

Utopias, Futures and Temporalities: Critical Considerations for Social Change

Abstracts

19 & 20 May 2015



Keynotes

Ruth Levitas



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The Necessity of Utopia

19th May 18.00

Ecology and equity demand radical social change, yet public debate remains dominated by a contest over who can better manage a capitalist economy. Ruth Levitas contends that we need more utopian thinking in order to develop genuine alternatives to the status quo, and that utopia is always a central part of critical social change. However, utopia must be understood as a method rather than a goal, and this entails revealing the images of a good society embedded in existing political programmes and policies, the imagination of possible alternatives, and the implications of these for human flourishing.

Kevin Birth



Department of Anthropology

Queens College, CUNY

Kronos, Eukairoi, Oukairoi: Contrapuntal Temporalities for the Future

20th May 14.30

When Thomas More wrote *Utopia*, he conceptualized a place (topos) that did not exist in order to comment about the affairs of his time. The affairs of our time often involve debates about the future—what will happen, when it will happen, and why it will happen. These debates fuse concerns about the linear march of time (kronos) and moments and events of significance (kairoi). The ways in which the concepts of kronos, kairos, and causality are woven together create subtle temporalities that structure how the future is represented. Often, different positions in these debates stem from fundamentally different temporalities. Here I shall look at some of these debates and examine the crucial role played by competing imaginations of time.

Arts experience

Roderick Maclachlan

Colony

19th & 20th May on the coach journeys

Travelers, delegates and believers are invited to come into parallel. As one Colony we will mobilise the potential for increased inter-connectedness. Over four journeys your enhanced participation will erode differences as working together we transform the travel environment. Choose to engage.

Artist Roderick Maclachlan will facilitate utopia Colony workshops on the coach trips between venues. Using the free tools provided you can aid the conversion of the coach with sound, light and enlightened conversation. Delegates will be asked to adapt their viewpoint so as to resolve a series of questions posed by the Colony's closed-circuit system.

Staring Competition

Steve Pool & Tim Neal

19th & 20th May through breaks and lunch

Practice as Practice.

I wonder if some of the animals at the Zoo consider their cages Utopias? They get fed, don't have to work, their habitat is stimulating, a chimp can swing in a tyre, a parrot can learn to swear or copy a car alarm, a snake can move to the light, perhaps they are unaware of the close edges of their world, the fact they are being watched, that they are the centre of the spectacle. We are applying to attend the above symposium in a very small way, building a future utopia feels a bit daunting even though we know every journey, even of a thousand miles starts with a single step. We think people may be more encouraged to take that first step if we let them know the walk is actually about a mile and a half, downhill with a pub at

the end. The enactment of Utopia within this green and pleasant land a week after a general election at the Zoo feels ambitious. It reminds me of my Mum's caution as I piled too much mashed potato on my plate "Steve don't outface yourself". As we are applying to contribute to the practice as research element of the symposium and are not really sure what practice as research is, we offer the idea of a Staring Competition to take place across the two days.

Why staring?

Staring conceptually implies confronting the inevitable - 'staring death in the face', or 'staring into the abyss'. My friend Johan once told me that if we stare into the void it sometimes stares back, again I'm not sure what this means but it doesn't sound very nice.

The most interesting animals at the Zoo are the ones that stare - the tiger pacing backwards and forwards catching you in his gaze, the shifty eyed ostrich giving you the sideways look. We feel that staring at each other over the two days will create insights into Deleuzian concepts of temporality, the time between blinks presenting a physical and variable quantum of the empty time of future. A time held between two people.

Paper Session Abstracts

Examining Utopias

19th May 9.30, Garden Room

9.35 – 9.50: Johan Siebers ‘Utopian Laughter’

This paper proposal relates to the following questions in the call: “How do societies and communities use and construct utopias, dystopias and other forms of anticipation to build agency and capacity for change? What impedes or enables these processes? What methodological and theoretical resources do we have for thinking about futurity and temporality?” I propose to give a paper, followed by discussion, that will address the question “how to think about utopia”, in other words: what is the status (epistemological, ontological, existential, rhetorical) of our utopian thoughts, language and imagination?

In particular I want to address the often overlooked question of humour: It has often been noted that utopian and dystopian thinking easily leads to totalitarian attitudes, and we have seen this often in the past, especially in the 20th century. Yet, as has been noted by key figures in utopian thought since Plato’s Socrates, the utopian should always be taken with a grain of salt if it is to do its work: perhaps it even is that salt itself. For Ernst Bloch, humour was a central aspect of the search and expression of truth, or has he called it “tendency-latency”, and a central aspect of a utopian conception of wisdom. The connection between humour and utopia is highly visible in More’s *Utopia*, a work which can only properly be understood when we notice its use of wit and satire. This, I shall argue, is not for nothing.

A contrastive reading of More’s *Utopia* and its contemporary, Erasmus’ *In Praise of Folly* can help us to begin to see the place of humour in the exploration of the utopian imagination.

One of the most powerful (and potentially totalitarian) utopian imaginations is, after all, given in religious experience: the hope of redemption and of a unification of individual existence with the “one and all” of the divine – the central theme in Erasmus’ panegyric. Religious longing may seem a thing of the past to some, but in ways which are often not immediately clear, and sometimes violently clear, it is still everywhere. But the faith of

religion is at odds with the world, the true folly, as the speaker in Erasmus' work describes it. The perspectives of humour and satire are somehow closely related to the utopian consciousness and are perhaps what is needed to keep the insanity of hope for a different world sane, and our minds open – in other words, they are perhaps what is needed for a full development of a critique of the utopian, which is both a critique by and of utopian consciousness. Both *Utopia* and *In Praise of Folly* make their claims by means of satire and wit.

In my paper I will build on an examination of the function of humour and wit in *Utopia* and *In Praise of Folly* to develop a contemporary theory of utopian laughter. I will include in my discussion Freud's *Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious*, and also contemporary literature on humour in philosophy, which I will show is deficient in its understanding of the epistemological and existential function of humour. Yet all is not merry; laughter also has its dark side. The religious context is essential here: just as there is holy anger, so there is holy laughter, an unsettling side of the utopian. I think this discussion will help participants to gain a deeper understanding of the nature, change potential and effect of utopian ideas in contemporary society. The material context of the conference, Bristol Zoo, fits well with my topic as I think that the contemporary popularity of "funny" animal video clips is an illustration of part of our unconscious religious utopian longing directed at the latent idea of redemption of nature, a world where "the wolf shall lie with the lamb" (Isaiah 11:6). The animalistic is a central locus of the humoristic for us, in a way that moves beyond Heidegger's claim that the animal world is enveloped in sadness.

9.50 - 10.10: Sarah Amsler & Ana Dinerstein 'Learning & Organising Hope'

While social futures were shadowed by warnings of the death of the utopian impulse in the latter part of the twentieth century, hope has become a prominent element in social analysis and discourses of political change since the turn of the twenty-first (Amsler, 2015; Dinerstein 2014, Holloway, 2014) This is reflected in elite state politics, such as Barack Obama's 'audacity of hope' and Alexis Tsipras's claim that 'hope made history' in this year's Greek parliamentary elections; notions of hope are even more active in the many 'hope

movements', or autonomous practices, epistemologies and struggles which aim to dismantle the institutionalized power of global capitalism in everyday life, to democratise thinking and politico-economic relations, and increasingly to construct radically different forms of social life (Dinerstein and Deneulin 2012). In the academy and amongst organic and public intellectuals, a new scholarship of this politics of possibility has begun to emerge through the documentation and theorisation of these movements.

Despite this presence of hope as an emerging field of inquiry and orienting concept for political mobilization, however, competing discourses of hopelessness, despair and paralysis pervade everyday life in capitalist societies and are particularly oppressive in contemporary states of autocracy and austerity. Many people experience the distance between the extant conditions of their lives and the alternative future that they would like to build as an unbridgable chasm, or regard their futures as relatively closed. Their fears about the nature and extent of work that is required to change this situation are exacerbated by common-sense understandings of hope as wishful thinking for a demonstrable result within existing rhythms and parameters of possibility, rather than as a critical and active relation to what Paulo Freire (1970) called 'untested feasibility'. This generates backlash against the politics of hope in favour of adaptive or pragmatic agency – which, in situations where sustained radical change is needed to ensure future and better possibilities, only reinforces the experience of impossibility. Such untheorised politics of hope do not, in other words, underpin critical forms of anticipatory consciousness or action.

In this paper, we translate recent research into conceptual tools which can be used to unblock this impasse and activate the power of hope for sustaining emancipatory movements, and argue that ours is a dialectically auspicious moment for what Ernst Bloch (1959) once called 'learning hope'. Drawing on epistemological and political insights from autonomous movements and critical pedagogies, we demonstrate how hope can be theorized as an epistemological relationship to human and social change, a 'directing act of a cognitive type' and a method of critical thinking and action, and illustrate how these theorizations can inform pedagogies of hope that facilitate 'possibility-enabling practices' and 'alternative-creating capacities' (Amsler 2015, Dinerstein 2014). While methods and

pedagogies of hope are multifaceted, in this paper we focus on elucidating the character of hope-time (in comparison with domination-time) and theoretical and empirical methods for recognizing and intervening in hope-time. From this theoretical work, we finally introduce some concrete tools for educating and organizing hope to activate and sustain radical being in both social movements and everyday political life. These tools can be used to make ourselves aware of the unfinished and open nature of the world and the necessity of daydreaming individually and collectively. Above all, they enable us to design a new approach to reality that does not take it for granted and rely on 'facts' but that engages with the other realities, the realities of the not yet that already lurks in the present and required to be imagined.

10.10 - 10.25: Sue Cohen & Morag McDermont 'The Marvellous & the Murderous: Imagining and Better World'

Heaney credits poetry with helping us imagine a better world; the alternative, immobilisation. In his Nobel laureate lecture he spoke of the disabling effect of the daily realities of Ulster, Israel, Rwanda and Bosnia, of knowing 'that the documents of civilisation are written in blood and tears'...

"..for years I was bowed to the desk like some monk...Attending insufficiently to the diamond absolutes....among which must be counted the sufficiency of that which is absolutely imagined. Then finally and happily, and not in obedience to the dolorous circumstances of my native place but in spite of them, I straightened up. I began a few years ago to make space in my reckoning and imagining for the marvellous as well as the murderous.

We – one a songwriter, both activists and academics inspired by poetry and music – are part of Productive Margins, a research collaboration between community organisations and academics in Bristol and Cardiff. Productive Margins asks

How can we design regulatory regimes that begin from the capabilities of communities excluded from the mainstream and find ways of powerfully supporting the knowledge, passions and creativity of citizens?

In Utopia as Method, Levitas says to us, pay attention to those 'diamond absolutes'; make space for the 'marvellous' whilst not losing sight of the murderous. Productive Margins, and the partner organisations like Single Parent Action Network, attempt to pay attention to the 'murderous' whilst making space for the marvellous. SPAN has long critiqued politics that lead to dystopia - exploring alternatives, imagining the world and ourselves otherwise. Desire overcomes fear, connects with hope, imagination, aspiration, emotions. Social sciences have had the effect of writing out emotion, putting a break on imagining. Utopianism, expressed so often in music and poetry, acknowledges the connectedness of work, art, social relations, space and human happiness, inspires activism, a desire to change the world for the better. "I think therefore I am" becomes "I desire, therefore I exist".

"At the still point of the turning world. ... there the dance is" .

Yet community activism leaves little time for reflection. We have to find, or create, these still points, for otherwise the voices of regulators, technocrats, those who today are finding ways to write out so many from the future, take over. Without the still point ... there is no dance.

Research, poetry and songwriting provide space and time to reflect. We offer an exploration of imagination and agency, of how imagining the marvellous in a dystopian environment relates to our capacity to act. Drawing on poetry, songwriting, community activism and critical social theory.

10.25 - 10.40: Jessica Symons 'Operating in the realm of the 'should': the utopian imaginary and its obligations'

The inspiration motivating anti-austerity narratives comes from grand utopian visions turned inward. People produce ideal versions of how society 'should be', drawing on a pick and mix selection of social tropes. They develop ideals of self and others, seeking out communities of interest in solidarity and to take action on issues that concern or threaten these contrived identities. These alternative 'mini-me' utopias made up of adopted social anchors result in similar ambiguities to so-called 'revolutionary' overarching utopian visions such as communism. The internal and group conflict over which social mores should dominate reduces attention to the injustice that inspired action in the first place.

In a Northern inner city community, local people are caught up in the competing ideologies of those that engage with them. They are expected to conform to national political narratives of independence and self-determination, of voluntary sector and social service narratives of 'the poor' and media narratives of criminal, grasping 'real versions of the people from Shameless'. During fieldwork in this community, I found that it is utopian frames that oblige people's engagement with social structures. The distorted shapes they are expected to throw in order to access resources and the filters through which they are perceived by others, have a troubling effect on local people's ability to go about their daily lives. I argue that dropping the 'should' from political, social and media rhetoric about the lives of people on limited incomes would reduce the pressure on them.

Revolutionary Fictions

19th May 11.30, Garden Room

11.30 – 11.45: Joan Haran 'Ecofeminist Utopias'

This paper engages with utopias, futures and temporalities through the lens of a particular ecofeminist utopia; Starhawk's *The Fifth Sacred Thing*. Published as a novel in 1993, since 2011 efforts have been ongoing to attract sufficient investment to adapt it as a feature film. A 2011 Kickstarter campaign explicitly mobilized investment in the future as a rationale for this adaptation decades after the book's publication:

"They say that movies are collective dreams. If so, we're heading for a nightmare—for there are very few films that show a positive future on earth. We want to change that. How can we create a thriving, just and balanced future if we can't even imagine it? We want to bring alive a vision that can inspire people—and we've found the story in Starhawk's novel, *The Fifth Sacred Thing*."

The campaign raised \$76,327 in 60 days. Messages posted to the website indicated that Starhawk's vision of the future had already inspired backers to take up many of the practices it depicted.

Set in 2048, the novel gives an account of a recent history which led to the uprising against militarist and capitalist forces that initiated the non-violent, radically democratic society inhabiting San Francisco and Bay Area. This imagined history extrapolated from the period when the novel was conceived and written, and seems horribly prescient of the dystopian aspects of current US and world politics and economics as well as the effects of accelerating climate change. However, in the interim, there has also been more positive social transformation; for example, in the USA and the UK attitudes to sexuality and alternative family forms have liberalized despite continued resistance to such change. A longer view of history is also taken, as one character claims that the damaged croplands and emptied water table with which they are dealing are the postponed results of millennia of “callousness toward the earth and other human beings”. This claim is voiced during a ritual giving a strong sense of the performativity of particular historical accounts in enabling orientations towards making the future in the present.

This paper considers the iterability of Starhawk’s vision of ‘a thriving, just and balanced future’ at different historical moments, as well as its grounding in every day practices. Building on textual analysis of the novel and of the social media focused on the film adaptation, as well as interviews with Starhawk and her co-producers on the film project, I draw out the ways in which the values of global social and ecological justice were instantiated in the novel, and how they may need to be recontextualised for the second decade of the 21st century. I use these examples to conceptualise the temporalities of social movements. I also outline the ways that Starhawk’s practices of earth-based spirituality and permaculture encourage attention to both cyclical temporalities and dailiness. This paper forms part of my research project examining the mutual influence of fictional or artistic cultural productions and social and political activism.

11.45 - 12.00: Hugo Garcia ‘The power of social nightmares: dystopian futures in Spanish literature, c. 1870-1960’

As Chad Walsh pointed out already 1962, the waning of utopia in the 20th century is parallel to the waxing of dystopia. Reconstructing the history, logic and power of dystopian

literature is therefore crucial to understand the decline of utopian ideas and proposals in contemporary societies. This paper approaches this problem by analyzing a large and relatively unknown sample of reactionary uchronias –works of fiction that imagine future revolutionary societies in dystopian terms– published in Spain between the 1870s and the 1950s, that include works by respected writers such as Pío Baroja, Miguel de Unamuno, Ramón Pérez de Ayala and Agustín de Foxá. Contrary to the traditional view of this literature as reactionary propaganda, the paper argues that these works not only provide a precious insight into the mentality of a large section of Spanish society in the transition to modernity, but also illuminate the formative process of the modern dystopia exemplified by the classic novels of Zamyatin, Huxley and Orwell. Besides counter-revolutionary prejudices, they clearly and powerfully transmit the resistance of many Spaniards to social changes in all realms –from technology to gender relations– and to modernity as a whole, whose political expression was the Nationalist-Catholic rebellion against the Second Republic in 1936-1939. The virtual disappearance of the dystopian subgenre after the Civil War can be interpreted as a result of its own success: in Spain, as elsewhere in the West, the Franco years witnessed the triumph of social and economic modernity, but also a drastic decline in revolutionary and utopian thinking, which continued after the return of democracy in 1975. Even if the rise of the left-wing populist party Podemos and the threat of Islamic fundamentalism have fueled some dystopian speculation in recent years, conservative-minded Spaniards seem to be more comfortable with the current social trends than were their great grandfathers with socialist “new barbarians”, telescreens and jazz. More generally, this preliminary study shows the remarkable spread of the dystopian form in the Western world since the late nineteenth century and the need for further comparative analyses that integrate the traditions of semi-peripheral countries into the general –and overwhelmingly Anglo-American– narrative on the history of utopianism.

12.00 – 12.15: Reuben Knutson 'The Preseli Hills Transcended'

This paper will be presented in the context of my work with an AHRC Care for the Future project entitled *Troubled Waters, Stormy Futures: Heritage in Times of Accelerated Climate Change* (lead organization, Aberystwyth University), and relates this project to my own

research into the appropriation of natural and cultural heritage and traditions in order to enact utopias via, in particular, countercultural practices in West Wales in the 1970s.

In 2013 an exhibition took place at The Haus der Kulturen der Welt, a contemporary art space in Berlin, entitled *The Whole Earth Catalog: California and the Disappearance of the Outside*, which was a meditation on the utopian communities being constructed in California during the late 1960s/early 1970s. At the centre of the exhibition was Stewart Brand's *Whole Earth Catalog*, whose 34 issues, produced between 1968 and 1972, supported the creation of these communities with practical, aesthetic, ideological and spiritual information. Later seen as the forerunner of the internet (Google in particular), Brand's *Catalog* formed a springboard for the exhibition, which was highly critical of that utopian idealism, and exposed a legacy that paved the way for our current neoliberal crisis and its will to commodify all realms of living. To do this, the exhibition placed archive material relating to the *Catalog* alongside critical texts and artworks which, together, illuminated such commodification of ideas and aesthetics; and also showed how the *Catalog* contributed to the creation of a new totality which unwittingly bypassed the particular or 'outside' struggles of, for example, black communities, women and migrant workers.

I will move such critique, which pictured Brand's *Catalog* as the roots of neoliberal ruin rather than a lost utopia, into a more detailed study of artists' methods concerning the relationships between history, heritage and utopias. My own case study focuses on a young generation who settled in and around the Preseli Hills in North Pembrokeshire (West Wales) in the 1970s and were enormously influenced by Brand's *Catalog*, the communities it inspired and the Californian atmosphere of that epoch. The Preseli Hills themselves have been continually reimagined to fulfill political, social and ideological aspirations, embodying modernity, prehistory, revolution and harmony (the hills encapsulate ideas of nature as an area 'protected' for modernity; are associated with the Celts as 'outside' of the mainstream; and contain abundant evidence of 'harmonious' Neolithic living). Using these two points of reference - California and the Preselis - I will show how my own practice-based research, illustrated with film, oral histories and archive material, works with ethnography and historical re-enactment in order to produce an affective history that enables futures to be

reimagined. To help think through this process, I will draw on the 'redemptive critique' of Walter Benjamin and consider histories, archives and heritage as unfixed, whose meanings might be revealed anew according to our own (present) sense of utopia/dystopia. I will question the relationship between nostalgia for a lost golden age and history's warning signs for the present/future, and ask whether we might possess utopian energy.

12.15 - 12.30: James Duggan & Joseph Lindley 'Co-producing design fictions as part of mundane utopian practice'

The paper reports on an innovative method and research project, co-producing design fictions with pupils in one school and the Brixton Pound 'everyday utopian' (Cooper 2014) local currency community, as an example of 'materialising futures through creative practice'. Frustrated by existing discourses, rationalities and practices of envisioning the future in education and everyday utopian communities we sought to develop a participatory and explicitly (everyday) utopian process. Our engagement emerged out of the productive tensions between use and utopian in design fictions, and so the potential of co-produced design fictions as practice to support communities in imagining, prototyping, and engaging in the pre-figurative and figurative processes of realising preferable futures around the idea of the 'near future'.

Design fictions combine elements of science fiction, science fact and design to create diegetic prototypes, that is prototypes that exist within 'story worlds' (Bleecker 2009). Design fictions use videos, physical objects, text, or any other combination of media to 'suspend disbelief about change' (Sterling 2012) and create arresting scenarios and provocation of what might be, and so what might be possible or preferable (Dunne and Raby 2013). There are therefore many similarities with traditional utopian thinking and methods, in relation to considering future scenarios holistically, reflexively and with attention to mundane, everyday behaviours and needs to interrogate the present in terms of what is possible, preferable and open to new forms of social organization.

Co-producing design fictions with a community, rather than with designers or design students, is an innovative contribution to research and practice. We report on an emerging

method to facilitate a design fiction process in which community members create or respond to future scenarios, technologies and social arrangements presented in different levels of specification to enable dialogue, creativity and imagination in envisioning and interrogating potential futures in education and local currency communities. This approach enables us to engage with and explore interesting themes in the utopian and social change literatures, such as, intentionality and the collective authorship of preferable futures (Garforth 2009) in relation to the aspiration, anticipation and imagination of individuals and communities (Appadurai 2013). We make the case that by collectively imagining and interrogating the near and preferable future through design fictions communities can engender the capacity and desire for change.

Time, Change and Disruption

19th May 11.30, Council Room

11.30 – 11.45: Danny Dorling ‘Utopian tricks – thinking ahead 100 years and back 6 generations’

Abstract In 1984 Rudy Rucker explained “It certainly feels like time is passing; I’d be foolish to argue otherwise. But I want to show you that this feeling is a sort of illusion. Change is unreal. Nothing is happening. The feeling that time is passing is just that: A feeling that goes with being a certain sort of spacetime pattern). Rudy was writing in the years before he took up his computer science professorship in San Jose in 1986. He was trying to explain mathematics and physics to a wider audience. What he didn’t say was that, being the sorts of spacetime patterns we (humans) are the feeling that time is passing is especially important to us. He could also, perhaps, say what he said because of the time he was saying it and what had occurred just a little earlier (or to the left in spacetime diagrams!) in the 1960s and 1970s. The point of starting with Rudy’s quote is to point out that thinking about change is all about what we can imagine. It is not about what is real, but there are some ways of imagining things which may be more effective than others. because of our mortality

100 years is 'after I am dead'. Because of our lack of memory, or great ability to forget, 6 generations ago is 'before the time I know of'.

During 2014 I wrote four articles for the anarchist magazine 'Strike':

- 1) How might we house ourselves: A view from 100 years Hence
- 2) How we might better school ourselves: A view from 100 years Hence
- 3) Work: A view from one hundred years hence
- 4) Eat the Rich: wise up and rise up

These were inspired by Keynes musings on our (collective) grandchildren; but also from a thought experiment about looking backwards and asking whether there have been any generations in human experience before when fundamental change has been as great as in the last six? The implication being that perhaps we ought to expect a great deal of change in at least the next couple of generations, up to one hundred years hence.

Finally if you see space and time in the way Rudy Rucker did, and as I did in the 1980s when I first came across him. Then you can see ways of looking across space for how things can be different as well as looking forward in time, and you can begin to ask - how would we know if we were near to 'as good as it gets'? In utopia are half the population more happy than average and half less happy? Which is not the case today. Could we think of the future a little differently and not so euphorically if we thought of space and time and change a little differently? And given that we are in a zoo, why don't we ask ourselves which creatures around us are organised most like us and what they might think about where they currently are.

11.45 – 12.00: Colin Shepherd 'Perceiving the Past as a Common Resource: Continuity, Disruption and Rebirth in Heritage Research'

This paper draws upon evidence gathered by the Heritage Legacies Connected Communities (CC) project, which is concerned with the role of heritage within CC, how heritage research actually happens, and whether heritage research results in distinctive legacies. We now

recognise that institutions and community partners function within very different timeframes and methodological environments. This can result in friction in heritage projects. Such problems may also be common across a much wider range of disciplines.

Continuity

More's Utopia was rooted in historical analysis, and his work informs this paper. The future resides in a past whence are shaped hopes, dreams and fears. One person's Utopia may well be another person's Dystopia. Time is a reflexive and continuing process: the future responds to its past as much as the past speaks to present and future concerns and ambiguities. Legitimation is sought in the past and societies have frequently used such strategies to attempt to ensure desirable or durable futures.

Disruption

I argue that a more complete understanding of the histories in which communities and respective institutions are situated may lead to closer understanding between them. CC projects have demonstrated the benefits of co-production for those engaged in these partnerships, but suspicions can still persist on either side (Chirikure & Pwiti, 2008). Limiting factors within such projects centre frequently upon issues of temporality within economic mechanisms: lack of time to complete projects and frustration at not having time to develop sustainable personal links, amongst others (cf. Facer et al, 2012, 6). From this perspective time can be a disruptive presence. Community and institutional paradigms may indeed be fundamentally irreconcilable.

Common-pool resources (CPR) approaches, in which 'the past' could serve as a kind of common resource, might offer new ways of thinking about and managing heritage projects (Ostrom, 1990, 89). CPR methodologies employ low-cost, non-intensive input strategies which can be accelerated for short periods when need arises. But Common Pool Institutions (CPIs) rarely maintain sustainability once bureaucratic uniformity is imposed (Ostrom, 1990, 23; 214). To harmonise, institutions must attempt to slow their game plans down and funding must be spread across longer timeframes. The paper argues that, although initial

outcomes will be slower in appearing, the increased quality of the results and sustainability of partnership links would more than justify the wait.

Rebirth

Understanding social and academic community pasts is essential to inform future co-production. A temporally-adjusted, negotiated approach might generate communities of co-production working sustainably and appropriately to local needs. Successful co-production can happen if long time-frames of years or generations rather than days are envisaged. Whilst clearly pertinent to a heritage milieu, such an approach may be applicable to all co-production processes.

12.00–12.15: William Gallois 'The future of the world, Kabylie 1841'

Much of my academic work has looked at the idea of time and the relationship between temporalities and histories across world cultures – especially in *Time, Religion and History* (Longman, 2007) – but I have become increasingly frustrated with my failure to reach new publics with my temporal work and with the lack of academic interest in attending to non-western temporalities and the impact such ideas might have upon the academy. My essay 'Zen History' (*Rethinking History*, 2010) asked what the discipline might look like if it took Buddhist claims about time seriously, whilst 'The War for Time in Early Colonial Algeria' (in Lorenz and Bevernage, *Breaking Up Time*, 2013) attempted to look at colonial history through Islamic temporal lenses.

It is that last paper which provides some of the inspiration for this proposed intervention, which would introduce the audience to a variety of Algerian voices from the 1830s, each of whom responded distinctively to the revolution induced in their world by the French invasion, and brutal occupation, of Algeria. Tellingly, indigenous texts often operate with ideas of time as their organising logics, contending that the French Conquest marked a moment of rupture in which new futures of violence and subjugation were unleashed upon local populations. What Abdelkader Djeghloul has called a 'long-lasting colonial night' settled over the Maghreb and intellectuals such as Hamdan Khodja argued that a long-standing culture of justice was in the process of being overturned by a European culture

which drew upon a notion of future beneficence quite alien to north Africa. Instead, it was better to see the French occupation as a form of Jahiliyya, or return to the time of corruption of the pre-Islamic era, with an inevitable future moment of cleansing to be anticipated just as it had been in the seventh century C.E.

Other key Algerian actors included the Emir Abd 'al-Qādir, whose extensive correspondence with religious authorities in Mecca, Cairo and Morocco revealed quite different forms of Muslim temporal framing based around ideas of jihād, whilst in turn Ahmed, Bey of Constantine, invoked parallels with the historical fate of Muslims at the hands of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

It is, however, an anonymous note from a tribal leader in 1841 which provides the inspiration for this proposal, in which he wrote to the French government to assert that 'we are no means ruined because you have burned our harvests and cut down our trees [...] even if you stay here for a century, all of your tricks will do us no harm.'

Using music, contextual slides and a spoken word presentation (not an academic lecture with powerpoint!) I hope to meditate on these words and the temporal ideas of the future within them to offer attendees some sense of the richness of indigenous cultures of temporal resistance to empire. I have no intention of offering a potted history of the period as my real goal will be to explore these words so as to dig into the questions of 'positionality, power, hope and despair' which lie central to this symposium.

12.15 – 12.30: Graeme Tiffany 'Big Data and predictive scientism: cause, effect and response to the new temporalities of social policy'

The policy narratives of education and social welfare (and others beside) provide evidence of an increasing confidence that 'Big Data' can be used to predict the future. The focus is on bad futures, futures that can, with the help of this data, be averted through 'prevention' and 'early intervention'. In its concern for preventing youth criminality, the Youth Crime Action Plan (2008) asserted: "Increasingly we know how to identify these young people early on". New enterprises offer: "data matching, data sharing and risk assessment platforms",

characteristically to “identify, predict and manage troubled families”. RAISEonline, in providing an “interactive analysis of school and pupil performance data”, recognises the centrality of data analysis in Ofsted inspections. It becomes the preoccupation of school managers and governors, who believe data can signal, mitigate and even eliminate ‘negative outcomes’ in informing ‘targeted interventions’.

The wider context is economic; public services can now target ‘limited resources’ at ‘those who need it most’. What’s implied is a system, a system capable of predicting futures and identifying those ‘at risk’ of these futures. It’s a given that these are futures that society must do everything it can to prevent, due to the social and economic costs judged inevitable through inaction.

But what are the impacts of these temporalities? How do they influence the practice of education and welfare agencies? And what is the effect on those whom these interventions are targeted upon? Might the anticipation of these futures have become pathological; citizens are cast as psychological entities with cultural failings in self-care, poor resilience and a lack of ‘grit’. These, we’re told, are the root causes of poverty and misery; data, it seems, bears witness to these realities. The lens is epidemiological, but with Big Data, people can be cured. In education, this temporal regime casts its net wider, encompassing all students. Learning is time spent securing a good future, a future of ‘economic well-being’.

Punk and indie-punk narratives are of the few that challenge these temporalities: “It’s about time everybody lived for the weekend - every night”; “Living for the weekend kills my weekdays”. They remind us of the value of today and present-tense functioning. As does youth work, and others forms of experience-focussed education, as they try to hang on to the now. But they too are affected by these temporal politics: outcomes are everything; process irrelevant. What’s done today is only valued (and financially supported) when society (or more particularly the economy) is seen to benefit tomorrow; ‘Payment by results’ seems to say it all. These temporalities drive instrumentalism; in education, the question is always: ‘what is education for?’, never: ‘what is education?’ ‘Outcomes’ shift from what comes out

to pre-scribed targets; they have to be known, in advance. And failure to secure them sees educationalists and other social practitioners disciplined and punished, ultimately cut off from state resources. The drive is for certainty; and data can provide it. Critics who speak for other temporalities are cast aside.

And yet some actors challenge these temporalities, in diverse and creative ways; uncertainty is embraced. Those concerned about the political demand for certainty fear a kind of predictive scientism exists: Sir Paul Nurse, President of the Royal Society sees it thus: “politicians and scientists come at issues from opposite ends of the telescope”. Others seek to re-value process, as an expression of, and commitment to, a value base in which democracy matters. Dewey is invoked: “If there are genuine uncertainties in life, philosophies must reflect that uncertainty.” (1916: 160): democracy is, and must be, inherently uncertain – the future, reasonably, unknown. Certainty starts to look anti-democratic. In sum, there’s evidence that uncertainty can be celebrated, in education, in welfare, and in our wider social lives; and that new and progressive temporalities can be imagined and lived. These are temporalities constitutive of thick concepts of citizenship (rather than the impoverished view of the 'economically activated'); they’re what education is supposed to be about. The work of Ulrich Beck injects a note of caution; neo-Luddism has appeal but data, re-imagined, can be emancipatory also: how do we get from ‘either/or’ to ‘and/also’, and a world in which a range of temporalities can be appreciated?

Films, Futures, Screens

20th May 9.20, Council Room

9.20 – 9.45: Alicia Blum-Ross & Sonia Livingstone ‘Hoping for, protecting from: Parental imaginaries of children’s digital media futures’

From the days of early films and comics to today’s social networks, tablets and multiplayer online games, the spectre of ‘futuristic’ technology has always entered into the imagination of parents – raising hopes about what media might offer and fears about the dangers they might introduce. Yet the pace of recent advances in digital media – think of wearables, educational apps, micro-chipping or sexting – leaves many parents and carers anxious about what these changes will mean for their children, now and in the future. In this paper we present initial findings from our research on Parenting for a digital future, funded by the MacArthur Foundation’s Connected Learning Research Network, drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in digital media and learning sites, and in-depth interviews with parents, carers and children in the home.

We understand parenting to be iterative and future-oriented: how parents imagine the future might unfold shapes their practices in the present; how children’s lives unfold in the present may in turn impact on their future. Yet rather than viewing ‘the future’ as a utopian space of possibility, much of the cultural and academic commentary on post-modern ‘parenting culture’ (Lee et al 2014) posits that parents view their role in preparing their children for the future as a ‘risky burden’ (Furedi 2010). Some parents, notably those with relative privilege, seem to confront the future through highly ‘intensive’ parenting practices (Hays 1996), ‘cultivating’ (Lareau 2011) their children’s skills and aptitudes in order to ensure what they hope will be future social, emotional or financial success.

Although these practices extend far beyond digital media, as media and communications scholars we are struck by the ubiquity with which ‘the digital’ becomes focal in parental imaginings of either children’s future possibilities or problems. From parents enrolling primary school-aged children in coding clubs or investing in digital devices for home learning or, by contrast, forbidding teenagers from using social media to avoid ‘cyber-

bullying' (Livingstone et al 2012), these actions show how being a parent often means making choices about how to manage, or encourage, children's digital media use. To make these determinations, parents are sometimes guided, though not always aided, by the often-polarised policy and popular media discourses about online dangers or the detrimental effects of 'screen time' on the one hand (American Academy of Pediatrics 2015), and a vision of digital media as opening up radically-new pathways to academic achievement or self-expression, on the other (Ito et al 2013).

9.45–10.15: Ben Parry & Graham Jeffrey 'Recycling the Indian Dream? Living the Utopian Dystopias of Dharavi's 13th Compound'

This paper explores the intense cross-currents between utopian aspirations and dystopian conditions in Dharavi's 13th Compound, one of the most contested urban spaces on the planet. In Dharavi, different dystopias and utopias collide, as the neoliberal dream of representing Mumbai as a 'world class, future city' of technology and financial services is confronted with the quotidian reality of its own free market logics. Dharavi's own brand of home-grown urbanism sits in stark contrast to the manufactured and manicured images of high capitalism, provoking highly charged conflicts as urban planners seek to direct resources towards the enactment of a high-tech, high-rise future city, even as the most basic needs of more than half of Mumbai's population remain barely provisioned for within the urban infrastructure.

In this clash of urban imaginaries, Dharavi's vertiginous hyper-productivity is in part a utopia for the urban poor, capable of absorbing surplus flows of migrant workers displaced by agri-corporatism. Dharavi is a world of many worlds, testament to numerous examples of people rising out of poverty by their own energies and initiatives, giving tangible reality to an "Indian Dream" for the urban poor. Over-represented as a dangerous 'no-go' zone for the urban elite, a fixture in 'alternative' cartographies of Mumbai's spectacular urbanisation, and under-represented as a core part of the city's infrastructure, it is a vital link in the city's waste management, micro-production and distribution systems, as well as providing shelter, opportunities and employment for as many as a million residents.

Dharavi's resistance to financial-economic hegemony plays out as a hyper-productive alternative to corporate visions of the city, blocking the route towards Mumbai's 'World Class' status. With tenacity Dharavi continues to resist capitalism's drive for informationalization and technologisation of production methods and social processes. Rather, it follows an anti-neoliberal logic of urban involution whereby cheap human labour facilitates dense production growth, providing mass employment for the migrant poor within an inner city temporary autonomous economic zone of micro-economies and smallholders, who share the production centres to such efficiency that almost all surplus waste is reabsorbed and reformed into new economic products.

The dystopian flip-side of the slum imaginary also plays out, as many live through the apocalyptic endings of real-estate poaching, eviction, corruption, and the physiological consequences of intense manual labour in working conditions that are hazardous to health. Dharavi is a container for the double-edged dystopian/utopian promise of neoliberal capitalism's 'wealth for all' mirage, in which the cost of human health, cramped living and dangerous working conditions is an accepted trade off for the opportunities afforded by well connected live/work spaces and intensity of contact within business, family and cultural communities.

This is no more evident than in the 13th Compound, Dharavi's recycling district, where slum tours pass through to experience primitivity and poverty 'up close' in what could be interpreted as both a dirty dystopian theme park of inordinately productive human labour, susceptible to malfunction at the expense of human life, and a self-regulated zone of self-organized free enterprise.

Beyond utopian/dystopian binaries

What is at stake when heavily populated, heavily utilised, heavily productive urban areas are described as 'no-go areas' or 'slums'? The relationships between the formal/informal, the so-called affluent and the deprived, the 'socially included' and 'socially excluded' are not easily understood as polar opposites once their essential interdependence is uncovered in representations of the material and imaginary city.

A fascination with the condition of urban poor has preoccupied writers and explorers for centuries, from Henry Mayhew and Jack London through to George Orwell, amongst many others, alongside dystopian visions of urban futures from writers such as Philip K Dick and China Miéville, and numerous cinematic imaginaries. A recurrent question is - who gets to write/inscribe whose histories and projections? In whose interests are these stories being told? It may suit people in positions of authority and power just to write off zones of apparent poverty and extremity, but questions of power and agency - of self-determination and self-representation - are at the core of the question of the 'right to the city'.

In 2012, as an uninvited guest, Ben Parry spent extended periods in Dharavi as researcher and artist. Working with community members, the Acorn Foundation and other NGOs, Ben has been interrogating his own outsider 'gaze' and that of others who come to investigate, intervene and ultimately extract knowledge about Mumbai's informal or unofficial urban practices. This led to the development of Reversing the Gaze, a project which investigates the displacement of 450 families formerly living on the pipeline in Dharavi's recycling district, known as the 13th Compound. The pipeline is one of the most documented and recognised images of 'slum world', made famous through its depiction in *Slumdog Millionaire* and *National Geographic* magazine. An over-productive global interest in Dharavi has even spawned an industry in slum tours, attracting artists, economists, urbanists and social scientists in a complex form of 'eco-tourism'. In 2012, many of the residents living along the pipeline in the 13th Compound disappeared without trace: they were the first residents to be evicted without entitlement to local rehousing through Dharavi's Slum Redevelopment Schemes. The destruction of homes and livelihoods in aggressive land reclamation went largely unreported in the press.

The story of the destruction of the pipeline community within the 13th Compound is a particularly potent example of an urban hotspot where these narratives of inclusion and exclusion, of formal infrastructure and informal habitation, of questions of land value and labour value, collide in explosive ways. Perhaps looking beyond the bright glare of the smooth, mirrored surfaces of high-rise, high-tech neoliberal utopias of 'Future City' and listening to and documenting testimonies of those living and working in the dark, dusty and

dirty alleyways of Dharavi may offer more insightful illumination of the dystopian paradoxes and dilemmas facing Mumbai's future.

10.15 – 10.45: Tim Boon 'Technological Utopia in the 1930s: A Semi-Live Documentary Mash Up'

The format

Academic performance tends to fall into two dominant modes: paper-reading and presentation / dialogue. Both are often enlivened by visual material, either as accompaniment or as text to be unpacked. But how would it be if academic performance took inspiration from the music hall, the cinema or the concert hall? Surely a range of affect to enable exploration of complex historical realities might be unleashed? Following an experiment in 2012 of presenting a paper with a continuous soundtrack, I propose here to create a novel kind of academic performance, a semi-live mashup of the 1935 films, *Plenty of Time for Play* and *The Face of Britain* to explore different visions of technological utopia in the decade of the Slump. Experimentally and reflexively using Paul Rotha's contemporary Russian-inspired dialectical model of film grammar, I intend to experiment with a novel performance mode so as to open-up, if not to answer, questions of how academic performance could be more inclusive of participants (perhaps as a [potentially co-produced] provocation within Connected Community programmes) if it employed some of the force of established non-fiction media.

The ideas

The 1930s famously saw both a tainted experience of modernity, as technology was seen as both cause of, and in some circles solution to, the Depression. At the same time, the new media of radio and cinema, were developing sonic and visual languages to put across accounts of the world their makers inhabited. These two striking films embody differing technological utopias: *Plenty of Time for Play*, a promotional film made for the Electrical Development Association, imagined a world of ease 20 years in the future, 1955, ushered-in by electricity. Rotha's *The Face of Britain* by contrast is more acutely technological-modernist, hymning 'an age of scientific planning, organisation of cooperation and

collective working'. Then again, where Rotha's film is a young man's attempt at historical and dialectical montage, *Plenty of Time for Play* packs an unexpected punch: in a self-reflexive coda, it turns out that the 1955 characters are only performers in a 1935 film about the future. Both, then, embody ways of thinking about the relation of past and present to the future. It is this that I wish to highlight in this performance.

Place, Landscape and Utopias

20th May 11.30, Lecture Theatre

11.30 - 11.45: Jill Ebrey 'Everyday Utopias: Place, Participation and Cooperation in Aberdeen'

Gordon (2005:364) writes that the World Social Forum (2002) in Porto Alegre recognised, 'another world' where '...there's a rich living history, filled with legends of people who can fly, end slavery and also organize meetings and grassroots movements...a world where 'the instinct for freedom is the antithetical core of culture, where the seeds of opposition grow into something more powerful than skepticism'. How can we understand this resistance in the context of everyday life, in practices that may contain the seeds of hope? As Gardiner (2000:154/55) points out, despite its many interpretations, a utopia is possible if we seek it in the present, 'upholding a multiplicity of value systems', (Heller, 1993 in Gardiner 2000) and recognizing it '...as counterfactual...a realizable alternative to present realities'. In recent months in Europe, we have seen a mobilization around the construction of alternative imaginaries, both in the Scottish referendum and in Greece, where the election of Syriza gave lie to the 'there is no alternative' mantra of neo-liberalism.

Using the experience of ethnographic and other qualitative methods undertaken on the Understanding Everyday Participation project in NE Scotland, this paper will address ideas of utopian and cooperative impulses in everyday life. It will discuss how, in the most mundane of circumstances, the groups with whom we worked, there, practised cooperation, admittedly through mutual exchanges with people whose lives are broadly similar. However,

such mutuality has the potential for bringing differences of whatever kind into dialogue, to undertake what Sennett (2012:6) has termed 'a demanding and difficult type of cooperation' through dialogic exchange. He discusses the contemporary 'us-against-them, you-are-on-your-own' social life, but is optimistic about the potential for change, suggesting that at present 'we dwell in the condition of the not-yet...' and 'as social animals we are capable of cooperating more deeply than the existing social order envisions...' (2012:280)

In summary, this paper will take issue with the idea of utopia as '...the imagination of a perfect society' (Gordon (2012: 362), instead locating it potentially in the (imperfect) 'now'. It will discuss through our work in three ethnographic settings, how life in a conventionally orientated Aberdeenshire village might demonstrate that an alternative world is possible, through firstly, a focus on its mutual cooperation and volunteering, secondly on its relationship with the landscape and 'natural world' and thirdly through its rituals and moments of collective pleasure. As Heller (1993, cited in Gardiner 2000:154) states, '[Utopias] are not mere figments of human imagination...Utopia is lived, practised and maintained by men and women as a form of life. [The] utopian form of life is, for those who live it, the rose on the cross of the present'.

This presentation will offer the symposium and its participants a means of reinterpreting the idea of utopia, from a grand narrative articulated in the future, to its embeddedness in contemporary everyday practices. This will be achieved with reference to ethnographic work in the context of a project seeking to understand the nature of everyday participation

11.45 - 12.00: Paul Allender & Prue Chiles 'Making yourself at home in Park Hill - meanings of modernism & utopia'

Paul Allender: During my lifetime, the development of Park Hill flats in Sheffield has twice been characterized as a utopian project, first in the early 1960's when it was built and more recently at the turn of the century by the developers Urban Splash. For long periods in the intervening 40 years it has appeared at times that, for many residents, living in Park Hill was anything but utopian. A key question for me is: can a physical structure embody utopian ideals or satisfy utopian aspirations?

Prue Chiles: As an architect educated in the Thatcher years in the 1980's, Park Hill was written about as far from utopian - ever. However, as time goes by there is a re-visioning of modernism and utopia is seen and theorized as a process, a method to inspire hope and a future that is better. The great modernist social projects seem now, a brave new future that went the wrong way, because of bad management, a lack of understanding of people's needs and poor materials.

The architecture of Park Hill has been re-invented and the residents are new. A key question for me is what do the new residents think of the architecture and the space and it's history. How are they making themselves at home and how do we start these conversations?

Park Hill is an icon of both brutalist modernism and of the mis-management and decline of utopian social housing projects in Britain's cities. The flats were listed at Grade II* in 1998, and have since been undergoing a long-term renovation by the developer Urban Splash, in conjunction with various other funding organisations. Previously entirely social housing, the flats are now partly social and partly privatised housing; Park Hill it is a towering example of huge success then a dramatic fall from grace into abject failure followed by redemption and a bright new hope for living in the city. But for who?

"These days houses in many places look as if they are ready to leave. Although they are unadorned for this very reason they are bright and bare like sick rooms, on the outside they seem like boxes on moveable roads, but also like ships"

Bloch's criticism of modernist housing and his well known ideas around hope allow us to reflect together on the tragedy and the heroism of utopian modernism in Sheffield.

The paper will address the surprising results from our preliminary interviews with residents living in Park Hill today and interested in working with us. We look towards creative methods we can use to engage us all in a close understanding of space and living in Park Hill in the past, today and into the future. Does the significance of Park Hill's utopian origins extend to the present day? We will build on the different attitudes and disciplines brought into this project from the residents, the academics, from our museum partners and artists.

We will also discuss and theorise the design of a model-making workshop -“modernism, utopia and making yourself at home”.

12.00–12.15: Jo Vergunst, Elizabeth Curtis, Colin Shepherd & Jeff Oliver ‘Imagining Landscape Heritage Futures’

This paper explores the landscape as a medium by which temporal imaginations of past, present and future connect with social change. Academic disciplines have conventionally separated the study of landscape by temporal realm, with archaeology uncovering the past, geography and social science describing the present, and landscape architecture and planning designing for the future. Recent work in public and community archaeology has begun to challenge this division by showing how archaeology can affect relations with place in the present too. But there is not yet a clear sense of how community involvement in archaeology and other heritage practices could articulate with the future, nor what kind of futures could be imagined through co-produced heritage research.

In order to achieve this articulation, we need a philosophical understanding of landscape and temporality that goes beyond the traditional art history conception of landscape as a static backdrop to human action, and also beyond the traditional archaeological conception of landscape as a palimpsest in which layers of the past can be read from the surface or uncovered through excavation. Henri Bergson’s concept of temporal duration provides one starting point. Senses of time are created through the duration of activities, in contrast to the temporality of a point-to-point succession of instants (Bergson 1911). While recognising change in the landscape, how can we carry out heritage research that allows for endurance between past, present and future, rather than just creating ‘heritage objects’ stuck indelibly to the past? Another way in is through scholarship on More’s Utopia. Harvey (2000) rails against utopianism made material in architecture such as the shopping mall, and against the utopia of process such as the free market. Utopianism instead should emphasise the connection between spatiality and temporality. Moving from the urban to the rural, how can collaborative research on landscape generate connected forms of spatial and temporal

value? We discuss how communities can explore aspects of the past that they value positively, and thus potentially maintain or recreate them, as well as those valued otherwise.

Drawing on these resources, we reflect on co-produced research around the hill of Bennachie in north east Scotland. Two themes are described in particular: firstly the use of 'low-tech' archaeological survey and excavation techniques based on ordinary ways of interacting with the hill that allowed distinctive narratives of the past to emerge, and secondly a programme of schools involvement that did not emphasise learning about the past as much as learning through engagement with it. Both themes suggest ways of imagining landscapes for the future that are based in forms of perception and action (Janowski and Ingold 2012). We connect this material with senses of temporal duration and emergent values in co-produced heritage research.

12.15 - 12.30: Michael Northcott 'Utopian Visions of a Low Carbon Society and Climate Change Mitigation'

The utopian writing, and activities, of William Morris inspired not only an arts and crafts movement but a connection between the aesthetics of the built environment, and of cities more broadly, and ecological aesthetics and social justice. This contributed to a great range of socially progressive and environmentally situated visions and approaches to city and home building, urban-rural relationships, and interior design and town planning in the twentieth century in the UK and North America. The most influential utopian ideal in these domains currently is the neoliberal Hayekian vision of an unplanned and spontaneous economic and political order where companies and consumers make decisions, and act, and planners get out of the way, and so collective welfare is advanced. But this dominant twentieth century utopian ideal neglects social costs, including dispiriting ugliness in building and city design, the growing disconnect between persons and nonhuman life in increasingly artificial environments, and irreversible ecological problems including climate change and species extinction. However cost benefit arguments for climate change mitigation fail because they rely on benefits being experienced by non-existent future people. Utopian representations of a low carbon future, analogous in aesthetic and literary

form, and ethical and ecological orientation, to the utopianism of Morris, might therefore reasonably be said to have the potential to promote societal change towards forms of design, planning, and regulation in which ecologically and climatically beneficial civilizational changes are represented as positive rather than negative in their human as well as ecological impacts.

Workshops

All Change: Heritage and the Temporalities of Transformation

Caitlin DeSilvey, Sarah May, Sefryn Penrose & Antony Lyons

19th May 9.30, Council Room

This workshop examining the role of heritage in change and transformation will be organised by the Assembling Alternative Futures for Heritage team and is open for all participants. We will explore how material and social change –counter to prevailing paradigms— opens up temporal connections both to the past and to the future. The way the past and future are handled is variable and to a certain extent responds to the choices and actions of people involved in the change. This can be contrasted to the experience of a place which is ‘conserved as found’, where the past is fixed and the future is unimaginable.

In the first half of the workshop the co-ordinating team will introduce the AAFH project, sketching its four themes: nature/culture boundaries, uncertain futures, curating profusion and conserving diversity. Then we will present two case studies of places where change and transformation have strengthened the experience of heritage values and increased the temporal complexities of place: Mullion Harbour and Merseyside. In the second half of the workshop, all the participants will work together to consider how these issues relate to another case study, the reintroduction of beavers to the River Otter in Devon.

Listening Voices and Telling Stories: A Co-Producing Literacies Workshop

Zanib Rasool, Kate Pahl & Mowbray Gardens Library Group

19th May 14.30, Garden Room

The topic of the session: The session will attempt to create a new ‘imagined community’ using particular literary texts and pedagogical tools to re-imagine future identities.

Format of the workshop: The session will be run along the same lines as the 'Listening Voices Telling Stories' group in Rotherham, currently running as part of the ESRC Connected Communities funded 'Imagine' project. This tends to involve the stimulus of a text, either existing literary texts, or a new text, and then a discussion. As the discussion unspools, new insights emerge and take shape. We will encourage participants to write, following reading the poem 'Anticlockwise' by Kishwar Naheed.

Previous research that informs this session: Our workshop provides an attempt to resist deficit images that have defined gender, community, and place. In this workshop we will be exploring contemporary issues of women's identity through interaction with poetry, particularly poetry from Pakistan and Afghanistan, and contemporary autobiographical and fictional writing by women (see for example, 'Anticlockwise' by Kishwar Naheed, 'Why Be Happy When You Can Be Normal' by Jeanette Winterson, and 'The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly' by Sun-Mi Hwang). The transformational writing of everyday stories provides an emergent space in which the women can oppose logocentric ideologies, creatively reconstruct the narratives of their lives, and 'imagine' new ways of being and seeing. We will investigate the possibility of this emergent space by acknowledging unheard voices in what can be called 'imagined communities'. We will explore key ideas such as the concept of 'interruption' to re-think the ways in which communities have been represented and also to re-think new positive spaces. In the context of our group, discussions about the poems created a transcultural space for belonging, recognition, empathy and self-actualization. At the same time, fictional texts presented missing tools - concepts, emotions, images, metaphors and vocabularies - which are not usually provided in ESOL-based texts and pedagogies. We will showcase this methodology, but also make a space for new, emergent themes to be articulated. These will form the basis of writing, which will be co-produced in the workshop.

How will this workshop contribute to the topic of the symposium: We will work together to think about the potential of this methodology to re-imagine the future and to provide a way of addressing issues of conflict and recovery in communities that have experienced trauma, such as Rotherham. We will draw on our existing 'Imagine' project to articulate the way in

which we have drawn on the past to materialize new futures through creative practice, with a focus on marginalized women within communities.

Future Works 2050: the future of energy, industry and making

Renata Tyszczyk & Julia Udall

19th May 14.30, Council Room

In the context of inevitable changes to energy systems, our Future Works 2050 scenarios workshop will explore imagination and agency. It will investigate the opportunities and obstacles to making ethical decisions for a just future along with the capacity to act in the present.

The workshop draws on a participatory design methodology being used in the Future Works strand of the AHRC Stories of Change project. Future Works investigates ways to refresh public and political conversation about energy in the context of industrial making in the Derwent Valley region. The team is working with diverse communities of apprentices, employers and employees, and volunteers in past, present and future factories. We have been asking the following questions: What does it mean to imagine the future collectively? Change is inevitable, so what kind of change do people want? What stories of change in energy-society relations can we already tell? 2050 is a major target date for the reduction of carbon emissions in the plans of UK, EU and corporate responses to climate change. All assume fast-paced energy transitions. The Future Works project strand is exploring what this target might mean in the context of the Derwent Valley. This was the location for the (initially renewable, or low-carbon) industrial revolution, and still an important centre of industrial making and innovation.

For the Future Works 2050 workshop we would like to test our thinking about scenarios and stories as techniques and tools for thinking about uncertain futures. The term scenario has a layered history that includes the improvised performances of baroque theatre, planning for the 'unthinkable' occurrence of nuclear war, marketing strategies and the storylines of

climate changed futures of the IPCC. In this workshop we will explore the agency of scenario making when understood as an improvised anticipatory practice. We view the construction of scenarios as temporarily embedded social practices, informed by the past, responsive to the contingencies of the present, and with a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities.

We will start with a map of the Derwent Valley Region. Each person round the table will be invited to tell a story about energy – past, present or future – adding marks to the map as they talk. The conversations will draw on hopes, desires, concerns, hunches, gestures, journeys and emotions. The resulting scenarios will be improvised, crafted, intentional, by turns serious and playful, and based on the collective experience of the workshop. The productive and distributed agency of the scenario game makes room for diversity, responsiveness, localised and tacit knowledges, and happenstance. We have tested Future Works 2050 with two different groups: postgraduate students of Architecture and a diverse range of community and project partners on the Stories of Change project. Versions of the Future Works 2050 workshop have been conducted with multiple small groups of between 4-8 people at events of up to 50 people. For ‘Utopias, Futures and Temporalities’ we can adapt it to suit numbers of between 4-16 people.

Temporal Design: reimagining the materials of time

Michelle Bastian & Larissa Pschetz

20th May 9.20, Garden Room

Even while maps and mapping processes have been the subject of critique, they have nonetheless been taken up as creative and critical tools. Indeed utilising some kind of mapping, such as collaborative mapping, participatory GIS, or counter-mapping, is often central to the work of any number of social movements and participatory projects. It is rare, however, for clocks to appear in repertoires of participatory and collaborative methods. There are no ‘collaborative clocking’ or ‘counter-clocking’ movements, for example. Instead, clocks continue to symbolise capitalist forms of control and domination, and the constraint

of progressive impulses more generally. This workshop, however, challenges this account of the clock and asks whether it might instead form a useful part of our repertoire of participatory methods.

Drawing on our work for the Connected Communities project *Time of the Clock* and the *Time of Encounter*, we are proposing a workshop session that will explore the possibilities of Temporal Design. Run as a design challenge workshop, the aim of the session will be to allow participants to reflect on their own methods for managing time in their everyday lives (temporal tactics) and develop a design that might help them address, transgress or make visible, problems that were particularly at issue for them. A series of timed stages will build upon each other towards a finished design proposal. Participants will have a chance to leave feedback for each project and also select their favourite, with a prize for the winner. The session will conclude with time for reflection on the process and discussion of possibilities for the future.

This particular method has been offered previously by Pschetz at a workshop for 40 participants in Edinburgh, where it was very successful. The session itself also draws on papers written by Pschetz and Bastian which we hope to distribute to the workshop participants beforehand so that they will also have a sense of the theoretical background to the session. This workshop responds to a number of central themes for the conference including 'critical temporalities' and 'materialising futures through creative practice'. It will prompt questions around whether (and how) time might be redesigned, as well as showcasing one particular method for working creatively with groups to explore their own experiences of time and how they might want their time to work differently. This will in turn provide room for reflecting on the 'role of time in inclusion and exclusion', as well as the possible futures of time itself.

Roundtables

How might the traditions of therapeutic communities and greencare inform our re-visioning of social futures?’

19th May 9.30, Lecture Theatre

Introduction

The therapeutic community movement and greencare approaches to mental health are both traditions that have at times been synonymous with utopian envisionings of the future. This roundtable explores what insights and lessons these traditions might have for our social futures.

The therapeutic community movement which developed after the second world war explored the creative role that such spaces might offer for personal and social healing, but also embodied a utopian promise and a radical alternative to the social formations of western modernity. Meanwhile the greencare tradition in mental health foregrounds the importance of a wholesome psychological relationship with the natural environment, for both personal and planetary well-being; and it has posited a more modulated sense of self as a key locus of societal change towards more fulfilling and sustainable social futures.

Such reflections may be timely given the daunting challenges that haunt contemporary efforts to envision wholesome futures that all might share: challenges such as climate change, financial instability, terrorism, resource depletion. Looking backwards and forwards in time, we might ask: to what extent might the histories of these traditions harbour seeds from which viable social alternatives might flower? This cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral roundtable will draw on the perspectives of an NHS psychiatrist (Dr Rex Haigh), a professor of Utopian Studies (Professor Lucy Sargisson), a researcher in public health (Dr Neil Chadborn) and a historian (Dr Jonathan Coope).

Dr Jonathan Coope, 'Greencare theory and its dystopian narrativisations of modernity'

Contemporary greencare research usually tends to 'ecologize' psychology, by focusing on studies of the mental health benefits of nature. But earlier post-war theorists, such as Paul Shepard and historian Theodore Roszak, also 'psychologise' ecology, by proposing that humankind's environmental predicaments might most fruitfully be explored as symptoms of collective dysfunction in our psychological relationship with non-human nature. One consequence of this 'dystopian' re-framing of modernity is that utopianism no longer appears 'naïve' or 'aberrant', but urgent and necessary. Such re-framing also invites us to contemplate the deep time contexts of modernity, situating our storied humanity within not only evolutionary and planetary timescales, but also the 13.8 billion years or so of cosmological time.

Jonathan was Research Fellow on the AHRC Connected Communities co-production project The Social World of Nottingham's Green Spaces, based in the History Department at Nottingham University. He is on the editorial committee of the European Journal of Ecopsychology and is chair of the 'Greening the Mind' Integrated Research Group at the Centre for Social Futures in Nottingham University's Institute of Mental Health. Jonathan co-organised the recent Rescue!History workshop 'History and Climate change: What have we learnt?' and was on the curriculum working group of Lincoln's Social Science Centre, a free university established in the wake of the Occupy movement. He has represented the Green Party in local council elections. Jonathan's PhD in History explores the impact of ecopsychology on historical and cultural theory.

Dr Rex Haigh, 'Therapeutic communities, healing and positive environments'

Although therapeutic communities in their 'pure' form have suffered from the wider political and social forces away from collectivism and towards individualism, the underlying spirit - of using groups in radical ways to challenge established orthodoxies - is alive and well, and thriving in the development of 'modified therapeutic communities' and other projects planned at the Royal College of Psychiatrists under the 'positive environments' framework. As well as in mental health, these projects are being planned and developed in different UK

sectors, and overseas. In the UK, this includes prisons, the homelessness sector, therapeutic child care, addictions, intellectual disability, for NHS staff, and less specific greencare projects. Overseas, the positive environments work includes cooperation and exchange with various individuals and organisations including public health officials in Sicily, a large NGO working in low income countries, and a 'twinned' therapeutic community project in Bangalore.

Professor Lucy Sargisson, 'Are therapeutic communities utopian?'

The paper will examine this question in two ways. Firstly, the values of the therapeutic community movement (as expressed by the Royal College of Psychiatry's accreditation body 'The Community of Communities') will be considered. Do they depict a utopia? Secondly, the practices and structures of actual therapeutic communities will be examined. Are they a form of utopian experiment? All utopias begin from a feeling of discontent with their author's present and seek to imagine or create alternatives. And all utopias identify key 'wrongs' with their present society. These might be things such as the stigmas that are attached to people with mental health issues, or the institutions within which people are confined and defined. Positive utopias (sometimes called 'eutopias'), seek to imagine a radically better future, in which the key 'wrongs' with their present have been removed or resolved. Negative utopias (sometimes called 'dystopias'), extrapolate from key 'wrongs', stretching them to show how society could look if these things are not resolved. Eutopias depict better societies, dystopias are social nightmares, but all utopias reflect a desire for something better. Some embody hope that we can make it so. This paper will begin by asking whether the values of the Community of Communities are utopian. It will then consider the relationship between therapeutic and intentional communities. Intentional communities are one form of utopian practice. They are groups of people who live (and sometimes work) together for a common purpose. These people share a set of core values or aims and seek to create a better future, now. Intentional communities come in many forms, including convents, monasteries, ecovillages, housing co-operatives, co-housing communities and, of course, communes. Taking sample therapeutic communities, such as

Lothlorien and Arbours Communities the paper will then identify structures and practices that are shared (and different) between therapeutic and intentional communities.

Dr Neil Chadborn, 'Communities creating glimpses of utopia for public health benefit'

Future society is a core theme for public health, but unfortunately public messages frequently portray dystopias. In these dystopias, future health risk is embodied, in order to exert control in the present. In contrast to such state-sponsored campaigns, community based projects portray public health utopias. Many community-based projects are set in greenspace, which is unsurprising considering the public health discourse on parks. I will explore perspectives of wellbeing from this asset-based approach.

While public health dystopias are constructed to protect future adult populations, policies may negatively impact on minority groups in the present; I will focus on children and older people. From this rights-based perspective, I will describe two studies of children's views on the connections between greenspace and wellbeing. Case studies indicated that community organisations had enabled children to experience greenspace in ways that carry meaning and may improve wellbeing. We are now exploring older people's reminiscences of greenspace, and investigating benefits for people living with dementia. Exposure to dystopic media discourses seems inescapable and may contribute to mental distress. Community-based initiatives may provide glimpses of utopia enabling people to thrive within the current risk society.

Ruins, temporalities, utopia and the city

19th May 11.30, Lecture Theatre

This roundtable brings researchers representing two projects into dialogue:

- (i) 'Re-Configuring Ruins: Materialities, Processes and Mediations.' AHRC Care for the Future Early Career Developmental Award [Galviz (PI), Bartolini, Stock]

- (ii) 'Imaginarities of the Future: Historicising the Present.' Leverhulme International Research Network [Coleman (PI), Stock]

'Re-Configuring Ruins' is an interdisciplinary and cross-geographic project, which treats ruins as thresholds that provide a unique insight into the relationship between past, present and future. Questions about temporality are at the heart of our discussions on the nature and culture of ruins: Are ruins the materialization of cycles between and across what they used to be and what they will become? What notions of time can we recover through ruins? Is our understanding of past, present and future consistent with the 'multiple temporalities of ruins' (Edensor 2005)?

'Imaginarities of the future' investigates the nature and understanding of how we can conceptualise the future while moving beyond the sorts of abstract visions which tend to be self-justifying (as visionary), and thus make it impossible to convincingly draw lines from the 'is' (the given of current conditions) to the 'ought' (how we might want things to be). Our investigation into narratives of genuinely alternate futures starts from a sense of genuine possibility (the concrete) rather than wild fantasy (the abstract). We aim to develop a set of critical tools to enable disciplines across the arts and humanities to better conceptualise the future and enact change rather than simply responding to events.

Following the four papers outlined below, open discussion will focus on how different modes of temporality interact and contribute to the experience of space. We take as our starting point four keywords (ruins, the city, the body, space), and three cities as sites of ruins and ruination: Rome, Paris and London. We refer here not only to actually existing ruins and their display, but also to ruins as mediated through fiction and film, and indeed to ruins of the imagination. Going beyond conservation, we are concerned with the genuinely transformative, utopian potentialities of theories of space and temporality that do justice to ruins, and to the past more widely.

Nadia Bartolini 'Ancient modernity: Planning Rome's future with the past'

The city of Rome is a testimony to how the 'ancient' and the modern collide. It functions through a web of tensions between people who look after the past and those who seek to

develop the city for the future. While some have described Rome as a palimpsest where space and time are superimposed, the city also exhibits evidence of juxtaposed spaces and non-linear temporalities. It is through the disruption and the jumbling of times and spaces that I propose to explore the body: how one must navigate between pasts, presents and futures in the everyday, both physically and psychologically.

To do this, I will draw on the works of Freud and Jung to engage with the ideas around disorganized times and materials, the unconscious and the city. These ideas will be illustrated with examples from contemporary development initiatives in the city and one particular scene from Federico Fellini's *Roma* (1972). By elucidating the experience of the city through spaces that are on the surface and in the underground, and amidst archaeological remnants that are part of the everyday, perhaps a better understanding can be achieved as to how the accumulation of pasts can be integrated in urban planning strategies.

Nathaniel Coleman 'Apocalypse Now: Rome in Film Across Four Decades'

This paper draws upon my on going work as PI of the 'Imaginarities of the Future' Research Network, and on architecture and Utopia. Central to these endeavours are the tensions between temporalities and spatialisations. In particular, utopian prospects for the social and political life of the city (temporality), and its physical restructuring (spatiality), are located not in some unknowable future but rather in the patterns of the past that continue to shape the present, as either enduring habits or in ruins. Futurity is thus a product of substantive pastness reimagined in the present as revelations of future possibility. Historicising the present in this way discloses how the dialectical relationship between space and time (in general), and place and occasion (more specifically), charts anticipation across a continuum of situated bodies that is more enduring than ruins.

I propose to explore these tensions between temporalities and spatialisations in the following films: Fellini's *Roma* (1972), Greenaway's *Belly of An Architect* (1987), Moretti's *Caro Diario* (1993), and Sorrentino's *La grande bellezza* (2013). Each film invites viewers to share the filmmaker's vision of Rome. If Rome is the Eternal City, it is not in the sense of

being changeless, but rather in being ceaseless. Strangely, the view of Rome as immortal turns on the status of its decaying monuments and ruins, most of which predate the 19th century. The place of ruins and monuments, and of tourists, is significant in each of the films. Accordingly, this paper considers four types of temporality represented by: city; ruins; bodies; and space in each film in an effort to chart the relative presence of that particular Roman genius for using one's wiles to be 'free in the city outside the state' because 'being a free citizen within the state' just is not possible (Lefebvre and Régulier 1986). Arguably, this form of liberty persists as a source of utopian possibility through time (in Rome); its relative absence or presence in each film is mapped with reference to Lefebvre's 'rhythmanalytical project'.

Carlos Lopez Galviz 'Past Futures: London and Paris 1851–2051'

Imagining the future of London and Paris has been and continues to be a significant part of how the two cities are shaped. For centuries, London and Paris have been engines of change; sites of refuge; arenas of political dissent; places where new mores and habits take hold and are reinvented, often within a generation; test beds of socio-technical and artistic innovation; monuments and memorials to ideals that are inclusive but that also exclude. This contribution will provide a reflexion on the different ways in which the urban societies of the two cities have imagined themselves in the last one hundred and fifty years, using what vehicles and media in the process, and in response to or under which circumstances. An important part of that reflection will connect to the urban societies of the future as we envision them today: the London and Paris of 2050 and beyond.

The paper is therefore a survey that aims to identify who the main actors in the process of envisioning the future of London and Paris were, inspired by which motivations and needs, and speaking to what audiences. This is an approach that provides a uniquely urban dimension to the issues around how individuals and societies use and reflect upon their pasts, specifically in relation to themes such as innovation, sustainability, growth and health: the utopias of our futures which the urban past might help illuminate.

Adam Stock 'Eschatological temporalities and the dystopian ruins of fiction'

In this paper I examine models of apocalyptic temporality in relation to ruins and dystopian fiction. Key to the rhetorical strategy of dystopian fictions as political novels is their ability to historicise the present. Indeed, the frame of a flash-forward to a future setting, within which the narrator looks back toward the authorial present, is a generic convention of dystopian fiction. The gap between the future storyworld and the authorial present may be said to constitute the 'future-as-past' and its contents 'future-histories'. But what is not revealed in the future-history is as important and interesting as what is. Drawing on Malcolm Bull's discussion of eschatology (*Seeing Things Hidden*, 1999), I show how the ruptures and reversals of narratives of apocalypse link the temporal structures of twentieth century dystopian fictions such as John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids* (1951) – partially set in a post-apocalyptic London – and the figures of ruin and the city in more formally experimental texts such as Wyndham Lewis's *The Childermass* (1928), and Jean Cocteau's film *L'Orphée* [Orpheus] (1950), filmed amid the ruins of postwar Paris.

What links all of these imaginaries is a suggestion that as images of the shattered bodily politic, ruins play a key mediating role in grounding radically altered post-apocalyptic temporalities in recognisable bodily and psychological experience: it is through ruins that life is imagined beyond the eschatological threats of the mid-twentieth century. The paper thereby brings together my on going research on the mediation of ruins and ruination in fiction and film for the 'Re-Configuring Ruins' project with investigations into narrative constructions of the future for the Research Network 'Imaginaries of the Future'.

Temporalities/Comunities/Sustainabilities: Frictions & Frissons in the Making of Utopian Futures

19th May 14.30, Lecture Theatre

In this Roundtable we bring together researchers associated with both Care for the Future and Connected Communities AHRC themes, to explore the work done by the key concepts

of change, temporality, 'progress' and Utopia. We will draw attention to the plural 'temporalities', 'communities' and 'sustainabilities' that we find jostling with each other in our case studies and conceptual frames, opening a space in which to explore the frictions and frissons these pluralities generate.

We intend to table a series of succinct interventions (12-15mins) that distil some key questions and concepts we are working with: the interplay of temporalities in understandings of landscape and conservation in Namibia (Sullivan); conceptions of utopia and dystopia in the UK planning system's response to 'eco-village' developments (Katherine Jones); the impact of 'environmental crisis' on debates about inter-generational justice (Hannis); and radical incrementalism in the opening of utopias (Owain Jones). We hope these interventions will lead into an open and dynamic discussion regarding the productive use of these plural concepts in arts and humanities engagements with utopian horizons shaping social change.

Sian Sullivan 'Conservation utopias and temporalities of sustainability: notes from west Namibia'

I reflect here on the range of temporalities at play in the particular context of the conservation and cultural landscapes of west Namibia, where I have conducted ethnographic fieldwork since 1992. These temporalities jostle productively with one another to shape particular policy choices, and to both enable and constrain possibilities for the future. Thus the universal(ising), homogenous, abstract time of capital and modernity – the time of generalised commodity exchanges, economic growth, progress and development that underscores contemporary market-based approaches to both conservation and development in the region – unfolds in productive tension with the particular situated, amodern social orders of temporality assumed by the 'lifeworlds' and practices of those with longstanding connections with this landscape (cf. Chakrabarty 2007). Here, rhythmic praise songs and dances (lgeis), as well as the ontological reality of ancestral agency in present times, entwine culture with ecology to generate particular sustainabilities that tend to be displaced by the linear-thinking of modern and market-based conservation interventions. Conservation itself

has been defined in temporal terms as ‘about negotiating the transition from past to future in such a way as to secure the transfer of maximum significance’ (Holland and Rawles 1996: 46, emphasis in original). ‘At the same time’, assumptions of an imagined prior and utopian time of ‘pristine wilderness’, untainted by human transformation and ‘degradation’, plays a part in clearing landscapes of the diverse temporalities known by the people who live there. The urgency of wilderness preservation measures is itself informed by a sense of apocalyptic time (Žižek 2009: 92) that engenders a productive milieu of crisis, catastrophe and scarcity requiring speedy expert and reconstitutive intervention. And then there are the multiplicitous temporalities of the other-than-human entities always present in localities (cf. Marder 2013). In a broad context where better attunement with nonhuman existences and dynamics seems appropriate, these also demand a reconsideration of temporal assumptions and sensitivities. These juxtapositions of temporality, sustainability and community open a space for discussion of the roles of power and difference in engendering frictions and frissons regarding whose pasts, whose memories, may become transferred forwards into the future in this context, and with what possible utopian and dystopian effects.

Katherine Jones ‘Broadening conceptions of utopia and dystopia in relation to contemporary ‘alternative’ sustainable development’

Intentional communities and similar sub-cultural or countercultural experiments have long been talked about as utopian (Kanter 1972; Coates 2001; Hardy 2000; Sargisson & Sargent 2004), yet work on such communities often overlooks the wider context in which they are set and the particular utopian and dystopian visions that are embedded in the minds and hearts of those living in the wider society around them. This paper, based on my PhD research with a contemporary eco-village called Lammas in Wales (active since 2009), explores how the concept of utopia can be used to analyze not only such experiments but also the context of the planning system with which they interact, and further, the imagined spaces of utopia and dystopia that compel futures-thinking from planners and neighbors, as well as the eco-villagers themselves. Utopian thinking is connected with the more recent concept of sustainable development which has been described as a utopian impulse (Hedrén & Linnér 2009; Harlow et al. 2013). Here, the interpretation and contestation of notions of

sustainable development are explored as a political space in which multiple utopian and dystopian visions are invited to jostle alongside each other. The research takes the position that space is 'produced' through the combined dialectical processes of conceiving of space, perceiving space, and spatial practices (Lefebvre 1991). As such, the production of new spaces has much to do with utopian and dystopian ideas about past, present and future space. Utopia can be used both to mean 'no place', related perhaps to our notions that it is a dreamworld, and only exists in the imagination, or in the sense of 'eutopia', a good place (Levitas 2010). Space is produced through the interaction between dreamed spaces, ideal spaces of the imagination, and the action of creating space through building and spatial practice that produces any space. Notions of 'good places' play out throughout all these processes, whether explicitly acknowledged or not.

Mike Hannis 'Crisis, Utopia, and Future Generations'

We present-day humans owe it to future generations not to compromise their chances of living a good life – of flourishing. But if living a good life requires the freedom to choose that life for oneself, we cannot know now what future people will choose. How then can we know what 'state of the world' our duty to them requires us to bequeath? The default option has been simply to assume that we owe them – at least – the possibility of leading lives comparable to ours. Confident societies have historically gone beyond this, expecting future lives 'like ours, but better', and framing the imperative to keep up the pace of 'progress' as a duty to future people. Dogmatic neutrality between conceptions of the good life compromises the possibility of ecological sustainability, and thereby imperils the flourishing of future humans (Hannis 2005). But so too, perhaps, does the eschatological temporality of 'environmental crisis'. If 'lives like ours' are already unsustainable, even the default option of aiming to leave the possibility of similar lives open to future people appears not only unrealistic but incoherent. We thus find ourselves, however unwillingly, in the position of having instead to imagine what it might mean for future people to lead flourishing lives in a context very different from our own. This opens up opportunities for (re)imagining the flourishing of present-day human beings in ways that recognise and celebrate our ecological embeddedness rather than seeking to transcend it through endless economic growth. Is this

a utopian project (Sargisson 2013)? Perhaps. But it is not a new one, and as Alasdair MacIntyre (1999) observes: “trying to live by Utopian standards is not Utopian, although it does involve a rejection of the economic goals of advanced capitalism.”

Owain Jones 'Radical incrementalism in the opening of utopias'

..something I've realised recently - my own discipline, anthropology and other social sciences like sociology, largely see culture as a vehicle of the past, of heritage, memory, tradition, customs. Culture is occasionally seen as important for the present but almost never as far as the future is concerned - the result is, the future has been handed over to economics and other quantitative and predictive sciences. I wanted to signal that the future is also highly variable. People have different visions, images and narratives of the future. Today, in cities like Mumbai, there's a lot of debate about heritage - but you won't see the language of conservation applied to what people want ahead. That's a huge oversight. (Appadurai, 2013, online, emphasis added)

What is required in response to this challenge is radical, experimental incrementalism - a proliferation of possible but unknown utopias through an understanding of the temporalities of action within dystopia. This approach to some extent rests on Whitford's (1991) reading on Irigaray (and others) in the chapter “Feminism and Utopia”. ‘Utopia is a process’ (Baruch 1984). It is not ‘any one place or time, but the capacity to see afresh - an enlarged, even transformed vision...a vital utopia requires change and interaction with alien forces; otherwise it becomes a barren and useless idea’ (Khanna 1984). We are never sure, can't possibly imagine, where we are going - the future is open. But what we do know is that we need to move away from where we are now. But of course move away in terms of time - not place (for now we seem space-bound in city, nation state, planet etc). Clearly utopia is a temporal proposition/location. So... incrementalism because of the facts of; politics, always starting from somewhere (a situation), and mistrust of grand, ideological, technocratic ambitions; radical in the judgement of just how urgent is the need to move from the here-now, and how far and fast we have to travel (in time). The future might be thousands of years hence - or it could also be tomorrow.

Radical incrementalism is the basic temporal dimension – or trajectory - embedded in pragmatist notions of philosophy, enquiry and action. Pragmatism calls for on-going experimentalism and creativity in thought and action and a parallel – integrated, process of reflection, re-evaluation, and adjustment. There is no end goal – no truth in terms of final state of being (utopia) or knowledge of that being. Rather an assumption of life as always a striving - provisional, makeshift – a sort of shanty utopia. Utopia is a politics of openness and change. It stands in stark opposition to the pernicious economic-theologic ideologies which currently, and conflictually, seek to grip the world in vice like grips of stasis.

Energy: Utopias and scenarios

20th May 9.20, Lecture Theatre

In this roundtable we will look to both the past and future to investigate cultural anticipation of changed relationships with energy. In particular the roundtable will explore the role that imaginings of alternative futures have had in thinking about energy systems, policies and politics at any one time. The contributors' work draws on literature, history, media, theatre, design and arts disciplines, but is drawn together here by the shared ambition of finding a fresh way of thinking about energy system change, and specifically decarbonisation, in the present time. We anticipate starting with a broad introduction, and will take turns to outline our material and interests for up to 40 minutes in total, allowing the remaining time for interdisciplinary discussion across the themes and approaches explored. Our introduction and discussion will draw upon the four background papers outlined below:

Axel Goodbody 'Back to the Future: Energy in Victorian Science Fiction'

With an opening contribution rooted in the late nineteenth century, Axel Goodbody examines Edward Bulwer-Lytton's novel 'The Coming Race' (1871). If we accept the idea that we live in a discrete geological epoch in which human activities are having a significant global impact on the Earth's ecosystems (the 'Anthropocene'), then all cultural artefacts since the industrial revolution can legitimately be regarded as 'contemporary', and those of

a utopian nature may reward examination for their relevance to our reflection on the future today. Axel will look at Bulwer-Lytton's novel as a late 19th-century work of science fiction focused on energy. The protagonist discovers a race of seraphim-like creatures whose discovery of 'vril', an alternative energy source, enables them to eliminate poverty and war. But they cannot produce art or original ideas. Bulwer-Lytton was influenced by Victorian fears of the impact of the machine on individual liberty and identity, of the degeneration of civilization, and the dissipation of energy. Drawing on recent studies including Allen MacDuffie's *Victorian Literature, Energy, and Ecological Imagination*, this contribution to the roundtable will ask whether the novel can be read as a response to 19th-century shifts in energy production/ consumption, what anxieties and hopes it articulates, and what cultural narratives it echoes. The power relations, temporality and other aspects of Bulwer-Lytton's imagined utopian energy system will be considered in the context of the challenge of energy system change facing us today.

Joe Smith 'Consensus, utopia and futures in the politics of climate change'

Joe Smith draws on environmental history, politics and social science to explore the role of utopian and dystopian thinking in relation to broad social and political transformations. Climate change is difficult new knowledge. But it is nevertheless redrawing the boundaries of ethics and politics. Joe's paper offers a brief review of historical comparisons of ethical and political transformations that are drawn upon in the academic and campaigning literature on climate change. It explores the strategies embedded within these, in particular where they work with notions of alternative futures in order to progress goals in the present. The paper considers the politics of climate change, and specifically energy system transformation, alongside a specific and little considered historical comparison, that is, the development of post-war northern European welfare states. This takes the paper into an exploration of the political meaning and impact of notions of consensus, particularly where they relate to or play off projections of utopian and dystopian futures. Such a focus opens up discussion of the deployment of consensus as a 'politics of the future in the present'. This kind of political and cultural work seeks to embody collective hopes and insulate society against shared fears, and at the same time overcome obstructions to change.

Consensus is today viewed as a powerful and robust response to the radical uncertainties associated with climate change, just as universal provision of welfare responded to varied ambitions, uncertainties and pressures. However consensus is itself a utopian notion. And the conjuring of consensus can serve to disguise conflict and erase consideration of radical responses to complex problems. The notion of a climate change consensus is explored in Joe's contribution in terms of the political sociology, economy and geography of energy. He seeks to unpack the potential and also the hazards of thinking about climate change politics in terms of consensus. By drawing particularly on comparisons with the deployment of notions of consensus in the development of post-war twentieth century welfare states he seeks to work with a scale and scope that parallels the novel and far-reaching problem of climate change. This pairing also permits discussion of the desirability and impossibility of achieving a sense of security and stability in the present.

Renata Tyszczyk 'Improvising Utopia'

Architectural historian and theorist Renata Tyszczyk investigates scenarios. Her contribution begins with an account of the history of scenarios. This traverses baroque theatre, Hollywood, Herman Kahn's scenarios of nuclear war, Buckminster Fuller's synergetics, and works through to the techniques still used by Shell, by foresight industries and in the IPCC reports predictive storylines of climate changed futures. In baroque theatre, scenarios were synoptical collages of the actions, intentions, emotions and use of props in a play, usually associated with the improvisational performances of commedia dell'arte. The word scenario travelled from theatre to Hollywood and was used by screenwriters. In the 1960s the word was borrowed to describe the strategic planning techniques or 'scenarios' developed by Herman Kahn with the Rand Corporation during the Cold War. Kahn (the inspiration for Kubrick's infamous Dr Strangelove), utilized systems theory and game theory to model the various effects of nuclear war – the 'unthinkable', in order to write multiple histories of the future – or the 'future-now'. Around the same time Buckminster Fuller developed a scenario Universe incorporating a global energy grid that he claimed had world-unifying potential. Scenario techniques were deployed by Shell from the 1970s as a way of 'rehearsing the future' and have informed the utopian narratives of Shell Energy Scenarios 2050 and the EU

Roadmap 2050. Scenario planning, using similar techniques to those established by Kahn, is now standard practice in business, propagated by foresight industries, used for trend watching and identifying emerging market opportunities. It is also used to put together the predictive storylines and plausible trajectories of climate change in the scenarios of the IPCC and UNFCCC. However all of these neglect cultural work on climate change: a puzzle given how heavily they rely on this culturally rooted term 'scenarios'. Renata will explore the use of future scenarios and declarations of uncertainty around energy and land use by the IPCC, and place them in relation to future imaginings by storytellers, futurists and architects. She will argue for an ethos of improvisation when thinking about alternative futures for the places we live in that is rooted in collective and experimental endeavours. Could these be understood as exercises in improvising utopia?

Bradon Smith 'Animal, vegetable, mineral: the energy systems of our imagined futures'

Literature researcher Bradon Smith (Bath/Open University) will investigate the tendency in the growing body of work on 'petrofiction' and 'petroculture' to concentrate on the representation of historical or current energy systems in literature. His contribution to the roundtable will look instead at future energy systems, both utopic and dystopic, and ask: How are energy systems imagined in our societies' futures, and what might this tell us about our relationship with energy in the present? In a column in the PMLA that may mark the inauguration of increasing critical attention to petro-fiction, and more broadly energy-fiction, Patricia Yaeger proposes a radical reframing of literary historical periods not by movements, nations or centuries, but by dominant energy source. Imre Szeman takes on the section entitled 'Literature and Energy Futures'; and yet, his observations about representations of future energy are surprisingly vague in contrast to the rest of the piece. Having described the conditions that have brought us to "where we find ourselves at the present", he suggests that "it makes little sense to cast about for what might come after the present phase of oil literature". He goes on to argue that imagined energy futures either: perpetuate the present fiction of a continuing energy-surplus that sustains our current way of life; or imagine a post-apocalyptic world of energy-lack that serves as a cautionary tale about our current fiction of energy surplus. Bradon argues that such a characterisation

misses other categories of representations of future energy systems. Drawing on examples from novels, film and television he will suggest, firstly, that future scenarios of 'energy-lack' can act in a variety of ways, not just as cautionary tales; likewise, the replacement of fossil fuels with other, or 'new', sources of energy does not always entail the continuation of our current relationship with energy. Bradon's contribution will contend that what critical analysis of imagined future energy systems can do – fulfilling Szeman's desire for narratives that don't simply perpetuate our current fossil-fuel myth of abundance – is remind us of the historical and imaginative precedents for dramatic energy systems transitions; and remind us that a fossil fuel society is not the only one imaginable.

Pecha Kuchas

Utopias, social change and temporality

20th May 11.30, Garden Room

Sarah Armstrong, Margaret Malloch & Bill Munro 'Finding 'justice' in Utopia'

Our paper draws upon our ongoing work on 'justice' in Utopia. Imagining a better world generally involves future aspirations for the good of all. This necessarily concerns how best to organise society; the distribution of 'justice' plays a key role in this process. However, principles of 'justice' become meaningless or even unjust if society is structurally unequal. While Thomas More's Utopia promoted social and economic justice for its citizens, his envisioned society retained the use of slaves and capital punishment for those 'outside' the social boundaries. To what extent are concepts of justice drawn from the past, determined by the present and amenable to 'future-making'? The paper will contribute to the wider symposium by introducing a critical criminological analysis of 'justice' in utopia (Malloch, 2013; Munro, 2013; Malloch and Munro, 2013). We aim to challenge taken for granted assumptions about 'crime' and 'justice' and consider the temporal aspects to these concepts – and how they influence current practice and future imaginings (Armstrong, 2013; Goodall et al, 2013). As we draw upon ideas of the future, we consider the role of communities as they create and connect to concepts of justice taking account of processes of criminalisation, public order and what a 'just' society may look like from the vantage points of citizens of an 'unjust' world. This paper forms part of a larger project to develop a 'justice through utopia' network.

Christos Efstathiou 'History of Contemporary Utopian Thought'

Five hundred years after Thomas More depicted the island of Utopia, the portrayal of an ideal social system has not ceased to intrigue generations of authors. In the previous century, there were several utopian thinkers who believed that one could predict how life could unfold in the future and tried to provide a detailed description of an ideal society. From H. G. Wells and Aldous Huxley to Arthur C. Clarke and Ursula Le Guin, contemporary

literature showed a strong concern for future living and working conditions. Another important aspect of this literature is its connection to anti-utopian thought. It is not accidental that the same authors that wrote dystopian novels also wrote utopian ones as a counterargument. Despite the fact that several historians have written on contemporary utopia and science fiction, most of their treatises, even the ones published very recently, tend to focus on the literature before the 'short twentieth century', and then to quickly summarise the last hundred years. Moreover, they tend to neglect the strong ties between utopian and dystopian perspectives.

This paper will try to explain the relationship between utopias and dystopias in the twentieth century and hopes to provoke conversations and stimulate collaborations between researchers and activists. Firstly, it will offer an outline of twentieth-century utopian thought. It will briefly introduce the origins of the 'crisis' of utopian thought in the early twentieth century. It will show why several thinkers brought forth the idea of developing a dystopian future. It will also discuss the new wave of militant utopianism that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, which played a significant role in the development of late twentieth-century science fiction. Secondly, it will try to explain how the twentieth-century historical experience determined utopian literature and why several authors chose to offer a positive vision of a future society rather than a negative view. The relationship between utopian and dystopian elements will be shown not as a clear-cut distinction but more as a spectrum ranging from a pure negative picture at one end to an absolute positive at the other. Finally, it will discuss the criticism of utopian literature by those social scientists who either classified utopia as an inadequate reflection of social reality or a profound sign of contemporary ideological crisis. More specifically, it will try to understand why the utopian perspective was seen as unacceptable by several activists and radical scholars.

Anna Pigott 'Imagining the future in Wales: Government, art and re-emergent utopianism?'

This paper explores how futures are imagined in Wales, in light of environmental change and the idea of the 'Anthropocene'. Increasingly, imaginations of the future are seen as

influential to social change because they are a vital part of how possible futures are pre-experienced and set in motion (Yusoff and Gabrys, 2011), and yet it is also suggested (e.g. Harvey, 2000) that contemporary societies have experienced a decline in the hope and utopianism that once characterised visions of the future and motivated social change. Wales provides an important context for this research as its Government is pioneering a cutting-edge approach to sustainability and the well-being of future generations (One Wales: One Planet, 2009), an approach which is suggestive of a re-emergent 'utopianism'. The research draws on ethnographic engagements with a range of case studies, from Government to arts organisations and community co-operatives, to shed light on diverse imaginaries of the future and explores their significance in relation to both national and global narratives.

Specifically, this paper relates to the Symposium's themes concerning the role of creative practice in making futures (and the play-off between utopia and dystopia within this) and the emergence of new conceptions and world-views. For example, one case study involves a collaborative project in Wales that seeks to build, through artistic practice, "a more creative, caring and compassionate planet...our next evolution, revolution or re-evolution" (www.emergence-uk.org). Another theme touched upon relates to imagination and the capacity to act: the Welsh Government's constitutional commitment to sustainability creates space and momentum for projects such as the one mentioned above and for a growing number of community co-operatives and low-impact housing developments, all of which (and more) offer diverse imaginaries of the future.

Through these case studies I contribute to ideas about the role of utopianism in society, and I also consider the possibility that, for some, 'dystopia is now' - and that it must be confronted as such before we are able to invent the new (Featherstone and Miles, 2014). In exploring these questions I draw on Zygmunt Bauman's theory of Liquid Modernity (2007) and notions that current society has lost its energy and spirit (e.g. Stiegler, 2012). The case studies presented here represent efforts to resist or rework these diagnoses of contemporary society, and are suggestive of an 'imaginary reconstitution of society' (Levitas, 2013).

Adelina Ong 'Multiplicities'

In *The Garden of Forking Paths*, Ts'ui Pên creates a labyrinth/book that creates 'diverse futures', made possible through 'an infinite series of times, in a growing, dizzying net of divergent, convergent and parallel times' (Borges [1941] 1964: 40 - 41). One is simultaneously aware of all alternatives and one's existence in only a fraction of these possibilities. Can one create similar multiplicities of time through urban placemaking performances, and if applied to an official national narrative, how might this generate alternatives and possibilities for 'vulnerable' young people who perceive themselves as excluded from the dominant narrative?

Responding to the themes of 'reimagining time as part of reimagining social life' and how this reimagining shapes agency, this presentation reflects on official narratives of Singapore through the practices of 'breaking' (popularly known as breakdancing) and Art du Déplacement (a form of playful exploration of the city that shares philosophies with parkour or freerunning). Using personal narratives to interrogate established narratives, 'breaking' contests existing 'heroes' and certain decisions that have been portrayed as 'heroic'. Art du Déplacement looks at how one's creative movement and exploration of the city might compose new paths, opening up alternative trajectories and narratives.

Social geographer Doreen Massey defines 'space', as a 'simultaneity of stories so far' and 'place' as 'integrations of space and time' or 'spatio-temporal events'. 'Place' is a part of 'space' which draws our attention more intensely at a particular time (Massey 2005: 130). Individuals immerse themselves in 'place' physically, imaginatively, or both. Edward Soja uses 'Thirdspace' to describe 'a constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances, and meanings' that provides new alternatives, opportunities and possibilities for openness and diversity (Soja 1996: 2, 99). When Edward Soja's *Thirdspace* is read together with Massey's *For Space*: 'Thirdspace' extends beyond 'lived space'. It includes possibilities and alternatives that have not yet been realised, and have not yet been imagined. In this 'Thirdspace', 'place' might include the aspirations that one holds for one's physical interactions with the site and one's relationship with others within this site.

As Singapore turns 50 in 2015, this pecha kucha provocation considers the potential narratives generated through 'breaking' and Art du Déplacement and asks how the multiplicities of narratives made possible through these urban placemaking practices might be realised.

Diletta De Cristofaro 'Post-Apocalyptic Critical Temporalities'

This paper argues that the dystopian post-apocalyptic futures which abound in contemporary post-apocalyptic fictions articulate temporalities critical of the linear, teleological and progressive conception of time at the core of western modernity, a conception which is inherently apocalyptic. In popular parlance the term apocalypse has come to denote a catastrophe of enormous proportions and overwhelming consequences. But apocalypse, from the Greek *apocalyptein*, etymologically means to unveil or to reveal: apocalyptic writings are fictions of historical order, as they seek to make time intelligible, by revealing that the whole course of human history is tending towards a final utopian resolution, a *telos*, which will make sense of everything that happened before. Therefore, the dystopian aftermaths of contemporary post-apocalyptic fiction stand in stark contrast to the utopianism of the traditional apocalyptic paradigm. The relevance of the latter, understood as a totalising explanation of history based on utopian teleology, extends well beyond religion. This paradigm lies at the very core of secular western modernity and its metanarratives, in particular, the ideology of progress. Hardly by chance, it is indiscriminate progress which is implicated in the man-made catastrophes of contemporary post-apocalyptic fiction. The temporalities articulated by these novels are arguably critical of the modern apocalyptic conception of time and expose it as a totalising and deterministic construct deeply enmeshed with power structures, for those who posit a *telos* to history generally conceive of themselves as the only rightful interpreters and agents of this *telos*.

However, by focussing on a specific example of a contemporary post-apocalyptic novel, David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* (2004), this paper also argues that post-apocalyptic critical temporalities serve to foster agency and resistance to the apocalyptic metanarrative. In

Cloud Atlas, Mitchell invites his readers to envision, and act in order to achieve, a more just history in which the purportedly utopian telos of apocalyptic temporality does not end up justifying dystopian oppressions or blinding us to an approaching catastrophe. By relying on the power of fiction to imagine alternatives to the status quo, the novel gives prominence to individual agency as an antidote to the apocalyptic metanarrative, its determinism and the exploitations it supports.

This paper relates to the theme of the symposium, “Utopias, temporalities and futures: critical considerations for social change” in that it explores how novelists, by imagining dystopian post-apocalyptic futures, seek to shape the present and a better future. As Jeanette Winterson writes on her website, “when we challenge ourselves imaginatively, we then use that challenge in our lives. I want *The Stone Gods* [her 2007 post-apocalyptic novel] to be a prompt, but most of all, a place of possibility”, those very possibilities that the deterministic apocalyptic conception of history closes off. Indeed, consonantly with the theme of the symposium, this paper seeks to investigate, and stimulate discussion on, the role of critical temporalities in fostering agency and social transformation. Finally, my contribution to the symposium would offer resources to articulate the relationship between dystopias and utopias.

Darren Webb ‘Pedagogies of Hope and Utopia’

This paper explores the relationship between hope, utopia and critical/radical pedagogy. It focuses in particular on the role(s) that educators and activists can play in developing pedagogies of hope that evoke or inspire the utopian imagination. It is easy here to be lulled into simplistic readings of ‘hope’ and uncritical associations between hope and utopia. The paper seeks to present a constructive critical engagement which challenges three commonplaces:

- the first is that hope and utopia enjoy some kind of privileged relationship – that utopias operate as visions of hope or that hope underpins and drives the utopian impulse. I argue instead that there are different modes of hoping and that while some modes of hoping do underpin and find expression in utopian visions, others

refuse, resist and negate the utopian impulse. There is no intrinsic relationship between hope and utopia.

- the second is the idea that we live in unhopeful times; that neoliberal hegemony has placed hope under threat and that we have lost a vocabulary of hope. I argue instead that hope abounds under the reign of neoliberalism. In order to reproduce itself capitalism requires that individuals study, sell their labour power, consume, save and invest. The reproduction of capitalist relations of production requires that individuals possess hope. Hope is central to the collective cognitive-emotional orientation of advanced capitalist societies.
- the third concerns 'pedagogies of hope'. The phrase 'pedagogy of hope' is very much associated with critical theory – one thinks instantly of Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux or bell hooks. A common argument goes along the lines of: we live in unhopeful times, hope is under threat, we need to develop a pedagogy of hope to rekindle the utopian imagination. Care needs to be taken here, however, for just as there is no intrinsic relationship between hope and utopia, there is nothing inherently radical or subversive about hope or a hope-driven pedagogy. As I highlight during the course of the paper, pedagogies of hope can serve to reproduce social relations as well as to transform them.

The paper will explicitly raise for discussion the following questions: can 'hope' be regarded as a progressive force, a force aligned with resistance, change and the struggle for a better future? And what scope is there for educators and activists to develop 'pedagogies of hope' that operate as pedagogies of possibility, utopian pedagogies of radical futurity?

Gary Winship 'Utopia & Only Children – revolutionary family planning'

In his chapter; 'Of Their Traffic' Thomas More proposed measures for economic sustainability arguing that the size of families should be limited and that there should be forceful removal of children when families became too large. He also called for enforced population migration where areas became over crowded. This paper will grasp the nettle of burgeoning popular growth on our planet, and will reflect on the Utopian project of family

planning in China over the last 40 years. With an estimated 5 million only children in the UK, 20 million in the United States and 300 million in China, there is considerable impetus to make sense of the lives of only children across the globe, and especially in China where a radical and controversial plan to limit population growth was introduced in the late 70s. How much has the one-child policy in China contributed to the astonishing economic success? Can family planning in highly populated countries produce considerable economic security? But at what cost? While there is some evidence that only children might have motional resilience, and might even be happier during childhood than other children with siblings, is this happiness quotient maintained into adulthood? Research points to aspects of being an only child which leads to isolation and loneliness, especially into old age. This paper is based on GW's experience of visiting China on three occasions and his research exploring the trials and tribulations of only children which are referred to as 'Oneliness'. As we start to think more deeply about only children we must consider how only children are presented in the arts and popular culture. This presentation will focus on the iconography of only children, and look at popular depictions of only children, both in the work of Chinese artists as well as Western artists. And what do Chinese only children make of only children in the West?

Paper and roundtable

Temporalities

20th May 11.30, Council Room

Elena Fell 'Temporal Rhythms and Social Inclusion' (Paper)

This paper will focus on the link between ethics and time—a theme that has not been sufficiently developed so far.

Just as people differ in their physical characteristics and their aptitudes, they also differ in the way they negotiate time. Some of us do things faster or slower than others, and Bergson reflects on this stating that temporal rhythm is an important characteristic of human consciousness. He describes consciousness as “a duration with its own determined rhythm, a duration very different from the time of the physicist, which can store up, in a given interval, as great a number of phenomena as we please.”

Each instance of “duration” is different, as everyone’s consciousness operates at different rhythms: “In reality there is no one rhythm of duration; it is possible to imagine many different rhythms which, slower or faster, measure the degree of tension or relaxation of different kinds of consciousness and thereby fix their respective places in the scale of being.”

However, society implicitly assumes that humans’ temporality, their perception of time and their capability to operate at standardised rates is or should be the same for all able-bodied individuals. Failure to fit in with the standardised rhythms of societal engagement can lead to social exclusion in the form of, for example, a timed exam failure or a job loss (if one cannot keep up with the pace).

It is implicitly assumed that acting in accordance with externally prescribed rhythms is in principle achievable via training. Those who do not acquire the necessary skills of time management are not accommodated by society unless they have a disability that warrants

“reasonable adjustments”, which may include allowing the individual more time to complete a particular process.

But if some minds naturally operate at a faster rate, and some at a slower rate, then making someone’s natural rhythms fit in the procrustean bed of the standardized societal tempo that significantly differs from their own could be traumatic for some and unfeasible for others.

Should people be excluded from work or education on the basis of the way they negotiate time? Everyone will say no to this, but what the consequences would be if we decided not to do this – what would that mean for the practical norms and rules of social interaction?

Researching this type of question would link ethics with the fundamental ontology of human being, inasmuch as temporality is irreducible from human existence and human actions. This discussion would directly correspond to the proposed theme “The role of time in social inclusion and exclusion” and provide an entry point into a wider thematic linking time and ethics.

Albert Mayr ‘A Social Time Sculpture’ (Roundtable)

The workshop is based on the diagnosis that contemporary Western civilization is severely limiting our ability of imagining satisfying individual and collective temporalities. Alexander Mitscherlich has emphasized the importance of fantasy in shaping human relations

If we are not, or rather no longer, capable of imagining gratifying and non-conflictual temporal structures for our actions and interactions for a limited time span ahead of us, there is little chance that we may conceive of future times in a creative way.

The object of the structuring process are the temporal parameters of the participants' verbal statements. The procedures employed are very similar to those used in musical composition.

It is usually suggested that the subject of the statements be the everyday experience and use of time, in both the positive and conflictual aspects.

According to the time allotted to the workshop we create and perform different versions. In the initial version we adopt the conventional means for organizing time: the order of succession of the statements follows the spatial arrangement of the participants and each participant is allocated the same duration for his/her statement (which he/she may 'fill' as much as he/she wants or leave 'empty').

In the following versions we work on the parameters of succession (where would you like to be in the series?); then on duration (how long would you like your statement to be?); sound-to-silence-ratio (choose a model for inserting periods of silence in your statement); from monologues to dialogues (two or more participants share one time unit).

For all these versions we draw a graphic score, perform and discuss it. By combining the various parameters we gradually arrive at giving the round-tables a distinct formal-musical, yet functional quality.

The workshop ends with a collectively created and performed verbal composition.

