

Foreword by Hazel Henderson

It is a pleasure to welcome *The Foresight Principle* and its lucid, comprehensive map of the growing futures research movement. Richard Slaughter is a futurist par excellence as well as a valued colleague. This book fills a deep need in today's cultural transitions and confusions - expanding the contexts for further human development. Change is occurring at many levels: personal, community, corporate, national, and in ecological and global restructuring processes.

Richard Slaughter is a superb teacher. He has provided a broad, coherent framework for thinking about all those dimensions of our current transition from the dominant culture of the past three hundred years based on instrumental rationality, reductionist science, and the efforts to create an earthly paradise of material abundance. Slaughter recognises the achievements of this era and its ideology of industrialism and summarises the new problems its limited world view, short-term philosophy and epistemology have created - from ecological destruction to social pathologies and personal angst. Yet he uses all this as prologue to a careful assessment of our human potentials and possibilities for social innovation to transcend our current dilemmas. I subscribe to precisely this kind of disciplined and honestly normative futures research.

Too often in meetings of professional futurists there is a gulf of misunderstanding between so-called value free, objective technological and social forecasters and those whose research is clearly based on normative scenarios and ranges of alternative policies for creating preferred futures. A similar gulf often separates futurists who are not only researchers, writers, and thinkers but also activists and social innovators. Slaughter masterfully shows the continuum linking all these groups and honours their respective contributions to creating the extended foresight that we humans must now develop.

This book will serve to excite interest in the whole field of futures research and its still budding potential for the next stages of human development. Slaughter's style is clear and direct, without sacrificing subtlety and deep reflection. *The Foresight Principle* serves as both a college text and an exciting introduction to the field for concerned citizens and general readers. Even thoughtful high school students will find it engrossing. Many young people who are in despair and alienation will find a road map here to offer new meaning to their lives beyond the narrow options of today's job market.

I can imagine how many teachers will use this book as a basis for new courses in futures studies and to encourage learning of the new skills of social innovation. As an educator, Slaughter has pioneered such courses and fostered foresight in universities and social institutions in many countries beyond his present home in Australia. I hope this book will be read by all those politicians, administrators, and business people who care deeply for their children and grandchildren. My own experience confirms how widespread such concerns are. I found them in government, during my service as a member of the original Advisory Council of the US Office of Technology Assessment; as an environmental and civic activist; and as an early participant in the burgeoning movement of socially concerned investors and companies.

Most of the millions of people concerned with the future of the planet and the human family become activists - no matter what their walks of life or professional careers. In some way, today's human and ecological crises are activating the most aware humans and awakening consciences world wide. In many cases, the young are leading the way because

they have the most at stake. In 1992, the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio produced an outpouring of such concern. Its Global Forum linked activists and citizen groups who share longer time horizons and concern for future generations. While government representatives argued from pre-set positions in the official meetings, thousands of representatives of civic organisations cooperated on mutual agendas. They drafted their own treaties to push their respective governments, and shared manifestos and declarations of new principles for human behaviour and responsibilities toward each other, other species, and the planetary ecosystem.

Nothing less than the outline of an 'Earth Ethics' emerged out of the Earth Summit to provide a backdrop of higher human awareness and moral striving for the agreements signed by the 178 countries present and summarised in Agenda 21. It was a personal privilege to participate in this great global gathering and an honor to provide a chapter for the United Nations volume, *Ethical Implications of Agenda 21*, on how the global economy and financial system can evolve to meet the challenges of restructuring industrial societies for sustainable development. It is now clear that all societies since World War II have confused means (i.e. GNP-measured economic growth) with ends (i.e. the goals of truly human, sustainable development on a small, ecologically compromised planet).

One never expects social innovation to emerge from existing institutions or world views. Today, the planet is dominated by two sets of large institutions: nation states and global corporations. Neither can be expected to lead in the great transformation to sustainable forms of human development. National governments are losing sovereignty due to six great forces of globalisation, as I have elaborated in *Paradigms in Progress*, the globalisation of industrialism and technology, of finance and information, work and migration, human effects on the biosphere, and the globalisation of the arms race and human cultures. ¹ Governments can no longer guarantee security, development, environmental protection, or even coherent macro-economic management to provide jobs to their citizens in face of these global forces.

Today, governments must cooperate, by pooling their sovereignty via many international agreements and treaties, such as those in Agenda 21 and many existing UN protocols which already protect workers, consumers, and human rights in all countries. At the same time, global corporations are pursuing policies and trade agreements which are still predicated on global competitiveness - tantamount to economic warfare, using the same old rules and GNP scorecards of 'progress' and 'wealth'. A 'third sector' is now visible in the world: a growing global civil society in many countries, composed of citizens and voluntary organisations which are still referred to inappropriately as non-governmental organisations (NGOs). As I have described elsewhere, this diverse network of millions of aware, active, grass-roots futurists, and Earth-keepers are rapidly linking beyond their computer conferences on INTERNET, PEACE NET, ECONET, TOGETHERNET, and many others. An Earth Council was launched in 1993, based in San Jose, Costa Rica - a prototype 'world people's parliament for a sustainable future'. Based on pre-industrial, deep ecological wisdom from all the world's indigenous cultures, these global civil networks incorporate the best of modern science, ecological wisdom, and green technologies and strategies for restoring the earth.

This emerging global civil society will be served by its own Global Television for Sustainable Development network, covering all continents, to amplify grass roots successes in creating more sustainable models for replication, for appropriate

replication elsewhere. As this global civil society emerges and its social innovations are amplified on television, a quantum leap in human learning and empathy is possible. As the global civil society is empowered it can lift some of the burdens from governments in many countries and provide alternatives to passive global consumerism and advertising-driven corporate marketing.

Happily, social innovations, 'greener' technologies, and new rules and agreements are breaking through in most countries. In addition, new quality-of-life scorecards, with data clearly presented from many disciplines (rather than over aggregated in money terms as in GNP) and monitoring all the multiple dimensions of true wealth and human progress, are proliferating, from the United Nation's development program's Human Development Development Index (HDI) to my own Country Futures Indicators (CFI).² All 178 countries which signed the Agenda 21 agreements pledged to overhaul their GNP national accounting systems to include valuing environmental costs and benefits as well as all the productive hours worked which are unpaid and ignored in GNP. As I have pointed out, for decades this 'love economy' of cooperative work such as volunteering, growing food, do-it-yourself housing and repairs, parenting children, caring for elders and the sick, maintaining healthy households, etc accounts for some fifty per cent of all productive work even in industrial countries, and much more in the 'Two Thirds World' as Elise Boulding, author of *Towards a Global Civic Culture*, calls the developing countries. Today, we must acknowledge that all countries are developing in different ways, hopefully toward a more sustainable future, and many in the North will need to learn from those in the South.

Richard Slaughter identifies many of these trends and social innovations. It is clear that we cannot allow trade negotiators and economic advisors with out-dated economic text books to continue 'levelling the global playing field' from their narrow perspectives, which results only in levelling rain forests and homogenising all the world's cultures. We are learning that cultural diversity needs to be savoured and is as important as biological diversity. In the emerging ecological perspective, diversity, both cultural and biological, is seen as a resource just like coal and oil, except more valuable. Obsolete economic worldviews and methods are reproducing some of the worst features of 19th century capitalism in eastern Europe and Russia as well as in Latin America and Asia. This 'rear view mirror' economics still underlies trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Uruguay General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT).

What is needed is an overhaul of all the Bretton Woods institutions: the GATT, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank which were all set up as part of the United Nations in 1945 and reflect a now vanished world. Today we must level the global playing field upward by raising its ethical floor. The girder work underlying this higher floor is composed of the many global agreements already mentioned to protect people everywhere and all the earth's ecosystems. Such an ethical floor should include a 'bandwidth' within which today's wage differentials can be narrowed (in the same way that currency fluctuations are contained today). This can slow the mad rush of corporations and global investors seeking out cheaper labor and unprotected environments.

The transition will be slow and painful from today's helter skelter competition. Meanwhile, we will learn that in a global commons such competitive games end in lose-lose tragedies for all players and the ecosystems. Economists are learning what systems theorists, ecologists, and futurists already know: what goes around, comes around. When niches in markets fill up, as they have in today's crowded, polluted cities and societies, these markets transform into 'commons' (i.e. closed systems which all players must use cooperatively). Markets are usually open systems and can still support win-lose,

competitive games. Today, the seamless global economy itself has transformed from the open competitive 'global playing field' of the economic text books into a commons with all the same characteristics of other 'natural' commons: such as the Earth's oceans, air, and electromagnetic spectrum.

All commons require cooperative win-win rules because their resources flow indivisibly and can only be used collectively. Economists need to learn how to identify when a market is filling up and turning into a commons and help devise the best ways of changing the rules from competitive win-lose to cooperative win-win. Most economists still use text book references to open systems, not as commons but as 'common property resources', implying that they must be owned by someone. This distortion creates many inappropriate policy approaches and collides directly with the emerging understanding that humans do not own or control the planet but are part of the web of life and must operate within the limits of ecosystem niches. Indeed, we are learning that markets are good servants but bad masters and that the 'invisible hand' is not derived from God but is our own.

All countries today have 'mixed economies' (i.e. various mixtures of markets and regulations) while economists have no theories about these mixes. Indeed, it is more fruitful to look at economies as sets of rules derived from the various cultural DNA codes of all societies (their different values, goals, and traditions), as I have elaborated elsewhere. Thus, economists will need the assistance of many other disciplines - from anthropologists to zoologists - and all studies of the human development process will need to be systemic and interdisciplinary. Futurists will play key roles as well, in developing and institutionalising foresight. This book will be an indispensable tool in fostering the multi-cultural dialogues and understanding to move us all along.

Hazel Henderson, December, 1993

Notes

Henderson, H. *Paradigms in Progress: Life Beyond Economics, knowledge Systems*, Indianapolis, 1992.

Hazel Henderson, *County Futures Indicators* (CFI) and trademarked, 1991.