



HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

A REPORT FROM SEMINAR 4 "IT'S OUR FUTURE, LOVE!", 18-19 JANUARY 2012 AT CARLSBERG ACADEMY, COPENHAGEN

By Gitte Larsen, Director House of Futures

At this two-day seminar we emphasized people, mindsets and mind shift in the project 'In 100 Years – starting now'. We looked for how we, the people of this planet, can develop our way of life towards sustainability. We listened to international and Danish speakers and heard about their visions and their experiences. We debated and discussed long term futures and concrete initiatives – and we did also spend time in the head quarters of our special travel agency Future Mind Tours.

On the second day of the seminar a smaller group of participants continued with workshops unfolding sustainability from five different perspectives (business, politics, living, mindsets and mindshift) and in the afternoon we did a Wisdom Council.

POSITIVE VISIONS

From the beginning of the row of In100Y-seminars participants have pointed to the need for positive visions. Let me quote Donella H. Meadows (1941-2001), one of the leading pioneers of sustainable visions and co-author of "Limits to growth" from 1972:

"If we don't know where we want to go, it makes little difference that we made great progress. Yet vision is not only missing almost entirely from policy discussions; it is missing from our whole culture. We talk about our fears,

frustrations, and doubts endlessly, but we talk only rarely and with embarrassment about our dreams." Donella wrote this in 1994 for the Third Biennial Meeting of the International Society for Ecological Economics, held in Costa Rica, where she talked about the need to strengthen ourselves to endure the pain of the enormous gap between the world we know and the world we profoundly long for, and she made people try it themselves.

So we did at this fourth and final In100Y-seminar, and people were not afraid to dream and share their visions for the future. At House of Futures we do believe that we are able to promise each other more than survival during the next 100 years. The world is changing, and people are changing too. Our values, belief systems, consciousness or simply the whole range of our capacities as humans are not the same today as they were back in 1912, and they will not be in 2112 either. No matter whether you see it as an evolvement of the rational human mind, a new enlightenment or a growing spiritual movement, it is happening. We are moving into a new era, and we need to go for shared and responsible visions to begin with.

All of us, we believe, are fuelled by the desire to change towards the better, but also pulled back by the agenda of today; survive and keep business as usual going. Our common future is literally on fire. At this seminar we did come together and not least at the second day we were 'beautiful in spirit'!



Hardin Tibbs



The audit

Bill S. Becker and
Karen Blincoe

SPEAKERS AT THE FOURTH IN100Y-SEMINAR

WILLIAM (BILL) S. BECKER, SENIOR ASSOCIATE AT NATURAL CAPITALISM SOLUTIONS, AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE FUTURE WE WANT (US)

Bill starts his presentation by showing a short film outlining the future we don't want as it is constantly presented in society. We talk only rarely about the world we want. In 1939 The Futurama New York World Fair set the standards for the design of cities and energy consumption and we still follow those standards today even though we can no longer afford it.

Three years ago a group gathered and started to define 'The Future We Want – The Power of Positive Thinking'. "We have since then defined a program that focuses on co-creating a 20 year positive vision, which we presented to the UN. They liked it so much that they want to make it an integrated part of the Rio+20 conference 2012. We are very happy about this since it means we will now get a large distribution of the message and interaction with people worldwide to define the future we want and make it come through," says Bill S. Becker.

The plan is as follows: Before Rio we will engage in local conversations with a focus to creating the future we want through actual change with a 20 years goal. During Rio we will make the input visible in an exhibition, and after Rio we will follow up and continue world wide distribution. Visit www.futurewewant.org to take part in the conversation.

We are also in the proces of asking some of the big minds globally to share a three minute vision of a better world and document it on video. "We cannot solve the problems by using the approach that created the problems", as Einstein said.

KAREN BLINCOE, FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF ICIS AND CHAIRMAN OF DANISH DESIGNERS (DK)

Why is nothing happening in terms of sustainability? Karen Blincoe asks and answers: Because the vision of sustainability is a utopian vision. We live among dystopian stories, as described in the latest issue of the magazine The Big Issue: The Mayan calender predicting the world going under in 2012, Economic Meltdown, Asteroids, Atomic War, Virus Attacks, Digital Take-over, Life Elsewhere. Karen urges us to rediect our focus and spend our energy defining a sustainable future.

Sustainability is a collective vision about creating a better world. And if we really want to create a sustainable world we must be prepared to change everything in our society. It is okay that it takes a while. A major challenge is to communicate both the big vision and make it very concrete in terms of what for instance a new energy solution may cost a family a year. Let's not be too harsh on ourselves by the fact that such major changes take time and will lead to making mistakes!

There are a number of new visions taking form as concrete architectural projects, and they all represent some sort of top down initiative (see slides). A number of Living models are bottom up initiatives with a holistic approach (see slides). It is very important to raise sustainability literacy on all levels of society. It must be raised so people involved in law making, urban planning, energy solution development etc. can begin to speak the same language and create sustainable initiatives. And it must be raised on a personal level so people become more and more able to create bottom up initiatives as well as top-down ones.

Personal sustainability can be raised by paying attention to the four key levels of being human: The Spiritual, The Mental, The Emotional and The Physical. "Acombination of raising sustainability literacy bottom-up and top-down and a good bit of patience and acceptance of qualified mistakes is



Karen Blincoe



Inga Gerner Nielsen



Bill S. Becker

the path towards making our visions for a sustainable world come through", claims Karen Blincoe.

INGA GERNER NIELSEN, ONE OF THREE FOUNDERS OF THE PERFORMANCE AGENCY FICTION PIMPS' AND A PARTNER IN HOUSE OF FUTURES (DK)

One of House of Futures' aims is to intersect different disciplines in modes of knowledge productions that open up new ways of imagining and relating to issues and visions of the future. Inga introduced the performance theories behind 'In 100 years – Starting Now' pointing to how Performance Art can be used to turn a seminar event into a ritual that can facilitate and make visible the new root-metaphors of a possible mind shift. She also talked about how House of Futures has used performance art to turn an event like 'In-100Years – Starting Now' into a ritual, that emphasizes the importance of intersecting disciplines in new experimental modes of knowledge production, thereby activating the mind and the body in the process of moving into the unknown.

"In times of crisis, such as the one the world is in today, the rituals of societies become particularly important, because of their ability to re-establish the feeling of community and belief in a system. But the breach in the symbolic order might be too deep and wide to close with the traditional rituals, and in that case new ones may be invented to bring a society from one stage in history into another. Which rituals in contemporary society do we have, that could be used to create the necessary new mind sets?" Inga asked.

As a setting of the In100Y-seminars, we have created the travel agency 'Future Mind Tours' to create extraordinary events and to open up all the senses of the 'Reisende' (participants). Inga quickly went through the journeys/performance installations of the previous three seminars:

- On seminar #1 the participants were prepared in the ritual's pre-luminal phase for a different kind of seminar experience. They were traveling to an unknown

part of the industrial docks of the city, from where they were sailing through the canals on an imaginary tour of Copenhagen 2112 introducing the long run of 'In 100 Years'.

- On second #2 the participants were moved deeper into the luminal phase by transforming the two traditional future studies scenarios, 'Man Made World' and 'The power of Nature', into two Sensed Futures. With these three-dimensional installations/scenarios a new mode of knowledge production in a future studies process were introduced, because the participants were invited to have a bodily experience of a possible future.
- On seminar #3 a mystery was created – the universe of Acorn Falls. By surrounding and immersing the whole seminar in a parallel universe, House of Futures insisted that the aesthetic experience and its poetic language should be intersected in the process of discussing and visualizing the future. The ability to move into and manage the unknown was part of what walking into the red forest of Acorn Falls was like.

Inga ended her lecture introducing the performance installation of seminar #4 by shouting to the other performance artists in the room and the word spread in the whole building: "The time is NOW!"

"Here in the Head quarters of Future Mind Tours we have prepared spaces, in which you can see your visions of the future developed and expressed in different kinds of art and rituals. Our agents are waiting for you in the luminal," said Inga and continued, "If you have any question to this lecture, please report to the Future Mind Tours' office. We will be very happy to hear your reflections in our on-going conversation and action research in rituals, performance art and mind shifts. We expect you to give great contributions to ignite the fire of transformation. The Time is NOW!"



Dominic Balmforth



Ole Fogh Kirkeby



Hans Fink

HANS FINK, PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY, AARHUS UNIVERSITY (UK)

"The concept of nature is the focus of my presentation today with a digression into the relation between man and nature." said Hans Fink and he asked: "Do we really know what nature is?"

In the 1700th century a researcher warned against talking about nature as such because it implicated nature being a sort of person, that could do something. Nature is not a person. Nature is just nature, and nature is ambiguous. "We should be cautious when formulating man's future relationship to nature," said Hans Fink and proceeded to present six conceptions about nature.

1. Nature is comprehensive and all inclusive. Nature is a way that all natures fit together. It is the way everything hangs together with everything else. nature is the all encompassing totality. Nature is all that is true about it and all that can happen to it. and all it can do to other items. according to Hans Fink, this is the only truly holistic conception of nature.
2. Nature as a contrast to culture. That which is not cultivated or have been subject to human interference. There are few areas on the earth as such. The inner part of the polar ice caps, maybe.
3. Nature as opposed to a more systematic exploitation and interference. It is a more loose version of no. 2 where The animal and plant life is relatively unaffected by man's interference. This is the nature we see in a BBC nature program.
4. The rural as opposed to the urban. Natures is the place where we go for a walk and have our summerhouse. Nature is the grass we play golf on. Nature is the immediately visual characteristic most often left to itself, such as hills, mountains, seas, etc.
5. Nature is how the natural sciences describe it. The ideas, the normative, as a research object, etc. as opposed to the humanistic sciences. This is the opposite of nature

as the wilderness. And it cuts directly across the former conceptions. This conception has made cultivation of nature possible. and Hans Fink believes we will have to rely on this conception of nature to save us in the future. Science must be used to solve the problems science has contributed to creating.

6. Nature as an earthly entity, as opposed to a deity. We must orient ourselves much more in terms of the first conception defining nature in a holistic way. Nature is never less than the whole. We must remember that the totality cannot be divided into parts where one part is more natural than the other. We should discuss what it is in nature that we want to preserve based on a comprehensive understanding of nature.

HARDIN TIBBS, FUTURIST AND CEO OF SYNTHESYS STRATEGIC CONSULTING LTD, (UK)

"Choosing the Next 500 Years – The Emergence of Transmodern Society" is the headline that Hardin Tibbs presents us with for a start. The 'Limit to Growth'-study made in the 1970'es by MIT for the Club of Rome identified a system collapse in the beginning of the 21st century. If we look at the model today we are right at the tipping point of population, industrial output, food resources and pollution in 2012.

"A shift in values and a shift in our use of technology is needed: Sustainable use of new technology with new values. Technology can be identified as the enabler with the shift in values as the enabling factor", claims Mr. Tibbs. Recently Inglehart has identified a shift in values in 17 European countries toward postmaterialist values. "I was inspired by Fritjof Capra's *The Turning Point* from 1987. He described how at a certain stage the major culture in a society would sink below 50% and at a certain point thereafter the new culture would take over and become the dominant culture," Hardin Tibbs explains.

In the beginning of the 21st century we have seen a new sub culture forming. It is called 'Cultural Creatives'. For these people sustainability is important, they are less

interested in materialistic possessions, they have a new approach to many things in life based on being authentic, and they hold a critical view of large companies who fail to give attention to their more holistic viewpoints.

To find out if the MIT analysis from the 1970's was right that we are very near a tipping point, Hardin Tibbs decided to use a specific software to combine a number of population analysis identifying subgroups. He found out that there is a strong indication that in 2012 the Transmodern culture is set to replace modernity after the 50% crossover point, and thereby will be the dominating cultural norm in what he calls a transmodernist society. The traditional mass media mostly ignores this change since the traditional media is the message board for the Modernists. This indicates that the mass media is not the message medium for the new culture. The internet is. We are now leaving the zone of Modernity and are at the Frontier of Transmodernity. Some of the characteristics of this frontier is that we are moving from a quantitative development to qualitative development. We are striving for The sustainability Revolution.

A book such as the "War of the World Views" by Chopra and Mlodinow, indicate the increasing importance of spirituality. We are entering the design of a human-centric economy as described by Schumacher, a social and individual sustainability as well as an ecological and resource oriented sustainability. Another example of this is the "Dreaming New Mexico" project which focuses on rethinking established ways of farming, food, energy, etc.

The internet is a key factor in the spreading of this ideas and approaches of the Cultural Creatives. And to understand how that works one can compare it to a cellular economy: which spreads by holistic replication, not scaling. For Harbin Tibbs this offers us the opportunity to regard the tipping point in 2012 as the point of maximum possibilities. It is our choice to go with the many new possibilities and make peace with nature, personal healing and a sustainable life.

DOMINIC BALMFORTH, ARCHITECT, DIRECTOR IN HIS OWN COMPANY SUSTURB AND PARTNER IN THE HOUSE OF FUTURES (DK/UK).

According to Dominic Balmforth there are two problems and also two solutions:

1. Decreasing Natural Resources. Use New Resources, such as the man made lake full of products and articles. Cradle-2-Cradle is dealing with this approach. Huge companies can do this, if they want. Metal theft is second to terrorism on the British Police's list of crime.
2. Increasing Carbon per Capita. Use differently. 12 tons of Co2/capita/year. People can only buy sustainability if companies and organisations offer sustainability.

According to Dominic Balmforth we must redefine consumers as users so we don't need to possess things to use

them. An example of this is found at the Holstebro hospital where doctors and nurses hand in their operating clothes and get a new clean uniform every morning. They don't own the uniform and they don't bring it back home. They receive it at the hospital when they need it clean and in their size, ready to use. Or rethink the use of power drills which are used maybe for 10 hours a year. Can they be made available for other people when not in use? Rethink the use and the business models.

Another example is Brøset, Trondheim, the 3 ton suburb. They reduced the carbon emissions from 12 tons/year to 4,3 tons/year. The Super Fridge is another such concept - have a massive fridge in the middle of your street so you only buy from it what you need right now and don't have a fridge full of food that turns bad. Think beyond minimizing consumption: maximize use.

OLE FOGH KIRKEBY, PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY, COPENHAGEN BUSINESS SCHOOL (DK)

Ole Fogh Kirkeby starts a long list of questions urging us to reflect and raising a polemic viewpoint regarding Mindset shifts. Is a mindset a closed set of existential questions and answers at the common sense level? Who represents a mindset? Power, he answers.

Karl Marx identified that a mindset is made up of: Games of experience, language games, games of knowledge and games of truth. Are these universal or limited by history, culture and the level of knowledge? Can we distinguish between the structures of mindsets and how it all emerges?

The good, the true and the beautiful constitute the core values of our culture. Is there a universal mind set? "We are in an extreme situation of contingency" claims Ole Fogh Kirkeby. Through a number of historical examples Ole Fogh Kirkeby illustrates that an ethical mindset change does not guarantee anything. There is no logic of wisdom in history.

Our world today is dominated by ignorance, indifference, dogmatism, egoism. The real problem today is: Property. It is the core of capitalism and it is the constitutional shape under which sustainability must be introduced. Reality means private property. Reality is a collection of substances. Equality comes from generosity. We look at the other person as a thing, as Marx identified. And we look at other people as something in which we can invest. But that is a mistake since people are beings which we have no right to conquer, exploit and give names. We have to get rid of property as the dominant factor and start respecting each other.

Find the speakers' presentations and blogs about them and the discussion, and watch the whole video interview with Carsten Rahbek and Wes Jackson at www.in100y.dk