



THE FUTURE IS NOW:

UTOPIA, DYSTOPIA, AND THE CRISES OF TOMORROW

A CULTURAL DIFFERENCE AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY NETWORK SEMINAR

23rd – 25th May 2018

University Centre at Blackburn College

Call for Papers and Registration:

<http://www.differenceandsolidarity.org/seminars.html>



University Centre at
Blackburn
College



Cultural Difference and Social Solidarity

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SOCIAL SOLIDARITY NETWORK SEMINAR

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In Partnership with, and hosted by,
University Centre at Blackburn College,
Blackburn, Lancashire, UK
23rd – 25th May 2018

Confirmed plenary speakers include:

Professor Johan Siebers, University of Middlesex London

Professor Matthew Pateman, Edge Hill University

The established social-order is changing. The rejection of the neoliberal status quo by populist movements and the dramatic rise in global tensions is testament to the accelerated pace of change. We are, as Mason (2015), and Srinek and Williams (2015) argue, heading into a seemingly indefinable post-capitalist future. A future punctuated by emergent crises. From the introduction of artificial general intelligence and a new work order, to climate change and ecocide, these crises threaten the material conditions of human existence. These are the crises of tomorrow. Crises that stir today.

Harari (2015) outlines a bleak dystopia where humanity is subject to the whims of the machine and where power is centralised in the privileged oases of a techno-elite. Bregman (2017) offers the hope of a possible utopia where labour is a myth and individuals are free from work, destined to pursue their own collective dreams. The path we take tomorrow is mitigated by the choices we make today. Which will it be? Can we salvage fragments of hope from the wreckage of history?

We invite submissions from across disciplines, both within and beyond the academy, to discuss, challenge, and speculate on the possible landscapes of the future. What will it mean to be human in a world defined by crises? Can we harness technological ingenuity to meet the challenges we face, or will we become the victims of our own unrestrained imaginations?

From this broadly defined position, we invite papers that address, but are by no means limited to, the following themes:

Artificial Intelligence, Disruptive Technologies, and the Age of the Machine

- Artificial intelligence in the home, the workplace, and in wider society
- Disruptive technologies, hyper-reality, and the future of the mind
- Virtual and augmented realities
- Ethics and social cohesion in an emergent technopoly
- The role of labour in the age of the machine
- A universal basic income?
- The environmental impact of technological waste

Climate Change, Ecocide, and Sustainable Technologies

- Addressing climate change and the ethics of ecocide
- Developing sustainable technologies
- Energy: policy and practice
- Agriculture and food
- Biotechnology and genetics
- Defining the epoch of the anthropocene and the capitaliocene

A New Politic: Postcapitalism, Distributed Governance, and Social Justice

- Postcapitalist potential and possibility
- New and changing forms of radicalisation
- Distributed governance and the nation state
- Ethics and social justice
- Inequality and disadvantage
- Visions of utopia and dystopia
- Sexuality, gender and the body politic

Special Panel: A Pedagogy of the Future?

- Technology and/in education
- Traditional and critical pedagogies
- The end of the classroom: AI, augmented and virtual realities

- The future of the institution
- Knowledge: ownership, distribution and access
- Tomorrow's student

Other related topics discussing cultural difference and social solidarity are welcome.

Panel suggestions, alternate forms of intellectual presentation and papers (both polished and in progress), which should be aimed at 20 minutes maximum, along with shorter presentations and contributions, are welcomed. We are also keen to promote creative, innovative, and transdisciplinary approaches to research and scholarship. Visual and creative works are also welcomed: curations, readings, exhibits, and multi-modal expositions.

The seminar will be organised around presentations that allow for discussion as well as exposition and roundtable plenaries; CDSS believe that open discussion serves to consolidate presenters' papers, themes, and emerging ideas. It is anticipated that publishing opportunities, for selected articles, will emerge from the seminar.

The CDSS Network:

Cultural Difference and Social Solidarity Network (CDSS) is an international organisation focused broadly on fostering collaboration and debate around the broad issues of difference and solidarity in human societies. The network organises an annual conference, as well as periodic seminars and collaborative projects – see www.differenceandsolidarity.org. It has a particular interest in supporting international research collaboration and younger researchers entering the international stage. The network works towards the development of trans-disciplinary and trans-national understandings of, and interventions in, questions of solidarity and difference. This event is the second collaboration between the CDSS network and the University Centre Blackburn College.

Submissions:

Prospective participants should submit an abstract of no more than 200 words via the online form at www.differenceandsolidarity.org. The deadline for abstract submissions is **Tuesday 10th April 2018**. We operate a rolling programme of considering and accepting paper proposals, as they are submitted, so as to facilitate those who need to apply for funding. We will aim to respond to all

proposals by **Friday 13th April 2018**. Questions should be directed to *Terry McDonough* at the following address: terry.mcdonough@blackburn.ac.uk

Conferences Fees:

The seminar fees (below) include seminar packs, administration, refreshments, two lunches and two evening meals on both the 23rd and the 24th May, 2018. Venue details, menus and special considerations will be distributed before commencement of the event.

Waged/Full time Faculty – £100.00

Postgraduates/Part-time Faculty – £50.00

Accommodation:

Accommodation for the event can be booked by delegates via the following suppliers:

Chimneys Guest House: B&B from £28.00 per night www.chimneys-guesthouse.co.uk (this location is 600 meters walking distance to UCBC)

Premier Inn, Blackburn, Cathedral Quarter, room from £72.00 per night (this location is 900 meters walking distance to UCBC)

Other accommodation also available.

Seminar Organisers:

Terry McDonough, Lecturer in Linguistics, University Centre at Blackburn College, UK

Paul Reynolds, Reader in Sociology and Social Philosophy, Edge Hill University, UK (and co-director, CDSS)