Futures schools of thought within the integral futures framework

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to expand on the findings of the SOPIFF project by identifying eight futures schools of thought, and then analyze and critique these through the integral futures (IF) framework. This paper, Part I, also aims to focus on the upper quadrants of the IF framework.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper adapts Wilber's integral theory to clarify various philosophical orientations towards the future. It also adapts Polak's approach to futures as a matter of ''social critique and reconstruction''; however, here 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 has proved to be a valuable theoretical and analytical tool since it clarifies not only orientations to the future but also demonstrates the dynamic lines of development and interactions throughout all four quadrants, illustrating how the four-quadrant approach is an effective framework for understanding the crisis of civilization and the response needed at this time in history to bring about a preferred future.

Research implications/limitations – The paper draws and expands upon the findings of the SOPIFF project as a way to better understand the ''global problematique.'' Thus, this paper suggests some implications of that research and proposes the integral futures framework as a way to interpret research findings. Future research should attempt to develop and apply the IF framework similarly in order to realize a sustainable, integrally-informed image of the future of human civilization.

Practical implications – An integrally-informed approach to futures and foresight studies should help develop and improve futures methodology/practices in general. The IF framework helps to understand philosophical orientations underlying practices and applications.

Originality/value – This application of the IF framework to various mainstream futures schools of thought is original. It should help futurists to see and interpret the bigger picture regarding images of the future in a civilizational context by revealing the ''crack'' in the modern image of the future, how it relates to the current world crisis, and what is needed to heal the crack so that a new, more integrally-informed, sustainable image of the future can emerge.

Keywords Forward planning, Social problems, Branches of philosophy

Paper type Viewpoint

The SOPIFF project and the integral futures map

The State of Play in the Futures Field (SOPIFF) research project (2007) represents a significant, pioneering contribution to futures studies since it is probably the first attempt to map and analyze the futures/foresight field globally. In other words, critique and reconstruction of the field can only begin once the field itself has been identified; the question of identity must first be established in present-day reality before the step into the ''other'' can be even postulated. In the words of a John Lennon (1971) song, ''How can I go forward when I don't know which way we're facing? How can we go forward when we don't know which way to turn?'' That's what a map does: it tells us where we are and can also help us to realize what direction we want to go in – Friedrich Polak's ''other,'' the image of the future for the whole of humanity[1].

The integral futures (IF) map, based on Wilber's (2000) integral theory, has been evolving for several years now as a way of understanding and explaining futures/foresight practices. My introduction to the integral operating system (IOS) as it applies to the futures field began with Ramos' (2004) report, which is based on the integral metascanning framework, as a '"map' of the practice of foresight in Australia,'' the assumption being that ''based on such a map, the practice of foresight can be evaluated'' (Ramos, 2004, p. 2). Ramos identified three ''broad 'meta' principles,'' which directed the research:

1. ''to find as many examples of foresight practice as possible;''

2. ''to use an integrally informed perspective to evaluate the findings;'' and

3. ''the normative aim of developing social foresight in Australia through a NFS [National Foresight Strategy]''.

The SOPIFF metascanning research project (2007) is a continuation of the same approach, to classify futures activity globally, a method that has ''been shown to reveal hitherto 'hidden' aspects of futures work, thus bringing new analytic clarity to them'' (p. 6).

Integral analysis is also useful because it exposes the paradigmatic blindness evident in all prior approaches to futures studies (FS)[2]. In plain language, the four quadrants of the IF framework can be seen as four futures paradigms that all too often claim that their particular paradigm is the ground by which images of the future are generated and futures work progresses. This reductionism discounts the validity of the other forms of futures perspectives, thus making absolutist truth claims about the role of the futures field in general. As Slaughter (2008) explains, the four-quadrant model has proven to be useful in many areas partly ''. . . because it helps to question the widespread habit of viewing the world monologically, i.e. as though it were a singular entity . . . '', a habit that causes us to:

> Unconsciously run quite different domains together and ends up creating endless confusion. In hindsight, and with the clarity bestowed by integral methods, we can now see more clearly how different principles and tests of validity and truth (etc.) apply within different domains. Standard futures methods that return powerful insights in the currently still-dominant lower right (LR) quadrant (the exterior collective) are worse than useless in the upper left (UL) (interior individual) quadrant quite simply because they are dealing with different realities. Such knowledge – understanding clearly which kinds of knowledge apply in different domains – not only helps us to achieve more systematic ''coverage'', but also brings greater clarity to the tasks that futurists undertake, as well as prefiguring more innovative in-depth solutions. The implications go much wider than the futures community to the re-framing of what I call the ''civilisational challenge'' that we now face (p. 123).

The IF framework, in other words, acknowledges the contributions of all endeavors, claiming that all perspectives have validity and offer something of value to the field as essential pieces of the entire puzzle of the future. Each perspective works through its own sphere of development within one of the four quadrants, which are four perspectives of the same phenomenon – the future. Since the reductionist problem emerges when one quadrant attempts to make validity claims that exclude the validity of the other quadrants, the IF map is the answer to reductionism within the futures field. It serves to keep futures/foresight focused on the big picture rather than getting caught up in the rampant specialization that characterizes most of the social sciences.

In the Ramos study of foresight practice in Australia as well as the SOPIFF study of foresight globally, ''focal domains'' are based on the integral framework. Ramos (2004) writes that the focal domains represent ''the methods or approaches which are being used in Australia in respect to what the methods or tools look at, i.e. ''focal domains'' as seen through Wilber's four quadrant matrix (p. 12). Likewise, the SOPIFF (2007) project sees the ''focal domains'' in terms of ''futures-related activity,'' correlating closely with Wilber's four quadrant model which provides four ''lenses'' on the world, as follows:

1. Structural (lower right, or external collective domain).

2. Behavioral (upper right, or external individual domain).

3. Psychological (upper left, or interior individual domain).

4. Intersubjective (lower left, or interior collective domain) (p. 10).

In this paper, the integral framework is interpreted and applied similarly; however, because the focus is on futures ''schools of thought'' or ''images of the future'' from various philosophical or ideological perspectives within industrial civilization (rather than particular ''methods'' or ''futures-related activity''), then the way the four quadrants are interpreted within the IF framework is bit more expansive, as will be illustrated[3].

Moreover, IF along with CFS are able to clarify and evaluate competing truth claims concerning the image of the future for humankind. CFS necessarily implies a civilizational critique since the global problematique[4] revolves around a number of problems associated with the growth and so-called ''progress'' of western industrial civilization; hence civilizational critique is applied to the various futures perspectives mapped out in the IF framework as a means of evaluating competing truth claims. However, civilizational critique, like CFS, cannot stand alone, for on its own it may merely become a deconstructionist sword that does not employ foresight to indicate a way forward; consequently, the second part of the equation is that of integral reconstruction, a vital application of foresight based on the IF framework.

Now, let us turn our attention to the eight categories of futures schools of thought, which can be identified on the IF map, and apply civilizational critique and integral reconstruction to each.

Eight futures schools of thought within the IF framework

Figure 1 can serve as a map for identifying and analyzing futures schools of thought within the IF framework. This framework is, of course, indebted to the integral theory of Ken Wilber (2000) as well as the SOPIFF research project. It should help futurists to become more integrally informed about how various civilizational images of the future are interrelated as the basis for a new global future.

Each quadrant contains two futures schools of thought that are connected as lines of development within that quadrant (''lines of development'' are indicated by the circle in the center with intersecting lines), which is specified according to Wilber's (2000) integral theory. In other words, in the upper left (UL) quadrant, we find that the futures schools of thought are essentially focused on consciousness development/transcendence of the individual future (''I''), which is at the same time the window/perspective for viewing the world future at large. Such truths concerning images of the future found within this perspective are subjective and

Figure 1 Eight futures schools of thought within the IF framework

UL: Interior Subjective Futures Schools ("I" = Individual/Idealist Consciousness Development)	UR: Exterior/Objective-oriented Futures Schools ("IT" = Scientific Materialist Extrapolations)
Spiritual Transformationalists	Transhuman Singularity
Anti-civilizationalists	Techno-Futures
Permaculture	Empire Globalization
Earth Community	Global Sustainable Development (GSD)G
LL: Interior Collective Futures Schools ("WE" = Cultural Values/Worldviews Transformations)	LR: Exterior Collective Futures Schools ("ITS" = Socio-Political/Economic Systems Development)

are, thus, relative, interpretive, and constructive. Though some of these schools may speak of truth (with a capital ''T''), no consensus exists on the validity of subjective interpretations, which have more to do with consciousness development and experience with ''the beautiful'' and ''truthfulness'' than a verifiable, objective truth, which is primarily the concern of the upper right (UR) quadrant. However, where consensus on truth does exist (though not necessarily objective), it is a constructed truth, and we find that this becomes a matter of the lower left (LL) quadrant, informed by a shared image of the future and culture rather than mere individual images, perceptions, or experiences.

As mentioned, the UR quadrant is the realm of objective, empirical truths of science, which forms the basis of much of quantitative futures/foresight studies. It is the quadrant of ''it'' that is responsible for the projected image of the future as technologically-driven/based. Though technological futures involve systems[5], they are nevertheless situated in the UR singular quadrant because techno-driven futures are primarily founded on ''man'' as object in relation to his machines[6]. The future extrapolated concerns the invention of what it means to be human through science and technology, which is also the window/perspective through which the future/world at large is viewed. Also, one can find a line of singular development in this quadrant towards the transhuman singularity image of the future, which is the logical extension of ''man-centered'' techno-driven futures.

As mentioned previously, the lower left (LL) quadrant concerns the collective (''we'') image of the future (often based on shared values, morals, ethics, and worldview), which forms the basis of the ''good'' as culture. Also an interior and subjective quadrant, it is likewise interpretive and constructive, and since no individual is an island, culture also informs the ''I'' of the UL image of the future just as it is informed by it. Though Permaculture is stated here as the initial school of thought, it actually includes all localized organic farming movements that advocate a new culture for the future. Also, even though Permaculture is a system that is material-based as much as it is cultural-based, because it represents a break away from the mainstream culture of globalization and Empire, it is situated in the LL quadrant. The line of development can also be established here since when Permaculture and other localized organic farming movements form a new culture and link up with each other, they evolve into the Great Transition Initiative for Earth Community, which is based on a new sustainable paradigm for living globally.

Finally, the lower right (LR) quadrant is the plural of the UR quadrant of techno-driven futures; hence it is labeled as the ''its'' quadrant, which includes all socio-political/economic systems. The projected future within this quadrant is that of Empire Globalization, which concludes the general, historical trend[7]. However, because empire globalization has started to realize its limitations in the objective world and planet in terms of natural resources and the negative impacts of unsustainable growth, the high maintenance cost of the security of empire, the inherent contradictions of world capitalism, and the collapsing financial markets, it has been forced to rethink its future in terms of global sustainable development (GSD). Thus, we find this line of development within the LR quadrant; nevertheless, this realization is gradual, reluctant, and quite incomplete such that the revolutionary transformation required in the LR quadrant to meet the challenge of the future towards a new, authentically sustainable paradigm (the emerging culture in the LL quadrant) has yet to manifest. For this reason, the future in the LR quadrant is still uncertain: the catastrophic overshoot and collapse of industrial civilization seems unavoidable.

The following description and discussion of the individual futures schools of thought will begin with the upper (singular) quadrants proceeding from the UR to the UL and then will continue with the lower (plural) quadrants again from LR to LL. The civilizational critique will be largely applied to the right-hand quadrants of objective, external perspectives of reality chiefly because these are the quadrants that represent the conventional, prevailing, mainstream currents of futures thought[8]. Because these prevailing currents of futures schools of thought must realize a fundamental shift away from reductionism (in the UR quadrant) and domination (in the LR quadrant) for this civilization to meet the transitional challenge of our era (to realize the new, more integrally-informed paradigm of a sustainable future), it may appear at first to some that the treatment of these schools is not very balanced.

To some extent, I agree in advance, but then real balance must also take into consideration the historical context in which very unbalanced perspectives have colonized the images of the future through predominately right-hand quadrant reductionism and domination, as a result of what Wilber (2000) refers to as ''flatland,'' the descended industrial grid that has denied and virtually eradicated all left-hand quadrant notions of consciousness and transcendence, from which alternative and creative images of the future could flower if only . . . In this respect, then, this treatment can indeed be considered a ''balanced'' approach because it attempts to compensate for the faults of the historical context so that, through a more integrally informed approach, new images of the future can emerge and blossom.

Techno futures

The terms ''positive extrapolist'' and ''negative extrapolist'' have often been used in FS to describe the futures field as a whole. As such, these terms indicate a fundamental ideological split that continues today. As a matter of fact, Polak (1971) first identified this split as the ''cracked'' image of the future. Yet, what Polak did not seem to understand is that this ''crack'' was evident even from the very birth of the modern image of the future in Western civilization[9]. Essentially, the ''positive extrapolist'' school of thought represents the techno-driven image of the future, which holds a mostly uncritical view of the relationship between technology and humanity, embraces all technological progress as a good thing for the future, and assumes that any civilizational problems related to the side effects or negative consequences of technology can be ''fixed'' by new developments within technology. On the other hand, the so-called ''negative extrapolist'' school of thought represents those futurists who are quite critical about the relationship of technology to society and the role of technology in the future. These are mostly environmental-oriented futurists who are concerned that the negative side effects or consequences of the growth of industrial civilization outweigh the benefits. While they usually admit that some new developments within technology may help to solve these severe problems, they mostly see these as a ''quick fixes'' or ''band-aids'' that do not go far enough to address the root causes of the problems, which if not addressed through fundamental restructuring of the global economy, will inevitably result in an overshoot and collapse scenario[10].

For the most part, techno-optimist/determinist extrapolism is in denial about the role of technology in industrial civilization due to its flawed image of the future based on the descended industrial grid of flatland[11]. It is possessed with an ideological conviction that the progress of science and technology will resolve its own contradictions and poisonous outputs because it is in reductionist denial about the fundamentals of human nature. Focused only on the external reality, it is blinded by its empiricism; thus the image of the future it produces is one-dimensional – more neurotic obsession with the progress of S&T, regardless of the widespread repression and alienation that inflicts the soul of modern man and civilization[12].

Thus, the techno-driven future, quite often coupled with the ideology of neoliberal globalization, reflects an economic and technological determinist future of a one-dimensional consumer society in which humans are reduced to economic animals and cogs within machine civilization. As a matter of fact, much of the techno-driven future talk is mere window dressing, the present in new garb, sales gimmicks to persuade you to buy and consume the future. As Collins (2008) writes, this is:

> After all, one of the motors of advanced capitalism – creating, for example, a state of perpetual expectation for the next generation of information technologies, the frantic sense of a gap between what one owns and the more advanced products that one should be buying. In advanced capitalism, we are urged to buy the future (p. 3)[13].

So, is this really ''accelerating change,'' as some techno-futurists assert, or is it mere hype? Isn't perpetual change and ubiquitous acceleration just a mirage of change – in reality, the same as perpetual stasis? Isn't it more like standing still while viewing a fascinating kaleidoscope of change via technology and economic growth? Instead of ''a future characterized by the brachiating of new possibilities and unforeseen occurrences, we get the rapid linear succession of 'new' products that are endless iterations of consumer desire succeeding one another like cards on a blackjack table'' (Collins, 2008, p. 4). Doesn't this

''attenuation of alternatives to market-driven technologies'' represent more of a closing down of the future rather than opening it up? (p. 106). As Collins (2008) comments, we do not need to ''speculate on what the future may bring when the answer is on the next page of the catalogue . . . the future will be shelling out the same hamburgers'' (p. 5). Just try to envision a future outside of the techno-driven, globalization box, and you will be ridiculed as hopelessly utopian – ''out of touch'' with the ''reality'' of technologically-driven history and the God-given qualities of technology today. As investment gurus (2000) glibly retort to those who dare to question the rising tide of corporate globalization in a techno-future, it is like ''trying to turn out the moon or push back a summer breeze'' (p. 179).

However, whether technology and globalization are good or evil is not the real concern here; rather, the question revolves around the image of the future being projected – an image that assumes all social and cultural change hangs on the coattails of technological change, which is used to define what it means to be human. Not only is social change viewed through that prism[14]; more important, it is a hegemonic prism that seeks to rule out all other possibilities – to rule out the emergence of alternative visions of the future. Interlinked with globalization, the techno image of the future wants to dominate, colonize, and thus imprison the future in a way that threatens its very existence, for the techno image of the future is, essentially, reductionist and reactionary rather than forward-looking since it seeks to preserve the power relations of advanced capitalism. As Collins (2008) states, a world where ''. . . corporations and governments define the terms of the future is a world where the status quo will remain fundamentally unchallenged'' (p. 6).

Transhuman singularity

A major development within techno futures is a school of futures thought known as ''transhumanism,'' which seems to implicitly recognize the world crisis, but the reaction to it is escapist and elitist. In other words, transhumanism recognizes the one future, often coined as the ''singularity''[15], yet rather than critically examining the fundamental assumptions of the relationship of humans to technology and the current world crisis, it also blindly embraces the mantras and false promises of S&T with an almost religious fervor. Like most techno futures, the singular image of the future does not concern open or emerging futures; instead, as the term ''singularity'' indicates, the image of the future is narrow and deterministic, closing out all alternatives[16].

Transhumanism views human history as the history of man's relationship to his machines such that this relationship is seen as a fundamental stage of human evolution; thus, rather than acknowledging that the detrimental side-effects of machine civilization outweigh the benefits in the long run, it seeks to escape this dilemma through a back door by using technology to transform human nature itself as a means of adaptation to the changing (harsher) environment, an advance to the supposed ''next'' stage of human evolution. This sophisticated form of escapism is more like science fiction than grounded foresight. It is as if the techno domination and alienation of external nature is not enough; the transhumanist would also extend this same pathology to disfigure the internal nature of the human mind as well, yet another ''final frontier'' to colonize while realizing the Frankensteinian nightmare. Furthermore, its image of the future is elitist because only the naive would suppose that cyborg technological advances would be extended to benefit all of humanity. Instead, such advances would most likely be accessible to the wealthy and powerful only; hence corrupt leaders would be able to perpetuate their corruption indefinitely. For some of the miserable and oppressed people of the world, the only saving grace is the knowledge that one day their corrupt ruler will die; however, according to transhumanist schemes, even this hope would be dashed to the ground.

Transhumanist techno-optimism is presumptuous. We still know little about the brain and its various functions. It cannot be mapped, copied or faxed, and even if it could, it does not mean that human ''consciousness'' can be captured, much less spirituality. Put it this way, what if, among its many other functions, the brain also acts as a kind of antennae for the spirit world, much like a TV picks up airwaves? Perhaps some part of the brain, not yet discovered, is like a door to the dimension of thoughts, feelings, intuitions, and extrasensory perceptions[17].

Nanobots might be able to one day copy the brain but without being able to upload the mind; thus, that which emerges is not at all spiritual and would only vaguely resemble something human. Do not we need to know what ''human'' and ''consciousness'' is first before attempting to copy it and upload it into a silicone body? Spirituality in the context of machines treats the subject matter as a materialist would, displaying a profound ignorance of the relationship of consciousness to sub-consciousness, as if it could be savagely abstracted from its social and spiritual context, dissected and treated as mere external matter.

This extended reductionism in the UR quadrant is the logical conclusion of techno-extrapolism, the final nail on the tomb of a closed, mummified future, a further expression of human alienation. Its techno-optimism is a form of tortured idealism about the human condition, and rather than face the reality of the overwhelming problems of industrial civilization, which will bring its inevitable collapse, transhumanists persist in believing that technology will solve these problems through the transformation and redefinition of the human in the image of a machine. Once the evolution of machine humanity is complete, it will not be necessary to worry about organic existence: machines in the singularity will simply upload human consciousness and spirituality to preserve the human legacy. Consequently, humankind will not perish but will instead simply ''evolve'' into a new form of existence that will not be so sensitive to environmental degradation – and the implication is that those in the majority who do not make it, who are not financially able to preserve their consciousness, are simply the ''unfortunate'' who are ''unfit'' for survival.

From techno-driven futures to transhuman singularity within the IF framework

Though techno-driven ''futures'' is presented here in the plural, in reality, the vision is singular and one-dimensional since it is entirely focused on man in relation to his machines and economic well-being. Essentially, because it is trapped and blinded by the Descended industrial grid of flatland, it is a man-centered vision of domination and consumption that does not allow for alternative and creative visions of new civilizations. This narrow and obsessive perspective brings about its own set of problems, chiefly through the reductionist definition of human nature and Progress as a materialist, economic imperative while denying the interior spheres of human evolution. From this perspective, the prospect of science and technology being able to resolve the world crisis is hopeless; it will only perpetuate the crisis to bring about the great collapse.

On the other hand, it is not enough to point out the inadequacies and reductionism of the UR quadrant; like it or not, science and technology are indispensable to our civilization and its future, and so the real task is to find the proper perspective on technology within the IF framework. Technology does have a role to play in the future of humankind, but it is only one piece of the picture rather than the entire picture. Undoubtedly, human civilization has mostly benefited from the development of S&T, and many of these benefits are indispensable; however, if we only extrapolate these external benefits in a reductionist manner as if they comprised the entire meaning of human existence, all the while denying, repressing, alienating, and colonizing the interior, left hand quadrants, the Faustian bargain will cause us to lose our humanity (and possibly our planet) and bring about a dystopian future. Authentic foresight is multidimensional and wise, as is the potential of human nature, which must not be reduced to (and thus redefined or ''invented'' in the image of) its science and technology.

Further evidence of the singular vision of techno-driven futures can be seen through its logical extension into transhuman singularity, which is the final, ultimate expression of the fusion of man and machine. The problem with this vision of the future is not so much a matter of the development of technology in terms of artificial intelligence, robotics, cybernetics or biogenetics, etc.; rather, it is in its inherent reductionism and paradigmatic blindness, which denies and distorts the multifaceted nature of human consciousness and spiritual potential. Nevertheless, it is not simply a matter of abandoning such technological advances; instead, these technologies must be carefully scrutinized with wise oversight to keep them in dynamic balance with the other three quadrants, which interact to manifest the integral future as a whole.

James Martin's (2007) perspective on the relationship of artificial intelligence and robotics to human intelligence is worth commenting on here; as Martin relates, the attempt to fuse

human and artificial intelligence in one being should be abandoned since the two types of intelligence are so radically different. We should humbly recognize the limitations of human intelligence in areas that machines will certainly far excel humans in the future, but at the same time, we should also recognize that machines are completely inadequate in other areas of human intelligence, and there is no need to try to fuse the two:

> Humans should be made better at what humans are good at, and machines should be made better at what machines are good at . . . In the future we might say, ''A computer should never direct films, but a human should never run a factory'' (p. 206).

The anti-civilizationists

The anti-civilizationalists are a school of thought that draws heavily upon anarchist and skeptical postmodern sources. Consequently, this ''school'' would, undoubtedly, reject its position in the IF map among other futures/foresight schools of thought; nevertheless, anti-civilizationalists are the source of much of the criticism of industrial civilization and so should be given due consideration. Moreover, their critiques of civilization often provide fresh insights and perspectives, which help to think outside of the civilizational box when considering the fundamental assumptions of the present paradigm. These are anarchists like John Zerzan (1988) and radical environmentalists like Derrick Jensen (2006), who reject all forms of civilization, stating that human civilization is rotten to the core, inherently unsustainable, and thus irredeemable. They are anti-ideology, anti-utopian, and anti social organization, since (for them) such organization inevitably leads to division of labor and domination schemes, which are responsible for human alienation and sociopathic behavior, inevitably resulting in violence and crimes against humanity and all species that inhabit Earth[18]. According to Zerzan and Jenson, the perversity of civilization can be viewed through its hypocritical rationalizations of state violence, terror, and war; hence, the ''unacceptable'' crimes of those ''lower'' in the social hierarchy[19] are but a mirror of the greater violence committed by the more powerful against the less powerful – crimes that largely go unnoticed since, in the interests of social stability, they are not deemed worthy of mention by the guardians of information in the corporate media. Such crimes not only include the theft, rape, and plunder of the lands of indigenous peoples throughout history and in the present, but also include genocide and slavery, which likewise is as much a present-day reality for indigenous people as in the past. Besides crimes against humanity, ''civilization'' is also responsible for the destruction of natural habitats, the mass extinction of species, the depletion of limited natural resources, and the poisoning of the ecosphere. For the most part, the anarchist activists among this group believe that the best thing one can do is bring down human civilization – and the sooner the better – before it destroys everything (Jensen, 2006, p. x). Their conclusions are often borne out of bitter frustration from the futility of trying to bring about constructive change in a system that seems to be completely resistant to authentic sustainability since all civilization is inherently alienative, violent, and exploitive (Jensen, 2006, p. 18). Thus, anti-civilizationalists advocate a return to the hunter-gatherer way of life, which they maintain is the only way of life that is authentically sustainable. Though this unrealistic conclusion smacks of romanticism, nevertheless, their criticisms provide profound, valuable insights into fundamental assumptions about human civilization in general, especially concerning the sources of human alienation.

The spiritual transformationalists

Some futurists see humanity as trapped in the current stage of development, which is defined by one-dimensional materialism and technological pathology in denial about and even opposed to the spiritual nature of humans. The technological/materialist age is also defined by modernity with its excessive emphasis and preoccupation with rationality, reason and scientism, excluding and suppressing human instincts, psychic powers, and spiritual values. Thus, the spiritual transformationalists see the current crisis as one of values and spirituality that can only be transcended once the spiritual nature of humanity is recognized, affirmed, valued, and practiced authentically – not as the mere repetition of doctrines or mantras from texts once a week, nor from the repetition of empty rituals, but as a matter of diligent spiritual practice to transcend Consciousness while living in harmony with Nature

and others. Although various religious teachings may be referenced in the spiritual transformationalist way of thinking, it is not specifically ideological, nor is it a proponent of any one religious creed or belief; instead, it merely positions itself on the foundation of the recognition and affirmation of the spiritual nature of humans with only a slight regard for theologies or specific religious creeds. The spiritual transformationalist image of the future is based on a transformation of values that will inform the new culture of humanity as a whole, who will place more emphasis on spirituality and transcendence rather than the narrow pursuit of techno-materialism and consumerism. Furthermore, spiritual transformationalists recognize and affirm the latent psychic powers of the mind, which have been thoroughly rejected and suppressed by the exclusive emphasis on the development of intellect and reason in the age of scientism. Much of the New Age movement can be viewed within this spiritual evolutionist/transformationalist paradigm[20].

From anti-civlizationalist to spiritual transformationalist – the UL quadrant line of development within the IF framework

It may seem surprising at first to discover that the anti-civilizationalists and spiritual transformationalists should appear together in the UL quadrant of the IF framework. However, these two schools of thought are drawn together by their emphasis on absolute subjectivity and their total rejection of technological civilization. Also, notice that the line of development is from anti-civilizationalist to spiritual transformationalist. Though both make strong, decisive breaks from the UR quadrant of technological futures, the anti-civilizationalists, nevertheless, do not necessarily accept spirituality in their affirmation of subjectivity; as a matter of fact, anti-civilizationalists are often postmodern skeptics and nihilists who deny spirituality all together[21]. Yet, in their subjective quest to uncover and rediscover original human nature in a way that rejects scientific materialism and technologically-oriented consumerism, they can be drawn to the development and transformation of consciousness through truthfulness and the beauty of the human soul; for humans in their original nature are not possessed by original sin, nor are they essentially economic or warring animals; instead, they are beautiful creatures possessed with pure souls and unblemished spiritual natures: anti-civilizationalists must evolve into spiritual transformationalists; otherwise, as Wilber (2000) points out, they are still hopelessly trapped in ''flatland,'' blinded by the same descended grid that they decry, as they sink into nihilism and become irrelevant.

The upper quadrants of the IF framework

The futures schools of thought in the upper quadrants of the IF framework project a singular, narrow perspective of the future. The techno-driven futures and anti-civilizationalists at first appear as combative opposites, even as irreconcilable enemies; as a matter of fact, the anti-civilizationalists express the alienation of technological society, and techno-driven man often views anti-civilizationalists as Luddites, nihilists, anarchists, ''whackos,'' and even terrorists, who are seeking to undermine and overturn the advances of civilization. Unless these two schools of thought develop to the next stage within their respective quadrants, they can never be reconciled. However, as they develop to the next stages of spiritual transformationalists and tranhuman singularity, the possibility of reconciliation and integration does not appear to be as formidable.

In other words, the transformation of spiritual consciousness does not necessarily reject transhuman singularity as long as the latter does not attempt to reduce or invade the former, as long as proper recognition, respect, and integrity is granted to spiritual consciousness/transcendence, which, as essential and sacred to the nature of humans, cannot be allowed to be violated by the transgressions of technology. What is essentially human (the human soul) must remain within the human sphere, and what is essentially machine must remain within its own sphere, for the two have completely different natures, consciousnesses, and functions that are not meant to be joined or fused. Without this fundamental, unconditional understanding and law, there can be no chance of reconciliation; then rebellion against machine civilization is justifiable. On the other hand, if transhuman singularity recognizes the integrity of the human soul and spiritual nature, that

it is a separate domain that technology must not be allowed to reduce or dominate, then spiritual transformationalists must also compromise and accept it that technology is not an enemy but can be beneficial, even in matters concerning remedies for and (possibly) augmentations of the human body. Consequently, transhumanism is a term that can only be applied to transformations within the human body; it is a mistaken notion to think that it can be applied to human consciousness or inherent spiritual nature.

However, this discussion of the possible reconciliation of these two futures schools of thought, spiritual transformationalism and transhuman singularity, is only halfway complete, for both of these schools are also conditioned by their respective plural counterparts or correlates in the lower quadrants. Moreover, the larger issue of the relationship of technology to civilization is also a matter that can only be resolved through an understanding of technological, economic, political, and social ''systems'' in the LR quadrant, as well as ''culture'' and ''worldviews'' in the LL quadrant of the IF framework. Finally, the question of the viability of the IF framework for foresight practitioners can only be completely answered once all four quadrants and their interrelationships have been elucidated. Thus, these topics will be covered in ''Part II'' of ''Futures schools of thought within the integral futures framework.''

Notes

1. In Fred Polak's (1971) classic text in futures studies, he posited ''social critique and systematic reconstruction'' as the defining activity of a ''utopist'' (the term ''futurist'' not yet part of the lexicon in the 1950s), whose utopia serves as ''. . . a buffer for the future and as a trigger for social progress'' (p. 178) As an ''eternal questioner,'' continues Polak, the utopist is also the ''prototype of the revolutionary and radical spirit,'' whose task is to hold up two mirrors: ''one to reflect the contemporary generation, and one to reflect a counter-image of a possible future'' (p. 179).

2. Slaughter (2008) elaborates on how IF is the natural successor to critical futures studies (CFS). Whereas CFS opened up ''hitherto-overlooked 'social interiors,''' thus exposing how the often-studied ''exterior forms of society'' largely neglected underlying social factors, cultural assumptions and paradigms (the ''shared symbolic foundations'' of the present that inform the way we project possible futures), CFS nevertheless ''lacked a further essential element: deeper insight into the nature of human beings and, in particular, the structure of their own unique interior worlds. In addressing this 'missing dimension,' IF has, in a sense, completed the 40-year process of disciplinary development'' (pp. 120-21).

3. Also, as Slaughter (2008) warns, ''it is vital to remain aware of the dangers of reification. The four quadrants, for example, are a device for thinking – they do not exist in the outer world. Care should be taken, therefore, not to make them – or any other part of the integral operating system (IOS) – 'too real''' (p. 121).

4. According to SOPIFF report (2007), the global problematique, ''originally coined by the Club of Rome in the 1970s,'' represents an ''interlocking set of major systemic problems'' globally (p. 41).

5. Normally in the LR quadrant, which will be discussed in Part II.

6. In modern technological society, ''man'' as an object of scientific investigation is ''invented'' man (Wilber, 2000, p. 406, quoting Foucault).

7. Thus, some writers like Fukuyama (1992) view our time as the ''end of history.''

8. As the SOPIFF research project (2007) finds, most futures work is focused on the Right Hand, external quadrants. The overwhelming ''focus on the structural (lower right or external collective) domain again represents a carry-over from the history and early development of the field which was dominated, and still is to a considerable extent, by a preoccupation with 'hard', 'external', 'scientific' ways of knowing. That is, the bulk of futures work appears to be concerned with problems that relate to external physical phenomena: new technologies, cities, infrastructures, the human genome and the physical universe'' (p. 11).

9. For more on Polak's misunderstanding about the modern image of the future, see Morgan (2002).

10. A representative example of the positive extrapolist school of thought is the work of Hermann Khan while the Club of Rome and the work of Dennis and Donella Meadows represent the negative extrapolist school of thought.

11. ''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.

12. 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 did not just pursue its own truths, it aggressively denied that there were any other truths at all!'' (p. 398).

13. Roszak (1972) refers to technological optimism as ''the snake oil of urban-industrialism. Each new application buys time, fast-shuffles the dissenters, and rubs the addiction to artificiality deeper into the collective psyche'' (p. 42).

14. What Wilber (2008) refers to as ''the monological gaze''.

15. In this discussion, the terms ''singularity'' and ''transhumanism,'' though closely related, are not entirely interchangeable Transhumanism is a broader perspective that involves the control of human evolution through technology in order to reach a posthuman future Technological singularity, however, as one critical aspect of transhumanism, is postulated as a future event or turning point in transhumanist evolution when accelerating technological change will result in an explosion of artificial intelligence that will surpass human intelligence, in which machines will, furthermore, acquire the capacity of autonomous, exponential growth, perpetually accelerating into singular existence. Vernor Vinge originally coined the term as ''analogy between the breakdown of modern physics near a gravitational singularity and the drastic change in society he argues would occur following an intelligence explosion'' (Wikipedia, n.d.).

16. As Collins (2008) warns, in the ''. . . area of artificial life, autonomous agents, and emergent behaviors, the observer no longer perturbs the system; instead, the system closes about the observer, reducing the kinds of dynamic perspectivism implicit in Varela's 'enaction' to a single, hypostatized perspective: reflexivity as tableau vivant. This is what ontologically grounds the 'lie' of Artificial Life: the universalization of a single perspective, like the first person in a crap game, limits the perspectives one can take, and therefore impoverishes alternatives'' (p. 106).

17. In one of the most important studies of human consciousness of our time, Jaynes (1990) gives archeological and historical evidence to argue this very point.

18. Zerzan, in particular, posits the concept of time, the advent of language, numbering, art, and agriculture as types of ''original sins'' that brought about domination schemes and, as a result, human alienation.

19. In ''Premise Four,'' Jensen (2006) states that civilization is ''based on a clearly defined and widely accepted yet often unarticulated hierarchy. Violence done by those higher on the hierarchy to those lower is nearly always invisible, that is, unnoticed. When it is noticed, it is fully rationalized. Violence done by those lower on the hierarchy to those higher is unthinkable, and when it does occur is regarded with shock, horror, and the fetishization of the victims'' (p. ix).

20. As well as Wilber's (2000) and Korten's (2006) conception of spiritual consciousness as the final stage of human consciousness (p. 47-8). Also, the writings of Roszak (1972) and Capra (1999) should be included in the spiritual transformationalist camp, as well as a host of others who form spiritual communities that, for the most part, reject the technological-materialist/consumerist way of life. These ''others'' also include a great number of the ''affirmative'' post-modernists (Rosenau, 1992, pp. 148-52).

21. The anti-civilizationalists easily fall into the camp of the ''back-to-nature'' modern romantics, whom Wilber (2000) criticizes extensively for their denial and hatred of all transcendence. For this reason, Wilber depicts them as, nevertheless, paying tribute to the ontology of the industrial grid: ''In other words, they worship the nature that was disclosed by the differentiation of the Big Three. And they think that this nature is the only reality. That is, they have made a god out of the modern collapse of the Big Three to the Big One; they have made a god of monological nature. Mononature, and mononature alone, is real. It is their God, their Goddess'' (p. 419).

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