial civilization; hence, “techno-futures” is also expressed throughout the LR (“ITS”) quadrant. Similarly, we can discover commonalities between anti-civilizationalists and permaculture (the plural correlate in the LL “WE” quadrant) just as we can find interactions and commonalities between Spiritual Transformationalists (the line of development in the UL “I” quadrant) and Earth Community (the line of development in the LL “WE” quadrant)[7].

Each of the futures schools of thought within the plural quadrants of the IF framework will now be discussed, proceeding from the LR "ITS" quadrant of external, objective, economic and politico-socio systems of global empire, as well as its line of development towards global sustainable development (GSD), and then continuing to the LL "WE" quadrant of internal, subjective, shared values, ethics, and morals that form the culture and worldview for the "good" of a new civilization, beginning with permaculture and its line of development towards the great transition movement and earth community.

Global empire

In the previous section discussing Wallerstein's world systems analysis, I mentioned that Wallerstein gives little attention to the external contradictions (human-nature) of the world capitalist system. Furthermore, he mostly focuses on the growth of neoliberalism and globalization while hardly mentioning its relation to the historical context of the American empire, which is world-wide and more far-reaching and pervasive than any empire of the past[8]. For the most part, the recognition of this American global empire largely emerged during the Post Cold War era[9]. As Schlesinger (1999) questions, "Who can doubt that there is an American empire? – an 'informal' empire, not colonial in polity, but still richly equipped with imperial paraphernalia: troops, ships, planes, bases, proconsuls, local collaborators, all spread around the luckless planet"[10]. Likewise, Chalmers Johnson (2004) notes that the US deploys "... well over half a million soldiers, spies, technicians, teachers, dependents, and civilian contractors in other nations and just under a dozen carrier task forces in all the oceans and seas of the world. We operate numerous secret bases outside our territory to monitor what the people of the world, including our own citizens, are saying, faxing, or e-mailing one another" (p. 1). In fact, there is hardly a place in the world that is not in some way a part of or at least has not been impacted by the American empire.

Especially when we consider that the economic component of this empire goes hand in hand with the militaristic component, its reach is truly global. The historical dimension of how the economic, expansionist imperative depended on American military enforcement is key to understanding how the republic transformed into a global empire. By the time the American frontier was conquered in the late nineteenth century, the global expansionist effort was already underway by Presidents William McKinney and Theodore Roosevelt[11]. As Andrew Bacevich (2002), (professor of history and international relations at Boston University) relates, the goal, then as now, was to "create an integrated international order that offered no barriers to the flow of goods, capital, and ideas, and that is administered by the US. The whole world is to become a free-market economy, and the US military is there to remove any opposition to this process. And since there will be those who will not be happy with this project and will resist it, our foreign policy necessarily has to become, in essence, a military one"[12].

The question whether neoliberal globalization is indeed a form of American imperialism, realizing an American empire, has been hotly debated. However, the lens of the post Cold War era affords a clearer, more objective view, which indicates that this is indeed the case, if not only for the simple fact that, after the fall of the Soviet Union, once the Cold War smoke had cleared, the empire of the "sole superpower" remained firmly entrenched, revealing the mirror that had been there all along. After all, as Berman (2006) writes (referring to Ivan Eland (2004) in *The Empire Has No Clothes*), if the main goal "of US foreign policy after 1945 had been to fight communism, the *pax americana* we had established during the Cold War years would have been dismantled after 1991. But our military spending never dropped below Cold War levels after that date. The truth of the matter is that the conspiracy theory of a global red menace threatening to engulf the world was grossly exaggerated by the US for imperial purposes, to gain public support for military and political intervention in the affairs of other nations and for the huge defense budgets such intervention would require. In this way, the Cold War became the justification for building a global empire" (p. 114).

Thus, the American vision of the future as empire is one that has been in place almost since the beginning of the republic. Though it has at times been covertly promoted, concealed,

denied, and euphemistically repackaged, it is still a thread that runs throughout its history, from Manifest Destiny to the Open Door notes to Paul Nitze's 1950 top secret National Security Council document known as NSC-68, which provided the overriding ideological imperative for the Cold War, laying down the Manichaeic gauntlet that "a defeat of free institutions anywhere is a defeat everywhere" (as quoted by Berman, 2006, p. 118). The American interests that needed to be secured globally were expansive and indefinable so that the Cold War could be prolonged indefinitely, until such interests became synonymous with the global empire itself.

A central problem with the American nature and culture is that such interests have never been clearly defined except in terms of "business." For example, what else could such "free institutions" referred to in the NSC-68 document be if not strategic business interests globally? Surely, protecting such "free institutions" has hardly been a matter of protecting democracy globally. History has already given its verdict on that matter, and the US record does not fare well. It might be worthwhile then to explore what exactly is meant by "free" institutions.

The concept of freedom is certainly a cardinal principle that defines the American nature and culture. Historically, this "freedom," however, has largely been interpreted as a negative freedom, which is, simply put, freedom from, which is the freedom to not be controlled by an external power such as the state or a state-sponsored church. The liberties enumerated in the American Bill of Rights spell out these individual freedoms; however, what is often missing from the individualist notion of freedom is the concept of "positive freedom," i.e. freedom for [13]. The only thing in American culture that possibly comes close to this notion is that of property, the cardinal principle of capitalism. Historically speaking then, American expansionism has been simply a matter of acquiring more and more territory, or "property" – but property for what? Especially when considering the dynamic character of American capitalism and its global ambition to acquire or else dominate such "property," then the American notion of positive freedom can be interpreted as the "right" to "do business" internationally, i.e. to acquire or else dominate "property" or "territory" on American terms to serve American interests – neoliberal globalization with teeth.

To put this in a futurist context then is to emphasize the freedom for over the freedom from. However, this requires knowing who you are. How can you know where you are going if you do not know who you are? This is the crisis of the American identity, which has largely been defined by the negative character of freedom from while the positive character of freedom for has merely the external correlate of property, territory, expansion, globalization – all matters of "doing business" and protecting American business interests internationally. Yet without an internal correlate of positive freedom, the for to shape its identity and guide its future, we can only expect that this "business future," is but a veiled imperialist venture to make the world over in the American image. It is the image of the future as an Americanized global empire, and it will not go far, will not last long, and like most ideological utopian projects and empires, will very likely end badly; as a matter of fact, it is already ending badly. The question for the future then is whether it will pull the world down with it into a chaotic state of permanent war and ecological and environmental disaster, or whether it will give up its ambition of global empire and transform itself into a power to realize GSD in an Earth Community.

Empire globalization futures and the vision of global empire

A number of futurists these days complain that the futures field is not taken seriously and has not gained the legitimacy that it should. Such disappointment is understandable; however, this assessment is only partially true. What is often underestimated is the impact that futures tools and methods have had in the rise of the American corporatocracy and empire. Its influence is quite evident in the American military, especially in the US Air Force Academy. Also the Pentagon, CIA and National Intelligence Council periodically use futures methodologies to turn out reports that feature scenarios of the future [14]. In fact, some futurists have unwittingly contributed to this development by hiring themselves out in the service of the American empire to strategize its permanence in the future [15]. Such

co-optation of futures methods is by no means “neutral” since it seeks to dominate and colonize the future as the “final frontier” of Empire, with its strategy of coercion or perpetual war against those civilian populations that attempt to resist, especially in the developing and underdeveloped regions of the world.

The image of the future as the vision of Empire, with global war as the principal means to achieve global domination, is frightening. In this vision, war becomes a permanent, determining fixture of social relations. Hardt and Negri (2005) write extensively about the postmodern global reality of the “interminable and proliferating nature of war,” which is “becoming a permanent social relation” and the “primary organizing principle of society,” of which politics is merely “one of its guises”: war has become “a regime of biopower, that is, a form of rule aimed not only at controlling the population but producing and reproducing all aspects of social life” (pp. 11-12).

The image of the future as global empire also has features of social-Darwinism and Malthusianism. One of the central problems it seeks to conquer is simply that of excessive population growth. As Hardt and Negri (2005) point out, today’s “Malthusianism” often takes “the form of withholding from some populations aid for food or sanitation infrastructure and even coercive sterilization campaigns” (p. 166). Moreover, today’s multinational corporations are “disinclined to invest in the most impoverished parts of the world and sometimes even refuse to sell them medicines at prices they can afford. Poverty and disease become indirect tools of population control” (p. 166). Neither are they interested in “bettering the lives of the poor or maintaining a sustainable total global population in line with the capacities of the planet but are rather concerned primarily with which social groups reproduce and which do not” (p. 166). Such a system is rapidly becoming a “global apartheid,” which is not merely a system of “exclusion, as if subordinated populations were simply cut off, worthless, and disposable. In the global Empire today, as it was before in South Africa, apartheid is a productive system of hierarchical inclusion that perpetuates the wealth of the few through the labor and poverty of the many” (pp. 166-7).

Thus, the imperatives of Empire insinuate social-Darwinist rationalizations; for example, if the carrying capacity of the planet can only handle 20 percent of the population at the current lifestyle, so be it. The only real question then for empire is how to “weed out” the “unselected” 80 percent gradually in a way that will not offend the sensibilities of the morally pretentious; the issues of social engineering and genocide must never emerge. Cooperation is vital to the security of empire. All violence is justified if it is *seen* to serve the greater good, which is determined to be global security, yet at the same time is almost always a matter of perpetuating and protecting the interests of empire. Results, rather than universal principles, in the postmodern global police state, justify the means[16], and such results are perceived, interpreted, and manipulated by the guardians of information in the corporate media; information control through the corporate media is a vital function for the legitimization and security of empire.

The decline of the American empire

Before the ink on the project for a new American century manifesto had barely dried, and before the dust of Richard Cheney’s “New Pearl Harbor” had hardly settled, it became evident at the very beginning of the twenty-first century that Goliath had been dealt a severe blow and was falling. History will surely record that its rise had been meteoric; its Republic had shone so very bright, lighting the world with the hope of liberty, yet the empire would fall just as rapidly as it rose. So, what will replace it? Will history repeat itself, as it has so many times, with one empire replacing another, or will the world realize that empires themselves are inherently destructive, that the time has come for all empire schemes to end with the American empire. As John Perkins (2007) writes:

History teaches that empires do not endure; they collapse or are overthrown. Wars ensue and another empire fills the vacuum. The past sends a compelling message. We must change. We cannot allow history to repeat itself (p. 7).

Indeed, just as there is speculation that China is the basis for the next empire, human civilization must realize that the time of empire is over, for the earth with its growing population, limited natural resources, stressed ecosystems, precarious climate change, species and habitat destruction, and environmental pollution, will not be able to maintain another empire based on the model of runaway, exploitive capitalism. Indeed, the time has come for the transition to a new economic model based on “natural” capitalism and GSD within Earth Community, which does not tolerate militarism and its pathological, power-crazed domination schemes. Otherwise, especially when we consider the enormous amounts of military armaments and weapons of mass destruction, the stakes are too high: the very future itself is now questionable, as the prognosis for a catastrophic, dystopian future rears its ugly head.

From global empire to global sustainable development

When the Brundtland Commission delivered its report, *Our Common Future* (Brundtland Commission, 1987), the concept and term “sustainable development” instantaneously became part of the lexicon of futures studies. The World Commission on Environment and Development had been asked by the Secretary General of the United Nations to formulate a “global agenda for change” that would “propose long term environmental strategies for achieving sustainable development by the year 2000 and beyond . . .”[17]. As Gro Harlem Brundtland (1987) pointed out in the “Chairman’s Foreword,” “development” had been perceived through the lens of the rich, more developed countries, as a matter of what the poorer countries could do to also become rich; thus, it was considered merely as a “concern of specialists,” who know best how to give “development assistance.” This one-dimensional view of development was misleading and quite inadequate to meet the challenge of development in a growingly complex planet plagued with environmental and ecological degradation, exponential population growth, devastating, brutal poverty, and economic inequalities between the “under” and “over” developed countries. Also, many of the “paths of development” within industrial civilization were clearly unsustainable such that prospects for the future were becoming grimmer, especially for the developing countries. Even then, in the late 80s, the Brundtland report (Brundtland Commission, 1987) recognized that the time had come to formulate a new, interdisciplinary, “integrated approach to global concerns and our common future” with sustainable development as its guiding principle, stating it as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Essentially, sustainable development is a “process of change” through which the exploitation of “. . . resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development; and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations” (Brundtland Commission, 1987).

In response to the Brundtland Report, the principle and goal of global sustainable development was then adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as an urgent educational mission; subsequently, in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) met at the Rio summit in 1992 to discuss dwindling resources, unrestrained economic growth, and inequitable and unsustainable development. At the “Earth Summit” (as UNCED came to be known), 172 governments with 108 heads of state, approximately 2,400 representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and some 17,000 people at the parallel NGO “Global Forum” (who had consultative status) agreed upon the Rio Declaration, which set out 27 principles for achieving sustainable development. Furthermore, the Earth Summit established a sustainable development agenda for the twenty-first century, known as “Agenda 21,” which is a “comprehensive blueprint of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the UN, governments, and major groups in every area in which humans directly affect the environment”[18]. Agenda 21 initiated a process that “marks the beginning of a new global partnership for sustainable development,” addressing the “pressing problems of today . . . preparing the world for the challenges of the next century,” and reflecting a “global consensus and political commitment at the highest level

on development and environment cooperation”[19]. At the same time, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was created in December 1992 to “ensure effective follow-up of UNCED, to monitor and report on implementation of the agreements at the local, national, regional and international levels. It was agreed that a five year review of Earth Summit progress would be made in 1997 by the United Nations General Assembly meeting in special session”[20].

Thus, as a result of the Rio summit in 1992, the concept of sustainable development attained global significance and is already visible within programs of various governments around the world. Nevertheless, at present, GSD is still largely theoretical since the efforts to implement sustainable development on national levels are still often met with considerable opposition by powerful reactionary elements of the status quo, as the multi and transnational capitalists of Global Empire have yet to recognize the extent of the grave crisis of the world capitalist system and industrial civilization; hence, the efforts at GSD by the UN and by some countries, though laudable, may be a case of “too little too late.” Unfortunately, many who often give lip service to sustainable development believe that an overshoot-and-collapse scenario can still be averted, that global capitalism and industrial civilization can still be preserved in its present form; they often still do not recognize the crisis as severe but instead see it as a “difficult period,” which can still be resolved through a soft implementation of some “green” policies related to sustainable development.

Nevertheless, though GSD has to some extent been co-opted by corporate interests, a global consensus for sustainability has been growing and gaining momentum – just as global empire is collapsing. The collapse of global empire is, in fact, necessary in order for a sustainable world to emerge. Even while the American empire attempts to extend its biopower globally and consolidate its military and satellite communications control throughout the world, with “full spectrum dominance,” surrogate soldiers, private mercenaries, foreign cronies, and an “empire of bases” (Johnson, 2004), at the same time, the consciousness of the multitude is demanding authentic democracy and a sustainable economy. This global collapse and emerging struggle is indicative of a transformation from global empire to GSD. The following excerpt from Hardt and Negri (2005) offers an analysis of this transformation:

When the flesh of the multitude is imprisoned and transformed into the body of global capital, it finds itself both within and against the processes of capitalist globalization. The biopolitical production of the multitude, however, tends to mobilize what it shares in common and what it produces in common against the imperial power of global capital. In time, developing its productive figure based on the common, the multitude can move through empire and come out the other side, to express itself autonomously and rule itself (p. 101).

So, what does the multitude share and produce “in common?” Of course, it is the natural capital of the earth as well as its own productive power, and once the multitude is able to finally, for the first time in the history of humankind, realize authentic democracy, to “rule itself,” then it will look to the future and engage in a sustainable and just economy based on such “natural capital”; consequently, the issues of global sustainability and world democracy are inseparable. What is at stake is what we share in common; mobilization of the multitude to protect the commons is the key to realizing a sustainable future, as well as world democracy.

However, what is “natural capitalism” and how can it help to realize GSD? In other words, what is the alternative economy of GSD in the future? Hawken, Lovins and Lovins’ *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution* (Hawken *et al.*, 2000) may very well prove to be as important to GSD as Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* was as the theoretical framework for the rise of capitalism during the industrial revolution. Hawken *et al.* (2000) conceive of the possibilities that will arise:

... from the birth of a new type of industrialism, one that differs in its philosophy, goals, and fundamental processes from the industrial system that is the standard today. In the next century, as human population doubles and the resources available per person drop by one-half to three-fourths, a remarkable transformation of industry and commerce can occur. Through this transformation, society will be able to create a vital economy that uses radically less material and

energy. This economy can free up resources, reduce taxes on personal income, increase per-capita spending on social ills (while simultaneously reducing those ills), and begin to restore the damaged environment of the earth. These necessary changes done properly can promote economic efficiency, ecological conservation, and social equity (p. 2).

Hawken *et al.* (2000) point out how we are destroying the most productive systems:

... ever seen on earth while statistically blinding ourselves to the problem. Economics cannot function as a reliable guide until natural capital is placed on the balance sheets of companies, countries, and the world. As it stands, the capitalist system is based on accounting principles that would bankrupt any company. A healthy economy needs, as any accounting student understands, an accurate balance sheet. In the meantime, acting as though natural and human capital were properly valued is critically important. When natural capital is no longer treated as free, unlimited, and inconsequential, but as an integral and indispensable part of the production process, our entire system of accounting will change. Prices, costs, and how we calculate value will alter dramatically (p. 61).

In *Agenda for a New Economy*, David Korten (2009) proposes a similar shift in the way the world, and chiefly the US, does business. A fundamental transformation must take place in economic relations, i.e. away from an economy based on “phantom wealth” to one based on “real wealth,” away from an economy based on the greed of Wall Street to one based on the goods and services of “Main Street,” and away from magical money created out of nothing (as a result of clever accounting tricks and based on debt) to un-inflated money used merely as a medium of exchange representing real goods and services. Finally, this economic transformation is a shift from the bankrupt ideology of a free market system to a responsible, sustainable, and just economic system, for as Korten (2009) relates, the term “free market” is just a euphemism for an unregulated market that:

... allows the rich to consume and monopolize resources for personal gain free from accountability for the broader social and environmental consequences. A free market rewards financial rogues and speculators who profit from governmental, social, and environmental subsidies, speculation, the abuse of monopoly power, and financial fraud, creating an open and often irresistible invitation to externalize costs and increase inequality (p. 30).

The transformation from the free market system of global empire and neoliberal globalization to the “natural capitalism” of GSD, based on “real wealth,” is huge, for, in the words of James Gustave Speth, writing from the perspective of a systems ecologist, “the planet cannot sustain capitalism as we know it”[21]. Instead, as Speth (as well as Korten, and Hawkin, Lovins and Lovins, and a host of others) suggests, the modus operandi of capitalism needs to be fundamentally redesigned and reoriented so that it supports the development of “local economies populated with firms that feature worker and community ownership and that corporations be chartered only to serve the public interest” (as related by Korten, 2009, p. 40). Moreover, if we make an honest assessment of the relationship of GDP and the environment, we cannot help but recognize that GDP is nothing more than a measure of growth and consumption, “which is the driving cause of environmental decline” (Korten, 2009, p. 41, citing Speth, 2008). Thus, the economy, if it remains unchecked on the present course, will continue to destroy the environment until a tipping point in the planet’s ecosystem is reached, at which point it may be too late to reverse the catastrophic consequences of a rapid collapse. To address this critical situation, a fundamental change in consumption habits in developed and developing countries must take place soon; perhaps not buying at all is even better than buying green (Korten, 2009, p. 41). From this perspective, when considering the ethic of GSD, the whole notion of “development” must be revaluated because “development,” commonly understood as a measurement of economic growth and consumption, is inherently unsustainable; hence the issue of unhealthy and destructive “overdevelopment” or “maldevelopment” through capitalism’s modus operandi of perpetual consumption must be addressed in a manner that incorporates all environmental costs and gives due consideration to the needs and rights of future generations.

So, what is the role of corporations, especially large, transnational corporations, in realizing GSD? Speth and Korten are quite critical and skeptical that such corporations will play a

positive role to realize the transition to a sustainable economy; hence, Speth calls to revoke "... the charters of corporations that grossly violate the public interest, ... roll back limited liability, eliminate corporate personhood, bar corporations from making political contributions, and limit corporate lobbying" (Korten, 2009, p. 41)[22]. Korten's (2009) approach to corporations, on the other hand, is not quite as draconian, recognizing that corporations often do produce goods and services that we depend on every day. As a matter of fact, writes Korten (2009), there are "incorporated businesses with identifiable responsible owners who live in the communities in which their businesses are located and who operate their corporations as responsible members of their community. These corporations are properly considered part of the Main Street economy" (p. 28). Where Korten (2009) draws the line for corporations, then, is precisely at the line between Main Street and Wall Street. When Wall Street gets involved in a corporation, whatever value the corporation may have had before will be "subordinated to Wall Street interests and values" (p. 28), which is, above all else, the "bottom line," – money, and how to make more of it. As a one-time executive of the Odwalla Corporation put it, "so long as we were privately owned by the founders, we were in the business of producing and marketing healthful fruit juice products. Once we went public, everything changed. From that event forward, we were in the business of making money" (p. 28).

Collapse and transformation in the LR quadrant of the IF framework

Wilber (2000) maintains that the "collapse of the Kosmos," philosophically speaking, occurred more than 150 years ago when the differentiation of the "big three" (i.e. science, art, and morality) of modernity drifted into disassociation, which in turn led to the denial of the left hand, interior quadrants, reducing them to their right hand correlates. In Wilber's words, the "big three began to collapse into the big one: empirical science, and science alone, could pronounce on ultimate reality. Science, as we say, became scientism, which means it didn't just pursue its own truths, it aggressively denied that there were any other truths at all!" (p. 398). As McIntosh (2007) elaborates, science eventually came to "colonize" and dominate other spheres of knowing, often going so far as to deny their validity. In many significant areas, science developed into scientism, the pathological form of modernist consciousness ... which maintains that the only 'real' reality is objective, material reality" (p. 53). Thus, as Wilber (1998) relates further, the subjective and interior domains "– the I and the WE – were flattened into objective, exterior, empirical processes, either atomistic or systems. Consciousness itself, and the mind and heart and soul of humankind, could not be seen with a microscope, a telescope, a cloud chamber, a photographic plate, and so all were pronounced epiphenomenal at best, illusory at most" (p. 56).

From an integral perspective, the key to understanding the collapse of the capitalist system and industrial civilization, as well as its transformation into an economic and political system based on natural capital, real wealth, and sustainability, involves an understanding of the historical and evolutionary imperative of our times – the challenge of the future. Can the "collapse of the Kosmos" (in which scientism reigned supreme and "flattened" the interior quadrants) also be related to the cracked image of the future that Polak so decried? As long as humankind remains blind to the reality and value of the internal, interior "I" and "WE" quadrants, no "transformation" into new economic or socio-political sustainable systems is possible, for there are no shortcuts to evolution, which in this case involves the evolution of consciousness and being through the recognition of the validity of the subjective "I" and "WE" quadrants. If this recognition does not come about through collective foresight, then it will be forced to come about through the great collapse and the chaos of crisis, for the imperative of evolution gives birth to the future, and such birth can be difficult and painful without wise foresight; otherwise, humanity faces the prospect of regression, which is the "miscarriage" of evolution. This is why the crisis of world capitalism and industrial civilization cannot be understood merely as a matter of systems transformation within the ITS quadrant alone. In order to understand the historical and evolutionary imperative and challenge of the future, it is time to consider the lower left (LL) quadrant within the IF framework.

The lower left (“WE”) quadrant in the integral futures framework

The lower left (LL) quadrant of the IF framework is the internal, collective quadrant that focuses on the cultural values and worldview that “we” share as a civilization. These are subjective values that are largely agreed upon, embedded assumptions about who “we” are. In the IF framework, however, these assumptions are also alternative, preferred futures, which challenge the predominate worldview about civilization and its future. The futures schools of thought then are those that, for the most part, reject industrial civilization and its current direction and attempt, instead, to posit a new, more sustainable image of the future.

In a recent volume of *Foresight*, Riedy (2009) argues that futures work has played a role in “providing inspiration for numerous small-scale, distributed and grassroots initiatives,” which include “experiments with different ways of living, . . . and the use of futures thinking for local consciousness raising and movement building” (pp. 46-7). These small experiments “seek to make alternative futures real” by acting as “lifeboats” or “seeds” with the possibility to grow into desirable futures. By experimenting with alternative ways of organizing social systems and cultures, they provide a source of creativity from which new futures can be born. As a matter of fact, as Riedy (2009) argues, many of these small initiatives “around the world have identified better ways to organize future institutions and have established alternative cultures” (p. 47).

A number of these grassroots initiatives are independent, organic farming communities who accept much of the criticism of the anti-civilizationists but nevertheless reject their isolationist and anarchist conclusions advocating a return to a hunter-gatherer way of life as the only option in response to civilizational crisis. In other words, although these localized, alternative cultures agree that grand civilization based on “life in cities” is inherently unsustainable[23], they nevertheless believe that organic and sustainable agricultural solutions are possible on a limited scale within pockets of alternative farming communities who share similar values. Thus, these small communities reject grand civilization and instead seek a pocket of self-sustainability that is completely independent of the world economic system and industrial civilization. Often they also seek to cultivate a communal way of life based on common, shared, spiritual values rather than consumer-oriented materialism. Localized sustainability focuses on achieving a self-sufficient lifestyle that is not dependent on the global economy or anything “global” for that matter, although it may link up (via the internet) to share information with other communities worldwide who share the same values and goals of self-sufficiency and sustainability. Moreover, most localized sustainability movements do not completely disavow the use of technology; however, all technology comes under the strict scrutiny of a sustainable, organic lifestyle.

One example of localized sustainability is the permaculture movement, which was founded in the 1970s by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren. The term “permaculture” is based on a fusion of the words “permanent,” “agriculture,” and “culture.” One can surmise that it is an attempt to realize a non-progressive, unchanging culture based on organic, sustainable agricultural principles. From this perspective alone, it does seem to have a utopian character, reminiscent of utopian socialist experiments of the nineteenth century. The main difference, however, is that permaculture is firmly grounded on organic, sustainable living and lifestyle rather than a theory about communal living. It is the art and science “of designing human beings’ place in the environment,” which teaches how “to understand and mirror the patterns found in healthy natural environments” so that one can then “build profitable, productive, sustainable, cultivated ecosystems” that can include people, and “have the diversity, stability, and resilience of natural ecosystems” (Blume, n.d.).

Thus, permaculture is not only an organic farming community, but its design principles have a philosophical justification based upon responsible living and a sincere regard for future generations; for this reason, it is positioned in the LL quadrant as an emerging alternative that challenges the worldview of global empire. The permaculture movement has spread internationally through grassroots networking and training programs, which teach a core set of design principles so that individuals can begin designing their own environments and build more self-sufficient permaculture settlements. The central idea is that these

settlements will not rely upon industrial civilization, which systematically destroys the earth's ecosystems.

Briefly, when a design component is not ecologically sound, community-building, and careful in its use of resources, then it is pretty unlikely that it will work out in the long run. This ethic is the basis of sustainability and also makes excellent, long-term business sense. Systems designed with these ethics are ecologically sound, economically stable, community building, and don't leave future generations with a cleanup bill for today's enterprise (Blume, n.d.).

The great transition initiative

The great transition initiative (GTI) is a growing, grassroots, internet-based network of global citizens who seek to act as a bridge between local sustainability and GSD. This group differs from that of mainstream, government-based GSD in that it recognizes that the "crisis" of the world capitalist system and industrial civilization is more than just a "difficult period" that merely requires cosmetic changes of half-hearted, watered-down attempts at GSD. As a realization of global consciousness, through the social innovation of the internet, rather than depending and waiting on top-down solutions from the power élite, this network of concerned global citizens is a bottoms-up, democratic approach of people power. Though still growing and largely based on educational efforts, the GTI aims to make an impact through networking and social innovations that create bridges to a sustainable future for all.

One of the most important statements of the GTI can be found at its website in the document, *Great Transition: the Promise and Lure of Times Ahead*, by Paul Raskin and others. In this document, Raskin *et al.* (2007) attempt to answer the four questions of the Rio Summit concerning global sustainability, "Where are we?", "Where are we headed?", "Where do we want to go?", and "How do we get there?", claiming that the "first wave of sustainability activity, in progress since the Earth Summit of 1992, is insufficient to alter alarming global developments"; thus a "new wave must begin to transcend the palliatives and reforms that until now may have muted the symptoms but cannot cure the disease. A new sustainability paradigm would challenge both the viability and desirability of conventional values, economic structures and social arrangements. It would offer a positive vision of a civilized form of globalization for the whole human family" (Raskin *et al.*, 2007).

Unlike the anti-civilizationists, spiritual transformationalists, and localized sustainability movements, GTI does not thoroughly reject globalization; instead, it sees globalization as a necessary, intermediate step towards a sustainable global economy or "planetary phase of civilization" (Raskin *et al.*, 2007). The real question concerning globalization then is whether it will drive the future into "conventional globalization, barbarism, or a great historical transition" (Raskin *et al.*, 2007). In contrast to "eco-communalism" (another term for localized sustainability movements), the great transition to the "new sustainability paradigm" attempts to "change the character of global civilization rather than retreat into localism" (Raskin *et al.*, 2007). It would reshape and "civilize it" through a "lifestyle wedge," a "values-led shift toward an alternative global vision" (Raskin *et al.*, 2007).

Earth community

A similar movement for an alternative future based on new cultural values is that of David Korten (2006) in *The Great Turning: from Empire to Earth Community*. One difference, however, is that Korten places globalization within the broader historical perspective of 5,000 years of Empire. From this perspective, Korten echoes the criticisms of the postmodernists and anti-civilizationalists since, drawing upon select anthropological sources, he affirms that the *modus operandi* of 5,000 years of male-dominated, warrior civilization is responsible for the current world crisis, and that it is only when this civilization of self-destructive empire gives way to the direction of a new intercultural and spiritual consciousness will the paradigm shift to earth community, which is, at least in this respect, similar to the "new sustainability paradigm" and "planetary phase of civilization" that Raskin *et al.* (2007) call for.

According to Korten (2006), Empire, with a capital “E” as a “label for the hierarchical ordering of human relationships based on the principle of domination,” is a mentality that embraces “material excess for the ruling classes, honors the dominator power of death and violence, denies the feminine principle, and suppresses realization of the potentials of human maturity” (p. 20). On the other hand, “earth community” represents the “egalitarian democratic ordering of relationships based on the principle of partnership. The mentality of earth community embraces material sufficiency for everyone, honors the generative power of life and love, seeks a balance of feminine and masculine principles, and nurtures a realization of the mature potential of our human nature” (p. 20).

Thus, the challenge of the future is the decision that humankind will collectively make about the opportunity for a great transition: will humankind see through the pathology of empire, its illusions and destructive behavior, and embrace earth community as the new sustainability paradigm, or will it remain trapped, hypnotized, and subdued by those illusions while Empire runs its destructive, runaway course, turning most of the planet into a living hell? However, assuming that a transition to earth community is the preferred future, it is important to consider this question from an integral perspective and the imperative of evolution, for earth community should not be merely a utopian ideal with unrealistic expectations, which do not clearly delineate the means of realization within the context of an understanding of the cultural evolution of humanity.

The integral perspective on transformation and postmodernism

In fact, McIntosh (2007) describes such utopian hopes for global transformation as “sentimental” postmodern idealism, “charming, but hardly realistic” (p. 73)[24]. While recognizing that “some kind of significant transition is now needed,” McIntosh not only questions whether a “revolutionary change” is realistic but whether it would indeed produce the kind of “sustainable advance that our civilization requires” (p. 73). In other words, he concludes, this transformation must come about “as a result of evolution, not revolution” (p. 73). Such calls for a “great awakening” ring hollow because:

... they are usually addressed to humanity as a whole without regard for the fact that the majority of humanity is not able to make meaning in the way that the postmodernists implore. Thus, because most postmodernists generally fail to understand how consciousness and culture actually evolve through a series of specific stages, they do not really know how to bring about the change of mind that they seek (p. 77).

From an integral perspective, postmodern consciousness, which comprises approximately 5 percent of the world population, with an estimated 10 percent of wealth and political power (McIntosh, 2007, p. 56), does not seem to understand that the majority “. . . of the world’s population has not even reached the modernist stage, and therefore is not going to adopt the values of postmodern consciousness anytime soon. Thus, we need to find solutions that don’t require the entire world to become postmodern in some kind of miraculous transformation” (McIntosh, 2007, p. 77).

At the same time, however, even though the “prime directive” concerning cultural evolution is that stages of consciousness cannot be forced, the world crisis or “global problematique” grows more and more serious as time passes by. As McIntosh (2007) acknowledges, the question now before us is a question of time:

... whether these problems must reach a point of acute crisis before they exert sufficient pressure to produce the kind of cultural revolution that will result in their alleviation. It may indeed take a global crisis to trigger the emergence of the integral worldview in a critical mass of people. Hopefully, our culture will evolve fast enough to prevent the kind of crisis that could actually cause culture to regress (p. 78).

Thus, McIntosh believes that adoption of integral values is the only way to “do more than just hope” (p. 78). He explains the role that integral politics can play to “moderate and restrain postmodernism’s radicalism so that important contributions can be better integrated into the politics of the developed world. Integral politics must therefore concentrate on the two areas

where postmodernism needs the most development: moderation of its often staunch antimodern bias, and education regarding the ‘fragile ecology of markets’” (p. 100).

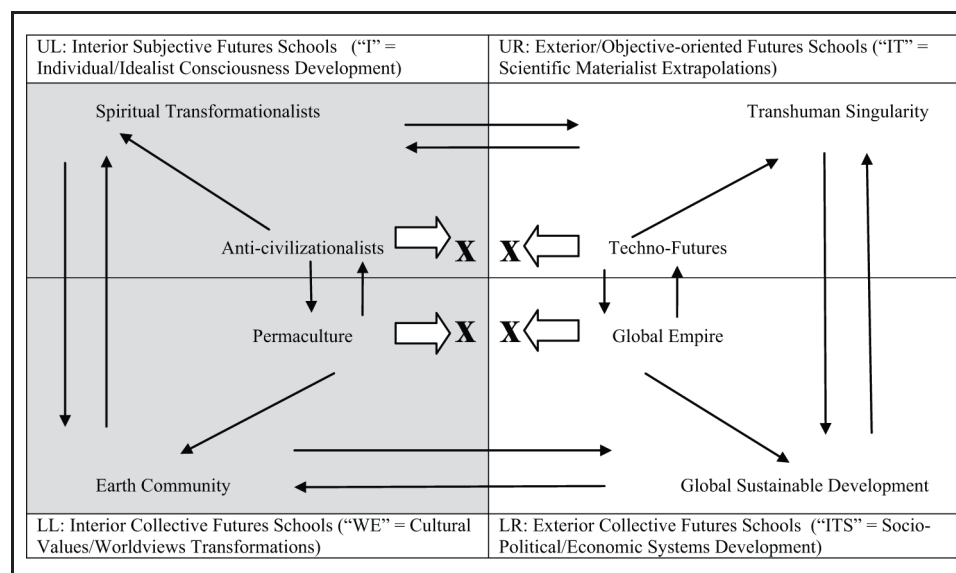
Postmodernism’s anger, angst, and absolute condemnation of modernism has often only brought about its alienation from the political arena such that it has become “more of a hindrance than a help.” Ironically, continues McIntosh, postmodernism’s “. . . general disgust for the crimes of modernism is itself a demonstration that modernism resulted in evolutionary progress – modernism’s success is evidenced by how it has produced its own transcendence in the form of the postmodern worldview” (pp. 100-101). Furthermore, postmodernism is often so anti-business that it blinds itself to the “fragile ecology of markets.” Just as ecosystems are fragile, since markets are also dynamic systems, they can also “be easily destroyed by too much external pressure. And this is even more true in the case of most individual companies, which exist within a narrow and fragile balance of supply and demand” (p. 102). It is one thing to implement an international system that is able to regulate corporations and businesses to comply with environmental and labor standards, but it is quite another to call to revoke corporate charters and to propose such stringent environmental requirements that businesses can no longer thrive. From the integral perspective, it is also important to recognize the contributions that corporations make to improve the quality of life; corporations also play a role in the evolution of society and human civilization.

The plural quadrants of the IF framework

Will the emergence of integral consciousness and its worldview be enough to avert the crisis and/or collapse of industrial civilization? Considering the fact that the integral worldview is held by less than 1 percent of the world’s population and has less than 1 percent of the world’s estimated wealth and political power (McIntosh, 2007, p. 84), the prospect seems bleak. More important, perhaps, is the question concerning what will emerge from the great collapse and chaos of the twenty-first century. Will humanity meet the evolutionary imperative to advance to the next stage, or will it regress? Can the vision of earth community become the basis of a new world culture and economy, or is that just a utopian fantasy? Will humanity adopt a vision of a sustainable future based on natural capitalism and real wealth, or will it continue on the crash course of a runaway economy based on fantasy wealth in a dysfunctional and unsustainable capitalist system? Finally, will empire disintegrate and globalization be replaced by global sustainable development?

Within the IF framework, the various futures schools of thought are interrelated and dynamic (see Figure 3). They should have a healthy give-and-take, push-and-pull relationship; however, as you will notice in Figures 1 and 3, there is a great chasm between the anti-civilizationists and techno-futures in the singular quadrants just as there is a great chasm between global empire and permaculture in the plural quadrants. The rift and clash between these futures schools of thought is irreconcilable due to the Collapse of the Kosmos, which resulted in a cracked image of the future within modernism – when scientism began to dominate and colonize the internal quadrants. As a matter of fact, the left hand, internal quadrants were “flattened” such that they became mere shadows of the right hand, external-oriented quadrants (see Figure 2). Consequently, the futures schools of thought portrayed in the left hand quadrants are emerging, alternative images of the future mostly based on the postmodern rejection of industrial civilization. In the LL plural quadrant, in the line of development from alternative, localized pockets of sustainable communities such as permaculture, “we” find the expression of a new culture and worldview that has the potential to network and link up with the efforts of the great transition initiative to realize earth community. Earth community also has the opportunity to adopt the integral worldview, which should increase its legitimacy while interacting with the efforts of GSD in the LR quadrant, for it is the LR quadrant that must express the internal transformation of cultural values and worldview taking place within the LL quadrant. In this way, the direction of change will represent a profound reversal of relations; rather than the external-oriented, “objective” quadrant dominating and colonizing the internal-oriented, “subjective” LL quadrant as its shadow, for the first time in history, the LL quadrant will provide the direction and impetus for

Figure 3 Dynamic interactions within the if framework



transformation in the LR quadrant: the "mind" will finally find its center and assume its proper role over the objective world. Then, for its part, GSD in the LR quadrant must nurture and support Earth Community materially while learning from its real world practice in sustainability in order to realize global sustainability even as Empire crumbles and falls.

Furthermore, earth community must also link up and interact with the spiritual transformationalists, who provide the spiritual nourishment, consciousness, and transcendence as sustenance for the peaceful, loving, and harmonious relationships with the natural environment and all living beings who share it; the wisdom and discipline of spiritual giants can longer be neglected, ignored, and dismissed, for it is this wisdom and spiritual discipline that provides the essential ingredients for a life worth living, which is the proper direction and future for a truly "rich" civilization.

Notes

1. Also, see Morgan (2009) for a more extensive overview of Polak's image of the future in modern times.
2. These examples were confirmed via email correspondence with Peter Bishop, Chair of the University of Houston Futures Studies program; however, as Dr Bishop related to me, they are "also as I remember them." Furthermore, Bishop attributes the conceptualization of the three futures schools of thought to C. Dede, who also taught graduate-level futures studies courses at UHCL during that time. However, through my e-mail contact with Dr Dede, I was informed that it was more of a "collective product" from discussions at the Univ. of Mass. futures program (according to Dede, the "first in the country" in the "early 70s") rather than something that Dede would consider as his conceptualization alone. For more information on these three futures schools of thought, see Bowman *et al.* (1978).
3. "Flatland," writes Wilber (2000), of the "Descended grid," has "marked the entire modern and postmodern condition" (p. 389). It is, essentially, the collapse of the left hand (interior) dimensions of the Kosmos into their right hand (exterior) correlates – it "collapsed interior depths into observable surfaces," (p. 132) or "flatland," resulting in a monological perspective on life. Figure 2, adapted from Wilber (2000, p. 415), illustrates how the flatland perspective has obliterated the left-hand quadrants such that they are merely shadows of right-hand quadrants.
4. Ken Wilber (2000) makes a similar observation that "... every stage of evolution eventually runs into its own inherent limitations, and these may act as triggers for the self transcending drive. The inherent limitations create a type of turmoil, even chaos, and the system either breaks down

(self-dissolution) or escapes this chaos by evolving to a higher degree of order (self-transcendence) – so called order out of chaos. This new and higher order escapes the limitations of its predecessor but then introduces its own limitations and problems that cannot be solved on its own level” (pp. 73-74). Both Wallerstein and Wilber are applying chaos theory, as put forth by E. Laszlo (1987), to the evolution of historical, world systems.

5. Not to say that the capitalist system will necessarily be completely abolished since one distinct possibility is that it will survive in a greatly modified form while other scenarios suggest that the world capitalist system will not survive, to be completely replaced by an alternate economic system that reflects the new paradigm.
6. Wallerstein (2004) writes that it is at once a world-economy and capitalist system, which gives priority to the “endless accumulation of capital” and is held together by “the efficacy of the division of labor” globally (p. 24).
7. These “commonalities” and “interactions” will be elaborated on further in the conclusion.
8. This refers only to Wallerstein’s World Systems Analysis (Wallerstein, 2004). It does not refer to some of Wallerstein’s other writings where he may have focused more on the American empire.
9. Though this empire has been around at least 100 years, as I will briefly relate.
10. As quoted by Berman (2006), p. 113.
11. As Berman (2006) points out, the Open Door notes of 1899-1900 advocated not “traditional colonialism but rather the policy of ‘an open door through which America’s preponderant economic strength would enter and dominate all underdeveloped areas of the world.’” Shortly thereafter, in 1902, “Princeton University President Woodrow Wilson wrote that overseas expansion was the economic frontier that would replace the American continent as the territorial frontier. In effect, the Open Door notes were merely the doctrine of Manifest Destiny gone global” (p. 103). Was this global “expansionist” strategy, in reality, American imperialism? As Johnson (2004) comments, Americans have always resisted regarding it as such, and have instead preferred to use more politically correct euphemisms. For example, Roosevelt professed to be “not an imperialist but an ‘expansionist.’ Arguing for the annexation of the Philippines, he said, ‘there is not an imperialist in the country . . . Expansion? Yes . . . Expansion has been the law of our national growth’” (p. 29).
12. As quoted by Berman (2006), p. 142.
13. The terms “positive” and “negative” freedom were originally coined by Hegel. Isaiah Berlin also expounded upon this two-sided nature of freedom.
14. The following links provide ample evidence of the extensive use of futures methods by the USAF, CIA, Pentagon, and NIC: www.au.af.mil/au/au/bibs/future03/future03a.htm; www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/awc-futr.htm#predictions; www.thomaspmbarnett.com/pnm/bibliography/chapter1.htm (Barnett, 2004); www.mapcruzin.com/climate-collapse-news/3566_AbruptClimateChange.pdf; www.dni.gov/nic/NIC_globaltrend2015.html; www.fas.org/irp/cia/product/bw1103.pdf (Center for a World in Balance, 1992; Center for Transformation Studies, n.d.; Central Intelligence Agency, 2003; National Intelligence Council, 2004; Phillips, n.d.).
15. Such futurists can be considered as “neutral methodologists,” who seek to shield themselves from the controversy of ideology through a single-minded, narrow emphasis on futures methodologies alone, as if futures/foresight is only a matter of developing methodological tools, which are then neatly divorced from those who hire and wield them in order to “capture the market” and dominate the business future, which is at the same time interlinked with the future of the American empire. Of course, neutrality and objectivity are necessary for social science research; nevertheless, such tools cannot be divorced from their contexts to conceal the purposes of those who use them, nor can the exclusive focus on such tools be used as a form of denial about the overall crisis of the world capitalist system and industrial civilization.
16. For example, as Negri and Hardt (2005) relate, the second Gulf War of 2003 was a preemptive war, calling “for legitimization primarily on the basis of results. A military and/or police power will be granted legitimacy as long and only as long as it is effective in rectifying global disorders – not necessarily bringing peace but maintaining order. By this logic a power such as the US military can exercise violence that may or may not be legal or moral and as long as that violence results in the reproduction of imperial order it will be legitimated” (p. 30).
17. <http://worldinbalance.net/intagreements/1987-brundtland.php>

18. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agenda_21
19. www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/res_agenda21_01.shtml
20. See the Center for a World in Balance website: <http://worldinbalance.net/intagreements/1992-rio-agenda21.php>
21. As quoted by Korten (2009), p. 40.
22. Also, one might add, stop government subsidization of large corporations.
23. According to the anticivilizationalist, Derrick Jensen (2006), cities depend on the appropriation and often plunder of non-renewable natural resources from the surrounding countryside (p. 34).
24. Here McIntosh is primarily referring to the "affirmative" postmodernists rather than skeptical postmodernists. Affirmatives posit alternative solutions to the problems of modernity and industrial civilization and are sometimes associated with the New Age movement. Skeptics, on the other hand, do not usually offer alternatives. For more on this distinction between postmodernists see Rosenau (1992).

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