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# pro zukunft

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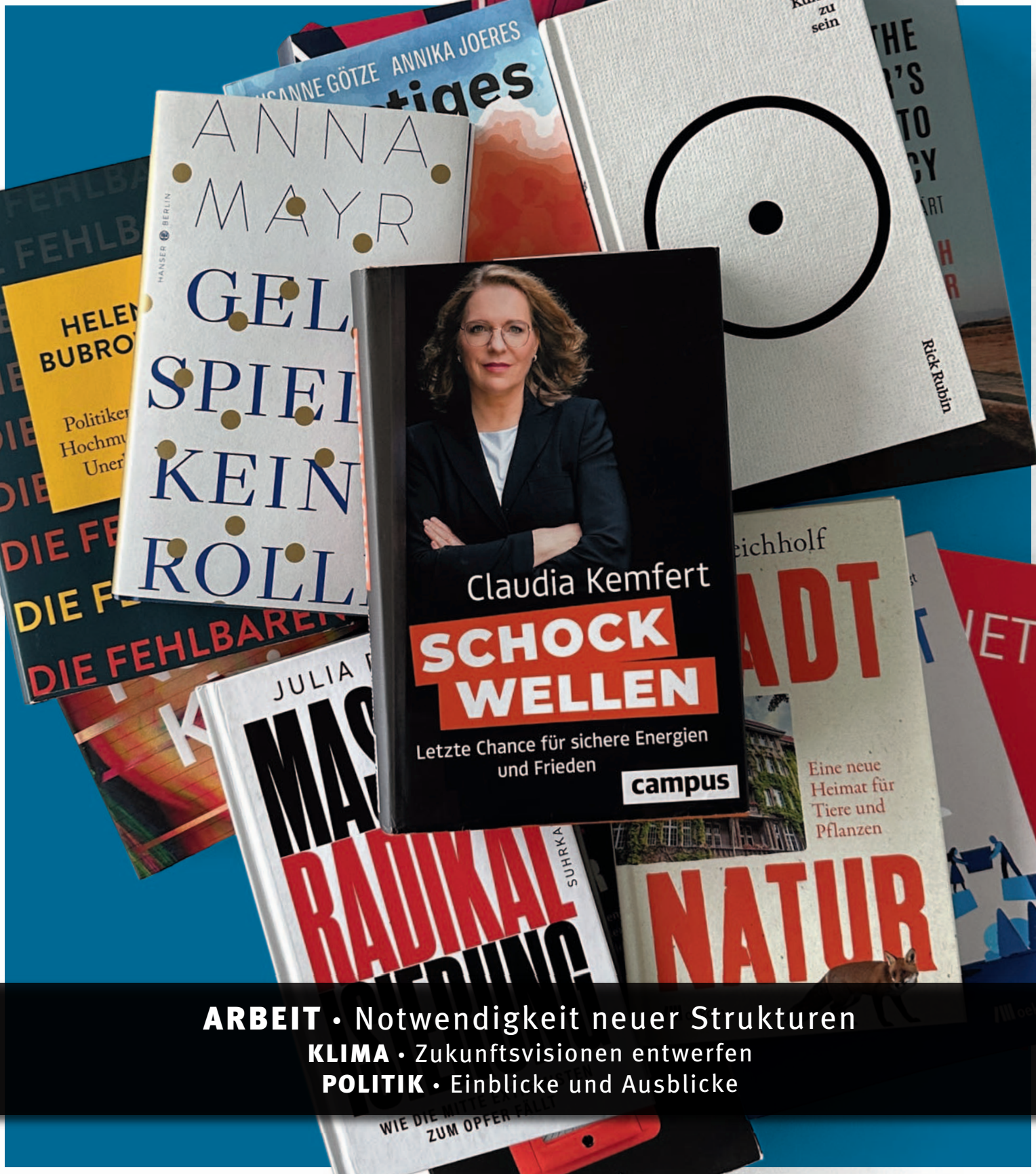


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# ZUKUNFTSFORSCHUNG

## Kurzinterview mit
## Sohail Inayatullah

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***Sohail Inayatullah**, a political scientist and futurist, is the UNESCO Chair in Futures Studies at the Sejahtera Centre for Sustainability and Humanity, IIUM, Malaysia. He is also Professor at Tamkang University, Taiwan and Associate at Melbourne Business School, the University of Melbourne. He teaches from www.metafutureschool.org where his courses include "Become a Futurist" and "Personal Futures: the CLA of the Self". He is listed in the top two percent of the world's scientists as measured by the highest impact of citations.*

*His most recent books include "CLA 3.0", "The End of the Cow and other Emerging Issue", "Asia 2038", and with the Asian Development Bank, "Futures Thinking in Asia and the Pacific Region".*

*In the past two years, he has presented to UNESCAP; ICESCO; PWC; ANZ; OECD; FAO; INTERPOL; WHO; Mitsubishi Motors; the Government of New Zealand; The Ho Chi Minh Academy in Vietnam; Victoria Police; the Government of Indonesia; The Asian Development Bank; Globe Telecom; the Philippines Senate; Aboitiz Infrastructure; the Pacific Community; GASERC; and the Queensland Crime and Corruption Commission.*

**Sohail Inayatullah, what do you understand by futurology?**
Futures studies is the study of alternative and preferred futures and the worldviews and myths that underlie them. We work to enhance agency whenever possible, to assist individuals, organizations, and institutions in deconstructing the narratives given to them and reconstructing the stories and visions they wish to create.
In my workshops I use the critical success factors approach asking groups:

**Question 1.** What is impossible today, but, if possible, changes everything?
**Question 2.** What is the used future? A practice that no longer works – not aligned to the new vision or the changing world – but we continue to do it?
**Question 3.** What emerging issues do you think are most relevant for the next 10-20 years?
**Question 4.** What are the implications of these emerging issues for the next 10-20 years i.e., how might they impact how and what the organization does?
**Question 5.** What are the alternative futures – the scenarios? Or how do they compare with scenario work already done?
**Question 6.** What is the Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) – i.e., the current and future of energy markets based on four levels of understanding: the litany, the system, the worldview, and the metaphor?
**Question 7.** What is the backcast i.e., the trajectory between the future and the present – the signposts?

This process assists them to move from the present to alternative futures to the preferred and then back to the present. We try and make the vision, the future more plausible.

**What are your main areas of work and research in the context of futurology?**
Most of my work is in Causal Layered Analysis. This approach consists of four levels of understanding. The litany or the headlines – the official description of reality. The systems that create, explain, cause the headlines. The worldviews that create the system and then finally the metaphors that underlie the entire edifice of reality. Once the present is understood at the four layers, we then focus on creating new metaphors linked to new strategies. Table 1 shows an example from the energy industry. Table 2 shows one from a futures dialogue between students and principals.

These interventions take the form of workshops, executive training courses, and books designed to understand how to change systems and cultures. The goal, as I understand it, is not to be the smartest person in the room but co-create so others can shine.

**And what are you currently working on?**
Most recently, I worked on the impact of generative AI on curriculum and assessment. I gave a speech focused on how teaching will likely change and new narratives of teaching and learning need to be created as we move to a world where we can learn anywhere, anytime, with anyone.

A few months I worked with local shires in regional Australia helping them adapt to the changing world of cellular agriculture. Often traditional systems react with fear when confronted with disruption. Our role in futures thinking is to assist and empower, indeed, decolonize.

While the worst-case scenario can be useful, often it is more important to focus on how the world is actually changing providing data-rich case studies of the future in the present. Done well, innovative strategies can emerge. For example, in the case of rural areas the narrative shift has been from farmer as victim to farmer as scientist, to experimenting and investing in new technologies.

This last month, we (with my colleague Ivana Milojevic) have worked in Manila (The Asian Development Bank); Hanoi (Ho Chi Minh Academy) and Bangkok (the United Nations). Four main themes emerge: a focus on the transition to renewables; toward gender equality; AI to enhance equity; and new models of governance.

**Which three book recommendations would you make?**
In terms of my publications, if you are asking that, "Understanding Sarkar" focused on the world philosopher, Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar. It focused on comparing his views on history and the future to other grand thinkers such as Ibn Khaldun, Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Karl Marx, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Wladimir Georgijewitsch Sorokin.

"Macrohistory and Macrohistorians" written with the great Johan Galtung focused on macrohistory and world futures.

The Causal Layered Analysis trilogy all present case studies on how CLA is being used throughout the world ("Introduction to CLA", "CLA 2.0" and "CLA 3.0").

**Which encounters or texts have turned your world view upside down?**
Meeting Jim Dator in 1976 began my journey into futures studies. He was the best mentor and friend one could imagine. He focused not on the litany of minor changes but the tsunamis of deep change – ageing, AI, robotics, world government, and more. Second was being exposed to the work of Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, particularly his books from the 1950s where he wrote on mind in technology as well as his imagined future of a world after nation-states, after capitalism and community, a world of multiple bottom lines: prosperity, planet, people, and purpose (spirit). Third was Johan Galtung, who used macrohistory – the rise and fall of civilizations and other patterns – to think about the next 50 and 100 years. Fourth was my partner Ivana Milojevic – from her, I saw the power of voice of women, the heroine's journey. Fifth was meeting the late William Irwin Thompson. His books, "The time falling bodies take to light" and the "Pacific Shift" all moved the discourse from technology and waves of change to the deeper Jungian archetypes that use us and we use to make sense of the changing world.

Encounters with groups outside of power have been helpful in having me think deeply about what works and what does not. One city we were working had just experience war – they cared little for positive possibilities. We first had to explore the worst case before we could travel to the best case. Working with those in the disability sector was powerful They imagined a world where they were deeply included by narrative and systemic changes i.e. the entire world designed like the para-Olympics village.

My conclusion with these encounters has been always asking, who is not in the room, as well as ensuring all design changes the deep story and the systems that emerge from these narratives, otherwise culture will continue to eat strategy for breakfast.

The goal of Futures studies for me remains, to move from anticipation to emancipation.

www.metafuture.org
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| | Current Trends | Preferred Reality | Reconstructed Reality |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Litany** | Cost of living and sustainability concern growing. Customers are more empowered | We are all customers and producers of energy | Households collaborate with retailers to mange their energy where and when to choose |
| **System** | Increasing energy usage is contribution to higher costs and pollution. Technology is helping customers and competitors | Households control their energy usage, cost and environmental impact through smart digital systems. Energy is integrated beyond the home to the community and beyond | The technology, products and solutions are available to make choices about energy production, usage and consumption |
| **Worldview** | Supply energy as a basic essential service, with price the key differentiator | Energy is a decentralized and integrated ecosystem | Energy centralisation and decentralisation occur in harmony |
| **Myth & Metaphor** | "Keep the lights on at the lowest cost" | "Connect your home and community" | "Choose your own energy adventure" |

Table 1

| Edmund Rice | Students | Principal | Integrated 2030 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Litany** | Students know their needs | Traditional teaching and learning is best | Holistic teaching and learning |
| **System** | Students design their education<br>Fluid and Flexible | Principals and teachers design education for a changing world | Social hubs anchor virtual learning Teacher as navigators and life gurus |
| **Worldviews** | Student-led artificial intelligence enhanced education | Tradition-led education with some reforms | Technology plus place plus spiritual learning |
| **Metaphor** | Tinder of education | The authority | Life as learning: life as service |

Table 2