

Rethinking waste

Workshop organisers

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Workshop description

Discussions surrounding the lifetimes of designed 'things' often focus on emotionally durable design, sustainable consumption and design for disassembly all of which fail to fully recognise that the *'waste problem is one of thought and cultural categorisation rather than of materiality'* (Fry & Willis, 1996. p7).

When this is recognised, the question becomes about how can we design emotionally durable products, how products can be disassembled at the end of their lifetime, and how design can encourage practices of repair, care and bricolage. These questions are still found in industrialising and semi-industrialised countries, but increasingly absent in industrialised ones (Strasser, 1999). The objective of this workshop is to provide the opportunity to rethink waste and begin to design in a way that enables this rethinking, by redirecting our current unsustainable trajectories.

Methodology

Participants will be encouraged to explore in more detail the contribution that design has made to selected waste streams, through a process of Cognitive Redirective Mapping (see figure 1). Cognitive Redirective Mapping takes into account the effects of the past on the present and the future that is gathering and coming towards us, as well as the use of design fictions. Waste streams will be traced forward to consider how they will be in the future, as we are increasingly threatened by a changing climate. Alternative futures scenarios will be imagined using what the participants have learnt about the current directionality of waste. Participants will work together in a group to map the histories, present and futures of waste and to develop preferred future scenarios.

The role of longevity will be explored throughout this process in a number of ways. The nature of the cognitive redirective mapping method thinks, in its reflection on the past, present and future in its complexity, in relation to time and longevity. This manifests illustratively, on paper, a relation to longevity that remains at the forefront of participants' minds. Furthermore, in looking to the past the cognitive redirective mapping process will look at how human relationships to material things have changed overtime, how historically there were enduring relationships to material things and in what form these relationships were present. Contrasted with today and the absence of longevity in our relationships with 'things' the cognitive redirective mapping process will look at the future that this behaviour is

taking us towards and, in turn, alternative future scenarios where longevity of 'things' is once again valued.

Participants will finish the workshop with a comprehension of the gaps between the way we currently think about waste and the way we need to think about waste if we are to have a future with a future. From this position participants will be able to begin to develop designs that are able to fill this gap redirecting the way we think about waste. These designs will consider the role of longevity in creating this change. Beyond this, participants will walk away with a process of design thinking-in-action that provides the opportunity for them to deal with increasingly complex social matrices and communicate this effectively to designers and non-designers. The workshop and outcomes will be documented and developed into a paper submitted to journals such as Design Philosophy Papers.

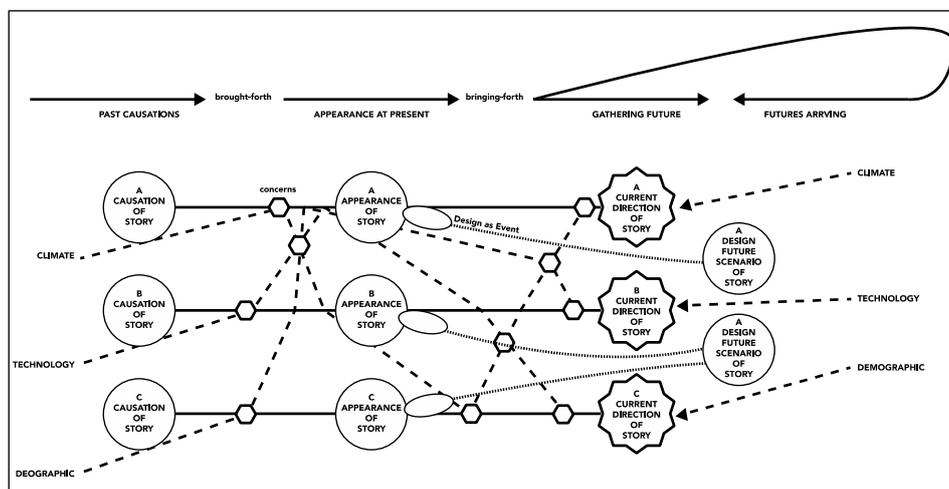


Figure 1 Cognitive Redirective Mapping technique (Schultz, 2015)

References

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