

To See With Fresh Eyes: Integral Futures and the Global Emergency

Reading Richard Slaughter's (2013) book, *To See with Fresh Eyes: Integral Futures and the Global Emergency*, *Foresight International*, Brisbane offered me an overview effect. An [overview effect](#) is a cognitive shift in awareness experienced by astronauts looking at the earth from the surface of the moon. This work provides an overview of the professional development and perspectives of a skillful futurist. The book combines history with insight and application of new ways of thinking about the complexity and [integral](#) nature of the world in which we live.

Dr. Slaughter takes the reader on an *outside in* and then an *inside out* excursion relative to the evolution of future studies through time. He shares his story and details his observations and insights from his early years in academic settings. He shares his work and own professional development as futurist and examines a number of philosophical and epistemological as well as methodological issues associated with the evolution and development of future studies.

He discovered and built on the work of Ken Wilber and applies integral theory to frame and reframe issues for contemporary society and futurists. Integral theory makes distinctions among four-quadrant perspectives, lines of development, and states of being and stages of growth. Integral theory proposes individuals develop in stages and evolve from pre-conventional to conventional to post conventional levels of development. With each stage of development action logics and meaning making become more nuanced. Integral theory challenges us to *be aware of being aware* of four quadrants or awareness and perspectives. Such awareness sharpens our intention and attention and provides alternative ways to investigate phenomena while appreciating and valuing multiple perspectives in pursuit of inquiry, learning, and foresight knowledge.

Through the application of an integral lens, Dr. Slaughter, illustrates and explains how future studies has evolved from forecasting and scenario development to critical futures studies grounded in social construction and transformation of meaning. In tracing the development he writes: *Forecasting is an attempt to assert control and a measure of certainty over an unknown future. Scenarios are an attempt to explore diversity within the forward view. The social construction of reality is an attempt to operationalize the deepest purposes of Critical Futures from forecasting and scenarios to social construction: changing methodological paradigms in Futures Studies work in ways that lead towards more humanly viable futures than those currently in prospect.*" (Page 153). Application of an [integral lens](#) is key to this transformation and helps one gain insight into the social constructions of reality.

He leads the reader through applications of his Transformative Cycle Conceptual model and enhances the model with Wilber's work to make distinctions between individual and collective as well as inside and outside perspectives pertinent to self, relationships, behavior/actions in systems and cultures. These perspectives require different types of framing and ways of reframing social, political, technological, environmental and economic challenges. He illustrates and outlines an integral metascanning process used to ascertain the state of play in the futures field. He argues that an integral futures perspective is more likely to yield greater insights derived from foresight work because of the multidimensional elements of the integral model.

Slaughter invites us to use an integral lens and become more aware of current contradictions; embrace insights into the state of the global system; acknowledge, value and apply signals of change; cultivate skepticism about the assumed primacy of science and technology; explore the

potential of human, cultural and institutional innovation; and, design and implement a range of high-quality responses—especially in education.

I am grateful for the overview effect he presents. His work is an invitation to transcend, include, and develop an [integrally informed approach to practice](#). Check out his [readings in integral futures](#). He has provided us an integral map that calls for post conventional, world-centric leadership that requires fresh eyes.

###

[Daniel J. Pesut, PhD, RN, FAAN](#), is a Nursing Professor in the Population Health and Systems Cooperative Unit of the [School of Nursing at the University of Minnesota](#). He directs the [Katharine J. Densford International Center for Nursing Leadership](#). He holds the Katherine R. and C. Walton Lillehei Chair in Nursing Leadership. He is a creative future thinking strategist, coach, author, and innovative nurse educator committed to create a caring society which he believes is the spirit work of nursing.

Published in *Compass*, Association of Professional Futurists, Easter 2018