



Art, Ethics and Deliberative Engagement with Climate Change Futures

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Art + Anthropocene

Culture, Climate and Our Changing Planet

- Virtual Seminar Series, March 8th 2021

School of **Social Sciences, Humanities & Law**

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Jumping off points

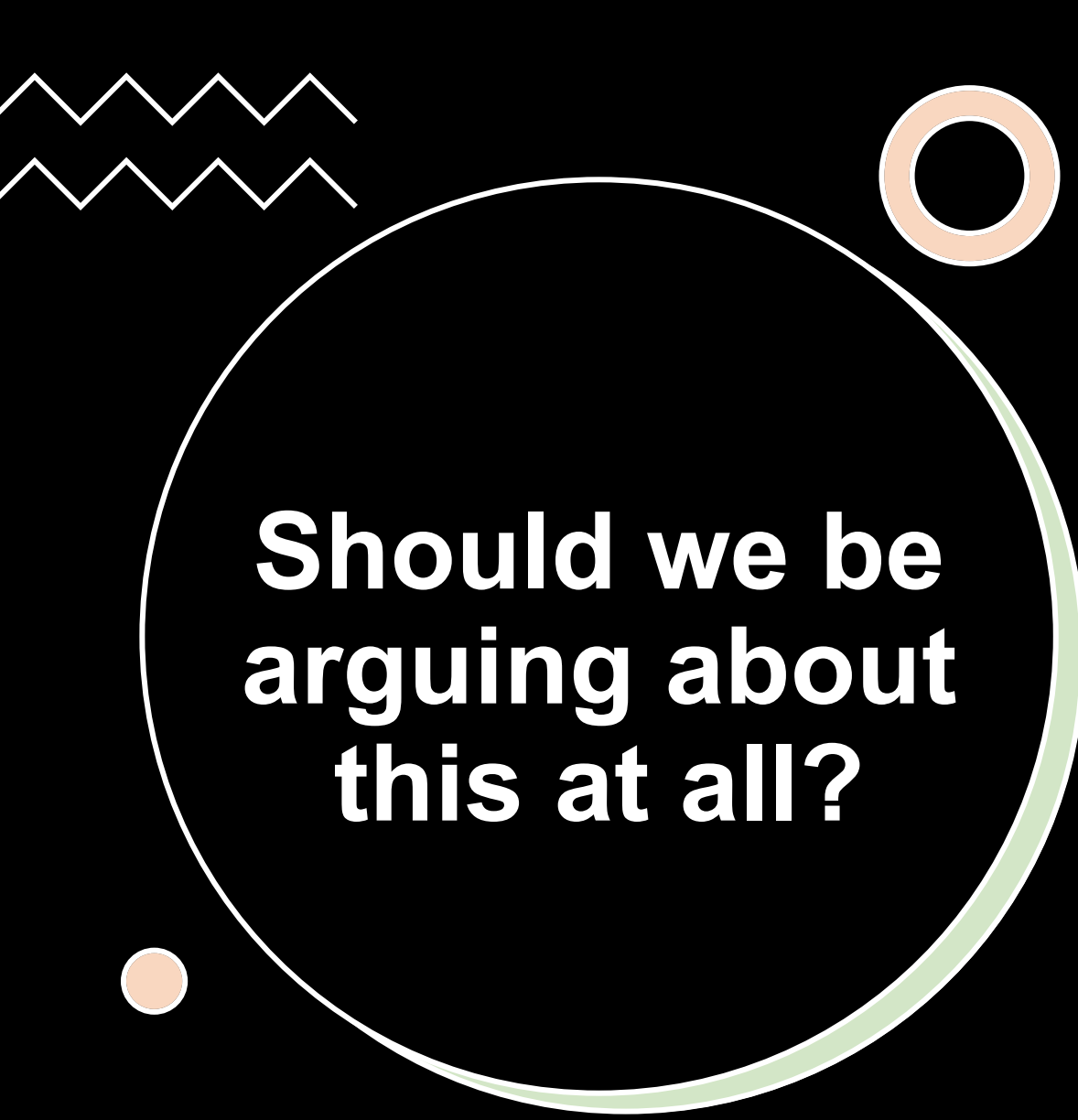
- Prof Doyle Keynote from last week - FutureCoast Youth and Cli-Mates projects.
- Gendered intersection of politics of care verses depersonalised stories from the end of late capitalism.
- Art as both process and outcome of deliberative engagement with a complex personal and political issue.
- In this presentation I did something very similar – though with a specific emphasis upon intergenerational equity and *moral imagination*.

The problem of future generations


- Brundtland definition – obligations to future generations
- **Threshold response** – obligation to ensure the absence of harm in the future.
- Debate over the specifics of such obligations
- Are rights more valuable? **Rights are reciprocal.**
- **Non-identity problem** – actions today create different future people
- Parfit's “**no difference view**” – no practical difference whether the size and composition of future generations depend upon our present decision.
- The **discount problem** – future lives valued less than current lives
- **Anthropocentric-versus-biocentric** values
- **Extrinsic-versus-intrinsic** valuation of nature

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Should we be arguing about this at all?

- Environmental pragmatism – concern with application of philosophy to environmental protection
 - John Dewey – concerned with shifting moral habits
 - Dramatic rehearsal – a method for ethical justification involving moral empathy, imagination and ‘trying on’ potential futures.
 - No instructions on how to do this!
 - Leaves room for methodological innovation
 - Empirical ethics
 - Ethical tools
- 



**Unique
opportunity
– a student
festival of
social
science**

- 4 days of activities with students, funding from the Toyota Foundation New Values for Society research programme
- Working with Paul Evans – local community artist in Sheffield
- Four aims:
 - To build moral imagination
 - Empathy for those affected in the future
 - A way to model or the future to help us understand the challenges faced
 - To think through the consequences and think up some solutions



Day 1 and 2

- Focus on moral imagination
- Group of 60 split into two – a high emissions scenario and a low one.
- Facilitated session using creative techniques including drawing, collage, cartooning and modeling, to visualise, design and construct a variety of imaginary ‘future worlds’.
- Model an individual ‘avatar’ and spend time mapping out the resources under the given scenario




Different materials and methods

- A) FOOD/LAND USE (Drawing) – draw the food and design the crops/ livestock that will provide this food.
- B) SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT (Construction): design and construct 'future dwellings' for your avatars.
- C) ECOLOGY (Model making): define the natural organisms that will co-inhabit your future world.
- D) NATURAL RESOURCES (Collage and cartooning): explore and develop natural resources for the future world



Day 2

- A mapping exercise.
- To develop a serious game approach.
- Maps based on the previous topics and materials are put into the map.
- The map acts as a guide for future generations.
- The resilience/adaptive capacity of the planning is then tested against various contingencies by the roll of the dice. As time progressed the odds changed, with greater changes in the high emissions scenario.



Day 3 and 4

- Day 3 Research + focus group activities.
- Qualitative data collection
- Day 4 – artefact creation that represents
- A reflection on changing environmental conditions, a behaviour change program, new technology platform, policy programme – or some combination of any of these.
- Reflective video, policy briefing papers, poster. Use of the existing materials.

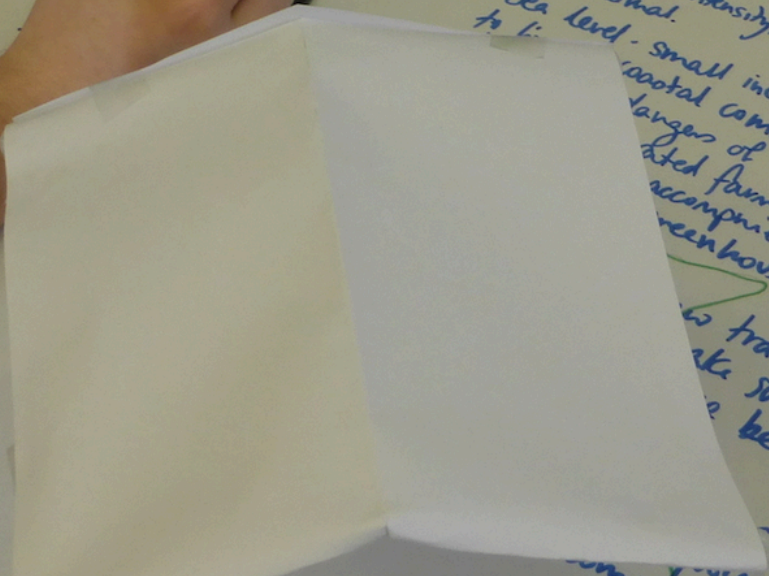
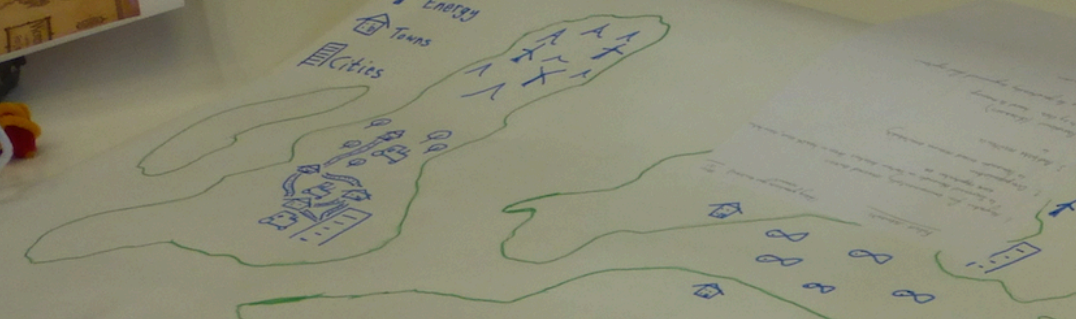
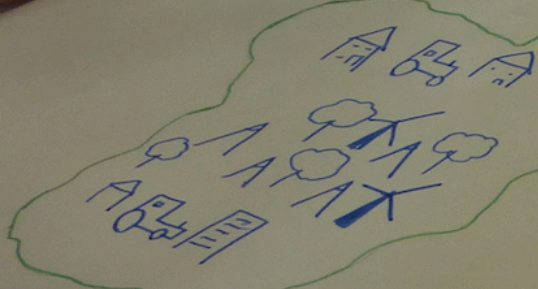




All Members
 Trees
 Energy
 Towns
 Cities
 Farms

CONCEPTS

- Population decrease - global awareness of future demands so cities etc. decrease in size.
- Increasing intensity extreme events - Re-settlement to move from harm e.g. not living as close to the coast to be more protected from storms.
- Renewable energy increase - replace greenhouse shifting resources - move to areas with good renewable availability e.g. high solar and intensity, windy, suitable topography, geothermal.
- Sea level - small increases. No longer able coastal communities / move away dangers of vulnerability.
- Adapted farm systems - most accompanied (geographically) greenhouses added
- to transport such long between





Headline findings

- Similar to Doyle's research – gendered solution space between behaviour change, social and technological solutions.
- The “ecstasy and agony of future technology” – the sense of longing and uncertainty that comes from future technological advance – nuclear fusion, artificial bees, underground/underwater dwellings, ‘arks’, modular laboratories.
- Emphasis upon anthropocentric problems and solutions – the framing of the activities places people at the centre – crowding out biocentric perspectives.
- Charismatic fauna – especially bees.
- Focus upon energy generation technologies as technological fixes. Less emphasis upon transport, land use or energy use (buildings, commodities, internet services).



Headline findings

- **Modularity, mobility and flexibility** - smaller scale, faster to deploy, decentralised. Ethos of small is beautiful.
- Pre-dates Thunberg's approach – less emphasis upon low growth/de-growth, barriers to reflection on personal behaviour change and its relationship to collective action – a **responsibility gap**.
- **Changing emotional states** – *the quiet in the room/the buzz of activity*.



Concluding thoughts

- Moral imagination is constrained by habitual thinking
- The combination of creative method, and deliberative approaches can unlock moral imagination – however, participants are often shy in expressing moral positions (fear of offence, fear of exposure).
- Where emphasis is drawn to the practical application of knowledge to policy this focuses discussion upon outcomes – policies, evidence, ‘hard infrastructure’.
- When emphasis is given to “drawing and talking” this brings forward different solutions. Changing the solution space changes the solution (which seems obvious in retrospect). The problem is socially constructed in the context of the activity.
- Dramatic rehearsal can be difficult in a group setting, as the emphasis upon *consensus* can be constraining.



Thank you

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