Deep Futures and China's Environment

Marcus T. Anthony
MindFutures
Hong Kong

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to unpack the discourse on China's futures, with a particular focus upon the relationship of Chinese people and the environment. The goal is to problematise the dominant discourse, and view the issue though new perspectives. Two tools from Critical Futures Studies will be employed: Sohail Inayatullah's Causal Layered Analysis and his Futures Triangle. Two possible scenarios for China's futures will be used as a focus: Brave New China and the Harmonious Society.

Keywords: futures studies, China, environment, energy, Brave New World, the harmonious society, utopian, dystopian, causal layered analysis, futures triangle, scenarios

Shallow Futures and China's Environment

"To get rich is glorious"
Deng Xiaoping. (Sims Gallagher, 2006: 405).

China is both "a fat businessman with his pockets stuffed with money" and a stage where everyone "puts on a mask."
Ma Jian, Chinese novelist and Tiananmen incident survivor (Kidd, 2008).

The continued emergence of China will affect all of our futures. It is a country which contains approximately twenty per cent of the world's population. As well as influencing the world's political and economic structures, China's rise will continue to place great pressures upon the environment. The economic crisis of 2009 has seen political leaders in China, and from all around the globe, begin to think carefully about the development of their countries, and the development of the world. A government report by Chinese premier Wen Jiabao just prior to the staging of the National People's Congress placed most importance upon maintaining rapid economic growth, accelerating economic restructuring and improving people's well-being. Education and social welfare were also mentioned (Yanan, 2009). When the 2009 Congress was held, comments regarding green issues

were conspicuously absent, indicating that short-term economic progress was being valued above long-term sustainable futures. The question is, just how deeply are China's leaders thinking about the current problems faced by China and the world, especially in terms of the environment?

China's futures run deep, as do the futures of all countries. The problem requires an approach more sophisticated than simply asking how China will make things "greener", and what problems economic development will cause. Therefore, this paper takes an expanded perspective on the problem. It will not only identify the broader drivers of change, and the potential pitfalls and benefits, but will identify questions which are typically not asked, with the aim of eliciting deeper meanings than typically discussed in related discussions. The goal is thus to disrupt the dominant discourse.

The Theoretical Approach

The approach here will employ two tools from Critical Futures Studies: Sohail Inayatullah's Futures Triangle (Inayatullah, 2004 & 2008), and his Causal Layered Analysis (CLA). Two scenarios – Brave New China and the Harmonious Society – will provide focus for the discussion.

Critical Futures Studies can help to examine issues at greater depth. As Inayatullah notes:

> *Futures studies seeks to help individuals and organizations better understand the processes of change so that wiser preferred futures can be created. (Inayatullah, 2008, p.5)*

A problem with dominant discourses within particular domains of enquiry is that they tend not to question the givens, the fundamental predicates which underpin the discourse. Paradigmatic restrictions may lead not only to restricted hypotheses, but to delimitations regarding which kinds of questions are permitted to be asked (Grof, 2000). The result is that thinkers may be too close to their subject matter, and fail to achieve the distance necessary to see alternative perspectives (Inayatullah, 2004).

The Futures Triangle: Pulls, Weights and Pushes

The Futures Triangle maps views of the future through three components (Inayatullah, 2008).

Pulls. These are the images of the future which lead us forward. Examples which are archetypal include **evolution and progress** – (including more technology, man as the centre of the world, and faith in human rationality); **collapse** (where we have reached our limits); **Gaia** (partnership, the world is a garden); **globalism** (closer economies and cultures); and **back to the future** (the need to return to the past and simpler times)

Pushes of the present. These include quantitative drivers and trends which are shaping the future (Inayatullah, 2008). In China, rapid urbanisation is a key trend affecting policies directed at the environment and development.

Weights. These are the barriers to envisioned changes, things that drag us back or slow us down (Inayatullah, 2008). China's intense nationalism is a potential barrier to integration in a globalised world. Also, the Confucian society drags back on the Gaian pull, because of the dominance of hierarchy. Here male power, empire and expertise (Inayatullah, 2008) are given higher value that the implicit wisdom of Gaia.[1] (Inayatullah 2008)

In a previous article (Anthony, 2007a) I used Inayatullah's (2008) Futures Triangle to map the primary forces affecting the future development of China.[2] Below, in Figure 1, I modify that diagram to summarise key forces which are impacting modern China, and in particular its environment.

As Figure 1 indicates, taken together these three dimensions are a means of mapping the competing components of the future. Figure 1 permits an appreciation of the multiple factors affecting China futures. The future is depicted as a contested space, being created by various competing processes, not only historical patterns or weights (Inayatullah, 2002b).
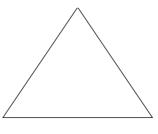
Pulls
Brave New World (dominant narrative)
(Westernisation/Market World/global tech/Hong Kongisation/scientific materialism).
Harmonious Society (disowned narrative)
(Confucian-Taoist/Gaian/Green/Transformed World).
Superpower China/Glorious China

Weights
Totalitarian & feudal power; collective trauma; nation state system; hyper-nationalism; distrust of authority; foreign exploitation; public unrest; rural/urban income disparity; the spiritual vacuum; environmental degradation; Confucian hierarchies/patriarchy. Information control.

Pushes
New technologies, the internet & foreign media; industrialisation & rural-urban migration; the One China policy; the one child policy; globalisation; the rise of Asia; rising awareness of the public; foreign pressures/interference/investment. Human greed.

Figure 1. Futures triangle of China's environmental futures

The Pulls: Brave New China, the Harmonious Society and Superpower China

Elsewhere (Anthony, 2007a) I discussed three mythic textual mythologies as scenarios for China's futures. These were the Brave New World/Brave New China (BNW/BNC) (materialism and hedonism), the Harmonious Society (HS) (spiritual integration with nature, with a market economy) and Big Brother (BB) (totalitarianism). I concluded that at present for China (and indeed for the world in general) the BNW scenario is the most probable immediate future (See Table 1). Many aspects of Brave New World are present in current Chinese society. However I suggested that the development of aspects of the utopian Harmonious Society, although presently a disowned future, is a long-term possibility. I dismissed the Big Brother scenario as having reached it historical usefulness to China (Anthony, 2007a). As such, it represents a weight to be transcended, rather than a genuine pull.

The Brave New China Scenario

In his dystopian novel *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley (1998) creates a dystopian vision where an entire society becomes enslaved in a carefully manufactured yet dehumanising social system. Life is reduced to simple hedonistic pleasures, sexual gratification, and generally mindless pursuits. All pain and discomfort have been anaesthetised by the drug "soma", with the purpose of keeping the population enfeebled, compliant and "happy" in the name of social stability. The motto of BNW is "community, identity, stability".

Huxley's *Brave New World* is a textual mythology which has many parallels with modern China. Most apparently, China is now a very materialistic culture where hedonistic distractions have subsumed deeper intellectual, social and spiritual concerns. Therefore the dystopian expression of where current Chinese materialism may lead shall be referred to as Brave New China. There is an implicit agreement between the Chinese people and the authorities that the focus of common life shall be channeled into the physical and material. This has considerable implications for the way nature and the environment are represented, perceived and used in the world's most populous nation.

Table 1

Scenarios: Brave new China vs. the harmonious society

	Brave New China (dystopian)	**Harmonious Society**(utopian)
Depth of Futures	Shallow. Market driven. More expansive & alternative futures, & other ways of knowing suppressed.	Deep. Disowned & alternative futures return to discourse: incl. spiritual and feminist. Other ways of knowing permitted
Environment	Not a priority. Alienation from nature.	Strong priority. Deep relationship, humanity/nature.
Consumption/ Energy Needs	High consumption. Rapid GDP growth essential for social stability.	Medium/low. GDP growth rates fall.
Values	GDP as God. Market. Money. Goods. Hedonism. Status. Power & Glory.	Market & non-market balanced. Family. Community. Harmony. Confucian. Taoist. Spiritual.
Innovation	Strong. Driven by market.	Strong/moderate, but with added non-market focus. Driven by need, & responsibility to humanity & nature.
Social Stability	Strong, via sedation of the people. Distraction via technology & entertainment. Collectivism. Peace valued.	Strong, but possibly less control. Increased possibility of dissent. Collectivism, but with more empowered individualism. Peace valued.
Bureaucracy	Heavy. Strong surveillance.	Moderate. Moderation of surveillance.
System	Neo-Darwinian. Western (partly). Confucian hierarchies. Hong Kongisation. Minimal civic society. Self-interest.	Cooperation. Confucian hierarchies remain, but softened. Civic society strong. Civic responsibilities.
Democracy	Minimal, or "window dressing." Strong control via entertainment, consumption & hedonism. Freedom of information curtailed.	Strong. Civic responsibility emphasised. Increased freedom of information.
Psyche	Alienation. Dissociation ego/ body/psyche; rational/affective.	Integration of ego/psyche/, rationality/affectivity.
Archetype Myths & symbols.	Huxley's *Brave New World*. 1920s Shanghai. The shopping mall. The machine, conveyer belt. Babylon. Ozymandias.	The harmonious society (Asia). Eden. Gaia. 1960s idealism. The liberal society.

The Harmonious Society Scenario

At the Fourth Plenum of the 16th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CCP) in 2004, President Hu Jintao announced that China was trying to develop an "Harmonious Society", or *xioakang* (de Burgh, 2006, p.159). In the following Party Congress in 2007, the concept was downplayed, possibly reflecting backroom Party factionalism. Nonetheless it remains a significant concept underpinning contemporary Party policy (Cervellera, 2007).

Hu Jintao's harmonious society includes the following:
- Sustained, rapid and coordinated economic growth;
- Development of "socialist democracy";
- Rule of law;
- Strengthening of ideological and ethical buildup;
- Maintenance of social equity and justice;
- Establishment of "a fine-tuned social management system", including the management of "the people's internal contradictions";
- Environmental protection (Building harmonious, 2005).

Superpower China/glorious China

One final image/pull of the future must be mentioned even as we focus upon these two scenarios above: Superpower China. Like the United States, China sees itself as having a special place in the evolution of humanity (Hutton, 2007). While America sees itself as a kind of evangelist, promoting the rights of man, democracy and capitalism, the Chinese simply see themselves as the greatest civilisation on Earth: Glorious China. The sense of superiority to outsiders (often referred to as "barbarians") is an entrenched part of the Chinese psyche, and probably emerged as a psychological means of compensating for the incursions of more war-like peoples into the Chinese mainland throughout its history. These invaders have included the Tibetans, Uigurs and Mongolians, as well as the western powers and Japanese in more recent times (Fairbank, 2006).

Causal Layered Analysis

Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) is a poststructuralist methodology developed by Futurist Sohail Inayatullah (2004) which probes the deeper meanings imbedded within texts and discourses through an exploration of four specific levels. CLA is particularly useful as a means to conduct inquiry into the nature of past, present and future. It opens up the present and the past to create the possibility of alternative futures. It is for this reason that it has been chosen as an ideal tool to unpack the discourse on China's environmental futures. In this paper the analysis will move sequentially through these layers, although there are obvious overlaps regarding many of the factors which will be discussed.

The following analysis will address the problem of China's environmental futures at CLA's four levels.

- **The litany** will examine the "surface" of the issue - empirical and verifiable data, what can be readily seen and measured, or what is typically seen when there is no attempt to look deeper.
- **The social and systems level** will identify underlying systemic factors, especially the influence of Chinese society and culture.
- **The worldview level** examines the paradigmatic and civilisational constraints upon the issue. Here, Chinese and non-Chinese knowledge structures which are impacting the problem will be identified.
- **The mythic and metaphorical level** will uncover the myths, metaphors and deeper psycho-spiritual drivers of China's futures.

CLA-1: The Litany

The shallowest analyses of China's futures focus upon logistical concerns, and often back them up with empirical data. These may include a limited layman's interpretation of events, or simplistic government media statements which deliberately try to obfuscate deeper analysis. Litany-focused analyses can also be found in brief/specific statements within texts.

Shallow futures

A reduction in the consumption of fossil fuels is acknowledged as one of the most important goals of responsible ecological development. There are four generally discussed viable options for China if it is to do this. They are solar power, hydro-electricity, wind power and nuclear power (Ng, 2008). Yet a discussion of these alternatives, without a corresponding analysis of the deeper issues which underpin their use, creates a discourse without depth.

In July 2008 the energy ministers of the Group of Eight and China, India and South Korea suggested that the age of oil is over (due to rising prices). These leaders concluded that we must find clean alternatives to protect the environment and "ensure global stability" (Kammerer, 2008). The solutions put forward involved replacing fossil fuels with nuclear, hydro, solar and wind power. Those attending the meeting concluded that improved efficiency and an acceleration of investment in the new energy technologies are necessary (Kammerer, 2008). Yet this analysis clearly remains fixed at the litany level, or the surface. Its limited focus is upon why oil is so expensive – political uncertainty, the weakness of the US dollar, growing consumption, or insufficient output oil reserves (Kammerer, 2008).

The reason attention remained narrowly fixed is that the stakeholders were part of the system, a system that they did not wish to be challenged. Those suggesting visions of the future were those who held the most power within the system. So the system was not questioned, nor any were deeper underlying factors brought forward for discussion.

Solutions to environmental problems offered at the litany level are inevitably "rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic". They become concerned with superficial surface features, and the analysts may have neither the desire nor the capacity to address deeper systemic issues. In Chongqing in southern China, the air is so polluted that it has "painted apartment blocks in a layer of soot and contaminates the air" (Tsang,

2008). The local authorities, upholding their motto of "sustainability, sustainability, sustainability" have spent twenty-four billion Yuan to "fix" the problem. They have relocated the town's steel factory to a location further out of town, and introduced better pollution controls, including on buses and taxis. But even as the officials have done this, the fixed system-level economic policies represent a complete contradiction to official environmental policy. For Chongqing is now aggressively trying to lure more foreign investment, while positioning itself as a transport corridor to western China. It is attempting to make itself the economic hub of the nation. Further, authorities are building new freeways and bridges, thus encouraging the use of cars (Tsang, 2008). This contradiction of expressing environmental concern while encouraging the massive expansion of the car industry, is also present in central government policy.

Used futures

Much discourse at the litany level contains what Inayatullah (2008) calls "the used future", adopting themes unconsciously borrowed from someone else. Referring to the development of Asian cities in general, Inayatullah writes that they tend to mimic the same pattern of urban development as western cities. Ironically, many in the west now believe this model is flawed. There should have been more focus upon creating livable communities, and thus maintaining green public spaces between developed regions. Growth without vision, concern for nature or livability has created huge megacities in western nations, providing high levels of employment but creating much suffering (Inayatullah, 2008).

Asian cities have unconsciously followed the western pattern. They have forgotten their own traditions where village life and community were central, and where living with nature was important. Now they must have find ways to create new futures, or continue to go along with the future being discarded elsewhere. This used future is leading to a global crisis of fresh water depletion, climate change, as well as loss of human dignity. (Inayatullah, 2008, p.5). It also creates vast expenditures of energy, as inefficiency in energy use is a constant problem (Yao, 2006).

Unlike many Chinese urban planners, Inayatullah moves his analysis into deeper civilisational, global and psych-spiritual considerations. Litany-level analyses and the interventions which emerge from them are likely to be largely impotent in creating lasting positive change if they cannot penetrate beyond superficialities. This is the level of much political discourse, both in China and beyond.

CLA-2: Systems and Social Level

Moving the problem of China's environmental futures to the next level, we find issues which reflect deeper social and systems issues. China's complex social and political systems are often discussed within academic and scientific discourse, and so this level tends to remain explicit in many analyses of development in China. Yao (2006) is typical. Examining Chinese strategies for obtaining more oil to fuel its booming economy, he concludes that China must apply domestic demand-side measures and a market approach, and cooperate with the United States without violating international protocols.

The unexamined

Yet analyses such as Yao's, although they incorporate systems perspectives and go deeper than litany level analyses, often contain unexamined presuppositions. Yao, for example, makes no attempt to question the system itself.

In an article called "The Dragon vs. the Tiger", and referring to the immediate futures of China and India, Cetron and Davies (2006) conclude:

Beijing and New Delhi will spend the next 20 years struggling to balance capitalist profit against rural need, environmental damage against development, military spending against domestic priorities, and the need for economic cooperation with their neighbors against the realities of trade and geopolitical competition. This will be a difficult balancing act for both the dragon and the tiger. But in 20 years, both these countries will be stronger, wealthier, freer, and more stable than they are today. (Cetron & Davies, 2006, p.45)

Typical of academic analyses, systems factors are brought forward: politics, environment, military considerations, the need for stability and so forth. Yet probing deeper, the first thing we might notice is the title of the paper: It assumes a neo-Darwinian survival of the fittest future, where superpowers battle against each other like mythological beasts. The key values are competition and trade, where aggressive entities (the tiger and dragon) battle it out to see who is dominant. This is a paradigmatic presupposition. Neo-Darwinism is often an implicit (or explicit) component of scientific and economic discourse in the modern age (Anthony, 2005 & 2008; Loye, 2004). A neo-Darwinian survival-of-the-fittest global system is not an inevitable future: it is merely a hegemonic and often unexamined one.

Chang's "Transformed World" scenario echoes much of the harmonious society. It emphasises "social and political changes as well as value and cultural-norm changes (which) shape and supplement market mechanisms" (Chang, 2000, p.103). There is greater equality of power distribution, and information is freer, similar to the harmonious society as listed in Table, 1, above. Cooperation and competition work in an ideal relationship for better social, environmental and economic benefit for all (Chang, 2000). Notably this involves "Gaian friendly technologies" (Chang, 2000, p.104) and deep ecological concerns. Yet, consistent with much academic analysis, Chang fails to entertain deeper mythic or spiritual considerations. The Taoist metaphysics inherent within the harmonious society are absent (Chang, 2000).

For Chang (2000), China's future is being influenced by broader global trends and issues. His "Market World" scenario is a "possible future... grounded in the belief in the power of markets and of private enterprise to create prosperity and improve human welfare in the world" (Change, 2000, p.101). Chang's model is essentially utopian. However, it has commonalities with the Brave New China scenario, where economic and material considerations became all-important at the expense of deeper ecological and spiritual considerations. These are societies of institutionalised distraction. Modern China has more in common with this. There are hours of daily television, the ubiquitous MP3 players, I-pods, and wireless internet "hotspots"; the increased urbanisation and commercialisation of cityscapes; and more permissive attitudes towards sexuality and violence in the media. These suggest that China is adopting a "used

future" (Inayatullah, 2008) first established in the west and east Asian nations such as Japan and South Korea, where Brave New World-like societies have emerged. In turn, this "image" has been pulled down by the weight of the industrial era (Inayatullah, 2008).

Nation states

At this level we also note the problem of the nation-state system. A common position when China is pressed on reducing greenhouse gasses is for the authorities to point out that China has the same right as developed nations to build its economy. It places responsibility on western nations to provide the technology to reduce pollution, and states the onus is upon them (National Development 2007).[3] At the G8 summit in July 2008 Chinese President Hu Jintao stated that: "Developed countries should make explicit commitments to continue to take the lead in emissions reductions" (Murphy, 2008).

Yet quite clearly this is an unsustainable position, given China's actions in the present will increase greenhouse emissions manifold in the next few decades. Each nation has to assume a position of global responsibility, not simply blame others. Here the nation-state system is clearly a weight holding back workable global solutions (Figure 1, above).

The political

In considering China's futures, it must be acknowledged that ultimately the push for material prosperity in China establishes the CCP's authority to rule (de Burgh 2006). The PRC's founding communist ideology has been abandoned. Mao's portrait in Tiananmen Square merely grants a token sense of legitimacy to the CCP leadership. Deng's mythic affirmation that "It's glorious to be rich" may be employed to keep the future shallow, and to stop people asking too many questions.

At the political level, Chinese authorities have long played up Chinese nationalism (another weight), and have carefully cultivated patriotic education and emphasised the "glorious" history of the nation (Hutton, 2007). While this is arguably a necessary phase of a developing nation, there is no reason why there cannot be equal emphasis upon situating China within the global community. "Patriotic education" will have to be balanced with "global consciousness" if China is to take its place in a sustainable future.

There are two factors at work here. The first is the likely reality that Chinese government is trying to deflect responsibility on to western nations, because it has no immediate answer to the environmental crisis it faces. Yet at the worldview and metaphor levels, there are psychological and civilisational factors involved. Like many postcolonial powers, Chinese people and their leaders have developed a strong victim mentality. At school, Chinese History focuses upon "the century of humiliation", the height of the colonial period between 1842 and 1945. As a result, the Chinese tend to identify themselves as victims of foreign control and manipulation, as the abused, (and never the abusers). This is a dominant narrative which lies within the modern Chinese psyche. China will need to begin to move beyond such a state of

mind if it is to establish a harmonious relationship with the world community, including responsible and accountable environmental policies.

The moral code

Corruption remains a crucial systems issue. Local officials often have unaccountable power, and are commonly in league with developers and their big money (de Burgh, 2006). Enforcing central government pollution controls and environmental protection policy is problematic where local officials and workers in responsible positions can be paid off. This situation has historical roots. China was traditionally a feudal society, with the emperor in command, followed by the military and public servants, with merchants and peasants at the bottom (Fairbank, 2006). The moral code followed from the fact that every person's role and power was defined by his/her position within the system. In modern China, that structure has broken down.

Perhaps most worryingly, Chinese society now lacks a definitive moral code. Business people have more power, and the idea of "prosperity" has captured the public imagination. As Li Peilin (Scholar explores, 2005) states, a harmonious society is one "in which the majority has a solid awareness of the obligations of citizens and high ethical standards". The current top-down system, where unaccountable authority is in league with big business, is a recipe for corruption.

Images from mid-2008 of a Chinese ship loaded with arms docked in South Africa, and waiting to arm the tyrants of Robert Mugabe's regime, spelled out a crucial issue. The "value-free" futures which drive Chinese market Leninism are morally bankrupt. Ma Jian's image of China as "a fat business man with his pockets stuffed with money" (Kidd, 2008), is a repulsive *present*, and an unsustainable future. The prime use for nature and environment in such a society is to ensure industry continues to stuff those pockets with more and more cash. The result is likely disastrous futures where values such as human rights and ecological concerns evaporate.

The greed and I

A "me first" attitude has developed in modern China, and represents another problematique in its development. This can be personally experienced in public spaces. Boarding trains and elevators in China, it is common to see people barging onto the train or lift as soon as the doors swing open, paying no heed at all to who is getting off. Looking at this historically, we can see that scarcity of resources is likely a factor. Famine and disaster have been common themes in China. Just forty years ago, many Chinese people were eating leaves and grass and starving to death in their tens of millions Some allegedly ate their own babies, or corpses of dead family members (Fairbank, 2006). Social instability and disaster have never been far way in China, and the lack of information about what is going on in the on country, means that people have little trust in the authorities, nor each other or the future. The often reckless regard for the environment by individuals and corporate entities may emerge from this mindset. What concern should there be for sustainable development, when tomorrow is an uncertain future away? This live-for-now mentality fosters short-term thinking and an attitude of selfishness.

29

Such a mindset is obviously contrary to the tenets of the Harmonious Society. Yet the HS is perfectly compatible with Chinese history and tradition. Despite the distortions of Chinese society after the CCP came to power in1949, a "harmonious society" is a traditional Chinese (and indeed Asian) concept, and mythology. It thus represents a psychic "pull" upon the collective. It combines aspects of traditional Chinese culture and metaphysics, with China's development within an increasingly connected world. Its emphasis upon the collective may serve as an antidote to the self-interest and greed which seem to have overrun the traditional Chinese concepts of harmony, family and working together as a team.

Most alarmingly, given the drivers of the pushes of the Brave New China scenario, enough can never be enough. Growth (GDP) becomes both the means and the end itself, because depth has been extracted from society, and all deeper meaning and purpose has become part of the disowned future. In such a system, no amount of development will ever be enough. The entire system is self-perpetuating. Without some severe discontinuity in the dominant narrative, it is not likely to change. The discontinuity is likely to be severe disruption or collapse that some have argued may occur if China does not change its current model of development (Diamond, 2006; Hutton, 2007). The economic crisis beginning in 2009 represents an even greater disruption.

Perhaps the greatest problem with the concept of the Harmonious Society is that it is not aligned with the extant reality of Chinese society today. China's leaders will have to think deeply about how to move closer to the vision. The top-down social structure may have to be dismantled if this is ever to take place. This is because responsibility and accountability are intrinsic components of the HS. Too many people at all levels of society are presently failing to act responsibly, or with a view to something greater than themselves. In ancient times, Chinese people acknowledged the idea of li, or the will of heaven, seeing themselves as accountable to divinity, and this kept the system in check (Hutton, 2007). These metaphysics have now been abandoned. How an Harmonious Society might function without them remains to be seen.

Chinese development needs to more readily balance its emphasis upon GDP and economic growth rates with the development of morality, civic responsibility, accountability, and reward for the work ethic. The development of the concept of the Harmonious Society theoretically meets this requirement. Yet it has to move from theory to practice in order for that to happen.

CLA-3: Worldview

The concept of worldview, whether it be of individual thinkers, commentators and leaders, or of entire groups and nations such as China itself, rarely emerges in analyses of China's futures. Worldview is typically implicit and invisible. As with the related concept of paradigms, those writing within dominant discourses assume certain ineluctable or incontrovertible givens, and these are often associated with their worldviews. They are thus rarely discussed.

When we move into the third and fourth levels of CLA, the analysis is not so much about individual thinkers, but about concepts that are implicit yet unexamined,

or simply absent from the discourse. Alternative ideas and futures, as well as conjecture, play a greater role here. Many of the following insights and observations come from my decade in the greater China region, and are therefore subjective.

Global-tech and the west

The "global-tech" mythology (Inayatullah, 2002b) is a key "push" of the future, indicated in Figure 1 (above). This is perhaps the dominant image of the future on the internet, in movies, science and science fiction. It is almost synonymous with Chang's (2000) "Market World," as discussed in the previous section. Looking at this from a worldview perspective, it appears to be an image of the modern West.

Yet upon deeper examination, this is only a *partially* Western future. Other Western institutions like democracy, freedom of speech, human rights, and environmental awareness are largely absent in modern China. China is thus "capitalising" as much as "westernising." Market Leninism is effectively capitalism without democracy.

Therefore Brave New China cannot adequately be called a "western" system. Many critiques of western culture are directed at the alienating potentials of capitalism, and its essentially patriarchal basis (Eisler, 2004; Milojevich, 2005). Typically, the aspects of western society which are generally praised as positive and progressive in terms of human social evolution, are the democratic and human rights ideals. If we now turn our attention to China what we see is that China has embraced many of most widely criticised aspects of western culture, and jettisoned the more humanistic ones.

As David Loye (2004) has pointed out, modern science and western culture have adopted the neo-Darwinian postulate of survival of the fittest. Now "the rat race" is writ large across the East Asian landscape. Many in the west are not aware of the degree that this story has come to dominate East Asian society. Yet unlike western cultures with their oft-criticized individualism, Eastern societies have essentially passive populations who live with limited questioning of the system. Social stability has been traded for individualism.

This is a highly problematic issue in terms of China's futures. Who will have the courage to stand and challenge those in power, to suggest that there may be limits to growth, or that the story might need changing?

The disowned future: The taoist/confucian worldview

As Inayatullah (2008) argues, a challenge in developing preferred futures is to integrate our disowned selves: Specifically, for the Chinese and their relationship to the environment, this could mean re-discovering their long-lost spiritual and Taoist roots, which may bring them closer to the Harmonious Society. In order for this to happen, the neo-Darwinian completion-focused society will have to be more evenly balanced within a softer culture. Yet notably, China's current model of development is out of alignment (Inayatullah, 2008) with the Chinese Taoist worldview.

Beyond Confucian dynamics we have to consider the reality that in modern China the CCP has actively destroyed China's connections with its civilisational and spiritual roots. The people have been pacified, disaffected and dissociated from each other and from nature. During the Mao years (1949-1976), people were deliberately turned

against each other – even their own families – in order for the authorities to gain greater social control (Fairbank, 2006). The indoctrination regarding the "superstition" of religious and spiritual practices has been immense.

Connection with nature has also been greatly eroded. The concept of a Harmonious Society incorporates a metaphysical dimension, including "the internal harmony of individuals to the ultimate harmony between the human race and nature" (Lau, 2006). Ideally this involves an empathic relationship with nature to form "part of a harmonious natural symphony" (Lau, 2006). Lau writes:

> *But it all has to start with one's internal harmony, graduating into family harmony, then social harmony and so on. The secret is not to over-emphasize the individual at the expense of the interest of a higher order (2006).*

However it remains to be seen whether a re-ignition of Confucian ethics and philosophy can reinstall a genuine Chinese culture and spirituality in China.

CLA-4: Myths and metaphors

At this level I modify CLA's fourth level, by focusing upon a domain that has inspired me in much of my own life and research: that is, human consciousness and the deeper psychological and spiritual underpinnings of discourses. Although often completely obscured in conventional analyses, an appreciation of this level is vital to a deeper understanding of many problems.

Glorious China

One of the key narratives of China's development is also one of its pulls towards the future (Figure 1) - Superpower China. The Chinese national symbol of the dragon suggests a powerful and aggressive nation which bows to no one. Here we can contrast the dragon with another symbol: the Taoist Yin and Yang motif. The latter promotes a ready balance of the masculine and feminine. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, China is the Dragon, and the neo-Darwinian and patriarchal consciousness is in full flight. This provides great thrust for the economy, but is not so great for the environment, moral development and deeper introspection required in addressing China's problems.

The Superpower China pull invites key questions:
• What does it mean to be powerful?
• What does it mean to be a leader?
• What does it mean to be a "glorious" country?

These are questions which need to be addressed in a country which has made the future an incontestable domain for public enquiry (Anthony, 2007a).

Metaphors and symbols

The implicit metaphor which underpins both the industrial age and Brave New China is that of the machine. Modern China is bureaucratic, and contains many exploited workers with minimal rights. Urban dwellers live in towering apartment blocks in concrete and glass cityscapes. The mechanistic education system combines

Confucian subservience with the western industrial model, churning out graduate citizens like commodities on a production line.

The Harmonious Society also resonates with elements within the human psyche, and images from history. It is born of the East Asian mythology of the harmonious society; echoes the simplistic idealism of Hemingway and 1960s idealism, the liberal society and the myth of Gaia.

There are other important symbols. Brave New China is Hong Kongisation; it also features elements of 1920s Shanghai; and there are the ubiquitous shopping malls.

A shallow prosperity

In modern China "prosperity" has come to be narrowly expressed. It is about how much money one has in the bank, driving a flash car, and wearing expensive watches. And you can take it with you! Packing coffins with fake money to accompany the loved one to heaven is a common practice, as is burning fake money for the deceased.

More obvious materialistic symbols are coming to represent life in Brave New China. In Chinese writer Ma Jian's (2008) archetypal novel *Beijing Coma*, the protagonist loses consciousness amidst political turmoil, after being shot in the head in the Tiananmen incident in 1989. He falls into a ten-year-long coma, and awakens in a shopping mall, in a "deadened culture that has no memory" (Kidd, 2008). The symbolism is obvious. In modern China, the people have allowed themselves to assume a collective amnesia, as a tradeoff for social and political stability. It is world of hedonism, devoid of deeper meaning or spiritual fulfillment. Unsurprisingly, many of Ma Jian's books are banned in China.

Other materialist symbols which have taken hold of the Chinese psyche include the Gucci bags which so many women want to hang from their arms; the ubiquitous mobile phone, never far from the grasping hand of most Chinese in public spaces; and the glittering skyscrapers which line the cityscapes of all big Chinese cities.

Yet perhaps the materialist symbol which epitomises the desires of the modern Chinese mind is the car, and especially the BMW, which many aspire to drive. The car is a status symbol. Many people are reluctant to use public transport because they see it as a kind of loss of face. Such is the increase in car use, that emissions from cars may soon overtake emissions from coal power plants (BBC, 2008).

The vanity of human ego is thus another key "psychic" force compelling the development of modern China.

The fake

An unflattering symbol of modern China is "the fake". Besides the obvious fake brand name clothes and bags, there have been cases of fake software, fake batteries, fake books, fake baby food (fatal), fake journalists, fake monks (beggars), fake taxis, fake ambulances and just about any fake you can think of.

In 2007, there was a media story of fake *jiaoze* (meat-filled buns). A journalist reported that a Beijing street vendor was shredding cardboard boxes and using them as part of the bun filling. The story was a sensation, spreading to foreign media and embarrassing China. A few days later the authorities intervened and reported that the journalist had lied, and would be punished (Sun, 2007). But, given the long history of

government deception in regard to media announcements, some questioned whether it was in fact the government pronouncement that was the lie. So which was the real fake: the bun, the journalist's story, or the government's correction? The entire saga was testament to a society where respect for truth has been severely diminished.

The problem is top-down. Authorities have long "embellished" the facts in their public announcements, and information which is unflattering to the authorities or seen as undesirable is typically erased. There are few honest role models which the Chinese people can look up to and emulate.

When flagrant deception becomes the social norm, respect for the broader community will inevitably suffer. Self-interest will usurp commitment to greater social and environmental concerns. Respect for government initiatives, including environmental and energy policies, will also likely suffer. Therefore a greater commitment to honesty, integrity and truthfulness at all levels of society is needed as China implements new policies.

Materialism and sustainability

The current materialist culture of modern China is unsustainable. It seems unlikely that all of China's 1.3 billion people can be rich, at least not in western terms. As pressure on resources and the environment mount, Chinese people (and people across the world) may need to redefine the concept of prosperity. In Bhutan, Gross National Happiness has become the definition of prosperity (www.grossinternationalhappiness.org/gnh.html). Redefining wealth to include mental well-being and living in healthy surroundings will likely impact China's environment in a positive way, as it will slow down the fast-paced consumption-based culture which is emerging.

Kammerer (2008) challenges the modern world materialism by suggesting that we start by being in less of a hurry, that we "stop to smell the roses." Thinking about our daily activities ahead of time will lead to fewer unnecessary excursions in private transport. This is also the ethos of the World Institute of Slowness (slowplanet.com).

The suggestion is that because of our haste we (including the Chinese) have lost sight of what really matters. This brings us to spiritual reflection. Why are we always rushing about? How much of what we want do we really need? What is the meaning of life? These are "why" questions that scientific analysis cannot provide ready answers to. Simple happiness based on finding contentment in the moment has become a disowned future.

Finally, is it possible to have all of economic development, happiness and respect for human dignity, and environmental harmony? The official version of the Harmonious Society envisions just this.

The rape of the mother

Moving into the mythical level of the discussion, the constant pulling of resources from the belly of the Earth "mother" can be seen to be a projection of the patriarchal society - the rape of Gaia. Various western philosophers and critics (Ross, 1993) have made this in reference to Judeo Christian values. Yet the fact that the Chinese nation has also pillaged and polluted its portion of the Earth suggests that the root cause of such problems is not philosophical. At the litany level, the "scarcity of resources" is a

logistical fact which has to be acknowledged. Place 1.3 billion people in a single nation, and turn it from an agrarian economy into an industrial economy, and vast amounts of energy and resources will be required.

Also at the mythological level, we can consider the dissociation of mind, body and spirit. There are a number of philosophers of science who have referred to this issue in contemporary western society: (Anthony, 2005; Ross, 1993; Wilber, 2000). At a perceptual level, this dissociation entails a separation of observer and object, a problem which results in the erasure of *eros* (love) and *agape* (compassion) (Wilber, 2000). Feminists have claimed that this affects humanity's relationship with nature (Ross, 1993).

In BNW the culture is inherently selfish, and ego focused. In individualistic societies where a sense of community is diminished, people may be tempted to take from the environment without giving, for the individual sees himself as the centre of the universe. The relationship with the environment, including society and nature then becomes a projection of the psyche, driven by an incessant want and the hunger of the ego for more.

Transpersonal researcher Grof (1996) has argued that many of the world's major conflicts are projections of deep psycho-spiritual drives within the human psyche. Could the desire to have control over nature also be a function of deeper imperatives within the human mind? In the transpersonal vision, humanity has become cut off from its spiritual essence, the Atman is alienated from the Brahman. In this sense the drive of the human ego for control and power is an "Atman project" (Wilber, 2000), a substitute quest for immortality. In turn then, perhaps the Harmonious Society is a Chinese longing for a return to Taoist and Buddhist roots, and the connection of self with cosmos, body with soul.

Cracks in the monolith

What does the idea of "energy" mean within the human psyche? Energy is power, the ability to do work. In another sense it is the capacity to move Heaven and Earth. Just as authoritarian governments have done since the beginning of the twentieth century, the CCP has elevated the monolithic Three Gorges dam to symbolise the power of the Party and the Chinese people to harness the power of nature. In this sense, human power over nature has replaced *li*, or the Will of Heaven within the Chinese psyche. In an age where we have alienated nature and made it our slave, we believe the resources of nature are there for us the exploit as we like.

Spiritual and philosophical lore suggests that hubris is inevitably followed by a fall. Pollution and environmental devastation in China are the cracks which have appeared in the colossus. The mighty Three Gorges dam is literally cracked, and even Chinese state media have begun to report that the project is facing major problems (Haggart, 2003). Perhaps Percy Shelly's archetypical poem, "Ozymandias" is worth heeding. In the poem a traveler stumbles across the withering remains of an ancient ruin in the desert, with a single pedestal trumpeting the arrogance of a long-dead king.

'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!' Nothing beside remains. Round the decay Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare, The lone and level sands stretch far away. (www.online-literature.com/shel-

ley_percy/672) The symbolism needs no elaboration.

Which way now?

If something akin to the Harmonious Society is ever to eventuate in China, and if the human relationship with nature is to become a more responsible one, questions will need to be asked by the Chinese authorities. What kind of symbols, images and narratives should we found our futures upon? Do we need masses of advertising, or a consumer society at all? What kind of education do we need? Are we willing to empower the people with the capacity to be able to develop the intellectual and spiritual empowerment which will equip them to be responsible citizens?

Educator John Moffet (1994) points out that policy makers will never create an empowered citizenry through market-centered education which denies human personal and spiritual development. Vocational training and the "3-Rs" are not enough. If the futures of China and the futures of the world are going to be sustainable, if they are going to be futures of depth, we need education which transforms the individual from the inside out.

In the response of Chinese leaders and public to the Sichuan Earthquake, novelist Ma Jian sees a flicker of hope. Ma noted that this represented "the first time in a millennia of Chinese history that the state has officially mourned the deaths of its citizens" (Kidd, 2008). Ma longs for the time that other man-made tragedies in China, such as the Tiananmen massacre and the Cultural Revolution will be remembered also.

Ma's observation is important at the mythic level. It suggests the possibility for the reigniting in Chinese culture of two of Buddhism's central tenets: love and compassion. It is a greater empathy for humanity, nature and cosmos that is so greatly needed in modern China. But that will require healing, and healing will not occur if the mistakes of the past are anaesthetized under the veil of consumerism and hedonism of Brave New China. At present the CCP leaders show no sign of addressing the massive historical errors and crimes of the Party.

If deeper factors are not addressed, interventions at the litany and systems levels may fail. It is entirely possible that "intelligent" changes in policy at a superficial level may founder if deeper civilisational, mythic and spiritual dimensions are not addressed. As just one example, will more and better roads, cars and bridges for the Tibetan people pacify them while the half a million Tibetans who have vanished since the 1950 invasion continue to be erased from history as if they never existed (Fairbank, 2005)?

In terms of sustainable Futures, the Brave New China scenario is not workable. Whether the impact on environments will be unsustainable or not is merely the surface of the problem. Nor is the question of whether specific fuels are emission-friendly the key point. Rather, the underlying psycho-spiritual imperatives which drive "development" are of the essence. The idealistic Harmonious Society is a better ideal to aim for than Brave New China. It is utopian, but as Milojevic (2005) points out, utopian ideals may serve a function as providing an ideal vision for the future.

Finally

In this paper Causal Layered Analysis has been used to examine two China futures and their relationship with the environment. A Futures Triangle mapped the key pulls, pushes and weights of change, and two scenarios provided a framework for the discussion.

The discussion has expanded to include elements not typically discussed with this issue. China's futures cannot be simply reduced to money and markets. We have seen that China's environmental futures exist within a greater human narrative, and its deeper socio/political and mythical/spiritual parameters.

Brave New China is a fast-emerging scenario, and represents a Great Wall standing between the people and genuinely "prosperous" futures. Solutions will need to be deep and profound, spanning the full depth of the litany, systems, worldview and mythical dimensions. The Harmonious Society stands as a useful model to mark the way forward. Merely re-arranging the deckchairs, no matter how efficient or ego-inflating, is no way to save the Titanic.

The Harmonious Society concept must not be allowed to disappear. The Party should acknowledge the inevitable; that it must make way for a political system and value structure which permit something akin to the Harmonious Society to emerge. This cannot be realised in a society where GDP, consumption and entertainment dominate.

Human beings take their identities from the kinds of narratives they are exposed to, or invent. Collectively, the dominant narratives of society induce the identity of that society. The story we see repeated within Chinese state media is that China is healthy because of its rapid GDP growth. Yet how much GDP is necessary? What do we really need to live our lives? What does it mean to be rich or poor? What does it mean to be Chinese in the modern age?

China is in flux, and we await the ultimate answers to these questions. The implications for the entire world are great.

Correspondence

Marcus T. Anthony (B/A, Hons, Dip. ed, PhD).
Director, MindFutures
50G, Tower 13
Ocean Shores
88 O-King Road
Tseung Kwan-O, NT.
Hong Kong
E-mail: marcus.a@mindfutures.com
Phone: (852) 9632 4889

Notes

1. Here there is the suggestion that humanity Gaia and cosmos may be interconnected in a kind of noosphere. Previously (Anthony 2006, and in much more depth in Anthony

2008) I have shown how the hegemony of western rationalism has relegated this perspective on human evolution to an aside in the history, including dominant discourses in science itself. For arguments regarding the possible entanglement of mind and cosmos, see Tarnas 2000, and Radin 2006.

2. Some small segments of that paper have been reproduced here.

3. Developed nations often reverse the argument, saying they should not shoulder responsibility while developed nations, where most of the increases in emissions are occurring, fail to act too.

References

Anonymous. (2006). Energy challenges for China and India. Washington: *The Futurist (July/August), 40*(4), 41.

Anthony, Marcus. (2005, August). Integrated intelligence and the psycho-spiritual imperatives of mechanistic science. *Journal of Futures Studies, 10*(1), 31-48.

Anthony, Marcus. (2006, May). A genealogy of the western rationalist hegemony. *Journal of Futures Studies, 10*(4), 25-38.

Anthony, Marcus. (2007a). Big brother, brave new world or harmonious society? *Journal of Futures Studies.* May.

Anthony, Marcus. (2007b). Harmonic circles: A new futures tool. *Foresight, 9*(5).

Anthony, Marcus. (2008). Civilisational clashes and harmonic circles. *Futures*, Upcoming.

BBC TV World News Asia. (2008). News report on pollution in China. 09.07.08

Broadfoot, Robert C., & Michael J. Enright. (2006). Different futures for China. In Hoffmann, W.J., & Enright, M.J. (Eds.), *China into the future.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Building harmonious society crucial for China's progress: Hu, (2005). *People's Daily online.* Retrieved January 11, 2005, from http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200506/27/ eng20050627_192495.html

de Burgh, Hugo. (2006). *China friend or foe?* Cambridge, UK: Icon.

Cervellera, Bernardo. (2007). 17th congress: The 'harmonious society' betrayed by the party. Retrieved December 10, 2007, from http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art= 10536&size=A.

Chang, Clement. (2000). Taiwan-China scenarios in the age of technological integration. *Journal of Futures Studies, 5*(2).

Cetron, Marvin, & Owen Davies. (2006). The dragon vs. the tiger. *The Futurist (Jul/Aug), 40*(4), 38 & 8.

Diamond, Jared. (2006). *Collapse: How societies choose to fail or survive.* London: Penguin.

Eisler, Rianne. (2004). A multi-linear theory of cultural evolution. In David Loye (Ed.), *The great adventure: Toward a fully human theory of evolution.* New York: Suny.

Fairbank, John King. (2006). *China: A new history.* Cambridge: Belknap.

Grof, Stan. (1996). Consciousness evolution and planetary survival. *International Journal of Humanities and Peace.* Retrieved April 22, 2004, from www.primalspirit.com/Grof_ PlanetarySurvival_art.htm

Grof, Stan. (2000). *Psychology of the future.* New York: Suny.

Hoffmann, John, & Michael Enright (Eds.). (2006). *China into the future.* Hoboken, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

Haggart, Kelly. (2003). Cracks in the dam have reopened, senior inspector says. Free republic web site. Retrieved July 10, 2008, from http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/920339/posts.

Hutton, Will. (2008). *The writing on the wall: China and the west in the 21st century.* London: Abacus.

Huxley, Aldous. (1998). *Brave new world.* New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics.

Inayatullah, Sohail. (2002a). *Questioning the future.* Taipei, Taiwan: Tamkang University Press.

Inayatullah, Sohail. (2002b). Alternative futures of genetics and disability. Retrieved January 22, 2007, from http://www.metafuture.org/Articles/geneticanddisability.htm

Inayatullah, Sohail. (2004). Causal layered analysis: Theory, historical context, and case studies. In Inayatullah, Sohail (Ed.), *The causal layered analysis reader.* Taipei, Taiwan: Tamkang University Press.

Inayatullah, Sohail. (2008). Six pillars: Futures thinking for transforming. *Foresight, 10* (1), 4-21

Ip, Regina. (2008). In search of excellence. *South China Morning Post.* Hong Kong: 23.06.08, p.A11.

Kammerer, Peter. (2008). Life in the slow lane. *South China Morning Post.* 13.06.08

Kidd, James. (2008). Tiananmen revisited. *The Review, Sunday Morning Post*, p.5. Hong Kong. 22.06.08.

The Literature Network. (2009). Ozymandias. Retrieved November 6, 2008, from www.online-literature.com/shelley_percy/672

Lau, Nai Keung. (2006). Harmonious society will impact the world. China Daily (online). Retrieved January 12, 2007, from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2006-10/20/content_712596.htm

Loye, David. (2004). Darwin, maslow, and the fully human theory of evolution. In David Loye (Ed.). *The great adventure: Toward a fully human theory of evolution* (pp.20-38). New York: State University of New York Press.

Ma, Jian. (2008). *Beijing coma.* New York: Chatto and Windus.

Milojevic, Ivana. (2005). Educational futures: Dominant and contesting visions. New York: Routledge.

Moffett, James. (1994). On to the past: Wrong-headed school reform. *Phi Delta Kappan, 75*(8), 584-590.

Murphy, Katherine. (2008). China, India snub world on targets. *Sydney Morning Herald*, Australia. 10.07.8.

National Development and Reform Commission, People's Republic of China. (2007). China's National Climate Change Programme. Retrieved May 19, 2008, from http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/P020070604561191006823.pdf

Ng, Eric. (2008). Lights still dim on solar power. *The South China Morning Post*, Hong Kong. 09/06/08

Qingfen, Ding, & Selina Lo. (2006). CSR begins to take solid shape. *China Daily* (online). Retrieved October 27, 2006, from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2006-10/27/content_718548.htm

Radin, Dean. (2006). *Entangled minds.* New York: Paraview.

Ross, Gillian. (1993). *The search for the pearl.* Sydney, Australia: ABC.

Scholar explores harmonious society concept. (2005). Retrieved January 11, 2007, from http:// www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Mar/121746.htm

Sun, Wukong. (2007). A fake story about fake buns. *Asia Times* (online). Retrieved July 10, 2008, from http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/IH01Ad01.html

Tarnas, Richard. (2000). *The passion of the western mind.* London: Pimlico.

Tsang, Denise. (2008). Chongqing lurches along its slow march towards a more sustainable future. *South China Morning Post*, Hong Kong. 15.06.08.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2007). Retrieved July 9, 2007, from www.unep.org/cpi/briefs/2007July03.doc

Wilber, Ken. (2000). *Sex, ecology, spirituality.* Boston: Shambhala.

Yanan, Lu. (2009). Chinese leaders call for fresh development by overcoming difficulties (from the Chinese government's official web portal). Retrieved March 5, 2009, from http://english.gov.cn/2009-03/05/content_1251694.htm

Yao, Yuanming Alvin. (2006, September). China's oil strategy and its implications for U.S.-China relations. *Issues & Studies, 42*(3), 165-201.