Transcendence of a method: the story of causal layered analysis

Jose M. Ramos

ABSTRACT

By weaving the history of Inayatullah's scholarship with Slaughter's and Galtung's as well as Thompson's and Foucualt's, this article tells the story of Causal Layered Analysis.

Introduction

Causal layered analysis (CLA) is a future oriented methodology created by Sohail Inayatullah. This methodology is post-structural   in so far as it seeks to problematise existing future oriented thinking, exploring the assumptions, ideologies, worldviews, epistemes, myths and metaphors that already are embedded in images, statements or policy oriented research about the future. It has developed, however, as a way of opening up spaces for alternative futures. These alternative futures are not based on extrapolating trends or tweaking the assumptions in a systems model as is common in scenario building, but through deconstructing/reconstructing critical assumption about the way we constitute the world. However, the articulation of alternatives is a product of this method, not a primary consideration focus of the method.

But while the theoretical underpinning of CLA is based on post-structuralism, the approach is layered, that is, it is a method of analysis which is inclusive of accounting for various streams of causality operating in unison upon an issue (the issue being analysed). These include four primary levels[1]:

1. Litany – the sound and fury, media sound bites, cliches, image, empirical – emerge from lower levels.
2. Social causes – facilitated usually through academic policy research, creates a rational understanding of issues – also emerges from lower levels.
3. Worldview / Episteme – these are the civilization based assumptions that people rarely question, until we travel into other communities / cultures, be they other countries, research centers, villages, companies.
4. Myth / Metaphor – this is the ground of being, the structures that ultimately mediates intersubjective meaning making, and identity of self/Other, the unconscious ordering of the universe.

CLA is not a statement about the future, but a method for analysing statements / images about the future.

Finally, the method incorporates critical theory. In the language of its author: [CLA] 'searches for power so that it has no where to hide and [is] futures oriented, creating alternative futures'.

> *...theory, approach and methodology are deeply interwoven in post-structuralism, as opposed to empiricism or interpretive discourse, where there are clear differences between theory, values and data. In CLA and post-structuralism, they are all nested.*[2]

Background

As the son of a diplomate for the United Nations, Sohail Inayatullah was born in Lahore Islamabad Pakistan, yet was raised in places such as Bloomington Indiana, Flushing New York, and in Geneva Switzerland. In addition, his mother was and is a Sufi, and his father a social scientist and human rights activist, and Inayatullah himmself has come to follow and champion the work of PR Sarkar, the late Indian mystic. Thus, from an early age, and through adulthood, he never belonged to one category, be it nation, ethnicity, religion, caste or philosophy. As he writes in *Why I hate passports and visas*, he was always in the 'middle', between categories. For example, while applying for American citizenship while in Hawaii, the examiner did not accept his writing in the citizenship form that his complexion was brown. It had to be fair, medium or dark. He did not consider his complexion medium – it was brown. They jostled for the categorical higher ground. In the category for his profession he had written in 'political scientist' (he didn't bother writing in *futurist*), but immigration didn't accept that either.[3] In short , he never fit well into a pre-existing category, a stereotype or classification people could easily identify without straining their minds. Nor would he want to fit into the current systems of categories. Having traversed the world of categories and never being comfortable in one, he has come to a 'vision of the future, as one might expect, committed to cultural diversity and civilisational integrity in the context of a creation of a planetary society'.[4] Transcending and including the categories that have dogged him these many years, the only thing left might be for him to receive an honorary planetary passport (but this might still seem categorically problematic for him). In short, these categories are the outward expression, through institutional form, of the social construction of reality; reified social arrangements that, instead of leading to a future that he wants, leads to a world he abhors. For him then, these categories were not only problematic, but also temporary.[5]

His history, as one who could not and did not want to fit into what he deems archaic categories, such as nationalism or ethnicity, contributed to the development of his thinking, and may have influenced the development of his causal layered analysis. He was always his own object of de-construction - the self and its identity dissolving before the gaze of post-structural analysis, or vanishing at the presence of spiritual insight. The Indian episteme and the teachings of PR Sarkar revealed the social construction of individual identity, and the pathways to transcending narrow boundaries.

At the same time his experiences revealed deep structures from the individual and social, from the local to the global levels. While he may be romantic about his childhood's Pakistani nights he spent on the rooftop of his house, under the stars and waking with the whole community at sunrise, the impoverishment of the landless, the limitations to freedom and gendered inequality that many in his own family had to endure did not escape him.[6] In Indiana growing up, and in other places he was subject to racism, taught to be ashamed for having dark skin. The post-colonial status of Malaysia and Pakistan, and the dominated status of Hawaii may have introduced him to aspects of imperialism otherwise hidden or naturalised. Deep immersion in many cultures revealed to him worldviews beyond textbook codifications. Before he was introduced to the concept 'cosmology', he was probably already speaking different culturally set languages of reality, of what the world is. Language is a window into these 'cosmologies', and his capacity with Urdu, English and French (now entirely English) must have contributed. Finally, his experiences and conversations with and within Islamic, Indian, Western, and Polynesian civilisations may have laid a foundation for understanding and articulating myth and metaphor from a civilisational perspective. He has been both an insider and an outsider, and perhaps within his own visionary future, a planetary citizen.

Horizontal and Vertical

Thus his experiences revealed both 'horizontal' and 'vertical' elements. Horizontal refers to plurality of discourse / worldview / episteme that give rise to the categories we live in day to day (often the expression of power / ideological interests). This is 'the post-modern turn' that reveals how reality is mediated by cultural inter-subjective factors. However, the vertical refers to depth, the existence of structures and layers that underlie one's social and cultural existence. These two patterns are at tension with each other and challenge each other. A totally horizontal approach sees reality as being completely mediated by inter-subjective discourse factors (those historically still active and power). Because 'reality' is all socially constructed, it is as well invalidated, every culture and every tradition. Only the analysis remains valid, and even that was socially constructed and can be deconstructed.[7] Inayatullah rejects this extreme position. And Zia Sardar's critique of postmodernism supports this. The vertical challenges this saying that, while there is a plurality of episteme and worldview, there are still real structural layers within each bandwidth of the horizontal spectrum, despite the fact that we can no longer call these structural layers universal categories. One might say that this approach is beyond structural universalism, as well as beyond extreme post-modern relativism. These contrasting patterns existed for him to digest while growing up, and later became conceptual elements of his causal layered analysis.

CLA thus incorporates elements that facilitate the understanding and analysis of the horizontal and the vertical. While 'we assume universalities even as we speak from our own narrow tradition', unpacking the layers, ' how we mythologise the future', is the beginning. Yet this is not a denial of the authenticity of a particular discourse, but a way of integrating layers. CLA is a way of 'integrating levels of reality, science, social science, philosophy and religion, if you will.'. Only then can we see and act beyond our idiosyncratic notions and traditions, creating truly alternative futures.

The vertical causes are expressed as four layers that are nested, and linked from top to bottom. Thus litany is ultimately an expression of myth / metaphor, but not visa versa. In the language of complexity science, this would be called upward causation. Whether this system of analysis makes intuitive sense or not, looking at the influences in the creation of each layer may be beneficial in clearing up some confusion and making the method more accessible. While I will try to show the development of CLA through a narrative, in part as an example of intuitive *action research,* cycles of theory and experimentation, an elementary sketch of the particular influences through the layers will allow us to gain a deeper understanding of contextualising influences.

Inayatullah's conception of the **Vertical**, the general concept of layers, was most influenced by Oswald Spengler, PR Sarkar, and his own practise of meditation. However, Slaughter's typology of *pop, problem and worldview* levels of futures research was the catalytic enzyme in this. His thinking around **Litany** was influenced by Richard Slaughter, who derived the term from Frank Fisher. However, his and Slaughter's understanding of this is now different. **Social Causes** were influenced by Galtung's analysis of imperialism (center / periphery theory), perhaps other neo-Marxist thought such as Immanuel Wallerstein, and the dominance of 'technical' explanations of social reality throughout academia. His ideas around **Worldview / Episteme** may have come from Johan Galtung's analysis of cosmology and Michael Foucault's work with historical episteme. **Myth / Metaphor** was primarily influenced by William Irvin Thompson's concept of mytho-poetics, and perhaps also by Galtung's CMT (Chosen-ness, myth, trauma) theory. Finally, the understanding around his conception of the **Horizontal**, shifting assumptions into alternative myths, metaphors, episteme and worldviews came from Michael Shapiro, other post-structuralist influences and the epistemological breadth implicit in his work with macrohistorians.[8]

Layers of Reality

There was a certain fatigue with post-modernism. While post-modernism was a clear break from the empiricist and expressive realist position,[9] Inayatullah found that 'postmodernism assumes no levels of reality, just alternative realities. Behind discourse are just alternative discourses.'[10] This has been best expressed through Zia Sardar's *Postmodernism and the Other*. In this Sardar shows how postmodernism, instead of critiquing Western cultural and economic universalism, has become a way to justify it. The hollowed out values of the West that now primarily embraces material life, and rejects traditions with their 'superstitious' ethical and mythic elements, is projected upon the rest of the world, such that traditions of the non-West are de-valued and trivialised, mimicked and used for commercial and cultural exploitation. This dis-respect for the diversity of traditions threatens the world with a homogenisation of culture that can only embrace material values. But irrespective of the West's material relativism, the cultures of the world retain true difference, unique identities, histories and traditions that are as necessary and important in significance, if not more, than Western material culture.[11]

This re-valuation of culture and tradition was central to the concept of layers, as it made a culture a legitimate focus of inquiry, where insight, perspective and indeed wisdom could be derived. In contrast to a technical science that created 'universal' 'laws' of 'nature' beyond cultural and individual subjectivity, culture is where we all exist, and know anything from. An analysis and understanding of the particular patterns that exist within human communities made sense. Layered analysis would become one such method of a depth understanding of culture.

The primacy of culture and tradition was a theme that ran through Inayatullah's life. While not overly idealistic about traditions that imply inequality and oppression, as a son of a Sufi and a social scientist Moslem, and a champion of the work of PR Sarkar, tradition was all around him, yet not in a simple fashion. It was tradition, but by choice. And his tradition by choice, his own personal and community journey, became foundational to his perspective that there are layers of reality. Meditation was central for him, and helped him see from many perspectives and 'peel off the layers of the onion', and also to see that superficial and deeper layers exist simultaneously.

To the partial disapproval of Jim Dator, director of the futures program at the University of Hawaii, Inayatullah had decided to do his Ph.D. dissertation on the work of 20th century Indian guru P.R. Sarkar. While Dator wanted his students to focus on political and technological themes, his students were veering into vastly different realms of inquiry, much to his dismay. It is to Dator's credit that he created spaces for his students to pursue their research agendas. Dator's authentic pluralism remains among the reasons he his admired and loved by former students. Inayatullah's pioneering of the work of P.R. Sarkar may have contributed to this understanding of layers of reality. Corresponding to the classic Indian episteme, there are six levels of the mind. The first is *Annamaya Kosa*, that of the body, glands, blood, cells, etc. and controlled through Yoga. The second is *Kammamaya Kosa*, that of instinct and physical desire, controlled through breath. The third is *Manomaya Kosa*, that of reason and emotion and including memory, thinking, dreaming and the experience of pain and pleasure, controlled through concentration. Fourth is *Atminasa Kosa*, that of the transpersonal mind (corresponding to the Jungian collective unconscious) connecting every individual and allowing collective action. Fifth is *Vijinanmaya*, cosmic mind where will and historical purposes are the same. Sixth is *Hiranamaya*, near union with pure consciousness:[12]

> *The grammar of the "blissful" again is central in Sarkar's cosmology, for it is that state of mind that is the end of all existence. It is not the accumulation of wealth, beauty, knowledge or wisdom, rather it is a state of unity wherein distinctions between subject-object no longer exist, where the mind moves in a continuous flow of unconditional love.[13]*

Other influences also existed. Inayatullah had begun to delve into the domain of macro-history, the 'study of the histories of social systems along separate trajectories through space and time in search of patterns, or laws, of social change.'[14] The work of Oswald Spengler, whose famous *The Decline of the West* created a stir in a climate of overconfidence, and laid bare Eurocentric notions of progress and history, expressed a

much different approach to understanding historical reality. For one, he was a cultural relativist at a time when the West was supreme, asserting that each culture and civilisation has its own lifecycle. Each civilisation, moreover, could only be understood through its own internal laws, customs, origin, and context, thus he rejected a positivistic notion of a 'science' of history. Most importantly, yet in a similar vein, he thus rejected the notion that understanding history 'could be based on truth or falsity':

> *"True science reaches just as far as the notion of truth and falsity have validity….But real historical vision belongs to the domain of significances, in which the crucial words are not 'correct' and 'erroneous', but 'deep' and 'shallow'….Nature is to be handled scientifically. History poetically."*[15]

It is important to note the similarities and differences between the various conceptions of shallow and deep – the conception of layers. For Richard Slaughter (to be dealt with later), the distinction applies to futures research work, from the most banal commercialisations, to the most humanistically profound. For Spengler the depth is in the insight, the facts are simply an endless and meaningless litany. For Sarkar reality's layers are pealed away through the inner spiritual journey. While one deals with the quality of future-oriented literature, the other with macro-history, and the last with an inner spiritual journey. Yet, they all deal with what is profound in human terms and what it beyond direct sense / empirical perception – they are depths of meaning and orientation beyond the relativistic. By 1982, these concepts began to take more solid form; he was working in the court system in Honolulu doing strategic planning and needed to understand issues being dealt with in their court system. He also acutely remembers seeing a sociology chart showing the difference between the individual and the structural, that is, the 'person invariant', helping him understand what aspects of society may not be subject to rapid change, but which endured beyond the individual and the time specific.

The social construction of reality and litany

Richard Slaughter met Frank Fisher in 1987 when they began working together at Monash University in a new masters program in environmental science. The program had just recently been established, and sought to address the new and growing concern regarding the environment, ecology and such. Fisher was an unorthodox teacher, and he wanted to challenge his students in two essential ways. First through living systems theory to begin to challenge the view that the world and the self live in isolation from each other, rather than, as he saw it, in a web of interconnection and interaction, as an ecology. The human separation from nature was a notion he challenged, and living systems theories explained the world more holistically. Along with this came the problem with the Western analytic tradition of analysis of parts, specialisation, and understanding of particular phenomenon, to the exclusion of an understanding of the relationships between the part and the whole, or visa versa. Second, Fisher saw the environmental movement as progressing through three stages: from whistle blowers who alert people to a problem, problem solvers who attempted to solve a problem within existing paradigmatic boundaries, and those who examined causes within existing paradigmatic

boundaries and worked to renegotiate these. At this epistemological level Fisher worked, examining the social construction of reality, how we have historically come to reified social forms of existence that are threatening to destroy the human environment and human civilisations.[16]

> *Reification is the apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is, in non-human [facts / objects] or possible supra-human [divine / natural law] terms. Reification implies that man is capable of forgetting his own authorship of the human world.[1] (p.108)*

Another aspect of our current social constructions that Frank Fisher uncovered he called 'litany'. Litany refers to the endless steam of cliches, sound bites, media fragments, exaggerations, outlandish statements, disinformation, advertisement and other distortions received as a constant stream day to day. Because of its ubiquity, it overwhelms us with disconnected ideas and images, yet it is the reality that most live and think in. While litany can lead us to a deeper, more substantial reality through analysis (as in CLA), it is often useless in and of itself - simply a distraction from deeper understanding. The concept of litany was eventually taken up by Slaughter as a characteristic of what he termed 'pop futurism', and passed on to Inayatullah where it became a level in his causal layered analysis. The understanding of litany between Slaughter and Inayatullah differs in that Slaughter may see litany as the most superficial and trite expression of the field, sometimes involving the exploitation of futures thinking towards political and commercial ends. For Slaughter, the move away from litany and toward worldview reflexive 'critical' futures moves us toward his 'wisdom culture'. While Inayatullah originally saw litany in this way, considering it to simply be 'moronic', expressions of crude and absurd culture, he has come to see litany rather as the most superficial expression of deeper layers of reality, not as something that can be bypassed. Thus litany is the surface, the empirical reality.

Social Causes

Inayatullah had begun studying at the University of Hawaii at Manoa as an undergraduate in the early 80's, taking a B.A. in inter-disciplinary studies, an MA in Political Science with a specialisation in futures studies. He later went on to a Ph.D. focused on comparative philosophy and macrohistory. Johan Galtung, who was a visiting professor of peace studies there in the political science department, became a strong influence on Inayatullah's thinking, and a mentor in some respects.[17] A Right Livelihood Award Winner and prolific writer in many fields such as Peace Research, Macrohistory, and a pioneer in the area of peace research and conflict resolution in his own right, Galtung founded the Journal of Peace Research, the International Peace Research Organization and most recently Transcend, a peace research institute that offer masters degrees in the field.[18]

In addition to a cosmological analysis of culture and civilisation, which I'll examine later, Galtung also articulated a theory of imperialism that adds a critical political and structural

dimension to Inayatullah's conception of the political problematique. In *A Structural Theory of Imperialism*, Galtung reveals how the relationship between center and periphery, imperial states and dominated states operates. Borrowing from the work of Lenin, Galtung analysis how imperialistic relations systematically create harmony of interests and conflict of interests, to the benefit of and detriment, respectively, of countries and peoples. The center of the Center (the capital decision making bodies in the dominant nation – in our time corporate/military/political USA) creates a bridge head (forming a kind of unity) with the center of the Periphery (the principle decision making and power base of the dominated country – for example elites in the third world, DF Mexico etc.), thereby creating a harmony of interest between the two centers, to the benefit of both. The periphery of the periphery (which is the majority of the population – for example rural Mexico / Indonesia / Zaire etc.) is systematically exploited for resources, labor etc. So by way of the center of the periphery (third world elites) being linked to the center of the Center (Washington DC/Wall Street), the periphery of the periphery (rural third world) is essentially disenfranchised politically and in other ways – thus setting up a conflict of interest between the two.[19] The periphery within the Imperialistic nation (for example suburban America), is kept satisfied with bread and circuses. This pathology extends into economic, political, military, communications, and cultural forms of imperialism.

> *Only imperfect, amateurish imperialism needs weapons; professional imperialism is based on structural rather than direct violence.*[20]

Galtung's understanding of imperialism may have added a culture invariant aspect to Inayatullah's analysis. While cosmologies may mediate different center/periphery relationships, the problem of dealing with this dynamic, and the human suffering and impoverishment that it produces, must be dealt with historically and into the future. At the same time, this analysis is a way of coming to grips with the totalising and hegemonic domination of the West in its many aspects, in particular the 'superior' cultural artifacts emerging from it, critiquing this effectively, problematising its legitimacy, and making the case for alternatives.

Other social causes that may have influenced Inayatullah's thinking are too numerous to detail. Suffice to say that social causes are rationalistic discourses that emerge from worldviews. In this respect Galtung sees both Western Marxism and Liberalism being variants of each other – the Western predilection toward creating ideological or religious synthesis that are incommensurate with any thing else, opposed to the Oriental tendency to straddle multiple schools at once.[21]

Worldview and Episteme

In Galtung's analysis, the actions of nations were symptomatic of deeper historical causes and civilisational cosmologies (worldviews). An understanding of 'deep civilisational codes' could allow one to get past the confusing day to day affairs (litany) and official national positions to understand larger patterns. Cosmology, which roughly means a

totalising understanding and of the universe from particular cultural positions in space and time, expressed through totalising relationship with that cultures lifeworld, is a central unit of analysis Galtung's peace, culture, and futures research. In *Structure, Culture and Intellectual Style*, Galtung showed how intellectual productions differ from culture to culture, and civilisation to civilisation, based on the greater intersubjective variables involved – histories, cultural dispositions, worldviews. What Galtung uncovered were cultural and civilisational structures lurking beneath the façade of a legitimation process for intellectual production.

In Michael Foucault's *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the human sciences*, a book that had a significant influence on Inayatullah's thinking and development of CLA, Foucault examined how knowledge had been ordered through different historical periods in differing ways, in effect revealing that, what may be considered universal structure, is the particular expression of a researcher, writer, thinker's historical and spatial context - episteme. He showed how during the renaissance, knowledge was based on the principle of similitude and resemblance, that is, knowledge was likeness. During the classical period knowledge became representational, the signifier was the signified, language was transparent and revealed the true nature of things. In the modern period knowledge became an understanding of abstract forces and internal structures, history and psychology respectively. Thus, knowledge structures in the human sciences can be said to be particular and situated in history, among other factors.[22] Inayatullah credits Foucault: 'his epistemes, or historical frames of knowledge, are primary in understanding how particular nominations of reality become naturalised.'[23]

Myth/Metaphor

In the 1980sInayatullah found 'instant rapport' with the work of William Irwin Thompson and spent considerable amount of time with him. *Darkness and Scattered Light, The Pacific Shift, The Time Falling Bodies Take to Light* and *At the Edge of History*, were some of Thompson's more influential works on the spirit of Inayatullah.[24] A cultural historian with a mytho-poetic perspective, Thompson was the son of working class Irish Roman Catholics. However, he said that by the time nuns started to try and teach him Roman Catholicism in primary school, he had already discovered yoga, through mystic experiences at an early age. He went on to champion a planetary culture, through the cross fusion of art, science and religion, working with people such of James Lovelock, Lynn Margulis and Gregory Bateson, who were also articulating 'Gaian' ways of thinking and knowing.[25] He eventually founded the Lindisfarne fellowship which brought together creative people, artists, writers, mystics etc. from around the world that were also creating the ideas, art, science and mythos for a planetary culture. It was also a rejection of his academic life and the 'MIT internationalism' that he felt was shallow and simply Americans colonising the world.[26] Thompson essentially saw the primacy of myth as giving rise to science, and as underlying science.[27]

Thompson shows how narrations and expressions of Time are given by 'unconscious systems of ordering'. From Darwinian / evolutionary thought, through to the classical

Greek history of Thucydides, he shows how narration is based an pre-existing cultural assumptions, myths or hidden needs.

> *All narratives, artistic, historical, or scientific, are connected to certain unconscious principles of ordering both our perceptions and our descriptions.[28]*

Thus ideology and knowing is a form of 'false consciousness', including the ideas of Marx, Habermas, Mohammed and E.O. Wilson. Ideology is the 'excrement' of the mind.[29] Thompson saw myth as the memory of the history of the universe. As such, he has compared the metaphor of the Eucharist 'take and eat for this is my body and my blood' as describing the explosion of a supernova that scatters heavy metals necessary for life on the planets. The story of St Michael who forces demons down into the underworld describes the anaerobic crisis several billion years ago in which cynobacteria forced anaerobic bacteria down into the bottom of lakes. And he has said that 'Gaia, the whole biosphere, is really our collective body politic.' Thus he has fused new understandings of the Earth and biology with a mythic and poetic (he is also a poet) understanding of reality. Myth is the grand narrative, the wisdom and story of the universe, while history is simply the most recent superficial headline in the 9 o'clock news.

> *…history is written by elites which are the ego of a civilization. If it's written by men in England, it's not about women and slaves in Athens or Semites with hooked noses who created the alphabet and the Mediterranean trading culture. The kind of history you learned in classics was a white, male, patriarchal narrative. That's the history of the ego. The history of the soul is always the history of the voiceless, the oppressed, the repressed: the marginal people, the artists, the women, the African.[30]*

Thompson's thrust is toward the creation of a new myth of humanity, one incorporating the new understanding of Gaia, living systems and complexity. Thus one might say that Thompson's influence lends Inayatullah's conception of myth a cross-cultural and universal quality, one that is capable of transcending narrow mythic categories. So, although Inayatullah was never influenced much by Joseph Campbell, Campbell's concept of a universal myth of humanity, such as in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, supports his concept of myth. But if myth can be translated across cultures, in a planetary story of evolution, how does Inayatullah arrive at the horizontal spectrum of epistemes? How can each myth be considered underlying and giving rise to a particular worldview, as he writes: 'created in and through myth'? The answers may lie in Inayatullah's own understanding of identity:

> *trauma creates identity, since it creates the foundational experience of inclusion/exclusion, separation and unity, which of course is about our descent from God, and on and on…The transformation from identity is transcendence, both in the evolutionary sense but as well in the spiritual sense.[31]*

Trauma may arise, I speculate, through the interaction with the environment, the Other, giving rise to myths that capture a cultures or civilisation's separation or 'descent from

God'. Thus myths are produced in some archaic point of origin, different in each place, and reflecting the distinctive features of that civilisations identification. Galtung's 'CTM syndrome' or 'collective-megalo-paranoia syndrome' (choosen-ness, trauma, myth), another influential element in Inayatullah's conception of CLA, exposed how cultures often identify themselves with transcendental forces, thereby creating a belief or sentiment that they have been 'anointed' with the right to show others (read 'the Other') the true way, to the point of justifying conquest and the right to control and govern. This chosen-ness is built into myths of a great past, a heroic age, inducing 'collective sentiments of grandeur', to be recreated in a great future. The present is a half way point between a great past and great future. Trauma represents the suffering, real or imagined, a culture underwent that may have led to a fall, and the path that that culture must travail to return to greatness. People can be galvanized and made cohesive through the memory of a chosen trauma/glory, irregardless of its historical truth, as this historical memory crosses generations, the trauma has been embedded into the identity of the group. The above clarifies how mythic trauma helps create that distinction of self/Other, cohesion and separation.

This understanding of civilisational cosmologies that maintain self/Other boundaries is also reflected in Johan Galtung's article *Western Civilisation, Anatomy and Pathology*. This is invoked through a civilisations distinction between center and periphery: the identity boundary of that civilisation. What gives rise to this self/Other dynamic, different in each civilisation from the Western, Indic, Sinic to Nipponic etc. are the invariant aspects of that civilisations cosmology, which is 'so normal and so natural that they become like the air around us, un-noticed.'[32] In a passage that may illuminate how metaphor works within Inayatullah's CLA, Galung writes:

> *Ideally, one should be able to invoke a cosmology by one figure alone, an image so powerful that the essence of that civilisation is carried in that image alone.*[33]

Thompson also invokes a similar understanding of metaphor in describing a cosmology and forms of rationality, that a mythic image communicates the essential quality of the 'unconscious ordering', and the worldview and rationality it gives rise to.[34]

Post-structural influences

Michael Shapiro, also a professor in the political science department at the University of Hawaii argued to Inayatullah, in Inayatullah's words, 'for futures studies to move forward it must engage with post-structuralism.'[35] Post-structuralism emerged in the second half of the 20th century through such writers as Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, Michael Foucault, Jacques Derrida who essentially began to critique the 'realist' positions of so-called 'structuralists'. In literary criticism 'expressive realism', which asserts that an inspired author reaches a state of sensitivity in which he or she communicates an ahistorical and deep truth by way of talent and other specialnesses, was critiqued by those who did not see a special author receiving transcendent truths, but rather saw a text that was and continues to be interpreted according to the conveniences

of the reader and their historical and spatial location. Instead of a window into 'truth' a literary text is ideologically constructed, 'rooted in a specific historical situation and operating in conjunction with a particular social formation.'[36] In addition its reading involves ideological interests. The same bias toward 'realism' in the human sciences existed, in which sociologists, anthropologists and the like looked for permanent structures that could be isolated and said to apply to any society and culture – a permanent taxonomy of human existence – individual and social, without a reflexive understanding of how 'real' changes historically. This 'structure' was effectively revealed to be a product of historically / spatially situated epistemes (knowledge boundaries / orderings of knowledge) in Michael Foucault's *The Order of Thing,* as earlier mentioned.

In *Reading the Post-Modern Polity*, Shapiro argued for a 'geneological' approach to political theory, one that situates a political discourse spatially and temporally in order to open a potential for alternative discourses. As such, Shapiro critiques Habermas for assuming that the subjects of which he speaks, and of which he articulates an intersubjective communicative process capable of transcending their living circumstances, have 'intentional control' regarding the meanings that they use to communicate.[37] Shapiro argues, in the same vein as Jacques Derrida, that this amounts to a blindness in regard to a speakers historical tradition that gives rise to their communication and the immediate requirements (perhaps power / legitimation) that exist in the spatial and temporal for that speaker.[38] In other words, the negation of the situated-ness of our discourse amounts to a loss of control in the face of such discourse, while the acknowledgement of our situated-ness in a discourse allows for freedom and alternatives to arise. In a similar track, while a discourse creates intelligibility, allowing for rational communication and understanding, it also sidelines and ignores other discourses and thus other alternatives, which may be a high price to pay. [39]

> *...insofar as one succeeds in loosening the bland facticity of the present, contention is discerned where quiescence was supposed, and claims of authority become contentious rather than unproblematic. The way is then opened to inquire into the forms of power and authority that the practices of the present help to sustain.*

> *…genealogists remain suspicious of all conversations, because they recognize that systems of intelligibility exist at the expense of alternatives. Therefore to strive to deepen intelligibility and provide more access within available conversations is to consolidate the power arrangements that the persistence of such conversations helps to maintain.*
>
> *Michael Shapiro[40]*

And this is why Shapiro saw post-structuralism as essential for futures studies to move forward. The program in Hawaii was supposedly about 'alternative futures', yet their could be no alternatives in Shapiro's view if one remained blind to one's own discourse, one's temporal (historic) and spatial (cultural / structural / power) situated-ness. One could spin out a hundred alternatives that, because they existed within the same epistemic

boundaries, would simply be versions of each other. Alternatives could only arise through an understanding of how discourse context frame issues.

By 1990 Inayatullah had articulated this approach applied to foresight through a paper published in futures called "Deconstructing and Reconstructing the Future: Predictive, Cultural and Critical Epistemologies".[41] This piece was also influenced by Inayatullah's work in the Hawaii court system. In it he looked at how epistemic assumptions were 'embedded in planning and futures studies'. He found that futures research could be grouped into three categories. Futures research that focused on prediction worked for the purpose of control and extending power, assumed a deterministic universe, with the future a place to colonise. Futures research that focused on culture worked toward insight, examining cultural images, myth, and 'universal narratives that ensure basic human values', plus the analysis of class, gender, ethnic and other categories. Critical futures tries to 'undefine' the future, to make existing categories and discourses problematic. This approach sees the present as 'fragile', as the victory of 'one particular discourse', and analyses forms of power that underpin these discourses.[42] CLA exists within this last category, but can also be a way of cultural research.

Insight: 'Probing beneath the Surface': Budapest 1990

[add bio on Richard]

Prolonged exposure in the futures field, along with Slaughter's academic experience, and his experience in Bermuda revealing image vs. substance, began to show him certain patterns within the field, 'hidden structures'. He began to see how futures work ranged from popular hype with very little substance, all the way to a deep level of work where researchers looked at and evaluated the worldviews and epistemic ground from which an image of the future, or statement about the future, arrives at. He also developed respect for the practically oriented futures work, but felt that this also went too quickly 'from analysis to global predicament to solution, but speaking and acting out of un-regarded worldviews and with little understanding for the social constructions that had been naturalised in other cultures.'[43] So while much of the 'practical' (later to be called 'problem-oriented') work sounded and worked fine in one cultural context, in another it sounded completely absurd. So he saw that there was trite work, full of empty cliches and wild statements which he would later term litany, there was problem-oriented work, often quantitative and good at examining general trends and issues, good intentioned yet lacking an understanding of cultural worldviews and assumptions, and finally futures work that took worldview and epistemic considerations into account. This last category he deemed the most fruitful area of research as it had not only been largely neglected by most researchers, but he saw many of the futures issues and activity we take for granted arising from worldview assumptions. Rethinking epistemic and cultural assumptions could lead to more fruitful answers to pressing problems, and open up new spaces for creativity.

It was at a World Futures Studies Federation conference in Budapest in 1990, in a session organised by Allan Tough around innovative futures thinking called 'Cutting Edge Ideas' where Slaughter first presented this typology of future research. Abstracted from an earlier piece he had published in Futures called 'Probing Beneath the Surface', it was a short presentation, only ten or so minutes from Slaughter's recollection. Yet it essentially laid out a typology of futures research from litany to the epistemological.

Looking at over a decade of futures work, Slaughter's typology essentially revealed three layers at which futures research applied itself. The most superficial level, called 'pop' (he also used the word litany), consisted of cliches, hype and often outlandish technological optimism. In this level there was rarely any substantive research done, and issues were framed in one-dimensional ways. The second area was problem oriented, usually solid research through an understanding of social change, empirical and quantitative data, looking at existing social problems and formulating social innovations. Finally, at the worldview levels, futures work looked at human 'values, metaphors and presuppositions,' analysed 'social interests, power, and civilisational factors,' and examined the social construction of the future.

The response was very positive. Inayatullah was in the audience and he immediately saw that this was more than a typology, but could be worked into a method.[44] It gelled with Inayatullah's own understanding and made intuitive sense. It was this flash of insight that would begin the process of developing the CLA framework and testing it through practice.

Intuitive action research

CLA was first tested at two conferences in Bangkok together with Tony Stevenson, the first in 1991 at a futures conference dealing with pollution and overcrowding, and later in 1992 on a futures of ecology conference. Many students took part in this conference and helped Inayatullah develop CLA. Tony Stevenson, Brisbane based futurist and former president of the World Futures Studies Federation, and who also worked with a critical futures focus, lent Inayatullah a practice orientation, and was indeed one of the people who influenced him toward incorporating action research.

In Bangkok he found that at the litany level the ket transport issues were gridlock, pollution and waiting time. The solution was to hire consultants, transportation planners both local and international, with the agency coming from government and contractors. They would build more roads and make the system more efficient. At the social causes level the issue was strategic, with hyper urbanisation, rapid development and economic growth creating the problem. Solutions were creating overpasses, switching from an industrial to an information economy, telecommuting and mobile phone use, using transportation modeling software etc. Agency came from international agencies and corporations. At the worldview level the issue was the development model, the framework for how Thailand had decided to develop. Thailand had inherited an industrial big city outlook from the West. Inherent were assumption about the idiocy of rural

people, that one should leave the farm and seek wealth in the city. The solution became to transform the development model, create deep decentralisation and localism ('where local people control their economy and feel they do not have to leave their life and lifestyle')[45], focus on agricultural reform and the dignity of work and valuing local customs. The agents here are public intellectuals and social movements. Finally at the myth level was "Bangkok, city of gold", the image of the good life in the city, the story of making it big in a Western like setting. The solution here was to focus on indigenous metaphors, and return to pre-modern ways of knowing. The agents here were mystics and fringe artists. [46]

The above shows a particular example of the outcome of one such testing session. It is important to note that this period of testing and refining spanned at least six years, and continues today (2002). It was not simply a theory refined through a small pool of academics in a particular field, but used the feedback of many individuals from all walks of life. Other testing grounds were the Andorra World Futures Studies Federation futures studies course, Visioning workshops at Southern Cross University in 1994-95, and Queensland Advocacy Incorporated on disability futures 94-95, to name a few. Through the first part of this period he did not tell people he was doing CLA, he just used it. They would talk and he would organise the information based on the level. But this became too difficult after a while so he began explaining the method to people.[47] The method then evolved through working with others. During this time Gary Saliba, an Australian futurist, gave Inayatullah the idea of switching assumptions to arrive at alternative scenarios. While Saliba applied this to strategic scenario building, Inayatullah learned to apply this to worldview, episteme, myth or metaphor, switching these 'horizontally' to arrive at alternative solutions or renditions of issues.[48]

Publication

His paper on CLA was first rejected by the Journal of Technological Forecasting and Social Change: 'the referees could not understand a word of it.' Although Inayatullah asked the editor for his opinion, he refused to engage him. When he finally sent it to Futures, it was accepted and given a good response. This was in 1998.

Conclusion

Sohail Inayatullah's journey as a child began his inquiry into the nature of reality. Cross-cultural / cross-civilisational experience may have imprinted in him the existence of many ways of knowing, the horizontal dimension. His following and championing of PR Sarkar, and meditation may have been primary in revealing kosas, or layers of mind – and providing him direction. Academic research in Hawaii, and experience in their court system gave him post-structural influences, as well structural influences, and a futures oriented / planning approach to policy(1989). Slaughter's typology provided the catalyst for the development of a method (1990). But he was practise oriented, perhaps something he picked up from his father's interest in action research,[49] so he quickly began testing

the method with people at futures conferences and workshops (1991-92). Upon moving to Australia he continued testing the method (1994+). It was seven years after conceiving of the idea for a layered method, and testing it in numerous places across the world that his paper on CLA was finally published in Futures (1998).

A proposition that one might make is that CLA is not about a methodology, but about opening up spaces to alternative epistemes, cultural worldview, discourses and hence opening up pathways to substantively alternative futures from what is currently offered through mainstream 'pop' and 'problem oriented' scenarios and the like. The proposition, in other words, is that CLA is about getting distance from 'the future of the world' (as narrowly defined, predictive and a culturally reductive vision of the future), and enabling 'world futures', an approach to foresight inclusive (and critical) of many futures, from many cultures.[50] This is in part rejected by Inayatullah, and in part accepted. In rejecting this proposition he writes that:

> [CLA is about] rethinking the nature of inquiry, from either / or to both / and, and ensure that the inquiry does not lose a vertical gaze, the notion of ethics. Move people to understand that long lasting change means being focused on myth and metaphor as well as worldview and policy. In that sense, CLA is about CLA, it is about the method.

In accepting this proposition he writes:

> (the above statement) is the litany level. At the policy level, CLA is about changing how government policy is done. At the worldview, it is about an integrated planetary civilisation, post west and post east. At the myth, it is the mode from which a new story can arrive.

Finally, I end with a disclaimer. I have not told the true history of CLA, and how it developed. Rather, I have interpreted and created a story that I hope makes sense. Many assumptions can be employed: If one favors agency, then it was Inayatullah's championing of CLA that exists. If one favors structure, then it was his historical context that caused CLA (from Pakistani child, post-structural scholar, the rise of futures studies, and the influence of critical futures). At the litany level it may have been publish or perish. At the social, the need to find alternatives to the Western development model – CLA as intuitive action research. At the worldview, Inayatullah's multi-civilisational influences and commitments – post-colonial multiculturalism. At the myth, perhaps the Indian kosas (shells) – 'ecology nested in the mind'[51] and the inner journey. And a metaphor for this story, what might that be?

[1] Email transmission 18th July 2002

[2] Email transmission 18th July 2002

[3] Inayatullah, S. Why I hate passports and visas

[4] Inayatullah S. Macrohistory and layers of reality, from KBFS,

[5] This attitude toward categories extends into the method of CLA itself. As Inayatullah writes: 'CLA can be located within futures studies… but as well within the larger development of the social sciences, the postmodern turn. I see it far more than merely a futures method'. From email communication 4 July 2002. In addition to this, CLA can be seen as a method of content analysis with the communications discipline as Inayatullah writes: 'CLA is well received…because of the conflicting levels of information we receive. CLA helps sort out these levels. I guess, it is timely because of increased information and a bit of fatigue with postmoderism' Email transmission 15 June 2002

[6] Inayatullah S. Macrohistory and layers of reality, from KBFS

[7] This point is taken up in Zia Sardar's *Postmodernism and the Other* and is challenged and rejected as yet another example of the delegitimation / invalidation of any peripheral structures. Inayatullah also uses this position to challenge extreme postmodernist relativism.

[8] Some of this thinking began with the inquiry into the tension between agency and structure, two patterns that continuously emerged in the field. On one side were the Americans saying that it is all just a matter of doing it – like the Nike slogan. The individual has the power to create anything. Then there were the Marxist, who saw structure as primary, that people were locked into structures of oppression. There also existed a Jungian influence (supported by Campbell's work) at the myth level. But most of this level's influence was from Thompson.

[9] Belsey C. , *Critical Practice*, Methuen and Co. London 1980

[10] Email interview 6/15/02

[11] *Zia Sardar, *Postmodernism and the Other: The New Imperialism of Western Culture* (1998, Pluto, London)

[12] Inayatullah, S. *Understanding Sarkar*, Brill, Boston, 2002

[13] Understanding S

[14] Inayatullah, S. 'The Weight of History and the Pull of the Future', from KBFS Slaughter (ed.)

[15] Oswald Spengler quoted in Galtung, J & Inayatullah, S. ed. *Macrohistory and Macrohistorians*, Praeger, Westport CT, 1997 (p.99)

[16] He used a simple model to explain his position in light of the 'environmental movement'. In the beginning were the whistle blowers, such as the Club of Rome, books such as *Silent Spring* (that had a strong influence on Slaughter when it was published), and others who put the spotlight on the little noticed by gargantuan environmental issues facing humanity. Then came the problem solvers. They would try to fix the problem in conventional, or semi-conventional ways, yet always within the boundaries of the current worldview. Thus, if cars polluted, the answer was to create zero-emission cars. If energy is coal driven, then we need to go solar or wind, etc. However, as these no-nonsense solution simply displaced the problems and created new categories of problems, such as the way nuclear power was to solve all our energy problems but simply created whole new unimagined problems of significant size, one had to wonder why. Thus finally environmental issues are addressed through paradigmatic / epistemological work, work that reframes the issue, situating the problem within particular epistemic / paradigmatic boundaries. Hence the problem may not be a 'lack' of energy and the consequent need to create ever more powerful technologies for creating it, but rather in our obsessive need, use, and waste of energy (the endless growth picture we get from economics). Framed in this way the answer to global warming is to ride bikes (which Fisher does), and conserve electricity. But even deeper still, Fisher examined how we socially constructed an unsustainable society, one systematically putting the ecosystem from which we depend in peril. Thus while living systems may have provided the trojan horse for his students to escape the epistemological trap of reductive thinking, an understanding of the social construction of reality was the true meta-perspective that allowed him to challenge reified social constructions that may take away our future.
But for him social construction was not an abstract thing that could only be explored through intellectual work. He would take his students out to the middle of a highway intersection to inhale some fumes from passing car and trucks, and to hear the noise pollution. He would challenged his students to stop taking showers and using de-orderant, take public transport, stop using a car, unobtrusively clean up litter, take water inventory for one's sink, and other practices that put one face to face with the lifestyle / cultural context we exist in.

The social construction of reality became a central theme in Slaughter's and Inayatullah's futures thinking, that would eventually lead into research on the social construction of the future. Written in 1967 by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* explored how, rather than having a predisposed nature, humans construct their own natures. An understanding of human plasticity, how behaviour is habitualised and directed in activity toward the creation of social orders / institutions, and the legitimation of institutions through symbolic interaction, tradition and 'sedimentation', provides the conceptual equipment to de-naturalise any social order. While the world of the day to day carries with it a reality that is almost impossible to resist, this day to day existence, although seeming natural, is seen to be a product of complex forces and actors at work. While this naturalisation or 'sedimentation' is necessary for human interaction, role-playing and the development of society with its institutions, it is also constraining if unexamined. While the social order may have been a product of social forces necessary at the time, while it directs human action it at the same time limits human action. A social order may in fact be dissonant, destructive or harmful to its members, or others outside it, or otherwise in an unsustainable relationship with its environment, other cultures, the universe etc. If such is the case, renegotiating the social order is key to creating a sustainable society. And such renegotiations will have to take place at a deep level, such as symbolic interaction / intersubjective meaning-making, tradition making / breaking, de-naturalising, at the level of institutions and processes of legitimation. In contrast to modernist thinking which places the modern at the end of history, as a society or culture which has rejected a superstitious and primitive past and founded on universal and everlasting scientific laws that can only create the good society, Berger and Luckman might argue that the modern is nothing more than a particular construction of social reality, albeit buttressed through ideology and institutions, that can be re-negotiated:

[17] Inayatullah, S. 'Layered methodology: meaning, epistemes and the politics of knowledge', Futures 34, 2002

[18] Galtung, J & Inayatullah, S. ed. *Macrohistory and Macrohistorians*, Praeger, Westport CT, 1997 (biographical appendix)

[19] It is amazing to see how well this framework works in our time. How many puppet dictators has the West supported to the detriment of that other nations people?

[20] Galtung, J. 'A Structural Theory of Imperialism', Journal of Peace Research 1971 (p.91)

[21] Galtung J. 'Western Civilisation, Anatomy and Pathology', Alternatives VII 1981 (p.150)

[22] Foucault, M. *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the human sciences*, New York, Vintage Books, 1973

[23] Inayatullah, S. 'Layered methodology: meanings, epistemes and the politics of knowledge', Futures 34, Elsevier, 2002

[24] Email transmission w/ Sohail Inayatullah 14 July 2002

[25] http://www.levity.com/mavericks/thomson.htm 23 July 2002

[26] *In relation to this distinction between internationalism and planetary culture he has said*: 'Planetary culture isn't a mono-culture. Planetary culture is basically saying that in internationalism, the governing science is economics. A planetary culture suggests a shift to ecology as the governing science. It energizes diversity, it requires a larger gene pool and it deals with the new sciences of complexity rather than linear reductionism. We're not all becoming one. We might be going in hyperspace to a level of integration in which we all participate in this multi-dimensionality, but it's high in individuation.'

[27] Levi-Strauss has said that "myth is an act of faith in a science yet unborn," but that point of view is still too close to Frazer; it sees myth as a foreshadowing of something which will be truly known through science. You could just as well say that science is an act of faith in a mythology yet unborn, and that when we truly know the universe of which we are a part, we will see that the way DNA spirals in our cells and the way nebulae turn in space are all related to a particular dance of idea and pattern. William Irwin Thompson, Darkness and Scattered Light

[28] Thompson, W.I. 'The Cultural Implications of the New Biology' from *Gaia: A Way of Knowing*, Lindisfarne Ass. 1987

[29] Thompson, W.I. 'Nine these for A Gaia Politique', In Context, Fall 1986

[30] http://www.levity.com/mavericks/thomson.htm 23 July 2002

[31] Email interview 14 July 2002

[32] Galtung, J. 'Western Civilisation, Anatomy and Pathology', Alternatives VII, 1981 (p.147)

[33] Galtung, J. 'Western Civilisation, Anatomy and Pathology', Alternatives VII, 1981 (p.147)

[34] Thompson, W.I. 'The Cultural Implications of the New Biology', *Gaia: A Way of Knowing*, Lindisfarne Ass. 1987

[35] Email Interview 14/06/02 w/ Inayatullah

[36] Belsey, C. *Critical Practise*, Methuen & Co. Ltd., NY NY, 1980 (p.2)

[37] Shapiro, M. *Reading the Postmodern Polity*, University of Minnesota Press, 1992 (p.9)

[38] Shapiro, M. *Reading the Postmodern Polity*, University of Minnesota Press, 1992 (p.9)

[39] I heard Inayatullah once make the statement that 'knowledge makes one stupid'. I pondered this quite a while, wondering just how knowledge could make me stupid. After all, all of my studies and all of my travels had revealed the world to me, not concealed it. However, upon reading Alan Watt's etymology on the word 'ignorance' in *The Taboo on Knowing Who You Are*, it finally made sense. To be in a state of (-ance) not looking at (ignor) constituted ignorance. When we focus on one thing we lose sight of the other.

[40] Shapiro, M. *Reading the Postmodern Polity*, University of Minnesota Press, 1992 (p.15)

[41] Futures volume 22no. 2 march 1990 115-141

[42] Inayatullah, S. 'Methods and Epistemologies in Futures Studies', KBFS Slaughter (ed.) 2000

[43] Interview w/ R. Slaughter

[44] Inayatullah, S. 'Causal layered analysis: post structuralism as method', Futures

[45] Inayatullah, S. *Questioning the future*, Tamkang University, Taipei, 2002

[46] Taken from lecture at Australian Foresight Institute, Class on Foresight Methodology, August 2001 &From Inayatullah, S. Questioning the future, Tankang University 2002 (p.212)

[47] Email transmission 26 June 2002

[48] While working for NRMA, Inayatullah and Gary Saliba saw that there were similarities between their two approaches. Saliba's talent was to include in these models intangible human issues, values, interests, and perceptions and see their relevance within organisational contexts. Upon mapping a 'system' (more of a 'context' in Saliba's usage), he would change the assumptions underlying that system, thereby creating the starting point for an alternative future, scenarios that could be either normative, extrapolative or strategic.[48] Inayatullah saw how this shifting of core assumptions could be used within an analysis of layered causality. As litany and problem-oriented levels were nested in more intangible but more profound levels of worldview / episteme and myth / metaphor, Inayatullah saw that one could work down from superficial levels to deeper levels and access culturally based worldviews and epistemes, then switch worldviews / epistemes or myths and metaphors, and give rise to radically different framings of issues, scenarios, and spaces for action. CLA could then be a discursive method. Instead of just a method of analysis to uncover cultural assumptions, perception, worldview, episteme, myth and metaphor, it could also be used as a way of breaking out of staid and constraining ways of knowing and discovering new ways of knowing that offered more.[48]

[49] Phone conversation w/S. Inayatullah in May 2002

[50] This is reflected in The Knowledge Base of Futures Studies, which is a strong attempt to see through the eyes of future oriented thinkers from many different cultures and background, instead of an attempt to define one 'correct' particular approach to the future, or the articulation of an idiosyncratic vision of a preferred or extrapolated future.

[51] Inayatullah, S. *Questioning the future*, Tamkang University, Taipei, 2002