Program

Day 1 – Wednesday 25 March 2015

6.00 – 7.15  CATASTROPHIC FUTURES? 2050 AND BEYOND
INCONVERSATION WITH PROFESSOR JOHN URRY
AND PROFESSOR DEBORAH LUPTON

Bradley Forum
University of South Australia
Level 5, Hawke Building
City West Campus
Free and open to the public

7.15 – 8.30  WELCOME EVENT

Kerry Packer Civic Gallery
University of South Australia
Level 3, Hawke Building
City West Campus
Delegates and invited guests only

Day 2 – Thursday 26 March 2015

8.30 – 9.00  REGISTRATION

Jeffrey Smart Meeting Room (JS6-13)
University of South Australia
Level 6, Jeffrey Smart Building
City West Campus

SESSION 1

9.00 – 9.15  Welcome
Professor Anthony Elliott
University of South Australia

9.15 – 10.30  KEYNOTE ADDRESS
Wicked problems and catastrophic futures
Professor John Urry
Lancaster University
Chair: Professor Anthony Elliott

10.30 – 11.00  MORNING TEA BREAK
SESSION 2

11.00 – 12.30  **Technofutures and Everyday Practices**
Can women and men develop adequate skills to cope with, and react to, our likely techno futures?

**Skill development for future environments**
Dr David Bissell, Australian National University

**Data doubles and digital data practices in the age of lively data**
Professor Deborah Lupton, University of Canberra

**3D printing and friction in offshored manufacturing**
Dr Thomas Birtchnell, University of Wollongong

Chair: Dr Eric Hsu

12.30 – 1.30  **LUNCH BREAK**

SESSION 3

1.30 – 2.45  **Roundtable Discussion: IT and Digital Media Futures**
The panel will consider the future consequences of rapidly changing technology and examine what this means for society and social relations.

**Panellists**
Professor Anthony Elliott, University of South Australia
Professor Deborah Lupton, University of Canberra
Professor John Urry, Lancaster University
Dr Daniel Chaffee, University of South Australia

2.45 – 3.15  **AFTERNOON TEA**

3.15 – 4.30  **Roundtable Discussion: Building Sustainable Futures**
The panel will consider how a sustainable future can be best realised.

**Panellists**
Professor Deo Prasad, University of New South Wales
Associate Professor Chris Riedy, University of Technology Sydney
Professor Jon Barnett, University of Melbourne
Dr Kathryn Davidson, University of South Australia

7.00 – 9.00  **WORKSHOP DINNER**

**Citi Zen Restaurant**
401 King William Street
Adelaide  SA 5000
*Delegates and invited guests only*
Day 3: Friday 27 March 2015

SESSION 5

9.00 – 10.30  **Perceiving Climate Change Futures**
How are climate change futures perceived and what affect do these perceptions have?

- The growing unpredictability of climate disasters – implications for future resilience
  Dr Constance Lever Tracy, University of South Australia/Flinders University

- Perceiving climate change futures
  Dr Joseph Reser, Griffith University

- Destiny and autonomy in the Anthropocene
  Dr Aidan Davison, University of Tasmania

10:30 – 11:00  **MORNING TEA BREAK**

SESSION 6

11.00 – 12.30  **Optimistic or Pessimistic Futures**
How or why should we be optimistic or pessimistic about the future?

- Beautiful waste
  Professor Brendan Gleeson, University of Melbourne

- Optimism, pessimism and ambivalence
  Dr John Cash, University of Melbourne

- Unpicking visions of the future
  Dr Kristin Alford, University of Adelaide/Bridge 8

12.30 – 1.00  **Closing comments**

- Professor John Urry, Lancaster University
- Professor Anthony Elliott, University of South Australia
KEYNOTE ADDRESS
Wicked problems and catastrophic futures
Professor John Urry, Lancaster University

Are major problems in the contemporary world to be viewed as ‘wicked’? What are likely futures involving wicked combinations of social-and-material processes? What is the likelihood that such futures will be ‘catastrophic’? And how do we anticipate such unknowable complex futures? This talk will address these questions in the context of energy/environment/climate processes.

Skill development for future environments
Dr David Bissell, Australian National University

This paper uses theories of habit to critically examine the issue of skill development. It turns to the everyday practice of commuting to consider how embodied skills, rather than being always at-hand, can wax and wane for people over time. Drawing on qualitative fieldwork undertaken with commuters in Sydney, it puts Bourdieu’s influential work on the topic into conversation with alternative theories of habit by Ravaisson, Dewey and Malabou. The paper makes two key points. The first is that we need a better appreciation of the always-in-transition nature of skill development. The second is that we need a better appreciation of how our environments can affect skills in powerful ways. In the context of preparing for future digital skill requirements, the paper concludes by showing how such unpredictability presents exciting opportunities as well as challenges for policymakers, researchers and industry.

Data doubles and digital data practices in the age of lively data
Professor Deborah Lupton, University of Canberra

In this paper I explore the concepts of data doubles and data practices. Data doubles are personalised profiles or assemblages that are configured when digital data are generated about individuals, groups or institutions. I am interested in how people respond to and make sense of their data doubles in an era in which such data are lively in a number of ways. First, these data are about life itself. Second, they are dynamic, constantly being configured and reconfigured as people interact with online technologies and circulated and repurposed by a multitude of different actors and agencies. Third, these data have become an influential part of everyday lives, affecting beliefs and behaviours and increasingly, people’s life chances via the inferences that are developed from predictive analytics.

3D printing and friction in offshored manufacturing
Dr Thomas Birtchnell, University of Wollongong

This paper examines how the demand for time-space compression in response to friction in international trade is positioning 3D printing at the forefront of a pending socio-technical transition. Reporting from a fly-on-the-wall research stall at the 2014 London 3D Print Show this paper inquires whether 3D printing is indeed a
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‘disruptive’ innovation likely to change or even reverse processes of comparative advantages, offshoring and capital flight that have typified manufacturing in the twenty-first century. Despite scepticism that 3D printing can substitute for current systems of manufacturing there is considerable hype that it will emerge as a catalyst for a transition to a new order in manufacturing wherein mass-consumption technologies become ubiquitous. Many assessments focus on whether the niche technologies now used in pre-production model making, known as ‘rapid prototyping’, will emerge into the mainstream for making final end-user products. As a potential tool for users to make their own objects, 3D printing promises a realignment of international trade and its dimensions: global production networks, free trade, containers, logistics, planned obsolescence and consumerism.

The growing unpredictability of climate disasters – implications for future resilience
Dr Constance Lever-Tracy, University of South Australia/Flinders University

Locally unprecedented and unpredicted natural disasters are already becoming manifest, and will increase in frequency and intensity, around the globe, as climate change advances. Accelerating warming, shifting weather systems and poorly understood tipping points can undermine the relevance of both local experience and expert knowledge. Transnational assistance can be equally unprepared or inappropriate (as illustrated by the introduction of disease into Haiti by UN forces). External aid, when it ignores local knowledge and undermines local initiative, can reduce further the ability to respond to worsening future disasters. However, few communities and nations, even the wealthy, have the resources or experience to cope quickly with novel challenges without help or advice. Can responding to these seemingly contradictory needs, for external aid and knowledge and for local experience, empowerment and resilience, coexist? Could modern communications facilitate networking between localities in different parts of the world, to learn and teach their novel experiences?

Perceiving climate change futures
Dr Joseph Reser, Griffith University

The presentation brings a psychological perspective to the session theme, addressing matters of environmental risk perception and appraisal, the nature and compass of ‘climate change’ and its associated risk domain, responses to the social representation of the phenomenon of climate change, individual as contrasted with societal levels of analysis, direct versus virtual exposure and experience, objective versus subjective risk and vulnerability, internal environment processes of sense making and psychological adaptation, and crucial mediating roles of current psychological impacts of the ongoing threat of climate change. There exist ostensible limits (temporal, geographic, psychological, phylogenetic) to individual and public understandings and imaginings of a profound and ‘distant’ global threat such as climate change. But such arguments are countered by the ubiquitous experiential and existential reality of climate change, and widespread psychological, social, and societal impacts in the human landscape associated with the ongoing threat and unfolding physical environmental impacts of climate change.
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Destiny and the autonomy in the Anthropocene
Dr Aidan Davison, University of Tasmania

Narratives of the Anthropocene have become central to the perception of climate change futures. These stories are typically modernist, building upon traditions that perceive a deep split between the realms of nature and culture. For some, the Anthropocene marks the death of nature and the birth of a human Earth; a conclusion that variously provokes celebration or mourning. For others, the Anthropocene marks the opportunity for humanity to fulfill nature’s destiny by becoming the prime instrument of evolution. In either case, time is thought to be ruptured, with the future broken from the past. Dystopian and utopian imaginaries thrive in this rupture. Although the Anthropocene seemingly asserts that the future lies with human choices, the present seems intractable. Interconnected growth of human population, economy, consumption and waste appears to be the only given of the twenty-first century on a planet growing strange. These narratives paradoxically exaggerate human agency and undermine the political conditions needed for its expression.

Beautiful waste
Professor Brendan Gleeson, University of Melbourne

An urban age has been declared and honked by global institutions and in expert commentary. Triumphalism abounds. To be sure, the urbanisation project that has been central to modernisation has reached new ebb of species’ significance. And yet, despite the insouciance of expertise, the new urban preponderance also marks a dangerous unravelling of human prospect. The testimonies of manifest environmental, social and economic defaults struggle to be heard above the chorusing of the urban age. ‘The Horsemen of the Apocalypse’ (Žižek) are the unheeded town criers of an endangered modernity. Hannah Arendt had faith in the human capacity for renewal, even in the face of the gravest epochal dangers. Acknowledging the immense unchecked threat of climate change, science has recently reset the Doomsday Clock, two minutes closer to midnight. The awful ‘next world’ foreseen by Lovelock is already upon us. Arendtian natality seems absent in the arid post-political order of global capitalism. The ‘dark natalities’ of neo-liberalism, austerity governance and anti-science suggest a species death wish that even Arendt did not anticipate. What are the grounds for any optimism at all? Perhaps only by embracing the certainty of destruction can a future be entertained.

Optimism, pessimism and ambivalence
Dr John Cash, University of Melbourne

Societies (almost) beyond oil, societies confronting the mega-hazards of the risk society, societies in which ontological security is radically challenged – some combination of these features of late modernity are already impacting and we can expect harsher impacts over time. Given this situation, what forms of both psychic life and cultural organisation would support optimism in such troubled times? The major challenge confronting those of us living in the current “interesting times” is to find a way to dwell in ambivalence without reaching for ready-made certainties. We need to achieve what the poet, John Keats, termed “negative capability”; the capacity to
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resist the lure of ready-made certainties and, instead, dwell in ambivalence. In this paper I will sketch in the main features of psychic life and cultural formations that would support this capacity for creative and constructive ambivalence, without resort to splitting and projection and reliance on the ever more dangerous certainties of the friend-enemy distinction and the “other-ing” and exclusivism it promotes.

Unpicking visions of the future
Dr Kristin Alford, University of Adelaide/Bridge 8

A vision is a powerful invitation to create a different world. Visions can inspire, or they can frighten - our response to such visions determines our outcomes in the long term. This presentation will examine perspectives of optimism and pessimism and weigh their effectiveness in helping us act.
Participants

**Kristin Alford** is a futurist and founding Director of Bridge8. She established Bridge8 in 2004 following careers in engineering, human resources, strategy and product development for companies including BHP Billiton, Ansett-Air New Zealand, the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria and Nanotechnology Victoria. Kristin holds a PhD in process engineering and a Masters of Management in Strategic Foresight.

**Jon Barnett** is a political geographer whose research examines the impacts of and responses to environmental change on social systems. This includes research on vulnerability and adaptation to climate change with a particular focus on conflict, cultures, mobility, and peace. In recent years he has conducted fieldwork in Australia, China, the Marshall Islands, Niue, and Tuvalu. Jon is Lead Author of the Human Security chapter in the most recent IPCC Assessment Report, and he co-edits the journal *Global Environmental Change*.

**David Bissell** is Senior Lecturer and ARC DECRA award holder in sociology at the Australian National University. He combines qualitative research on embodied practices with social theory to explore the social, political and ethical consequences of mobile lives. His current project is investigating how commuting in Sydney affects people’s sense of self, their relations with others, their job and their sense of place in the city. He is an editor of *Stillness in a Mobile World* (Routledge, 2011) and *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Routledge, 2014). His forthcoming book is *Commuting Life: mobilities, experiences, transformations* (Routledge, 2016). He is on the editorial board of *Mobilities*.

**Thomas Birtchnell** is a Lecturer in Geography and Sustainable Communities at the University of Wollongong. Previously he has held research positions in the Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University and the Centre for Corporate Change, UNSW. Dr Birtchnell’s books include the monographs *Indovation: Innovation and a Global Knowledge Economy in India* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) and 3D Printing for Development in the Global South: The 3D4D Challenge (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) co-authored with William Hoyle. His edited books include *Elite Mobilities* co-edited with Javier Caletrio (Routledge, 2014) and the forthcoming *Cargomobilities: Moving Materials in a Global Age* (Routledge, 2015) co-edited with Satya Savitzky and John Urry. He has published articles in the journals *Consumption, Markets & Culture, Area, Marketing Theory, Futures, Mobilities, Journal of Transport Geography, Contemporary South Asia and South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*. In 2013 he was awarded the Wiley-Blackwell Publishers *Area Journal* Prize for ‘New Research in Geography’.

**John Cash** is a social theorist with a particular interest in the incorporation of psychoanalytic theory into social and political analysis. He is a Fellow at the University of Melbourne, where, formerly, he was Deputy Director of the Ashworth Program in Social Theory. His publications include *Identity, Ideology and Conflict* (Cambridge 1996 & 2010), *Footy Passions*, co-authored with Joy Damousi, (UNSW Press, 2009) and a series of articles and chapters that draw critically on social and psychoanalytic theory in order to develop novel approaches to the analysis of social relations, subjectivity and entrenched political and ethnic conflict. He has also written, recently, on conflict and change in Northern Ireland; Freud, Newton and sublimation; “Waiting for Godot”; Freud’s Ratman case and issues of sovereignty in a postcolonial world; Negotiating insecurity; International relations theory and psychoanalysis; a psychoanalytic reading of Milgram’s obedience to authority.
Participants

study; and theories of ideology. In 2013 he was a Visiting Professor at Sorbonne Paris II, Pantheon-Assas. He is an editor of the Journal of Postcolonial Studies and is affiliated with the Graduate Program in Political Psychology at the University of California-Irvine.

**Daniel Chaffee** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Hawke Research Institute at the University of South Australia. His research focus is in social theory, networks, and globalization. He is the co-editor with Charles Lemert, Anthony Elliott and Eric Hsu of *Globalization: A Reader* (Routledge, 2010) and with Sam Han of *The Race of Time: The Charles Lemert Reader* (Paradigm, 2009). His work has appeared in *International Journal of Japanese Sociology*, *The Handbook of Identity Studies* (Routledge, 2011) and *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

**Kathryn Davidson** is a Senior Lecturer, Urban and Regional Planning, University of South Australia. Kathryn teaches urban economics, and research interest in urban political ecology, and urban sustainability. Kathryn has held an ARC post-doctoral fellow, and was elected to the board of the International Society of Ecological Economics for two terms.

**Aidan Davison** is a Senior Lecturer in human geography and environmental studies at the University of Tasmania. The author of *Technology and the Contested Meanings of Sustainability* (SUNY Press) and over fifty journal articles and book chapters, Aidan is fascinated and troubled by interdisciplinary questions of sustainability that arise at the intersection of themes of nature, culture and technoscience. His theoretical and qualitative research has covered many topics such as suburban history, urban planning, urban natures, human-nonhuman relations, environmental movements, and climate change.

**Anthony Elliott** is Director of the Hawke Research Institute, where he is Research Professor of Sociology at the University of South Australia. He is also currently Visiting Professor of Sociology at the Open University UK, and Visiting Professor of Sociology at University College Dublin, Ireland. He is Visiting Fellow at the Long Room Hub, Trinity College Dublin, and holds a Visiting Professorship at the Graduate School of Human Relations, Keio University, Japan. Professor Elliott is a prominent social theorist, sociologist and public intellectual. He is the author and editor of some 40 books, which have been translated or are forthcoming in over a dozen languages. His books include *Social Theory and Psychoanalysis in Transition*, *Psychoanalytic Theory: An Introduction*, *Subject To Ourselves*, *The Mourning of John Lennon*, *Critical Visions*, *Social Theory Since Freud*, *The New Individualism* (with Charles Lemert), *Making The Cut: How Cosmetic Surgery is Transforming Our Lives*, *Mobile Lives* (with John Urry), *On Society* (with Bryan S. Turner), *Contemporary Social Theory: An Introduction, and Reinvention*. He is best known for *Concepts of the Self*, which has been in continuous print for over 20 years and across three editions. Professor Elliott is a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.

**Brendan Gleeson** is Director of the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute at the University of Melbourne. He came from the position of Deputy Director of the National University of Ireland’s National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis. Prior to that he set up the Urban Research Program at Griffith University and was its inaugural Director. Professor Gleeson has made significant scholarly contributions in urban and social policy, environmental theory and policy, and is a regular commentator in newspapers, television...
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and radio. He has qualifications in geography and urban planning, including a masters degree from the University of Southern California and a PhD from the University of Melbourne. Professor Gleeson is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Social Sciences. He is the author or editor of thirteen books, three of which have won national and international prizes, and numerous journal articles. His latest books are *The Urban Condition* (Routledge, 2014) and *The Public City: Essays in Honour of Paul Mees* (MUP, 2014).

**Eric L. Hsu** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Hawke Research Institute at the University of South Australia. His main area of research revolves around the emerging sociological study of sleep, but he also maintains a strong research interest in the sociology of time (e.g., social acceleration, time shortage). In addition to being a co-editor of *Globalization: A Reader* (Routledge, 2010), his work has recently appeared in *Time and Society*, the *Journal of Sociology*, *Health Sociology Review*, *Media International Australia*, and the *Handbook of Social and Cultural Theory* (Routledge, 2014).

**Constance Lever-Tracy** has a BA (SOC) from the LSE (1962) and a PhD from Flinders University (1984), where she lectured from 1991-2009. She then retired with adjunct status. In 2013 she joined the Hawke Research Institute, UniSA as a research fellow. In recent years she has increasingly focussed on climate change and society. She is an expert referee for the IPCC, has edited *The Routledge Handbook of Climate Change and Society* (2010), and authored Routledge 'Shortcuts' *Confronting Climate Change* (2011) and 'Global warming' in the *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (2008).


**Deo Prasad** is Scientia Professor, AO FTSE. He is an international authority on sustainable buildings and cities. Deo won the 2006 Royal Australian Institute of Architect’s National Education Award for contribution to ‘sustainability education, research and design’. In 2004 he won the NSW State Government’s individual GreenGlobe Award for ‘showing leadership and commitment to the supply of renewable energy’. He has also won the Federal Government’s national award for ‘outstanding contribution to energy related research’. He is a regular contributor to debate in this area in local and international media. Deo is the Chief Investigator and CEO of the newly established CRC for Low Carbon Living (which is funded at $104m over seven years). This is the largest ever industry-government-professions-research collaboration in Australia and is leading to transformative impacts in the built environment sector. He also is one of the Sydney Ambassadors (Business Events NSW) with special focus on promoting Sydney as a destination for high end environmental-scientific events. In 2014 he was awarded the Outstanding Alumni Award for contribution in the field of sustainability by UNSW. In 2014 Deo has been awarded the Order of Australia by the Governor General of Australia for services to sustainability and renewable energy through his research and for extensive international community work.
Participants

Joseph Reser holds appointments at Griffith University (Psychology) and University of Queensland (Architecture), and as Emeritus Reader at Durham University. He is an environmental and social psychologist with research, teaching, and consulting experience across Australia, interspersed with academic appointments in the U.S., Canada, and England. A career focus has been the social representation and public response to environmental threat. Current research involved comprehensive national surveys in Australia examining risk perceptions, understandings, and psychological adaptation to ‘climate change’. Joseph worked with the APA Taskforce on Climate Change in distilling and communicating crucial environmental risk, psychosocial change, and impact work, and is a contributing author to the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5).

Chris Riedy is an Associate Professor and Director of the Higher Degree Research Program at the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney. He has particular expertise in climate change response, futures thinking, environmental communication and sociocultural change processes. He is the President of the Climate Action Network Australia, a Senior Research Fellow of the Earth System Governance project, a member of the Australasian Node of the Millennium Project and a member of the International Environmental Communication Association. Chris has published 33 peer-reviewed articles, one book and more than 50 research reports. He writes a blog on living within planetary boundaries called Planetcentric (http://chrisriedy.me).

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