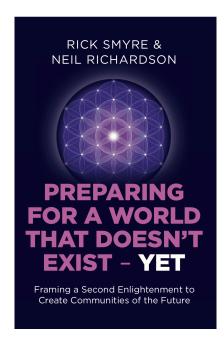***Preparing for a World that Doesn't Exist - Yet:***
***Framing a Second Enlightenment to Create Communities of the Future***

***Rick Smyre and Neil Richardson***

***Change Makers Books, 2016***



**Book Review and Comparative Commentary by Tom Lombardo, Ph.D.**
**Center for Future Consciousness[1] and The Wisdom Page[2]**

*"Because things are the way they are, things will not stay the way they are."*
*Bertolt Brecht*

In thinking about change, whether about nature at large or change within the human condition, we can envision that change involves moving from one state to a new and different state, from A to B. And within such a step wise vision, if we focus on human change, we can ask at a practical level: How do we best move from where we are to where we want to be? That is, how do we effectively and purposefully facilitate moving from A to B? But within such a model of change, the place we are heading toward (B) is just some new stable state, even if, in some sense, it is seen as better.

But what if, instead of such a model of human change, we were to think that in moving away from A, what we wanted to realize were not some other, even if better, stable state; what if what we aspired to were the capacity for continuous change. That is, our goal would not be to just inhabit some new, albeit more comfortable place, but rather to move into a mode of unending "becoming" and perpetual progress forward: in short, transform ourselves into beings of efficacious change.

This is the challenge that now confronts us. How do we transform ourselves and our approach to life such that we become capable of living within and indeed facilitating ongoing progressive change as the new normal state of human reality? Given our assessment of contemporary times, it is arguably only within such a dynamic and transformative mode of existence (within our thinking and behavior) that we will be able to flourish in the future. Our future is flow; there will be no sitting still; as soon as we sit still, at any point in time (no matter how good our spot is), we will find ourselves floundering, maladaptive, and out of resonance with the reality around us.

This view of human reality, change, and our preferable future is the essence of Rick Smyre's and Neil Richardson's new book *Preparing for a World That Doesn't Exist - Yet*. Rick Smyre is the President of the *Center for Communities of the Future*. (See the *COTF* website for an overview of members, history, and ongoing projects, as well as a glossary of key concepts and a selection of articles and presentations.[3]) Neil Richardson, a long-term and active contributor to *COTF*, is Director of Advancement, Partnerships and Continuing Education at the University of the District of Columbia and founder of *Walt Whitman Integral*.[4]

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The purpose of this review and commentary involves three connected goals:

- To describe the main themes and evaluate the content and arguments of Smyre's and Richardson's new book;
- To compare and connect the approach in their book with some of the main ideas in my forthcoming book *The Psychology of the Future*;
- To compare and connect the approach in *Preparing for a World that Doesn't Exist* with some of the main themes and general philosophy of the website: *The Wisdom Page*.

I have reviewed Rick Smyre's approach to the future, focusing specifically on his ideas on a "Second Enlightenment," in two previous publications.[5] To be candid, I have known Rick Smyre for almost twenty years, having first met him at a *World Future Society* conference (I believe in 1998), and we have, on a number of occasions, collaborated and partnered. We have participated together in panel discussions at *WFS* conferences, and on a few occasions I have been invited by Rick to speak at conferences and educational dialogues he organized in North Carolina and South Carolina. Rick has both strongly publicized and endorsed my book *Contemporary Futurist Thought* at his *Second Enlightenment* conference, and has written a very positive review of one of my other books *The Evolution of Future Consciousness*[6]. We are good friends and resonant professional colleagues. Acknowledging these positive connections, I will nonetheless strive toward objectivity and fairness in my review of his new book.

Rick Smyre's vision of a "Second Enlightenment," the central theme in the key opening chapter of the new book ("Emerging from the Mist: The Rise of a Second

Enlightenment"), was earlier presented in his paper "Futures Generative Dialogue for 2nd Enlightenment Clubs."[7] The theory and action-proposal for a Second Enlightenment (the ideas involve both a *call for a new way of thinking* and a *call to action*) forms the overarching philosophical framework of the book. The subsequent chapters, which provide a multi-dimensional and holistic survey of key features of human society, all derive their basic vocabulary, substance, and inspiration from the opening chapter and the idea of a Second Enlightenment. These subsequent chapters are:

2. Master Capacity Builders for Community Transformation
3. Transformational Learning: The Foundation for Future Colleges and Continuous Uplearning
4. Building a Creative Molecular Economy
5. The Emergence of Polycentric Democracy and Mobile Collaborative Governance
6. pH Ecosystem: A Comprehensive Approach to Community-based Preventive Healthcare

The basic argument behind the philosophy of a Second Enlightenment runs as follows: In eighteenth-century Europe a new approach to life emerged, a new modern Western Enlightenment, that embodied a set of ideas for effectively and rationally facilitating growth and progress in human society. These new ideas, decidedly secular and scientific in tone, involved a jump forward and away from—indeed a definitive reaction against—the religiously oriented philosophy of the Middle Ages. Embracing the principles of this new Enlightenment would presumably generate secular progress along multiple dimensions of human reality, including economics, government, morality, education, material well being, techno-industrial development, and the acquisition of knowledge. Our modern Western world, to a great degree, is the result of this new way of thinking and doing (See my *Evolution of Future Consciousness*).

Yet in contemporary times we face a number of significant new challenges and trends that require us to move into a new mindset beyond the First Western Enlightenment; this new set of principles embodies a Second Enlightenment. In his new book (as he had in previous articles cited above), Smyre lists, describes, and compares fourteen principles of the First Enlightenment with fourteen new contrasting principles of the Second Enlightenment.

Moreover, following from the first contrasting pair of principles—an "either/or" logic for the First Enlightenment versus an "and/both" logic for the Second Enlightenment—Smyre presents a third list of principles, aligning with what he refers to as an "Ecological Civilization" (in earlier versions of this model he referred to this third column as "Integral Society"), that flexibly integrates the sets of contrasting principles of the First and Second Enlightenments. As a sample, included below are the first seven sets of principles of the three columns:

| First Enlightenment | Second Enlightenment | Ecological Civilization |
|---|---|---|
| Independent (either/or) | Interdependent (and/both) | Systemic Ecosystems |
| Self-interest | Help Each Other Succeed | Concomitant Good |
| Linear Thinking | Connective Thinking | Synthesis & Generation |
| Static Structures | Modules, Webs and Networks | Dynamic Adaptability |
| Reductionism | Holism | Connective Analysis |
| Standard Education & Accountability | Unlearning, Uplearning & Non- linear | Transformative Learning |
| Meaning from Materialism | Meaning from Creativity/ Spiritualism | Balance of Values |

There are certain central themes within this triadic scheme. For one thing, Smyre and Richardson state that the principles of the First Enlightenment drew their scientific inspiration from physics, whereas the Second Enlightenment draws its scientific inspiration from biology and ecology. Instead of envisioning and understanding reality (including human reality), modeled in Newtonian physics, as a set of independent entities (or particles) that generate linear, cause-effect relationships, a bio-ecological perspective views reality as interactive, interdependent networks and systems that generate non-linear, cause-effect relationships.

At least seven of the principles under the Second Enlightenment revolve around the theme of connectedness and interdependence, contrasted with the First Enlightenment emphasis on independence and autonomy. As an important implication reflecting this shift in emphasis, Smyre's preferred focus of attention is facilitating change in the human community—a network of interdependent beings—rather than changing isolated and distinct individuals. Within a Second Enlightenment perspective, humans are interdependent beings existing within social wholes; that reality dictates the informed pragmatics of change.

In addition, the themes of mystery, uncertainty, change, and transformation show up in many of the principles under the Second Enlightenment. (The future is change and the direction of future change is uncertain.) Within the third column (Ecological Civilization),

concepts connected with change and synthetic integration frequently appear, along with variations on the themes of balance and flexibility.

In reading through Smyre's and Richardson's comparative descriptions for all fourteen sets of principles, coupled with a more extensive reading through the entire book, the two main themes undergirding both the Second Enlightenment and Ecological Civilization are *transformative change* and *interconnectivity/interdependency*, with *uncertainty* and *epistemic openness* (about the future) following the first two major themes.

Yet, to ascend to an even more encompassing level of the philosophy espoused in the book, the key emphasis is the *future*; indeed, *Preparing for a World that Doesn't Exist* provides a vision of a continuously transforming future and a set of principles for how to thrive within it. At a pragmatic and psycho-social level, this approach is key: only when people shift their focus of attention from the present and the past to the future—that is, when they enhance their consciousness of the future—will they be able to effectively meet the challenges facing us. In this regard, thinking in terms of change and interdependencies serves this fundamental goal. The book is geared toward how to raise what I term "future consciousness" at a community level.

Now, what is the point of the third column, "Ecological Civilization"? This set of ideas goes beyond (but conceptually envelops) the second column—the Second Enlightenment—acknowledging that while in numerous situations and challenges within contemporary life we need to embrace Second Enlightenment principles, rather than First Enlightenment principles, there are conditions in which First Enlightenment principles still have value and applicability. (For example, First Enlightenment principles are valuable in short term thinking and planning.) "Ecological Civilization" combines and synthesizes columns one and two. In essence, the third column represents greater flexibility and conceptual integration than Second Enlightenment principles alone. Hence we have a Hegelian triad, of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, or to use an Eastern model, we have Yang, Yin, and Tao. And to restate: the logical triads reflect a "both/and" logic, of A, B, and A and B, which, in fact, is the type of logic that is found in both Hegel and Taoist thinking. Ecological Civilization is a "both/and" integration of the First and Second Enlightenment.

Now, as I stated at the beginning of this review, this book involves both a philosophy for how to think about reality and the human condition, especially as it pertains to our contemporary world and to the future, but it also serves as a call to action. On this second point, the proposed philosophy has rich practical applications, providing principles and guidelines for how to think and act within our contemporary world. Indeed, the philosophy provides a theory and pragmatics of how to effectively and productively engage and facilitate ongoing transformational change within our world. In subsequent chapters, the authors repeatedly return to these principles (of both the Second Enlightenment and Ecological Civilization), showing readers how they support understanding and effectively facilitating new forms of leadership, education,

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economics, government, and public health in our contemporary world and the world of the future.

*The Wisdom Page* (a website I manage) offers a host of different theories of wisdom. Although theories of wisdom highlight the psychological, ethical, and conscious qualities of the human mind as they relate to wisdom, a central point in almost all such theories is that wisdom is a pragmatic behavioral capacity that generates beneficial change in us and the world (including other humans). The virtue of wisdom is both a mode of consciousness and understanding, as well as an applied capacity that facilitates well-being and the good.

What Smyre and Richardson aspire to in their book is to provide both a theory of how to think about the world (contemporary and future) and a practical approach to productively engaging and transforming the world. This latter practical side of the book is very pronounced and comprehensive, including numerous recommended techniques, strategies, activities, and exercises. Moreover, there is a clear emphasis on the pragmatics of productively working together with other people and within human communities. If I were to appropriately locate Smyre and Richardson's book within wisdom literature, I would categorize it as being about *applied social wisdom for the future*.

In viewing *Preparing for a World that Doesn't Exist* as an instrument for facilitating applied social wisdom for the future, several connected features of the book can be highlighted. First, the second chapter— pivotal in its own right—addresses "Master Capacity Builders for Community Transformation," which in essence deals with the question of the nature of leadership in facilitating community transformation toward Second Enlightenment thinking and action. As classic wisdom literature highlights, a teacher of wisdom must embody the very principles in their own life that they wish to instill in others; wise people walk the talk. Similarly, "Master Capacity Builders" guide and instruct using (and role modeling) the principles and practices of the Second Enlightenment.

Second, the focus throughout the book is on "communities" and "community transformation"; what Smyre and Richardson want to articulate is how to best facilitate social change. Their central area of interest is how to encourage communities to become transformational, as opposed to static, communities. Wisdom literature, at least in the West, largely focuses on the individual mind and individual growth toward wisdom. Smyre's and Richardson's book does a valuable service is turning the focus toward growth and transformation within communities (social groups) and in giving examples of how best to realize it.

Third, following from Thomas Kuhn's concept of paradigms (see my discussion in *Contemporary Futurist Thought*), what Smyre and Richardson offer is not just a theory but a paradigm, which is a broader, more enveloping mode of thinking and doing; a paradigm is, in essence, an articulation of a way of life. Covered in the book is a core theory (the Second Enlightenment and Ecological Civilization principles), but also "tools"

for facilitating change, various types of activities and projects to teach and implement transformative change, appropriate settings for dialogue and constructive social interaction, and a set of values regarding the desired or preferable direction of the whole mindset. And this paradigm of thinking, doing, and valuing is enacted at a social (community) level. In essence, Smyre and Richardson want to change the structure, dynamics, and values of human society, that is, to change the paradigm of human society.

And fourth, in so far as Smyre and Richardson are offering what they take to be a new paradigm (and way of life), it is to be expected that a new language (or vocabulary) would emerge in alignment with this new mode of thinking and doing. Basing this new language on a variety of inspirational and informational sources, we find expressions such as "complex adaptive systems," "creative molecular economy," "direct consensus democracy," "futures generative dialogue," "mutual collaborative coaching," "transformational learning and thinking," and "uplearning." Glossaries of this new language can be found both in their book as well as on the *COFT* website.

At this point, I am going to dig deeper into both the theory and paradigm presented in the book. In the "Master Capacity Builders" chapter, one of the key components to becoming a master capacity builder (as well as a transformational community) is "understanding the context," which means becoming cognizant of the important transformational trends (directions) occurring in the world today. How can we competently and wisely facilitate appropriate change if we do not know what is going on in the world? As an overarching summary statement, Smyre and Richardson see our contemporary world as moving from an "Industrial Society" to an "Ecological Civilization." This general civilizational transformation involves changes (from an industrial to an ecological mindset) in energy resources and utilization, technology, economics, health care, education, innovation and planning, government, politics, ecology, modes of thinking, human-environment relationships, and gender roles; that is, in all facets of human society.

When Smyre first wrote about the Second Enlightenment, he identified a set of "megatrends" that presumably captured many of the most fundamental changes occurring across the globe. He saw his "Second Enlightenment/Integral Society" principles as the modes of thinking and doing that would successfully cope or deal with these transformations and challenges. Now though, in this new book, he provides an overarching theory of contemporary global change—from industrial to ecological—that presumably captures all the varied types of changes, from the techno-scientific to the psycho-social. We can, of course, question whether all the major "megatrends" of today can be subsumed under this one mega-shift, but I want to focus on two other points regarding this global theory of contemporary change.

First, at one level (in line with Smyre's original way of thinking), Second Enlightenment/ Integral Society principles were proposed as a way of successfully coping with (indeed thriving within) the basic megatrends and changes in the world. But if we look at the list of changes identified in Smyre's and Richardson's book, presumably identifying the

basic parameters of change in the world, many of the changes identified are modes of thinking and doing associated with his vision of "Second Enlightenment/Ecological Civilization." That is to say, the authors are arguing that the world is, in fact, changing along the lines of "Second Enlightenment/Ecological Civilization" principles of thinking and doing as an overarching trend. So, although we could interpret Smyre's and Richardson's basic thesis as contending that we should adopt "Second Enlightenment/ Ecological Civilization" principles if we are going to successfully cope with challenges and changes in our world, they actually seem to be saying that the world is already changing toward a "Second Enlightenment/Ecological Civilization" way of thinking and doing, and that if we want to resonate with this newer way of life, we should adopt their principles of thinking and action. (Keeping in mind, of course, that the world still operates in many ways in terms of First Enlightenment/Industrial Society principles, and that in many cases such principles are still valuable and appropriate.) In short, Smyre and Richardson are describing present trends, predicting where these trends are leading, and prescribing how best to align with this new emerging human reality. Smyre seems to have moved from his original prescriptive proposal regarding how to successfully deal with a variety of contemporary challenges, problems, and trends, to an integrative descriptive hypothesis regarding how things are changing, and a commensurate prescriptive proposal that we should get in tune with this overall direction of change.

One implication that seems to follow from identifying the overall direction of change with their hypothesized preferred new mode of thinking and doing is that they are optimistic about the future. Such a view was not necessarily the case in Smyre's earlier formulation, which involved the identification of a whole set of problems looming on the horizon. In the present formulation, humanity, according to Smyre and Richardson, is heading in the very direction they describe as their new preferred mode of thinking and doing. We are heading right where we ought to be heading.

I bring this whole issue of interpretation of the message to the forefront because it has been a common phenomenon in human history that when advocates for change toward some hypothesized preferable direction present their views, they also state that those very changes they are advocating for are already occurring (or emerging) within the world. Hence, although the message could sound like we should or need to do such and such to create a better world (a better future), as the advocate defines it, the message is actually that the world is already changing in a certain direction, whether we individually do anything at all, and hence, if we want to stay in tune with the actual flow of transformation, that is, adapt and align with the whole of things, then we should get on the bandwagon.

This first point regarding the message of the book leads me to a second issue: What values and ethics underlie the philosophy presented in Smyre's and Richardson's book? This question is critical since their whole system of thought, at one level, is presented as a prescription regarding how we should think and act (as individuals and as communities) to realize a "better" reality in the future. The book is not simply an informed assessment of contemporary affairs and trends; it is equally, if not more so, a

prescriptive advocacy for a new way of thinking and doing that will, according to the authors, generate an improved reality for us in the future. The book is normative at heart. Hence, to properly evaluate the book we need to ask whether the prescription (preferable future) being presented is sound and desirable.

Pieces to their ethical and value system can be found in their statements that we should move from "self-interest" (First Enlightenment) to "helping each other succeed" and "concomitant good" (Second Enlightenment/Ecological Civilization). Moreover, we should move from meaning and value in materialism to meaning in creativity/spiritualism (Second Enlightenment) and "balance of values" (Ecological Civilization). Also, in line with an emphasis on the value of diversity of points of view, in describing the difference between a "Traditional Builder" and a "Master Capacity Builder," Smyre and Richardson recommend a shift from independent self-centeredness and authority to openness and concern for others. Under the category of differing "Ethics," for traditional versus master capacity builders, they state that we should move from a "Concern for 'the' truth, to a "Concern for truth(s)." Finally, contrasting Industrial with Ecological Civilization, the authors not only prescribe a move from male dominance to gender equity, but also—and more systematically—a transcendance of the philosophy of human dominance over nature (First Enlightenment). Generally, what they argue for is a shift in thinking and doing from top-down hierarchies of localized power to collaborative networks of balanced power.

If we draw these pieces together, what comes through is an ethics and set of values emphasizing the preferability of interdependence and (balanced) diversity over independence and singular dominant views or individuals. This vision is at least a big part of what Smyre and Richardson see as the "good" and in particular the preferable direction for a "good future." This cluster of values makes sense given the theory of human reality and human knowledge embodied in their philosophy. As I state in *The Psychology of the Future*, theories of well-being and the good always assume particular theories of reality, and although Smyre and Richardson acknowledge the contributions of the First Enlightenment, they clearly believe that human reality, as informed by contemporary bio-ecological science, is not a set of isolated and independent individuals but an interactive pluralism of interdependent individuals. Moreover, instead of a single revealed truth, to some degree at least, they advocate for the value and validity of a diversity of points of view, all of which contribute into the overall vision we have of human reality and our direction in the future. For one thing, openness to diversity seeds creativity, a key capacity within a world of perpetual change, and openness to differing points of view undercuts dogmatism and top-down power structures.

But to dig even deeper, the other key idea in their theory of human reality is change, which also informs their ethics and values. If we lived in a static reality, in which tomorrow were basically the same as today, there would be no distinctive value in opening our minds to the future, since the future would be no different than the present or the past. Yet we live in a world that is changing, and the rate of change is not only increasing but continuous, rather than punctuated and intermittent. From an adaptive

point of view, we need to embrace change and the future. Throughout their book Smyre and Richardson devote considerable attention to working with individuals and communities that resist change and hold to singular, entrenched, and static visions. (This is an issue I address in considerable length in *The Psychology of the Future*.) Through various suggested activities, strategies, and tools—in particular highlighting the value of the "futures generative dialogue"—they address the challenge of how to open minds and communities to change and multiple perspectives with an eye on the future. Within their approach, they place a central and critical value upon embracing change and becoming conscious of the various possibilities of the future because their theory of reality asserts that the human condition is, in our contemporary times, highly transformative, moving continuously into a future that is decidedly different than the present.

As I pointed out above, one value argument presented in the book is the adaptation argument: The world is moving in a certain direction, and if we are to stay in tune with (let alone thrive within) such a transformative reality, then we need to adopt the principles (which identify key features of the ongoing changes) described in the book. Yet, the adaptive argument won't entirely work as a normative argument since we could hypothetically be living within a world changing for the worse. Change *per se* is not simply or always good—and to adapt and get in tune with such a transforming reality would not be desirable or preferable. This is not to say that we shouldn't be cognizant of contemporary transformative trends and take such trends into account in thinking about and planning out or strategizing our future. But if the trends are negative, then it makes more sense to attempt to counter-act if not fight against such trends. (This indeed is the stance of many environmentalists who see contemporary trends, if left unchecked, leading to the destruction of the natural environment.) As I pointed out above, Smyre and Richardson, take a different view, describing the trends toward a Second Enlightenment/Ecological Civilization in an optimistic and positive fashion; so for them it makes sense, from a normative point of view, to adapt and tune into them. Still, we must demonstrate that the trends are good, or else to adapt to what is happening is not a sufficient foundation or rationale for determining that such a strategy leads to a good future. One could be adapting to an emerging madhouse.

Moreover, psychological evidence indicates that self-initiated or proactive change generates much more psychological well-being than passive or adaptive change; in fact, as I explain below, self-initiated change is at the core of what makes us human. To be fair, though, to Smyre and Richardson, they do repeatedly acknowledge that it is centrally important that communities or individuals come to their own informed decisions regarding the desirability of change, although a big part of their practical approach includes activities and principles for guiding and facilitating people's thinking toward this realization that they need to change. (In this regard their approach has the quality of community psychotherapy.)

So, in ethically evaluating Smyre's and Richardson's approach, what we have to demonstrate is why (or in what particular sense) embracing interdependency and transformative and continuous change (more generally the principles of the Second

Enlightenment/Ecological Civilization) is a good thing. (Another interesting question, which I examine in my book, is why uncertainty and a sense of mystery is also of ethical value.) This is where wisdom and in particular the ideas in my book *The Psychology of the Future* become relevant. As I stated above, theories of ethics and the good always assume theories of reality. Ethics and values refer to preferable or ideal states of reality, contingent upon how reality is described. But it is not sufficient to argue that the good is simply adapting to reality; rather the good is making the best of the reality within which we find ourselves. By and large, theories of wisdom delve into this very issue: Generally such theories describe wisdom as being deeply informed about the nature of things (including human nature and the human condition) and having the capacity and desire to apply this knowledge toward the betterment (well-being) of oneself and others. The central focus of my book is understanding what this capacity of wisdom entails and how to enhance it.

As history reveals, and as reviewed in my book, there are numerous theories of reality and numerous connected theories of human well-being and the good. Regarding the latter, there are myriad proposed methods for determining what is human well-being and the good, philosophically, scientifically, socially, and spiritually. Numerous articles written by various authors on *The Wisdom Page* address different aspects of this complex arena of inquiry, and there are many notable contemporary global approaches to comprehensively and holistically ascertaining, and even measuring, human well-being along multiple dimensions of reality. A main takeaway from looking at this extensive literature of investigation and study is that theories of the ethical good depend upon theories of human well-being, which in turn depend upon theories of human reality.

Drawing upon different sources and perspectives regarding these areas of inquiry, one basic conclusion I come to is that the most globally balanced, up-to-date, and informed understanding of reality, including human reality, involves two fundamental principles: evolution and reciprocity. Notably, these two principles significantly align with Smyre's and Richardson's central emphasis on change and interdependency.

One degree of difference between my approach and that of the authors is that Smyre and Richardson focus on human reality, highlighting the principle of transformative change, whereas I place transformative human reality in a larger context, which is evolution within nature as a whole. Humanity is part of nature, and as I argue, we both express and participate within the overall evolutionary nature of the cosmos.

If we were to ask why is it that human society appears to be in a state of accelerating transformative change, we can identify an answer by pointing out that the general rate of change has been accelerating across the history of the universe, with more complex realities generating more efficient and quicker rates of change. There is a general pattern of an "evolution in evolution." For those who find the contemporary world moving too quickly, the "answer" is that this increased level of transformation is a natural expression of the pattern of the flow of things within nature and the universe.

Moreover, humans are not simply "riding on the river of change or time"; we are actively involved in facilitating and guiding the process of change. To whatever degree Smyre's and Richardson's argument is correct that humanity is moving into a Second Enlightenment, we should acknowledge that we are the architects of this transformation, and in fact, this hypothesized transformation in thinking and doing, as Smyre and Richardson describe it, is decidedly focused upon purposefully achieving more efficient and accelerative change.

Now, perhaps highlighting evolution in a general description of human reality is a controversial move, but evolution helps us to understand the nature of our contemporary world and its accelerative, transformational rush into the unknown—for the future is unknown and uncertain in an evolutionary framework, and to recall, uncertainty is another key theme in Smyre's and Richardson's framework. Consequently our modern world should not be seen as an aberration of nature (as some traditionalists and conservationists would argue) but a natural result of a cosmic process going back to the beginning of time.

In this review I will not delve too deeply into the principle of reciprocity, as outlined in my book, except to note that one main inspirational source of this principle is Eastern philosophy—thus bringing global balance into my proposed vision of reality since evolution is a Western idea—and Eastern thinking, as exemplified in the Taoist Yin-Yang, adopts a "and/both" logic which is a key theme as well in Smyre's and Richardson's book. Further, reciprocity envisions reality in terms of distinct yet independent constituents and factors.

A key question addressed in my book, *Psychology of the Future*, is what kind of ethics and theory of well-being and the good aligns with a human reality in which we are architects and facilitators of evolution existing within an interdependent world (following from the principle of reciprocity). The answer I present is that the good is flourishing within the flow of evolution, realized through the exercise of the character virtues of heightened future consciousness that, when synthesized, constitute wisdom. Wisdom is the means to flourishing and creating a good future. I will now briefly explain what this answer means and how it connects with Smyre's and Richardson's concepts of a Second Enlightenment and Ecological Civilization.

Flourishing is a dynamic, growth-oriented, and holistic concept of the good inspired and grounded in the positive psychology vision of flourishing as the core of psychological well-being. Flourishing includes such qualities as personal growth; purpose and meaning in life; positive affective states; expanding cognitive horizons; a sense of adventure; a sense of efficacious engagement with the world; autonomous decision making; and a sense of beauty, among other factors. Flourishing, as a dynamic state, aligns with the dynamic evolutionary nature of human reality; specifically, flourishing is the ideal state of human evolution. Character virtues define excellence in human functioning, and following from the Aristotelian-Confucian concept of virtue, the ethical good is living a life based on virtue. Our distinctive human functioning is purposeful self-evolution, hence the exercise of virtues, which serves this distinctive human function,

defines what is good. In essence, the good is excellence, defined in terms of character virtues, of our highly developed and special capacity for self-evolution. Exercising such character virtues generates—indeed purposefully creates—flourishing and well being in the flow of evolution.

I propose that our capacity for guiding evolution is future consciousness, which is integral and distinctive to our psycho-social make-up, and that this capacity emerged within us long before modern times (or the First Enlightenment). Indeed, all the accomplishments of human civilization, from agriculture to technology, science, bonded partnerships, and religion, are a result of our empowered human capacity to consciously guide evolutionary change with an eye on the future. Future consciousness allows us to purposefully self-evolve—to intentionally guide change toward imagined preferable future goals—and it is within this encompassing theoretical context—a historical vision of our evolving psychology—that I place theories of a Second Enlightenment and Ecological Civilization (as well as the earlier First Enlightenment) as philosophies of thinking and doing with the purposeful future intent to transform and improve human reality; that is, to thoughtfully guide self-evolution.

Holistic future consciousness—our capacity for purposeful self-evolution—consists of all those psychological abilities we engage in approaching and creating the future, which includes thought, imagination, emotion, motivation, self-identify, and social interaction. The character virtues of heightened future consciousness, which include self-responsibility, deep purpose, tenacity, hope, optimism, and courage, define excellence within the various psychological capacities of future consciousness.

In summary, flourishing (in evolution) provides a theory of human well-being through which we can anchor the good (and the good future). Flourishing is best realized through heightened future consciousness. The character virtues of heightened future consciousness define excellence in this capacity. Character virtues provide an ethical anchor in terms of individual and social character and functioning, indeed describing what is preferable and excellent in our distinctive human capacity to guide the future and self-evolve.

In so far as Smyre and Richardson put a central focus on consciousness of the future within their vision of a Second Enlightenment—the Second Enlightenment is a mindset oriented toward preferably directing or guiding the future—my theory of heightened holistic future consciousness through character virtues identifies how to enhance all the psychological capacities for creating a positive and good future within Smyre's and Richardson's vision. If Smyre and Richardson particularly focus on the social-community dimension of futures thinking and action, my theory highlights the psychological and ethical dimensions, although I should note that this is simply a matter of emphasis for there are psychological and ethical aspects to their approach, as much as there are social-community aspects to my approach.

Julian Huxley stated that: "We are nothing else than evolution become conscious of itself." As I assert in *The Psychology of the Future,* "We exist in the flow of evolution,

and the flow of evolution exists in us." In becoming conscious of the evolutionary nature of reality, and in particular the evolutionary nature of ourselves, we become informed and empowered; we apprehend our dynamic and progressive reality and can therefore more effectively guide it. As our understanding of human history has grown, we increasingly see how both human psychology and human civilization are dynamic (changing) realities; how there has been progress (with numerous ups and downs); how we have facilitated this progressive dynamism with our ideas and inventions; and how the process of evolutionary change, grounded with the dynamic and creative nature of reality, has been accelerating across time. We are in the flow; we are the flow. It behooves to understand this flow as best we can, and to learn to direct it toward good or desirable directions. Indeed, becoming self-conscious of our dynamic reality, it makes perfect sense to endeavor to develop our capacities to facilitate evolutionary flow or change with an eye of the future. Instead of envisioning some ideal and yet static utopia, as did numerous thinkers of the past, it is more realistic to think of maximizing our capacities for productive, ethical, and thoughtful change (that is, informed and purposeful evolution). According to Smyre and Richardson, both the Second Enlightenment and the vision of an Ecological Civilization find their inspiration in the sciences of biology and ecology, and the key central idea in these sciences is evolution. (In fact, it is the central idea in contemporary physics and cosmology, having replaced the stable clockwork image of Newton.) What Smyre and Richardson repeatedly advocate is the building of the capacities for change with an eye on the future; it is not so much what we create as our enhanced power to create that matters. Their vision of the next step forward is not so much a stable spot to rest, but a self-conscious and empowered ability to keep flowing forward. This vision aligns with the above points that we have become conscious of our dynamic nature and that our fundamental goal or ideal should be to realize increasing excellence in facilitating this dynamic and progressive fluidity. We are self-evolving and our next step, presently emerging, is to consciously stand on top of this capacity to self-transcend—to see it for what it is—and learn how to guide it better.

Now for one final point of comparison between Smyre's and Richardson's approach and both wisdom literature (representatively illustrated through *The Wisdom Page*) and my book, *The Psychology of the Future:* Toward the end of my book I describe the various contemporary approaches, including Rick Smyre's ideas, revolving around the theme of a "New" or "Second Enlightenment." There are a number of such approaches with resonant themes, initiated and articulated by such contemporary thinkers as Walter Truett Anderson, Barbara Marx Hubbard, and Andrew Cohen and Ken Wilber.

I compare these approaches with my proposal for an "Age of Wisdom," in which I argue, consistent in spirit with various wisdom writers such as Copthorne Macdonald, Leland Beaumont, Walter Moss, and Alan Nordstrom, that the key principle for creating a good future should be wisdom. Wisdom should serve as the central theme of an ideal future grand narrative for humanity. (The psychological power and practicality of the narrative is a key idea that should be incorporated into any approach that aspires toward effective and empowering change in the future, personal or social.)

In comparing the ideas of an "Age of Wisdom" with a "New" or "Second Enlightenment," I note a variety of points of agreement—indeed one important inspirational source for my idea of an "Age of Wisdom" is writings on the "New" or "Second Enlightenment." I also though note at least two differences. "Enlightenment" thinkers emphasize the cognitive dimensions of the human mind (or community), whereas I see wisdom as more psychologically holistic, including emotional, motivational, and personal factors (and the character virtues synthesized in wisdom include a number of emotional-motivational-personal dimensions of excellence). Changes in thinking are not sufficient to generate changes in behavior and ways of life. Second, enlightenment, strictly speaking, as a state of enhanced consciousness and knowledge, does not reference or encompass action, whereas wisdom is more holistic (again), including both mind and behavior (the practical dimension of wisdom). To be fair, when Smyre and Richardson describe the "Second Enlightenment," they include a fundamental dimension of action and not just knowledge and consciousness, but in this sense, as I stated above, their approach could be identified as a system for social wisdom (community thinking and doing). That is, what they refer to as enlightenment is really wisdom. In summary, to me it seems that enlightenment is part of wisdom, and wisdom is the broader concept.

All in all, both for advocates of change and, in particular, wisdom writers who wish to see the future of humanity more centrally guided and informed by wisdom, the new book by Rick Smyre and Neil Richardson is an important and valuable contribution and resource. The authors attempt to build their vision of a new society upon both a historically informed perspective and contemporary scientific thought. At a very practical level, realizing the essential social-community dimension of human life and effective change, they provide a great deal of useful information and guidance on how to instigate and implement informed and thoughtful social transformation, along numerous dimensions of human reality. For wisdom writers and change advocates, there is often a disconnect between the presentation of elevating ideas and their actual social impact and effective implementation. Smyre's and Richardson's book is a guidance system for moving from idea to action and actual social change.

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[1] *The Center for Future Consciousness*: http://www.centerforfutureconsciousness.com/

[2] *The Wisdom Page*: http://www.wisdompage.com/

[3] *Communities of the Future*: http://communitiesofthefuture.org/

[4] *Walt Whitman Integral*: http://www.waltwhitmanmeditation.com/

[5] Lombardo, Thomas *Contemporary Futurist Thought: Science Fiction, Future Studies, and Theories and Visions of the Future in the Last Century*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2006b, pp. 386-391.
Lombardo, Thomas "Wisdom and the Second Enlightenment" (2007) in Lombardo, Thomas *Wisdom, Consciousness, and the Future: Selected Essays*. Bloomington, Indiana: Xlibrius, 2011, pp. 95-102. http://www.centerforfutureconsciousness.com/pdf_files/Readings/WisdomSecondEnlightenmentArticleMay2007Final.pdf .

[6] Lombardo, Thomas *The Evolution of Future Consciousness: The Nature and Historical Development of the Human Capacity to Think about the Future*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2006a.

[7] Smyre, Rick "America and the Enlightenments": http://communitiesofthefuture.org/concept-papers/; See my review in *Contemporary Futurist Thought*.