

Reconceptualizing Futures: A Need and a Hope

by Eleonora Masini

A prominent European futurist reviews the development and philosophical bases of futures thinking since World War II and proposes an expanded role for futurists that would combine analysis with creative imagination and productive action.

Futures studies needs rethinking; the ways and means, and, even more, the basic concepts underlying futures studies all have to be reconstituted. Events and changes catch us unaware, and people are more and more appreciating the need to link their thinking with their beliefs on the one hand and with action and events on the other. Futures thinking, because it is geared to what is still to happen, provides an opportunity for creating this link, but if this is to happen, profound changes will be needed in the approaches and methodologies practiced by futurists. This is not just a need, however, it is also a hope -- a hope for survival and for human development. It is with such questions that this paper is concerned. How can we move from abstractly looking into the future to actually building the future?

Futures Thinking: Past and Present

Futures studies has a history that can be traced to the end of World War II, although of course thinking about the future has been a central activity of men and women since the beginning of civilization. People become human the moment they think about the future, the moment they try to plan for the future. The future is a symbol, as John McHale used to say, through which we order the present and give meaning to the past. Attitudes toward the future have certainly changed in history at different times, both in terms of how people look at the future and of how contemporary values affect future perspectives. It is interesting to take a brief glimpse at some of these changes.

In the *Republic* of Plato, the vision of a future society is one based on justice. Saint Augustine's *City of God* is a society based on love and pitted against the "City of Man" based on pride. Augustine contends his perfect society can be made real through structural change in the City of Man. We can look also at the *New Atlantis* of Francis Bacon, a society based on human greatness, and at Thomas More's *Utopia*, in which communal ownership of goods is central and where the individual is subordinate to the community. And we can proceed from these examples to consider the social ideals put forward by Comte and Marx to solve the pressing

social problems of their eras; and examine the ideas and experiments of scientific utopians and social reformers since the 19th century.

All these different visions of a desirable future are in some way embedded in the social structures from which they emerge, and are linked to the needs and the hopes of the people living at the time. We, in the present time, need to look at the future in ways that go beyond the creation of beautifully conceived but ultimately illusive utopias. Our future must not only be foreseen and dreamt of, but also chosen and built.

Let us now trace, in very general terms, the historical development of futures studies, from World War II on, and then try to understand its philosophical basis.² Since the end of World War II, mankind has sought to tackle the ever quicker and more inter-related transformations taking place and to identify the future consequences of present actions in order to avoid being overwhelmed or taken unaware by events. The endeavor to anticipate events through scientific analysis of trends and indicators of change -- the technological forecasting component of modern future studies -- developed first in the United States during and just after World War II. Soon thereafter, Bertrand de Jouvenel and others in Europe began addressing the philosophical and sociological dimensions of future studies, stressing the importance of forecasting alternatives possibilities and considering in detail the long-term consequences of current policies and actions.

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With time, it became apparent that foresight was important not only in order to know where one was going and how, but also to choose where one *wanted to go*. That is, by identifying futures that were possible and perhaps the most probable, futurists could progress to think about desirable futures. But 'desirable' on what basis? On the basis of an individual's choices, or on the basis of choices by groups, cultures, or ideologies? Hence, more recently, futures studies has seemed to become increasingly linked to philosophic choices, to choices of principle, and to choices of how one is to regard reality, man and society. Unfortunately, this development is not strong enough, and certainly not the declared goal of all futurists at this time. In fact, my reason for writing this paper is to stress the importance of basic philosophical choices in futures studies.

Futures Thought in Western Europe

In the first period following World War II, the French futurists studied and investigated the scientific and political aspects of future studies. In the latter half of the 1950s, in fact, Gaston Berger founded a center for "prospective studies." The term "prospective," as it began to be used in Europe, referred to making decisions based not only on immediate needs but also long-term consequences.

After Berger's premature death, economist Pierre Masse continued the "prospective" effort. As general commissioner of the French national development plan, Masse was responsible for giving prominence to the prospective mode of thinking - a prominence that led to the adoption of the first French national plan for 1985. In the

same period, Bertrand de Jouvenel gave the futures movement an extremely important boost with his studies on power, methods of governing, and political choices. The central feature of his thought is the overall dimension of time - past, present, and future - which alone can enable man to function in the political arena. Even today, de Jouvenel is working on this research theme; and to this end he founded the Association Internationale de Futuribles, which acts as a clearinghouse for research on the future.

Other European countries have also made important contributions to the field of future studies in terms of philosophical bases. In the Netherlands, sociologist Fred Polak theorized the birth of futures research from an epistemological point of view in his books *The Image of the Future* (1961) and *Prognostics* (1971). Between 1966 and 1972, the political establishment in the Netherlands demonstrated some interest in future studies, even establishing a policy sciences unit in 1974. The work of Jan Tinbergen's group is also extremely important, particularly the report it prepared for the Club of Rome on RIO, the New International Order.

In Great Britain, the work of the Sussex University Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) is very important. In addition to presenting criticism of global models, the unit is attempting to create a theory of futures research with contributions from an interdisciplinary team.

The Scandinavian countries too have been developing future studies in recent years, and have offered the findings of these studies to their governments, and to research institutes and organizations in an attempt to arouse more interest in the future.

In Laxenburg, Austria, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) has attained considerable prominence throughout Europe. This institute was created with the financial and scientific cooperation of various national academies, particularly the United States Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. The institute's investigations focus on the application of systems analysis to different fields, most importantly in the energy sector.

Many international groups are involved in future studies. In addition to the Club of Rome and the International Futuribles Association of France, two other futures groups of international interest have emerged in Europe - Mankind 2000, and the World Futures Studies Federation (WFSF). Both groups were given strong impetus at the first International Futures Research Conference, held in Oslo in 1967, which was organized by the Peace Research Institute. The aim of Mankind 2000 (founded in 1966 in Holland, later moved to Brussels) is to promote all aspects of human development in the individual, in groups, and in emerging world communities. The need for a World Futures Studies Federation was recognized as far back as the Oslo conference just cited. The central purposes of the WFSF are to serve as a forum for the exchange of information through publications, conferences and meetings. The WFSF first focused its members' activities on the study and analysis of human needs in terms of future societies, gradually became more interested in communication and cultural identity, and at present is geared to the future of political institutions and of visions of alternative societies.

Prognostics in Eastern Europe

The Socialist countries of Eastern Europe merit some special remarks for their efforts in future studies. The term used in Socialist countries is "prognostics," which considers future studies as the crucial process preceding the formation of a plan. I should like to expand briefly on this definition.

The foundations of socioeconomic planning are laid in the identification of the regularities of the modern scientific-technological processes. Here the links with the positivist tradition and with Lenin's thought are evident: Lenin made the principles of scientific Communism the basis for planning. According to his school of thought, forecasting is the stage prior to planning. Forecasting and planning differ in levels of objectivity and complexity but are necessarily tied. On the basis of a dialectic-materialist outlook, the future (as distinct from the past and the present) is in principle stochastic and not simply a projection of the past; indeed, the future contains within itself a large measure of creativity. The Socialist countries, therefore, concentrate on the analysis of scientific and technological process and on the consequences thereof as elements of social progress. On this general basis, the futures groups that have developed in such "mainline" Socialist countries as Romania, Hungary and the U.S.S.R. vary somewhat in orientation and stress (for instance Poland, from the very beginning, has had a different orientation, displaying more interest in cultural developments for the future).

Future Studies in America

The first futures studies in the United States were invariably conducted for government agencies and business corporations. Only later were such studies carried out by universities and private research centers such as the Center for Integrative Studies directed by the late John McHale at the University of Houston and later at SUNY/Buffalo by Magda McHale. Systems future studies are currently being conducted by Harold Linstone in Portland, Oregon, and by James Dator in Hawaii, who has involved local citizens in efforts to design their own futures.

The leading futurists in the United States and Canada may be tentatively divided into the following categories:

- Technologically-oriented. These pursue future studies based on the use of technological processes. Representatives of this group include Herman Kahn, Olaf Helmer, and Theodore Gordon.
- Sociologically-oriented. Alvin Toffler, James Dator, Daniel Bell, and the late John McHale in the United States, and Kimon Valaskakis in Canada seem to fall conveniently within this category.
- Globalistically-oriented. This group includes those futurists who have worked on the Club of Rome's various projects (such as Dennis and Donella Meadows, and Mihajlo Mesarovic) , and those associated with the World Order Group in New York, directed by Saul Mendlovitz.

Futurism in the Third World

Mention should also be made of future studies in the developing countries, which are more and more showing their interest in this field. Within the Francophone region of Africa, Morocco leads in futurist activities; in the English-speaking zone, Egypt and Tanzania lead. Both India and Sri Lanka have futures groups, and of course Japan follows the developed countries' pattern and interests. Latin America has recently been expanding its activities in futures studies, particularly in Mexico, Venezuela, and Brazil.

Following this very brief description of the past and present of future studies, it is important to see the general philosophical orientation that such groups seem to follow, whether consciously or not and whether admittedly or not. In the French school, the primary focus of interest has always been the consideration of "alternative futures." There is not one future, there are many futures. Which of these futures emerges depends on the choices made by human beings. As Michel Godet describes it, "the prospective approach...reflects awareness of a future that is both deterministic and free, both passively suffered and actively willed."³

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In the Netherlands, the approach of Fred Polak is very interesting - namely that the future is based on images of the future that are related to historical situations, beliefs, and desires. To understand the future, Polak argues, we must examine its premises in people's minds.⁴

Other futurists in the Netherlands are more oriented toward searching for trends that may lead to policy choices. This is also the orientation of many Scandinavian futures studies: toward praxis.

In Great Britain the directions are varied but generally are oriented toward perceiving the world as a whole, taking into account relations among individuals, between man and society, and among societies. British futurists are particularly interested in the impact of modern technology on societies.

Also of particular interest is the work of the IIASA in Austria as it attempts to relate specific topics to the global system as a whole, as in the case of energy.⁵

The Socialist countries, as indicated, consider futures studies as the stage prior to planning and therefore as helpful for enlarging planners' perspective on goals.

As to the United States and Canada, the three approaches to futures studies we have described all have different philosophical bases, as I have explained in a previous article.⁶

For the purposes of this article, it is enough to mention that the approaches of most futures studies, in the recent past and even today, are related to Western philosophical concepts - particularly those of John Locke, G. W. Leibnitz, Friedrich Hegel, and Immanuel Kant. But I consider it important to

trace not only the philosophical foundation of futures studies, but also their ethical foundations.

Futures studies involves the possibility of looking into the future at various levels in order to better understand the changing interrelations between man, society, and the environment. The three levels of looking into the future reflect three different philosophical approaches to the future.

The first approach emerges from the need to face rapid change and to know where the world is going. It consists of the data of the past and present, which point the way towards what is possible and help identify what is probable among what is possible. It is based on the proposition that "something *is* changing."

This "prognosis" approach, which relies on extrapolation and makes heavy use of social and economic indicators, was widely used from the end of World War II to the 1960s. This approach is most closely related to the philosophy of John Locke, based on empirical data.

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The second approach is keyed to utopias - desirable societies. In terms of futures studies, this means that the future is built on the basis of something we wish to happen. While in the "prognosis" approach the "possibles" and the "probables" were sought, this second approach seeks the "desirables." I call this the "visions" approach because it aspires to transform the present by a *vision* of the future. The philosophical basis of this approach comes from Leibnitz, and is based on the belief that "something *must be* changed." I believe this approach to be very important. Futurists must not think only of "possibles" and "probables" but also of "desirables." We have to examine the forces that draw us on; otherwise, we will think only of that which has been done before, and change will not occur.

The third approach to future studies is a synthesis of the first and second. It is the level on which people think about the future in terms of *projects*. This means they seek to undertake projects that will change reality according to specific indications directed by utopias, by social ideals, by models and by visions, while at the same time taking into account empirical data on trends in the past and conditions in the present.

This third approach is based on both a knowledge of "possibles" and "probables" and on a vision of "desirables" - on models, and on ideals. Here we see emerging the choice - the interest of the observer. It is based on the belief that "something *can be* changed."

From among the "possible" and the "probable" emerges the "desirable" (in Kantian terms "the ideal," and in Hegelian terms "the infinite") inserting itself into reality and creating a synthesis, or rather, a synergy. The project that

emerges is based on assessments of the possible and the probable and the choice of the desirable. I call this approach "*project building*." I believe that it may also relate to non-Western philosophies, but I have not as yet pursued research into this very important area.

Futures Thinking as Vision

I have said that the "visions" approach focuses on "desirables" and emphasises values; although values are always present in every approach to future studies. Futurists using this "visions" approach often rely on the existing visions of writers, poets, political scientists, philosophers, or even policy-makers. But instead they should develop their own visions.

Visions spring from the capacity to recognize the seeds of change that lie in the past and the present; moreover, visions make it possible to create a future that is different from the present although its seeds are in the present. In a sense, visions capture the changes that are already latent in the present and posit these as the future reality. Visions are born from the capacity to listen, to search, to be attentive to that which already exists, but which is not yet obvious and may develop later. Visions are linked to people who carry the seeds of change, and are not mere abstraction. The ability to nurture the seeds of change and develop visions is even more important than the capacity for future analysis. For example, when an important element of change (such as a different life-style) develops, the people involved may be simply carried along, unable to do anything about it or sometimes not even aware of it. In this sense people are not part of the process and do not choose to change but simply accept it. This process continues and reinforces itself because the fewer the number of people choosing the changes, the less conscious direction can become part of the change process.

Instead, it is important to perceive what I have called the seeds of change, those aspects of society that are in the process of developing and that require new modes of understanding that go beyond the rational and work at the levels of intuition and emotion. Often the unconscious mind offers understandings that are richer even if less explicit than those provided by logical analysis alone.

The ability to recognize the seeds of change is stunted in people who accept change in a passive way or who are simply interested in keeping alive and expanding the social system of which they are part.⁷ Such people are locked into their social character.⁸ This term is used by Erich Fromm to mean the nucleus of the character structure that is shared by most members of the same society. In fact, such members of society will want to act as they are expected to act in the social system to maintain it. The social character as such becomes an assumed identity of the individual, which is necessary for the perpetuation of any social system.

Who are the people capable of capturing such latent changes to which the futurist has to be attentive in becoming a vision-oriented futurist? The best listeners, capturers of seeds of change, are those who do not fit the existing

social character in its totality. The capturers, the listeners, are those who somehow are outside the logic of that specific system.

Some would account for these people with "maladaptation theory," but I wish to go beyond such an explanation. In fact, if we consider as outside the social system the artists, the writers, the poets, or the politically persecuted in oppressive regimes, we cannot accept further the maladaptation theory explanation.

The listeners - the capturers of the seeds of change - are those who build visions, which are different from the present but are not pure utopias since they are part of the process of history. These perceptive individuals are mainly those who do not perceive only with their rational capabilities but also with their intuitive, imaginative capacities. This is the case of artists, poets, etc., who exist outside the existing social system, which mainly tends to conserve and perpetuate itself.

Other groups are not part of the system in the sense that they do not help perpetuate it, and these groups include, I believe, women and children. I shall talk about children first. They have to accept the social system of which they are a part but they are also silent witnesses to change. They are, if listened to and stimulated, capable of providing visions for a different society from the one in which they live. Of course, if they are simply talked to in terms of the social system of which they are a part, with its vocabulary and its frame of reference, they also seem to conform. But it has been shown by recent research in Italy that when the methods of listening to children are identified - even if in a tentative way - the visions emerge.⁹

Women too, I believe, are listeners to the seeds of change in the process of history. Because women have not competed with men till recent times, in the Western World, they have not become completely captured by the social system and hence have not completely absorbed the prevailing social character.

Women have, in fact, acquired and kept alive the capacity to build visions. This is shown by the opposition that women have voiced to the predominant emphasis in the West on economic priorities over the quality of life for human beings. This point has been expressed in global terms through the visions of alternative futures offered by Hazel Henderson¹⁰ and of a world of peace by Elise Boulding.¹⁰

Women have lived their "alternatives" to the mainstream of life in their private lives, and the indications now are that they will continue living them in public. The world of today (and probably of tomorrow) shows signs of stress and even of possible catastrophe. Perhaps women's visions, based on perceptions that are not purely rational, can create an alternative that may ensure the survival of humankind.

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way, or who simply wish to maintain the status quo."

It is crucial that the "visions" approach to futures studies stops being an evasion and starts to be recognized as a force by those who are bearers of the vision. If the capturers of seeds of change are aware of the importance of their visions to the process of history, they will also acquire pride and believe in themselves. In this sense their "visions" will no longer be "utopias" that, though linked in their premises to the historical moment when they are devised, are in fact evasions of the present - societies that parallel reality and have no force for change. This has been the case for many utopias in history. The importance of "visions" must be understood by futurists who have mainly relied on analysis, extrapolation, and on knowledge of the past and the present. Visions of truly different futures have been treated by most futurists as of secondary importance - as not very serious products of fiction writers or philosophers. As a matter of fact, futures studies has not even realized that extrapolations are tied also to visions, though in a less obvious manner. This has been described in the analysis of global models to which I referred in the first part of this paper. Futures studies has to reevaluate "visions" and search for the listeners to seeds of change wherever they are - in art, in alternative political movements, among women, and children. This will make their forecasts more than mere extrapolations - predictions more linked to unexpressed needs. Some writers speak of the peripheries in respect to the centers of power while others speak of the minorities and the mainstream. However we wish to label them, these groups are now very large: for they include most people of the Third World and the women of all the world.

Project-Building: the Responsibility of the Futurist

I have stressed the importance of "visions" in futures thinking and also the fact that such thinking must be rooted in the changes that are emerging as seeds in the process of history. But it is also important that such "visions" become, together with the analysis of past, present and future trends, *projects* of action for the future. It is not enough to identify those trends that may develop in the future, or to have knowledge on which to base analysis. Nor is it enough to have a vision even if it is rooted in the historical process. What is important is to build with the aid of trends a "project" that will then bring about the vision. It is at this point that the future can become what we wish it to become, or at least this can happen if unknown elements do not emerge. This is the moment when the element of force is important - the element of will that follows choice. It is the moment when strategies and even tactics must emerge, and it is this point that is based on all elements: desires, possibilities, probabilities, and will. In such terms, the concept of project has yet to be explored. For the most part there are either short-term projects about what way to develop, or there are grandiose proposals for the future like those of many ideologists. What is needed, though, are projects with a basis in past and present knowledge, and futurists who are aware of the short term but capable of seeing things in the process of change and who are inspired by a long-term vision.

"Is it ethically defensible to build a model for *utopia* and *not* seek to transform it into action?"

The frame of reference - the value system in which the futurist operates - needs to be clearly defined, for it is the futurist's responsibility both to exercise rational judgment in influencing decisions and at the same time to be creatively self-expressive. The expression of oneself is clearly related to one's values, while the rational influencing of decisions must include sensitivity to the ideas and values of others.

If we analyze the three approaches to futures studies described above, we can see that values and ethical choice are more or less evident. The future is the only temporal area over which people have power: the past and the present are always beyond control. These areas may offer knowledge, but no more; they are the "facts" that can be utilized for "futures" which in their turn are built by human will - meaning that the future emerges from choice among the various models of reality that humans wish to build. The future emerges from the chosen model of a specific historical moment, whatever the approach, although this emphasis is more apparent in the "visions" and "projects" approaches. How can we perceive these various historical-philosophical approaches?

Is it enough to know data and construct a model, giving importance to experience, trends and extrapolations? Conversely, is it ethically defensible to build a model for a *utopia* and *not* seek to transform it into action? This is a topic that merits more than philosophical discussion; for at this point the social and the ethical responsibilities of the futurist merge.¹²

The futurist is, in fact, part of the world and of the dynamics that he is trying to describe in future terms. The futurist cannot build himself a comfortable ivory tower like some theorists in the so-called "pure" sciences. The futurist, in fact, "reflects" his own culture and, at various and different levels, his disciplinary matrix. On the one hand, he believes that he interprets and reflects his culture completely.¹³ But in reality, he reflects it only partially; because together with his cultural elements he reflects his "social character" (in Erich Fromm's terms) and perhaps his individual temperament.

On the other hand, sometimes the futurist "reflects" his culture without knowing it; he thinks he is speaking for the world and forgets that he is expressing his cultural biases, his disciplinary education, and his social character, and that these are only partial aspects of the world. The futurist, more than any other scientist, needs to acknowledge the existence and the value of cultures, attitudes and objectives that are different from his own. Hence the importance of what Mihai Botez calls the implicit hypothesis of many projects, the hypothesis of the parts that are "excluded" more or less willingly.¹⁴ These considerations indicate that the futurist cannot be considered a pure technician but is the bearer of a set of values that are both declared and undeclared - a bearer of implicit and explicit hypotheses. Bertrand de Jouvenel, has stated that observation is related to knowledge and to the interest of the observer.¹⁵ This is especially true for the futurist, who, because his field contains much more than he can observe and because it deals with what has not yet occurred, must put questions to himself that range

beyond his own interests and try to reduce his area of "non-observation," in which the unforeseen - the "non-forecasted" - may prove fatal.

This aspect of the work of the futurist must be understood if we wish to reconceptualize futures thinking to include developing and searching for visions, and building projects. Futures thinking must be linked to social responsibility and to ethical values that are clearly expressed and defined. This does not imply setting rigid definitions that constrain outlook, but merely that the futurist make his - or her - values open and understandable and hence, recognized even if not approved.

In fact, projects for and of the future must be many, reflecting different values and recognized for their diversity. Many times, what are actually projects for the future are presented as if they were only extrapolations: the future is going to be such and such. On the other hand, sometimes what are presented as visions are actually projects for building a future that is different from or opposed to the present. But whatever their disguise, projects are ethical statements, acts of will, that futurists wish to be translated into reality. At their ethical best, such projects are not simply consequences of the past, nor schemes to perpetuate the present or to fulfill a private desire of the futurist. Futures projects are political and ethical positions that lead to action.

A project of the future is something that "can happen" and to accomplish which we take action; it is what Bertrand de Jouvenel and other French futurists call "prospective" - the link between science and action. It is to this end that future studies must reconceptualize itself: Futures studies must become acting for the future.

Futures Thinking as Learning

I wish to stress here that if futures thinking is to direct itself to visioning - searching for and listening to the seeds of change - and if it is to build as well, to implement and to act, then it must also be recognized as a learning process. Futurists must learn and help others to learn in future terms. This means learning not only with the aim of preserving the past or perpetuating the present, but learning to anticipate and build the future. It means learning to live with the future - not in the sense of adjusting to it, but in the sense of steering it in the direction we choose. Furthermore, ethics demand that the direction we choose be towards what we consider the best, not merely what will benefit a particular individual or group. This implies the conscious exercise of will and an act of responsibility.

Such a future is directed by what I call "principles of order as dynamic principles in the flow of life." As I have explained in another article,¹⁶ these principles in some way govern relations between the microcosm (man) and the macrocosm (the world). We could call them values that undergo a mediation from the ontological level. Absolute values exist, in fact, at the ontological level and govern the world; they are outside of time but are mediated to the existential level of man in an ongoing process of

internalization. These values at a given historical and spatial moment, and in a continuous and dynamic process, are the dynamic principles of order.

The continuous and dynamic process of learning to understand is the internalization of values in an existential way. Values undergo constant change in relation to time and space and as such are internalized. It is at this point that learning is important and crucial to futures thinking, and it is this kind of learning that will give human beings the ability to live in a rapidly changing world that seems to over-whelm their capacities to survive and develop mentally and spiritually. We seem to be constantly pursuing technological changes, political changes, economic changes etc., yet our internal psychological and spiritual structures do not seem able to accommodate such changes. By learning along the lines indicated, internalizing values in an existential way, we can learn to survive and also to develop, because in this way we follow principles of order that are outside of time and govern the world but are dynamic in time and space and are made realizable by the human will. In this way, the position typical of our times of fragmentation between the observer and the object, which leads to non-involvement, would be overcome by the mediation of internalized values.

Erich Jantsch¹⁷ cites Abraham Maslow's conclusion that man, by gradual awareness through the well known hierarchy of needs, attains the capacity for self-actualization and recognizes absolute values as principles of order in the flow of life. According to Jantsch, Maslow's self-actualization may be understood as the moment in which the identification of subject with object gives us the capacity to recognize the "order in the flow": the moment of internalized values.

Maslow assumes that the role of creativity (primary creativity) enters fully.¹⁸ I, for my part, assert that the role of intuition and spiritual understanding goes far beyond the understanding through reason on which the development of Western civilization has mainly relied over the last two centuries.

Learning for future thinking means developing these non-rational capacities, and, hence, learning should be based on:

A. Awareness of the Interrelation Between Psychological and Social Character. That is to say, awareness of the interaction between individual temperament and the social character. Each individual has a unique temperament that derives from his or her genetic components, and these develop in dynamics with the social character of the family, the group, the country, etc., as defined by Erich Fromm.

"Future studies must become acting for the future."

B. Respect for One's Own Culture and at the Same Time Awareness of Other Cultures. In a pluralistic world, learning must take account of one's own values, behaviors, life-styles and those of others.

C. Learning Should Be Geared to Identity - that is, to being oneself, as an individual and as a member of society: to be both an individual continually changing, and at the same time a dynamic part of society, including a world society. Identity is the capacity to live continuously in a dynamic relation to oneself, to others, and to the environment without being completely absorbed by them.

D. Learning Must Be Geared to the Ultimate Questions of Existence: Death, love, tragedy, hope, loyalty, power, the meaning of life and the place of the transcendent in human existence.¹⁹ Learning should not avoid raising such questions and should actively encourage the production of tentative answers to them. The aim is not to prove the correctness of any certain set of answers but rather to develop the capability of *perceiving* different answers to such questions; e.g., how the conceptions of death, life, and love differ in different cultures. Learning understood in these terms is basic to futures thinking and to future studies.

Conclusion

It is through a change of futures thinking and future studies that learning overcomes the fracture between the subject and the object. Futurists must think in terms of developing visions, attaining the capability of searching for and listening to the seeds of change in the process of history, and of building projects for the future through actions based on clearly articulated values, while acknowledging the legitimacy of other perceptions. Future studies can and must change in these directions so as to become a means for helping human beings better equip themselves to live in a changing world and to steer change to achieve their common benefit.

NOTES

1. John McHale, *The Future of the Future*, Braziller, 1969.
2. See also E. Masini, "The Growth of Futures Research in Global Futures," in Jib Fowles, ed., *The Handbook of Futures Research*, Westport, 1978.
3. Michel Godet, *The Crisis, in Forecasting and the Emergence of the "Prospective" Approach*, Pergamon Press, 1979.
4. Fred Polak, *Prognostics*, Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1971.
5. A. McDonald, "Energy in a Finite World" (Executive Summary of the report of the Energy Systems Programme of IIASA, directed by W. Hafele), IIASA, 1981.
6. E. Masini, "Philosophical and Ethical Foundations of Futures Studies: A Discussion," in *World Futures*, Vol. 1:7, pp. 1-14.
7. By "social system" I here mean "an interrelated set of social processes in which there is a sufficient feedback to warrant the assumption of some degree of self maintenance." See Percy S. Coen, *Modern Social Theory*, Heinemann Educational Books, Ltd., London, 1968.

8. Eric Fromm, *The Sane Society*, Routledge and Keegan, Ltd., London, 1956.
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NOTE: THAT biographical information was true at the time of publication. Prof. Dr. Masini is now retired, although she remains a lively and influential voice in the global futures dialogue.

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