

Using the Future: An Experience and a Few Practical Tips

Riel Miller



Forward Look
“Responses to
Environmental and
Societal Challenges
for our Unstable
Earth” (RESCUE)
“Frontiers of Science”
initiative
Paris, Sept. 11, 2009

Bugs Bunny Anticipates



Every-day anticipation

UMBRELLA TODAY?

"It's like totally the simplest weather report ever, Julie."

NO

We will text message you on days you'll need umbrella with our weather report. Enter your cell below.

We'll schedule your weather reports for 7:00 AM

Who's your cell carrier?

GO

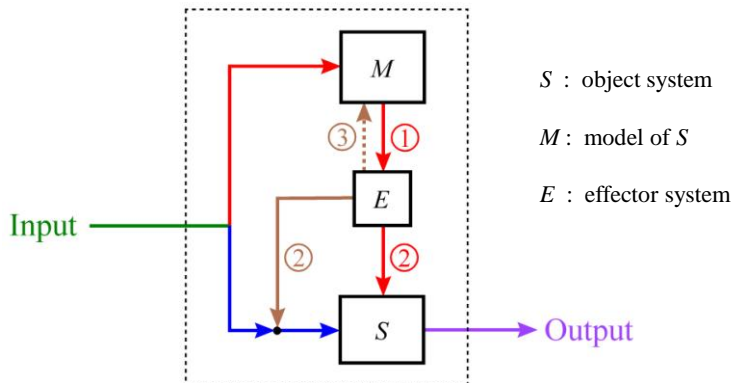
YES

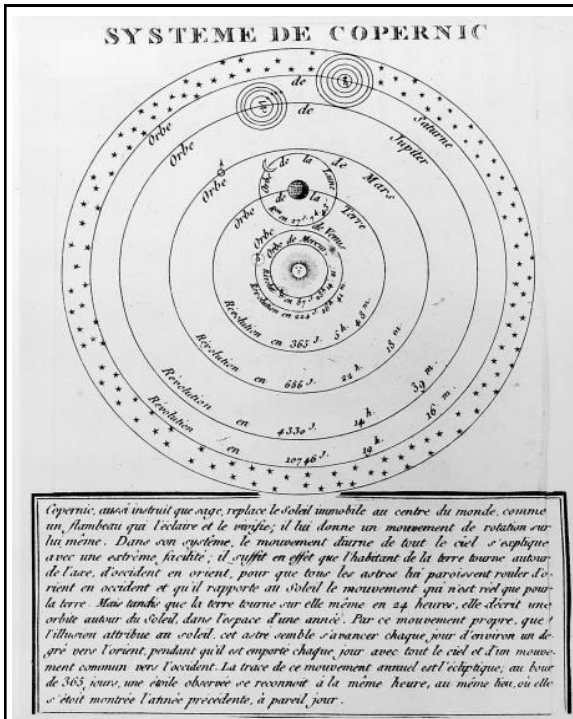
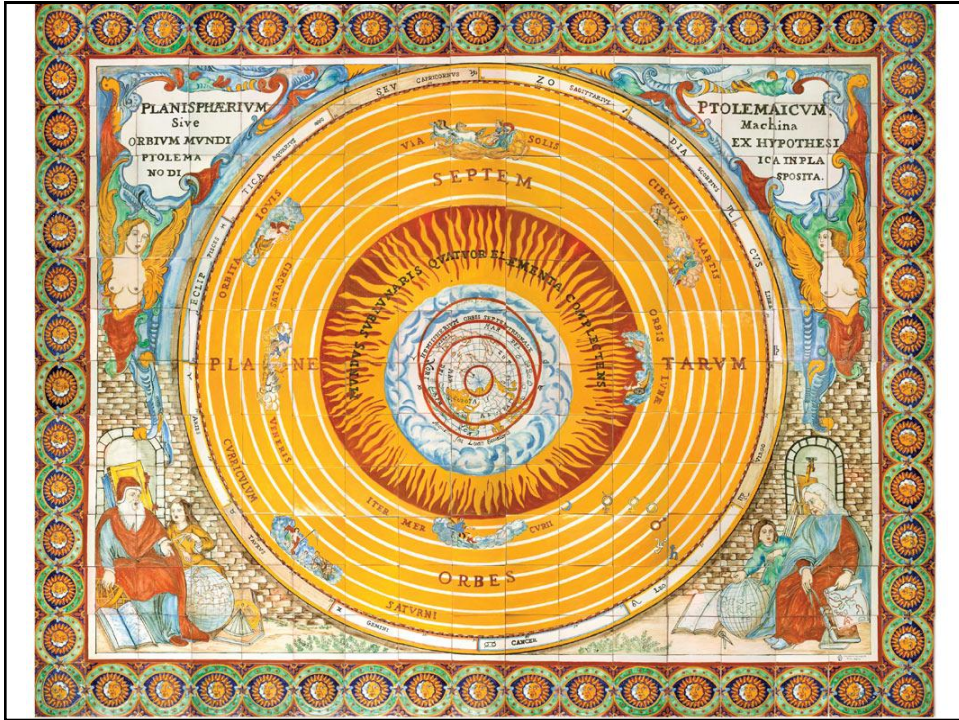
We will text message you on days you'll need umbrella with our weather report. Enter your cell below.

Make your bets – now (in the present)

Riel Miller, xperidox: futures consulting, 2009

M – the model of the future:
How and what we “see” and “tell” about tomorrow
changes what we see and DO now





What difference does it make?

- Thinking about change in the conditions of change.
- RESCUE: Re-imagining the potential of the present – decisions now.

“RESCUE will impact society by favouring common strategic understanding and coordination, and transformative education delivery, to help ensuring global sustainable governance.”



Photo credit- Merk Schacter ©

But what is the anticipatory framework?



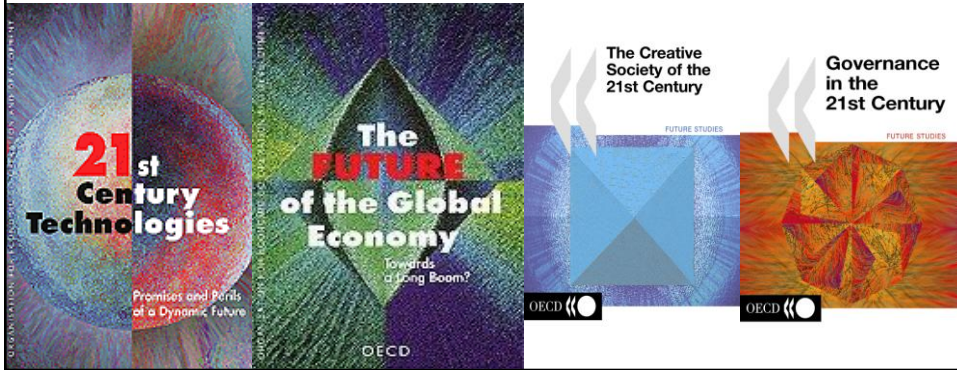


The Green Creative Society of 2025: An Imaginary Sketch of Daily Life



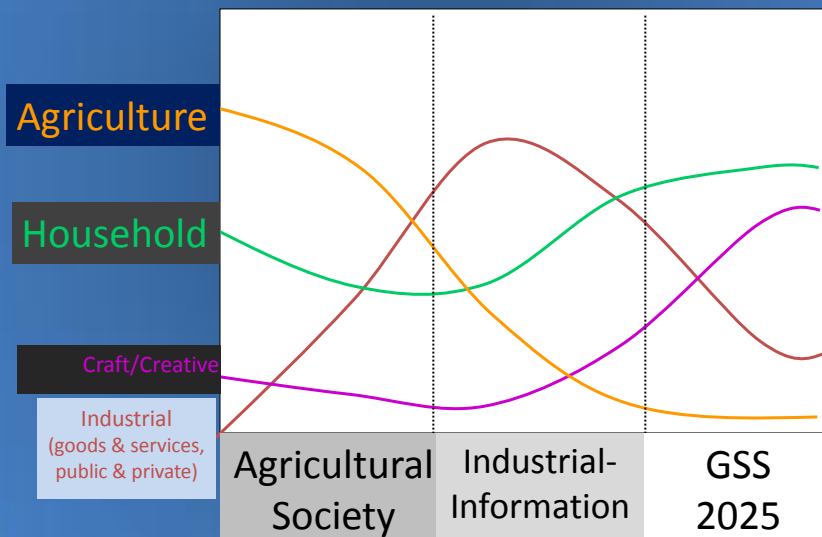
Changes in the Conditions of Change

Analytical foundations for imagining a Green Creative Society in 2025



Compositional Transformation

Share of total wealth creation by source

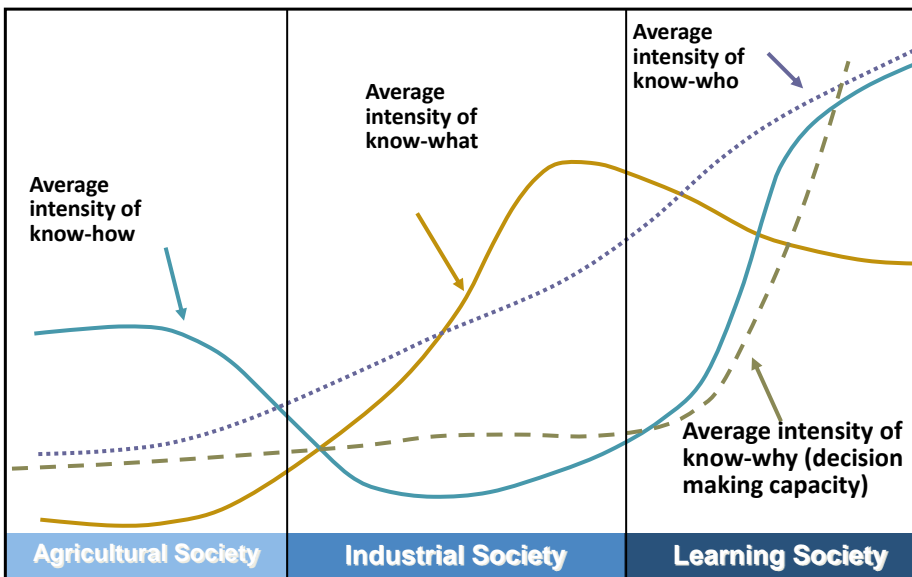


Learning in every day life is more intense if, in daily life, over a lifetime, people generate (flow) and accumulate (stock) more:

- know-how
- know-who
- know-what
- know-why

Riel Miller, xperidox: futures consulting, 2009

Greater Learning Intensity of Daily Life



Source: Riel Miller, XperidoX Futures Consulting; rielm@yahoo.com

Riel Miller, xperidox: futures consulting, 2009



Photo credit: Mark Schacter, www.luxetveritas.ca

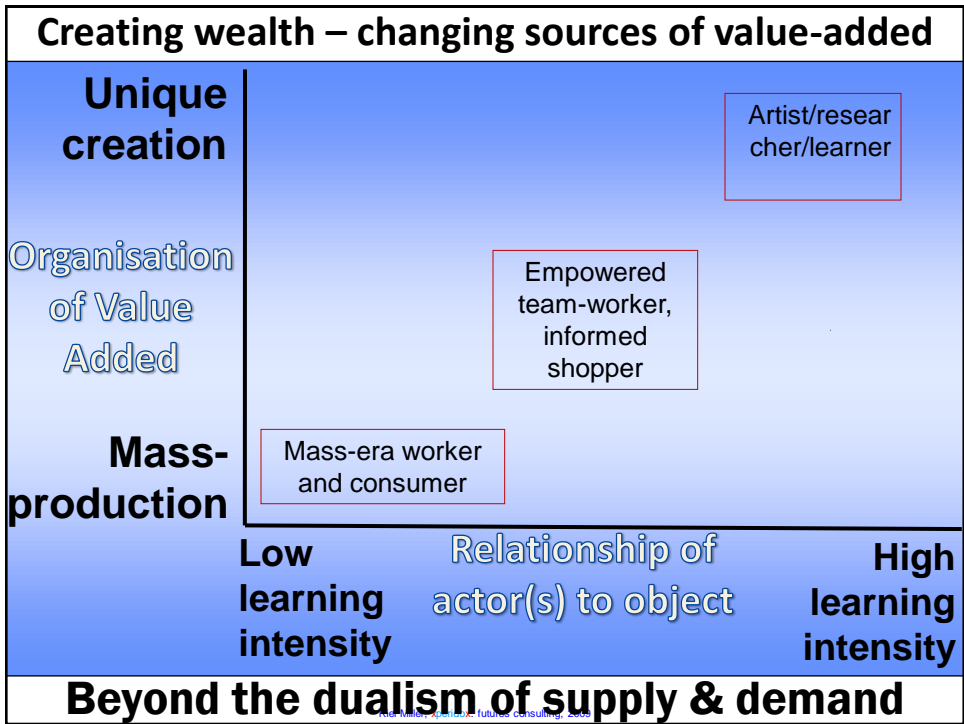
Riel Miller, xperidox.com: futures consulting, 2009

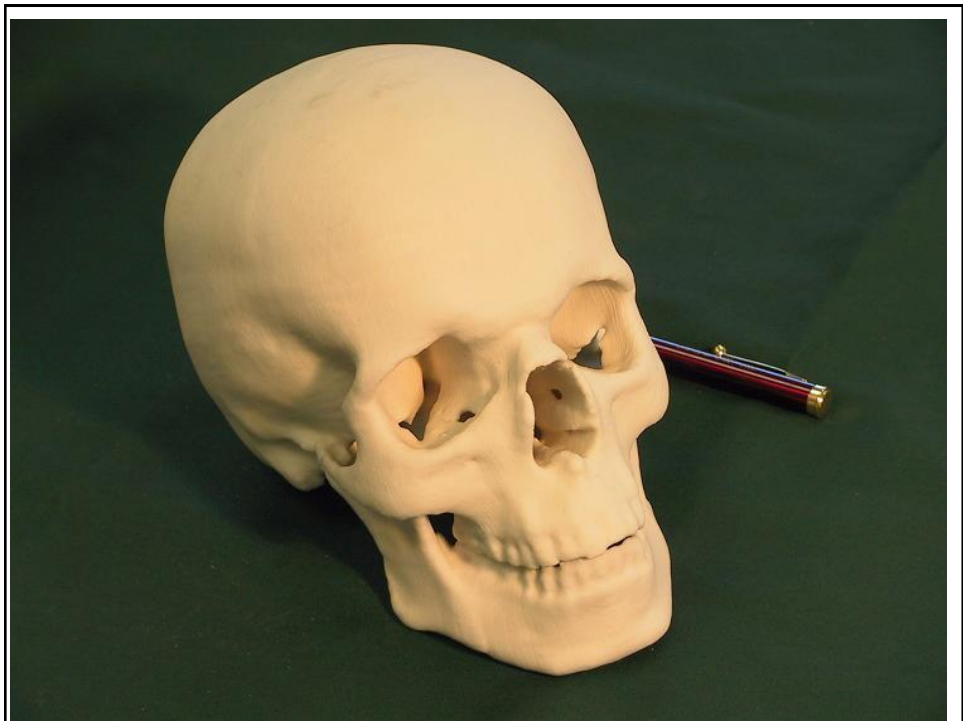
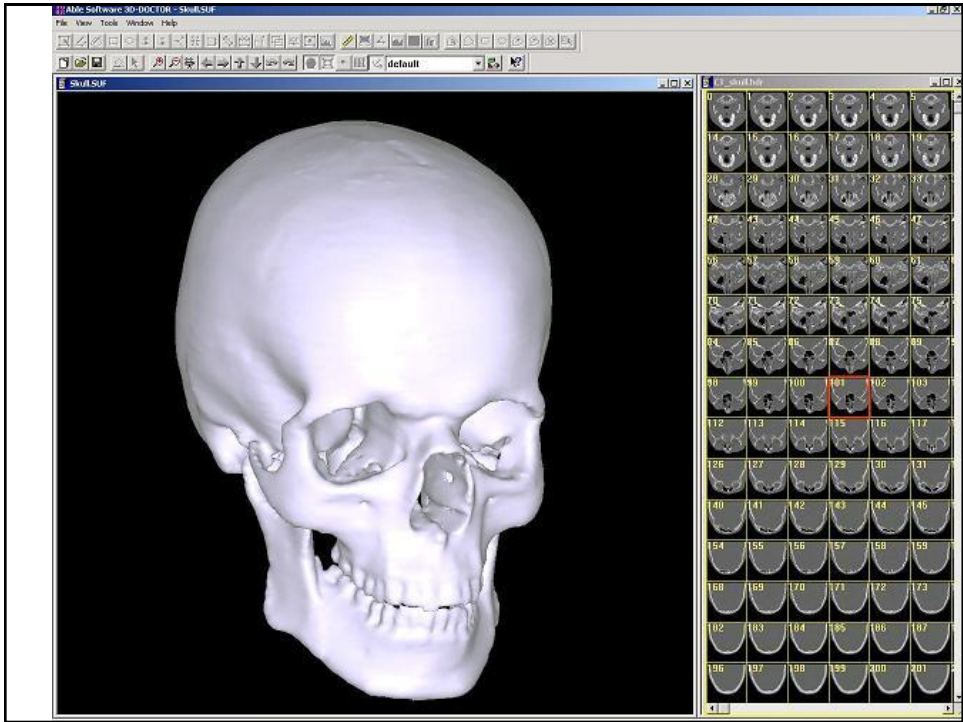
Systemic Economic Transformation: Changes What and How We Produce

- Unique creation – what is value?
- How do we organize value creation?
- Predominant type of economic activity
- Scope of transaction systems

“Next stage” of market economy – beyond mass-production and mass-consumption

Riel Miller, xperidox.com: futures consulting, 2009





FAB

THE COMING REVOLUTION ON YOUR DESKTOP—FROM
PERSONAL COMPUTERS TO PERSONAL FABRICATION

NEIL GERSHENFELD AUTHOR OF
WHEN THINGS START TO THINK

Users will design and create their own objects instead of shopping for existing products. Cybercrafting started in 1998 when students at MIT's How to Make (Almost) Anything course set out to fulfill their "individual desires rather than merely meeting mass-market needs."

Castle Island, Worldwide
Guide to Rapid Prototyping



US Army mobile rapid parts replacement pilot project



Industrial Era Sequential Production, Consumption, Resource Deployment Process



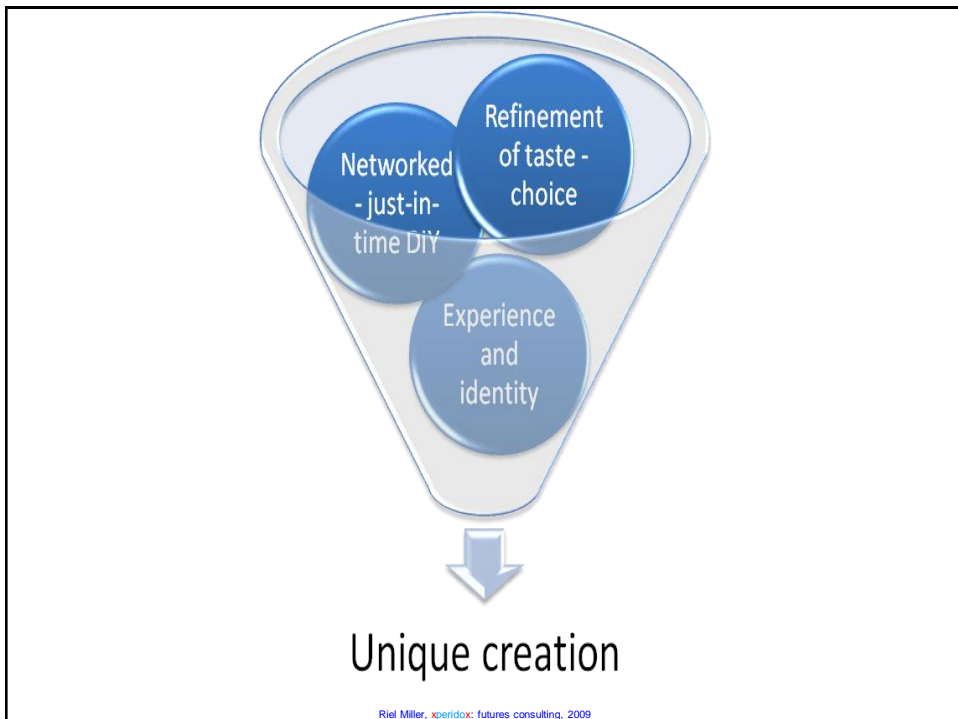
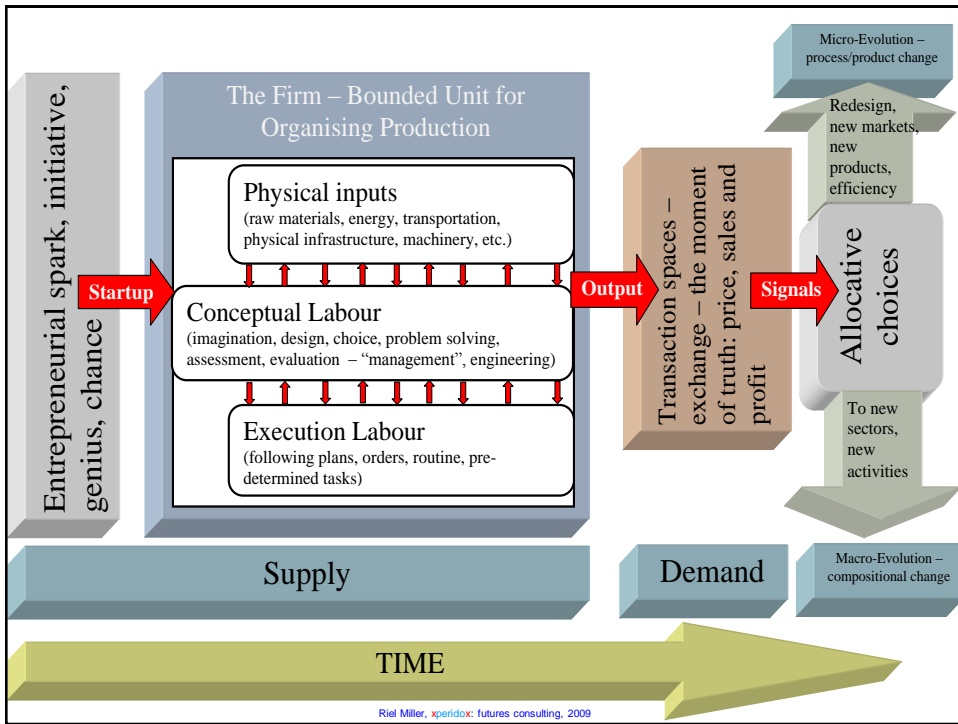
Riel Miller, xperidox: futures consulting, 2009

Conception

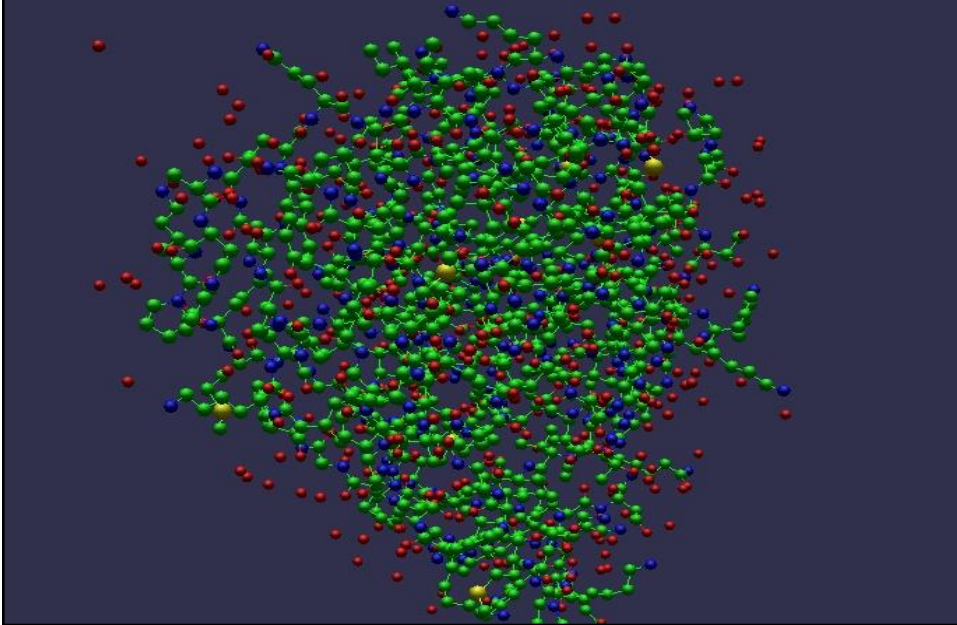
Management

Execution

Riel Miller, xperidox: futures consulting, 2009



Clouds of value creation:
Transforming the organizational foundations



“Attempts to reform British and American society from the 1830s on in what we now label the Victorian era were a monumental success. The impact on social capital in both societies was extraordinary, as masses of rude, illiterate agricultural workers and urban poor were converted into what we now understand as the working class. Under the discipline of the time clock, these workers understood that they had to keep regular hours, stay sober on the job, and maintain minimal standards of decent behavior.”

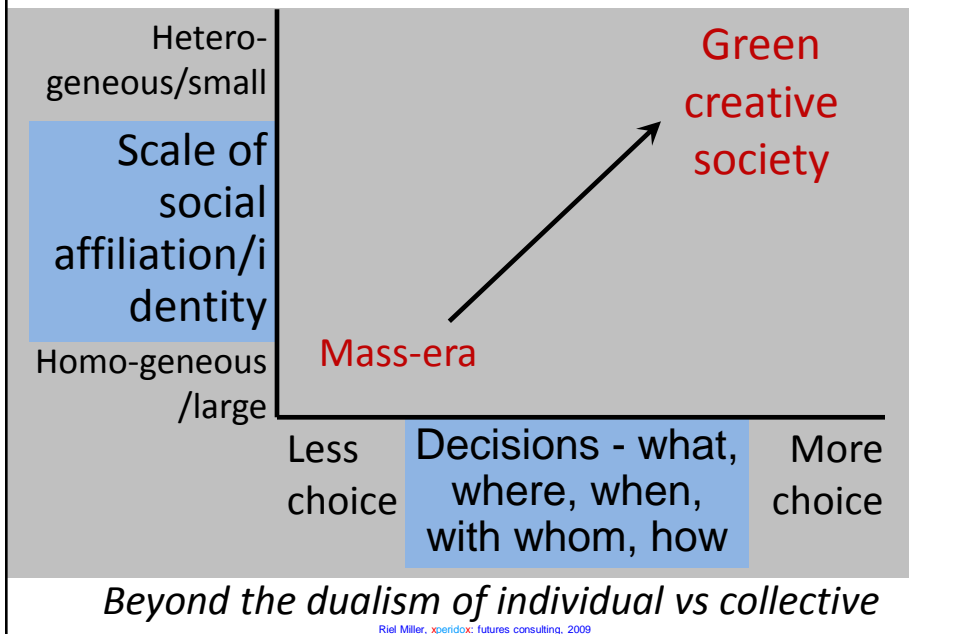
Francis Fukuyama, *The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order*, 1999, p. 268

Systemic Social Transformation Change in the Capacity

- Identity:
 - Who am I?
 - How do I define myself?
 - Which networks, communities give me my sense of identity?
- Choice:
 - What kinds of choices do I make?
 - How often do I make them?
 - When do I make the choices?
 - What is the range/depth of choice?

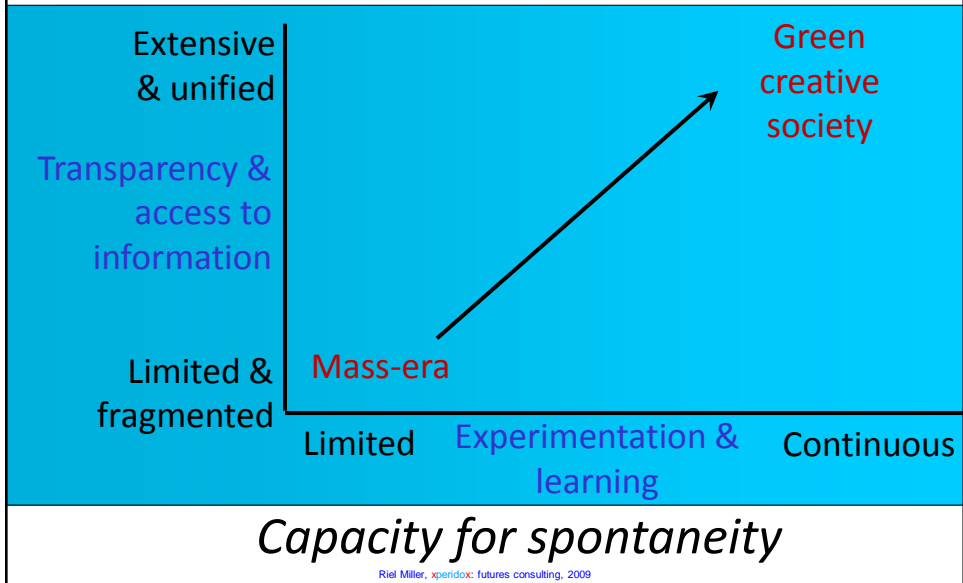
Riel Miller, xperidox: futures consulting, 2009

Identity & choice

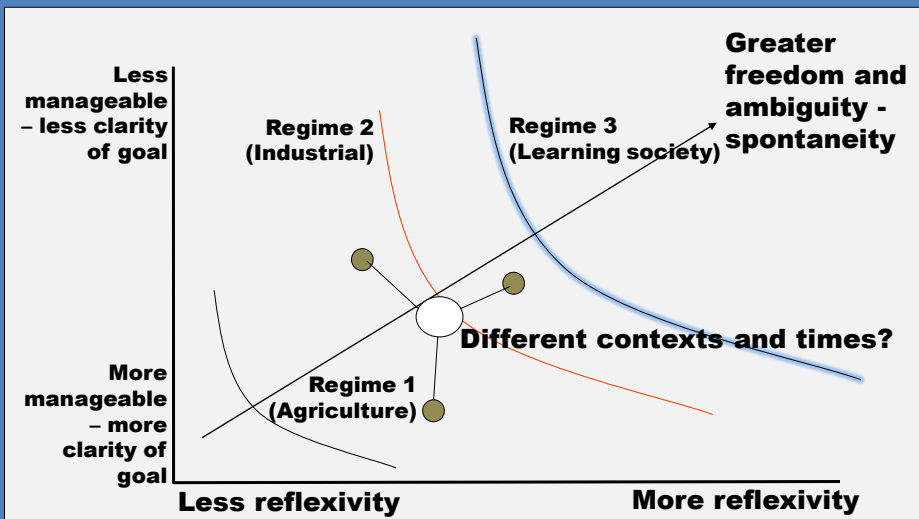


Riel Miller, xperidox: futures consulting, 2009

Governance: capacity to make decisions



A changing context for innovation and research



New conditions for a green creative society – but how does it work?

Imagining the Scale of Change: Frame a Picture

- Wealth, rules, governance, values
 - Physical/financial vs human capital
 - Simple vs complex property rights
 - Ex-ante vs real-time allocation of power
 - Shared values as basis for transaction trust (Universal Declaration of Human Rights)
- Quality of life
 - Mass production vs production for self/community
 - Life organized for work vs work organized for life
 - Hierarchy vs autonomy
 - Imposed identity vs self-generated identity
 - Sen's definition of "freedom"

Riel Miller, xperidox: futures consulting, 2009

Group Exercise

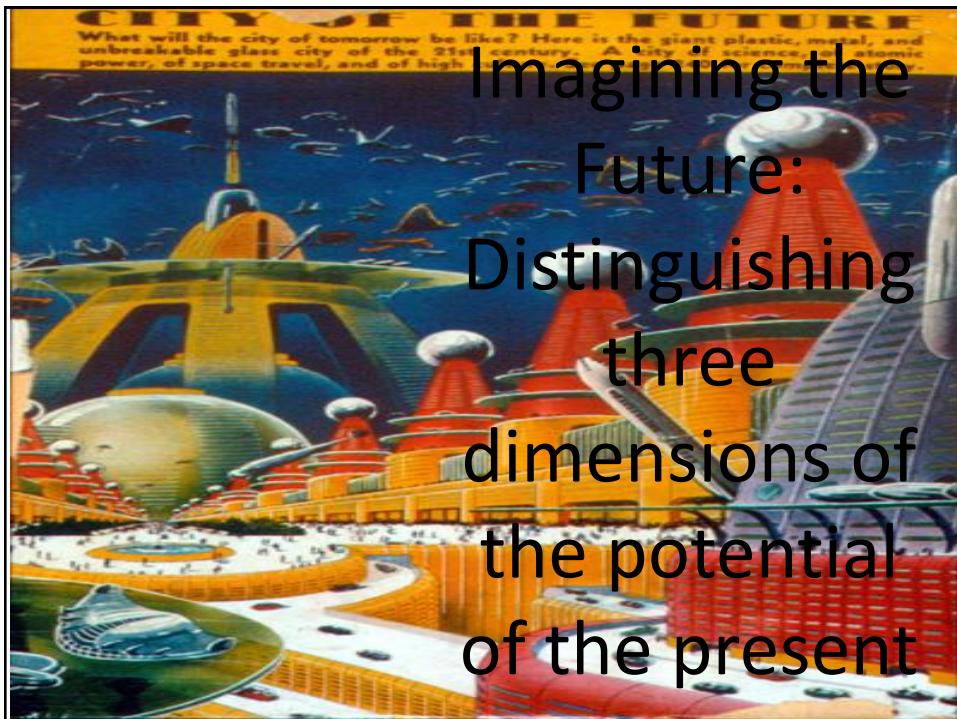
- Question 1: Imagine you are living in the Green Creative Society of 2025 – what aspects of daily life are most positive for you and how do they work. Take five minutes to write down a brief description, go around the table – each person presents (1 minute) their "experience" and then group discussion (4 minutes)– assessing what it is about and what is involved in making it happen.

Riel Miller, xperidox: futures consulting, 2009

Group Exercise

- Question 2: Imagine you are living in the Green Creative Society of 2025 – what are you researching and how do you conduct that research. Take five minutes to write down a brief description, go around the table – each person presents their research focus and methods (2 minutes) and then group discussion (3 minutes) – assessing what it is about and what is involved in making it happen, how it connects to their research topics and methods.

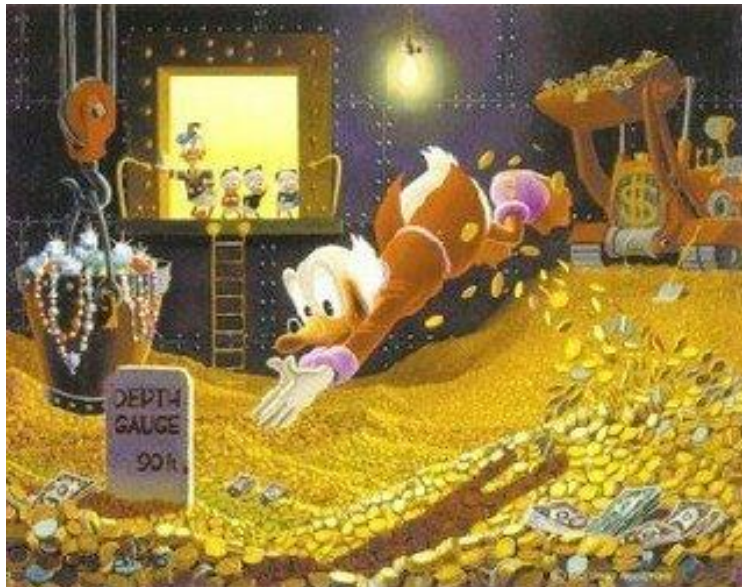
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Contingency futures: a tsunami



Contingency futures: winning the lottery



Optimization futures: chess, farming, assembly line



- Goal is given
- Rules are given
- Resources are given

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Exploratory futures: imagining the potential of the present





Linking Ontology and Epistemology

All Phenomena Contain Three Dimensions of Potential

- **Contingent** – the potential to be acted upon by an outside force
 - Functioning of AS: simulation and practice, learning by doing, early warning, transparency
- **Optimization** – the potential to be subject to control
 - Functioning of AS: Better calculation – models, projections, clarity and “certainty” of rules
- **Exploratory** – the potential to be without precedent, arising from inspiration, creativity and discovery
 - Functioning of AS: non-teleological imagining of changes in the conditions of change, rigorous imagining and enhanced narrative capacities for spontaneity

How and why to engage in exploratory anticipation?

- Can we gain perspective?
- Can we use complexity?
- Developing “futures literacy” – the capacity to distinguish, create and use the distinct ontological dimensions of the potential of the present to generate multiple and constantly changing imaginary anticipatory stories

START

CASE

ILLITERATE?
WRITE FOR FREE HELP.

ILLITERACY FOUNDATION

LAFAR

www.StrangeCosmos.com

Riel Miller, xperidox: futures consulting, 2009

FL: a deepening of our understanding of our anticipatory systems

- The capacity to distinguish different dimensions of the potential of the present and use the appropriate methods
- The capacity to systematically and continuously engage in rigorous imagining
- Continuously inventing and telling new stories about the potential of the present to enable improvisation and spontaneity.

Riel Miller, xperidox: futures consulting, 2009

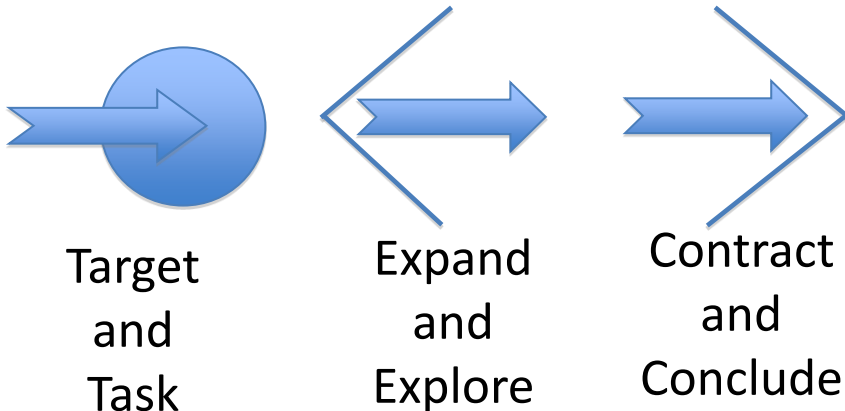
Learning by doing

- Level 1 futures literacy
 - Temporal awareness, values, expectations
- Level 2 futures literacy
 - Rigorous imagining
- Level 3 futures literacy
 - Strategic scenarios

Not “a method”, but a way of thinking about the learning process that all futurists and futures processes take – moving to more refined anticipatory systems

Riel Miller, xperidox: futures consulting, 2009

Deliberate Thinking: Creative method*



* Edward de Bono, TEC method. Riel Miller, xperidox: futures consulting, 2009

Level 2 Futures Literacy

“Rigorous Imagining”: How to link thinking about changes in the conditions of change (imaginary future outcomes) to policy formation and implementation

1. Telling good stories – rules set the assumptions for the narrative frame
2. Rigorous imagining – a model sets parameters for the analytical frame
3. Form/function scenarios – operational stories within the frames (constrained iso-probable, iso-desirable)

Riel Miller, xperidox: futures consulting, 2009

Dual frame for the scenarios:
analytical and narrative – then
different scenarios (ways of
achieving the same outcome)
within the frame (iso-
probable, iso-desirable)



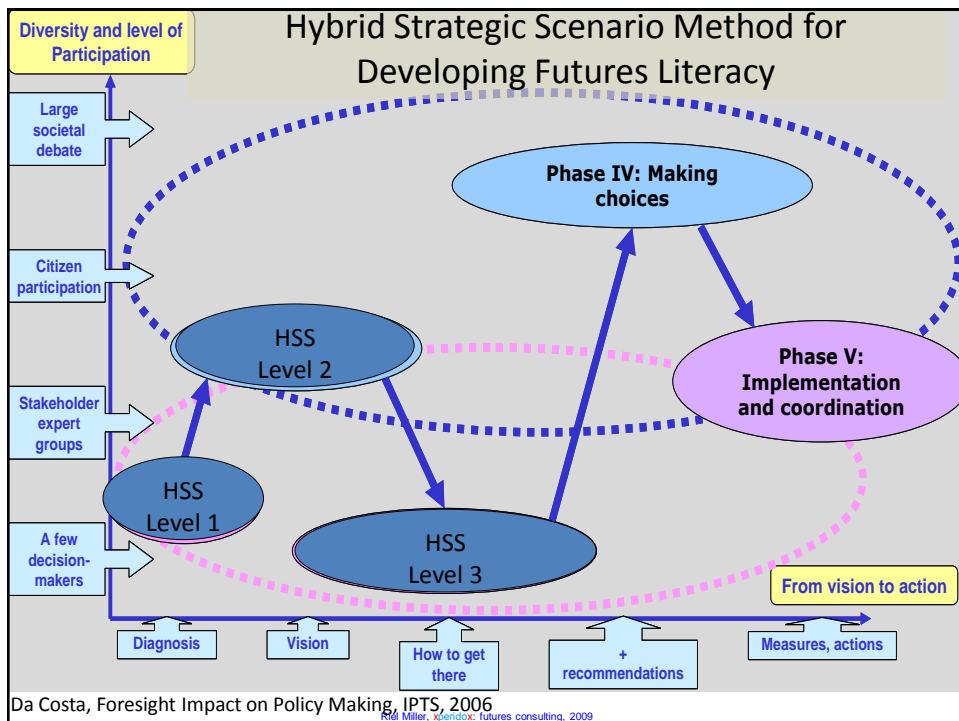


Level 3 Futures Literacy

Strategic scenarios

- Using the contrast between imagined futures and the present assumptions:
- Reintroduce values and expectations
- Focus on the assumptions and how choices are or are not consistent with present values and what is actionable now.

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Group Exercise Methods

- How to reconcile process rigour with limited resources (esp. time)?
 - Use existing scenarios as much as possible, pool scenarios across groups and, if need be commission a specific scenario.
- Should a similar methodological approach be used across all WGs?
 - Yes, share resources and experiences across groups – specific tools like similar surveys, workshop processes, internal wiki.
- Agree that the time horizon is 20+
- How to be revolutionary while remaining relevant?
 - Pay attention to the “narrative” assumptions – share common story telling elements so that inside and outside RESCUE people developed shared meaning.
- How to tap expertise across communities?
 - Diversity within the groups, respecting learning curves, and developing a shared “sense of the future” as common narrative.

Riel Miller, xperidox: futures consulting, 2009

Thinking about the future?
Not this way!



How to see the potential of the
present and act now. Imagine!

THANK YOU

Image: Sempe