
1. KEYNOTE ADDRESS

1.1 Participatory research from one feminist perspective. Moving from exposing androcentricism to embracing possible contributions of feminisms to participatory research theory and practice. VOICES AND VISIONS.

By Pat Maguire, Ed.D.

I would like to begin by recognising and thanking Ms Korrie de Koning and the Education Resource Group of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine for creating the opportunity for me to be here. I would also like to recognise the African Medical and Research Foundation for its role in hosting this symposium which provides a forum for us to share experiences, ideas and concerns with utilising participatory research in Primary Health Care (PHC) and health education and promotion programmes (HE/P).

My stated topic is "Participatory research from a feminist perspective". I would like to modify the title to "Participatory research from one feminist's perspective". As I am not a feminist theorist or intellectual, I am weary about trying to talk expertly about "a feminist perspective" and like so many others, I recognise that there is not one monolithic feminist perspective but rather many "feminisms", the so-called fractured, integrative or hyphenated feminisms (Lather, 1991; Harding, 1986). Nonetheless, I do believe that in all our diversity, there are some common threads to our hyphenated feminisms.

For me, feminism is simply:

1. an understanding that women, in all our diversity, face some form of oppression or exploitation;
2. an acknowledgement that we experience our oppressions differently based on our other "identities" such as race, class, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual preference, physical abilities and our nation's place in the international order;
3. a commitment to uncover and understand the complex and interwoven forces that cause and sustain oppression;
- and finally
4. a commitment to work individually and collectively in everyday life to end all forms of oppression.

For me, feminism is about trying to bring together, out of the margins, many voices for and visions of a more just and loving world. Feminism and participatory research then share emancipatory, transformative intentions. Of course, we must ask what exactly are we trying to emancipate ourselves from and transform ourselves and structures into? With our multiplicity of voices and visions, just what kind of world are we trying to create?

I would like to share my road map of where I will try to take us in the next thirty minutes.

- † I will discuss participatory research as an emancipatory approach to knowledge creation.
- † I will briefly discuss my own very novice and humbling experiences with attempting participatory research. In particular, it was out of this concrete experience of working with a multi-cultural group of former battered women that my concerns with the androcentric filter or bias of the accounts of the ground breaking, trendsetting early participatory research grew. In the mid 1980's, I found myself questioning, "Would participatory research establish itself alongside traditional

social science research as one more male monopoly?" (Maguire, 1987).

- † I will close with some of my own "wonderings" over the past several years about gender issues and participatory research. Specifically, I want to move from examining the androcentric biases of the early account of PR projects to more explicitly wondering about what feminism, in all its diversity, might bring to the participatory research table. It is a shift from Bud Hall's question "How participatory research might be human-centred, not man-centred?" (Hall, 1981:17) to more explicitly looking at how feminism, or as Patti Lather (1991) says "feminisms", feminist theories, practices and scholarship might shift, influence or reframe participatory research theories and practices.

A similar shift has already taken place in reconceptualising development and development assistance. It is a shift that moved us from the early women in development (WID) questions, such as how to make development assistance more responsive to and inclusive of women's needs and concerns, to a total reframing or reconceptualising of development and development assistance itself from feminist perspectives, particularly feminists of the South. I am referring, for example, to initiatives taken by groups such as DAWN, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era.

In exploring some of the concerns and challenges which feminism raises for participatory research, I hope to utilise the opportunity of being the first of five keynote speakers to influence, in a small but perceptible way, our dialogue over the next several days. Gender issues can be one of the threads which pulls together our symposium topics of PR in action, methodologies, theoretical bases, empowerment, training and networking.

As we begin this symposium on the possibilities and constraints of the use of participatory research in health promotion, we are challenged by wanting, on the one hand, to talk in specifics based on concrete experience at the same time that we must, on the other hand, keep in view the big picture, or perhaps more accurately, the many big pictures. For a few minutes, I would like to shift focus then from the foreground view of the specifics of PR and health promotion to the background view of the big picture in which PR is situated, that is, social transformation.

Participatory research uniquely attempts to combine the traditionally distinct or isolated practices of investigation or research, education and action (Hall, 1993). PR is a way for those of us who benefit from some measure of power and privilege to join in solidarity with oppressed groups to create knowledge and take collective action, both short and long term, for **potentially emancipatory, transformative structure and personal change**. Potentiality, transformation, structural and personal change are all issues to expand and explore the next several days, particularly as we grapple with how to actualise that potential.

Participatory research boldly declares its intention of collectively investigating reality, or as the post-modernists would remind us, investigating "realities" (Lather, 1991) to **transform them**. PR attempts to explicitly link theory and practice, knowing and doing, or knowers and doers. Hence one cannot talk about PR theoretical development divorced from PR practice. PR attempts to link in profoundly new and different ways the "doers" and those historically "done to".

PR attempts to provide one avenue for the usually voiceless to be able to raise their voices in naming the problems and questions worth investigating. Ultimately PR attempts to provide the means and confidence whereby those traditionally marginalised can be heard in the decision making centres where resources, opportunities, and privileges are divided up. Perhaps more importantly, each PR endeavour attempts, at however micro a level, to

transform not only the particular problem posing process but also decision making and resource allocating institutions and processes. Thus PR challenges the oppression of silence and isolation (Freire, 1970) and the institutional structures, processes and relationships which maintain that silence and isolation. Clearly PR has a bold, extensive, indeed exhausting agenda. As we talk the next several days, exploring how we have attempted in practice to actualise to a greater degree the empowering, transformative potential of PR, we will no doubt discuss the constraints and frustrations.

As participatory research advocates we recognise that because knowledge is one basis for power and control, PR has power sharing, power shifting potential. Yet while knowledge may be one form of power, knowledge in and of itself is not sufficient for structural, institutional, or personal transformation. Clearly power has material, institutional, and ideological bases. We are then challenged to keep in mind how any participatory research endeavour actually redistributes or consolidates power and privileges that have material and institutional bases. Ultimately we are challenged to actually live and work in ways that facilitate such redistribution.

The declared transformative intentions of participatory research are of sobering, perhaps even overwhelming proportion. In fact, PR's agenda of combining research, education, and action can at times be paralysing. One might wonder, how can I take on all this with one project, one endeavour? Why take it one with so-called research? It has been helpful for me to recognise that PR is but one piece, one player if you will, in the long haul struggle. And in that long haul struggle for a just and caring world, participatory research advocates are not alone.

We can take some courage from knowing that we are not alone in our recognition that, as Paulo Freire states, if domination is the central theme of our epoch, then liberation from structures and relationships of oppression and violence is our ultimate goal. As participatory research advocates we are but one part of the many who are working in a multiplicity of settings, in a multiplicity of ways, on a multiplicity of issues to create a more just, loving, and participatory world. Thus while participatory research may be one tool with empowering, emancipatory potential, it is not the only tool. Thus we might absolve ourselves of some unspoken requirement that all research be "pure" PR. Instead we might look at ways to move deliberately along the participatory continuum. I heard Rajesh Tandon's talk in 1985 at UMASS/Amherst, in which he proposed that we ask whether people's control is increasing over time. Are we moving in that direction or "still nibbling at the same place?" (Tandon, 1985).

Hence PR is one of many ways to challenge oppressive structures and relationships which stifle participation and voice raising. There are implications then for empowerment, networking and alliance building which we will explore in the next few days. Therefore, while I am a participatory research advocate, I am not a zealot seeking some pure and perfect PR. In fact I am as much an advocate of participation itself, as both a means and end, whether it be more participatory education, evaluation, management, or research.

There are implications then for how we work and live, love and play when we are not engaged in PR, indeed if we never actually use so called participatory research in our work. I believe that participatory research is not merely some set of methodologies or techniques, however unique its combination of research, education, and action. PR is part of something much larger. It comes from the multiple critiques of *what is*. It is part of a family of philosophies that pushes us to act boldly and unapologetically *with* instead of *on* or *for* the less powerful and voiceless.

In some ways, the motives for participatory research come from a place in the heart, where we dare to believe not only that change is possible, but that through collective

action or education or investigation, change is possible. What else sustains us as we witness degradation and violence in its many daily forms? We are challenged to keep this in mind as we consider symposium topics such as the training of participatory researchers or evaluators, lest we find ourselves merely training technicians. I am not suggesting some PR orthodoxy nor a PR "police" to ensure some correct formula. I am only suggesting that the practice of PR cannot be divorced from the philosophical bases and critiques out of which it grew. We cannot stop at critique. PR cannot be something we do even "with them", if it is only intended for "out there". Nor can our practice and promotion of PR be divorced from the many actions in our daily lives.

Just as we are not alone as social justice advocates or activists, we are not alone as researchers who are questioning domination and dominating structures and relationships. Participatory research is one part of the larger searching for emancipatory approaches to research, alternative approaches to traditional social science research, which is often dehumanizing in its methods and implicit messages.

Participatory research intentionally attempts to provide a forum for the voiceless and powerless to be creative actors and subjects, not mere "objects" in the knowledge creation industry and process. The intention is to provide ways for ordinary and oppressed people to produce information they require to understand and act, or not act, on their own lives and larger institutional structures for themselves.

In my experience, with participatory research, evaluation and education or training, people may benefit directly from both the processes and products of any participatory endeavour. In fact the process of engaging in collective investigation, education and perhaps action may be as potentially empowering as any of the actual knowledge produced. It is not only the so-called "oppressed" who may find themselves empowered or conscientized. We too, by we I mean those of us with at least enough access to resources find ourselves here, may also find ourselves changed and challenged in profound and unsettling ways. I certainly was.

Just as there is potential to be empowered to varying degrees through participatory research processes, the research product itself may benefit from people's involvement in problem posing and problem solving. The information or knowledge produced via more participatory processes may be more extensive, more inclusive, and a more accurate reflection of local realities, thus providing a better grounding for more culturally relevant and thus more effective and meaningful local action. Yet we have to be cautious not to exploit participation to meet "our" needs for better or more culturally relevant data, policies and programs.

As part of the broader search for alternatives to traditional social science research, PR advocates join with those who are exposing the myth and safety of value-free knowledge creation. From the instant a research question is framed, values are apparent. What is worth investigating? The questions we ask are as telling as the questions we avoid or shove to the periphery. For instance for many years in the field of domestic violence or woman-battering, researchers framed a major question: Why do women stay in violent relationships? This not only framed a question and hence a focus, it subtly implied that something was wrong with these women, perhaps all women. This even more subtly took the focus and the responsibility off violent men for their abusive behaviour and beliefs. With the help of feminists challenging an androcentric world view on many fronts, but even more significantly, with the help of actual battered women, many of whom would not identify themselves as "feminists", gaining their own voices, the question was reframed. "Why do men brutalise women in so-called love relationships?" (Schechter, 1982). Other questions were added. What are the systemic bases and props for male power which allows, perpetuates, even promotes such degradation and violence? Clearly,

the knowledge creation process, from the moment questions are posed, is not value-free or neutral, despite the many traditional social science devices which attempt to assure us that research not only can be value-free, but that it should be value-free. Participatory research questions both assertions, because development for a just and loving world requires that we take sides. Yet taking sides can take many forms.

If participatory research has taught me the need to be explicit about personal values and how those values impact the entire research process, then it is feminism, in all its diversity, that has taught me to recognise that the personal is highly political. I believe that a more feminist participatory research pushes us, relentlessly, to examine, then increase the congruency between our personal politics and public practices, research and otherwise. A more feminist PR pushes us to examine our own institutions, organisation, and agencies, and our practices and relationships within them. Transformation is not only for "out there".

Feminism has taught me other lessons as well. As we explore the empowering intentions and potentials of PR, feminism urges us to ask some tough questions of our work and institutions, indeed of ourselves and daily actions. I will identify some of the perspectives, questions, and issues which feminism brings to the participatory research table. We can go beyond considering how participatory research might be more inclusive of and responsive to so-called women's issues. Clearly the work represented here demonstrates that in that sense, participatory research has not been allowed to become yet one more male monopoly. We can go on to wonder about how the multiplicity of feminisms might inform, shape, and influence participatory research practices and theories.

When I first became curious about PR in the early 1980's, I had been active for some time in the US women's movement working on reproductive rights and efforts to influence legislation, locally and nationally. I had also been involved in development work in the US, Jamaica, and West Africa. And I also had begun working on issues related to women and violence. Specifically I was working with Navajo, Hispanic, and Anglo battered women in rural northwest New Mexico. Although I clearly identified myself as a feminist, I cannot say I was much of a feminist theorist per se. Likewise, I came to development work as an adult educator and trainer or practitioner, not as a theorist. In fact it was my own struggle to have a better grasp of why we were doing the things we were doing and to explore alternative approaches which took me to the Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts.

The Center for International Education, increasingly a truly international community of learners, was becoming known in the development community for promoting non-formal education for empowerment (Kindervatter, 1979). The Center itself was and still is an amazing place which practices, or struggles with the internal practice of the participatory and emancipatory approaches it promotes. While I was studying there in the early 1980's, there was an exciting flow of male guest speakers like Rajesh Tandon, Paulo Freire, Miles Horton, and Ira Shor. In that context many of us were grappling with the dilemmas involved in trying to do either doctoral research or actual development project research and evaluation in traditional, non-participatory ways when the Center's approach to education, development, and project evaluation was premised on emancipatory philosophies and to some extent practices. It was this struggle with trying to find congruency between our education and research practices which brought many of us to the door of participatory research.

When I left the Center in 1984 to move to Gallup, New Mexico I was determined to somehow attempt participatory research. In the classic research tradition, I had things backwards. I had a research approach in search of a problem, instead of a problem in search of the most appropriate "method of investigation". Based on working in the

community with the local battered women's shelter for several years, I did eventually attempt a participatory research project with a small, multicultural group of former battered women. I say "attempted" because some have said that what we did for the next two years was not really participatory research. Nonetheless, without rehashing that debate, we learned many things and I specifically began to notice and then seriously question what seemed to be a male-centred or androcentric bias in the growing early body of participatory research literature, perhaps in the work itself.

At first I felt just a vague annoyance or discomfort as I devoured accounts of the trend setting and ground breaking PR work of the late '70's and early '80's. I kept wondering, where are the women in participatory research? In many cases studies, the voices and observation of women were silent or invisible. Gender was hidden in supposed inclusive terms, "the people", "the oppressed", "the campesinos", or simply "the community". It was only when I began piecing together separate descriptions of some projects that it became clear that "the community" being described was too often, only the male community. In some instances in which projects dealt only with women, they might be clearly labelled, "women villagers". The many projects which involved only men were not clearly identified. I began wondering if the written accounts of the ground breaking, trend setting participatory research work had an androcentric bias, or if perhaps in identifiable ways, or the work itself had masculine biases. To me, my understanding of feminism, which grew first of my daily work and experiences, was like a dry cloth on a foggy window. It helped me to see things differently.

I believe that in many instances the exclusion of women from much of the early PR literature was more than a semantic or logistical oversight (Hall, 1993). If women were being excluded or marginalised from the question-posing, problem-posing community forums of some PR projects, then women's voices and perspectives, indeed women's visions and hopes for the future (and those of children which women often end up representing) were also excluded. Exactly whose problem and questions did PR address? If women had unequal access to project participation, then women no doubt had unequal access to any project benefits. How can you share in the supposed "empowerment" of a project which continues your silence and marginalization? So I found myself wondering, was this potentially empowering, emancipatory research approach intended only for the male oppressed? Exactly which systems and structures of oppression would PR attempt to dismantle or replicate? Would men engaged in participatory research ever seek to transform patriarchy? What kind of world are we seeking to create?

Likewise as I delved into the literature which described the theoretical debates and underpinnings of PR and the broader critiques of positivist social science, I noticed that feminist theories, critiques, and the growing field of feminist research were largely absent. I wondered, would they have us think that only men create emancipatory approaches to research? Was participatory research to become yet one more male monopoly?

As our work here testifies, and the work beforehand to bring us together, there has been great progress on this front. But this is not a resolved issue. For example, quite recently, Linzi Manicom said of the 1991 work, **Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly With Participatory Action-research**, the authors "fail to address gender as a central relation of power" (Manicom, 1992:24). While participatory research acknowledges the centrality of power in the social construction of knowledge, the centrality of male power in construction is still too often ignored. While participatory research incorporates a Freirian notion of man's alienation in the world, it still too often ignores women's alienation from a man-made world (Westkott, 1979).

As a side note, initially I was reluctant to trust my questioning or observations of the androcentric bias of PR. After all, what did I know? Despite many years of experience

outside academia, I was then in the position of "just a female graduate student", a lowly position in the hierarchy of knowers and knowledge. I doubted my feelings and observations about the invisibility, marginalisation and perhaps exclusion of women, in all our diversity, from the projects, the problem naming and problem posing forums, supposed benefits, theoretical debates, future agenda, and growing literature of PR.

The composition of this symposium, the work we collectively represent, the topics and projects we will discuss, and the questions we will frame, are some proof that participatory research has not been allowed to become yet one more male monopoly. Yet there are questions and concerns which we might incorporate from feminism and feminist research.

While I have already shared a definition of feminism, let me share Patti Lather's definition of feminist research. "Very simply, to do feminist research is to put the social construction of gender at the center of one's inquiry. Feminist researchers see gender as a basic organising principle which profoundly shapes/mediates the concrete conditions of our lives ... feminism argues the centrality of gender in the shaping of our consciousness, skills, and institutions as well as the distribution of power and privileges" (Latjer, 1991:71).

I would like to pose some of the questions and concerns that we might ask of our work, our institutions, indeed of ourselves.

1. Does PR require something fundamentally different of and from men and women PR participants and advocates?

One of the greatest requirements of engaging in PR is simply TIME. Just as meaningful, reciprocal, caring relationship building takes time, over the course of time, actual participation in all phases of a PR project takes time, pure and simple. What then are the implications of the sexual division of labour on PR? What are the implications for women with our "double day", including responsibilities for care of children, the sick, and elderly often not shared, or inequitably shared by the men in our lives? Time spent in often unpaid or uncompensated PR project participation is time not spent on other life demands or obligations. Do women face different constraints to extensive involvement in participatory processes, the very participatory processes essential to meaningful input, control, benefits, and ultimately to empowerment? Are we advocating a set of participatory processes or project phases which require something essentially different of women and men based on differing realities of daily life which center on gender? If so, how do projects account for this?

2. PR promotes profound changes in the relationship between the "researcher" and those traditionally "researched". What other kind of relationship changes might a more feminist PR suggest? What about changes among and between researchers or participants?

Development, human development, requires at its core human interaction, the building and nurturing of relationships. A more feminist PR might then prompt us to examine more closely how our actual organisational structures, processes, and practices shape and influence how people of unequal power and privilege are "in relationship" with each other. Human relationships take time; over the course of time, space, purpose, and reciprocity to grow and flourish. Human trust and concern cannot be "hot housed". What does this imply for the practices of participatory researchers, for the training of participatory researchers, for alliance building, indeed for all of our organisations and our relationships?

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3. How might a more feminist participatory research help us to reconceptualise the very notion of "power", as PR openly promotes redistribution and empowerment? As Nancy Hartsock (1974, in Harding, 1986:14) argued, instead of conceiving of power as domination over others and resources, feminists have been reconceptualising power as sharing and providing energy and access to resource mobilisation to others as well as to self.
 4. How might feminism help us rethink the organisation and community building aspects of PR? If a goal of PR is to mobilize oppressed people to act on their own behalf, is then a so-called popular people's organisation a necessary prerequisite or hoped for outcome of PR? Peter Park (1993:18) proposed that where there is little shared life, PR must first create a community base before it can do collective investigation. What conditions are necessary to create such a community or organisation, particularly one inclusive of women who are often excluded in a multiplicity of ways, overt and covert, from decision making and allocating resources and opportunities?

Again, while knowledge may be one form of power, power clearly has material and institutional bases. What do we need to consider not only to expand women's meaningful inclusion in historically male bastions but also to transform those bastions in meaningful ways that speak to issues of human relationships, community, and shifting power definitions and realities?

What do we need to consider in working within our own organisations and agencies to push them to be not only more sensitive to women and children's issues "out there", but also to actually create internal organisational structures and processes which themselves model and promote new power sharing and shifting within the organisation itself? This internal focus is a contribution of feminism to our dialogue on empowerment and transformation. We are not just about transforming what is "out there" but also what is "in here", organisationally and personally. Feminism pushes us to examine our relationships and how we conduct ourselves on a day to day basis in the universe. I'm not interested in advocating a truncated participatory research which pushes us to work in solidarity with the "powerless and voiceless" while leaving intact and unexamined oppressive practices and relationships within our own organisations, situations, and lives. It is all connected, different edges of the same fabric.

5. Because of the daily differences women and men experience based on gender, we may want to consider what kind of education or training is included in PR projects. Historically women have demonstrated our courage, resilience, and survivability in the face of injustice. Yet in many instances, women lack not only a material power base, but also we often lack confidence in our own voices and certain skills and experiences central to leadership and organising in the public arena. Certainly various women's groups and indigenous people have modeled more collaborative, non-hierarchical ways of decision making, problem solving, and working together. But not all women have the confidence or skills for collaborative advocacy work in the public arena. This speaks to the training component of PR projects in which participants are able to increase and utilise leadership, group, and organising skills which in turn increase confidence in speaking out and acting up.
6. Participatory research often starts with some kind of problem naming or posing. Yet based on lives of often grossly different experiences based on gender, do men and women sometimes name or pose different problems for investigation and action? The instances are rare when men name their own oppression of the women in their lives as a problem to be investigated and solved. While in theory

we want to be "culturally sensitive", how might we unintentionally collude with oppressive gender relations? What might it mean to act in solidarity with local women who are challenging the oppressive practices and beliefs rooted deep in culture?

7. How can we help women utilise to women's advantage the so called technological or instrumental knowledge created by traditional social science (Habermas, 1971; Park 1993)? Many successful mobilization efforts of women have utilised data produced by so-called non-liberating or non-humanizing social science. For example, women have been able to utilise for consciousness raising and mobilisation purposes large scale, hard statistical data in areas such was wage disparity; the extent or prevalence of sexual harassment, rape, battering, and child sexual abuse; the linkages among class, access to health care, and breast cancer survival; or the misuses of tests such as amniocentesis for sex selection. As advocates of participatory research, which is usually not as large scale, how can we tap into or team up with producers of technical knowledge which in fact has been very useful to women's mobilisation in many contexts?
8. And finally, what participatory research endeavours and outcomes will we allow ourselves to celebrate? Participatory research proposes an extensive, at times overwhelming agenda and process. It can be near paralysing if we compare our faltering beginnings and exhausting middles to the documented "neat" endings of others' PR efforts. No PR effort lacks critics. Yet is in the sharing of the flaws and shortcomings that we absolve ourselves of the paralysing need to "do it perfectly".

It is in the sharing of the successes, however small and micro, that we gain courage and encouragement to collectively learn by doing. When I tried to use the Freirian problem posing format with former battered women, I began by asking, "what problems do you see in your life and community?". The women's answers began some place else. Almost to a person they began by acknowledging the strengths and successes in their lives. They wanted me to know where they had come from and got to before they identified their current problems. One lesson we might take from feminism is not only the joyful affirmation and then celebration of our strengths and successes, but perhaps the redefining of "success" in an increasingly fractured, isolating and alienating world.

In closing, as we ponder what feminism might bring to participatory research, let us carefully consider what exactly it is that we are trying to liberate ourselves from and transform our selves and structures into. Exactly whose voices and visions will be included when we answer the question: what kind of world are we hoping to create, community by community, for our daughters and sons?

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1.2 The historical roots and contemporary influences in participatory research. Implications for health care.

By Dr Rajesh Tandon

Keynote Address

Context

The history of human civilisation is also the history of education and science. In fact, one of the most critical dimensions in which human species have distinguished themselves from other forms of life is in their intellectual capacity. And both education and science are built on this foundation of human intellectual capacity. Throughout human civilisation, therefore, different forms, approaches, methodologies and outcomes of education have been evolved, practised and abandoned. Similarly, science, even in its modern conception, has existed throughout much of human history. Some of it was science which allowed for human civilisation to live with nature. Some of it became science which encouraged human beings to control nature.

Further examination of this theme could also indicate that models and paradigms of development of human civilisation have also been significantly influenced by, as well as influencing, systems of education and science. It has become obvious that people-centred, participatory development as an alternative paradigm of development is not possible within the framework of modern science and modern education (Tandon, 1991). In a sense, modern science is built on the premise of destroying the system of science and education which was labelled as 'traditional', 'indigenous' or 'popular'.

These issues have acquired further salience in the contemporary context. Significant changes are taking place throughout the world and human civilisation is poised for the next