

FuMee V

Invitation and call for papers for the FuMee V workshop to be held 9-10 September 2013 at the College of Management of Technology, Ecole polytechnique fédérale of Lausanne, Switzerland, entitled:

The Discipline of Anticipation: Exploring Key Issues

Futures Studies (FS) includes all the ways to studying, thinking and using the future – ranging from visionary and utopian futures to pop futures, from participatory, critical or integral futures to the technicalities of simulations, formal modeling and forecasting. FS is inclusive. Every aspect, type, and way of including the future within one's analysis, theories or actions is a legitimate component of FS. However, some components of FS are more subject than others to constraints. In particular, the exercises conducted by professional futurists and the formalized transmission of existing knowledge through teaching require forms of accountability that need not constrain the field of FS as a whole – such as responsibility toward clients and students, and basic research. We shall adopt the expression Discipline of Anticipation (DoA) for this subfield of FS. In adopting a “disciplinary” perspective we recognize that FS as whole is a rich and varied field, one that could only be impoverished if confined within the straightjacket of a discipline. For this reason FuMee does not aim to encompass all of FS but rather focuses on those aspects that address the human use of anticipation, either as an applied activity or as a learning process.

As a field of knowledge the DoA can be sustained and improved through scientific effort. Like similar fields of practice and theory of knowledge, such as economics or sociology but also more applied crafts, the field of knowledge provides specific ways of knowing – describing – understanding such activities. Anticipation is pervasive, but there are specific anticipatory processes that can be identified, used, and made the subject of hypothesis testing through experimentation, action-research and a range of other analytical methods. A better understanding of different forms of anticipation is helpful for engaging in economic and sociological analysis, just as theories and practices that help to understand economic and sociological phenomena can clarify aspects of anticipation.

FuMee V will be based on the reference paper here attached. The paper will be considered *as known* by all those wishing to attend FuMee V. Complementary points of view, criticisms and developments, just as related paper or presentation proposals, including on work in progress, are welcome.

Abstract (1 page max) should be submitted to Pierre Rossel (pierre.rossel@epfl.ch) before August 20th, 2013 (extended deadline), response being given within the following days.

Any submission and participation should fit the general working principle of FuMee, the main idea being to have a forum for discussion of work in progress and precisely, through interactions taking place during the workshop, be able to make progress as a group and in our specific endeavors. You will find a description of the idea beyond FuMee at the end of this document (and a more complete one in the website soon to come).

Possible questions and topics (a non exclusive list, just tentative tracks)

- Critical stances to the DoA paper: the authors of the paper make a series of claims which should be debated
- What are the essential differences between optimizing methods and contingency planning?
- The tacit-to-explicit claim: futurists claim that making anticipatory assumptions explicit is one, usually efficient, way to setting the stage for reframing and creative exploration that requires the recognition of ignorance as a starting point, however there is a point beyond which making the tacit explicit is impossible, what are the implications for futures studies and futures literacy?
- Disciplines that tackle the future: how are anticipatory schemes designed or used? How can traditional scientific disciplines contribute to enrich the DoA?
- What are the deep properties of novelty?
- What are the main forms of anticipation?
- How can different communities of practice coordinate their ways of using the future?
- What does the notion of traceability mean in a DoA perspective?
- “In the middle”: Can Ba, Junctions, Boundary objects, etc. be considered similar attempts to point out the critical role of negotiation in constructing ways of how to use imaginary futures?
- Detecting and understanding vs. making and transforming?
- Is the DoA best limited to sense making and making sense as contributions or inputs to decision making processes?
- Does the practice of the DoA necessitate the use of collective intelligence?
- Can the capacity dubbed Futures Literacy be assessed on the basis of the mastery of the DoA?

What is FuMee?

FuMee (a playful word based on Futures Meeting but implying that our views of futures are somewhat fogged) aims to develop a disciplined exploration of the future and how the future plays a role in what happens. This means trying to clarify the nature of the future as both an active sense-making force and an anticipatory dimension of the present, with potentially important implications for the decision-making and choice-related questions that are at the heart of our collective actions (and inactions).

FuMee works on the multi-faceted relationship of the present to the past and the future, aiming at unfolding both its visible and latent aspects. As a consequence, we have come to question the common view of “individual”, “linear”, “thin” presents, and began moving towards the ideas of “multiple”, “overlapping”, “thick” presents, unpacking existing perspectives and discovering new ways of setting and traversing the boundaries of the present.

FuMee is focused on basic issues only, leaving discussion of futures methods to other events. The academic and professional aim of FuMee is to pursue critical analysis of the main conceptual components underlying Futures Studies at large and especially the Discipline of Anticipation, as well as the dawning of new, still dimly grasped concepts. The intention of developing a disciplined understanding of the future cannot but rely on the contributions arising from many different fields of knowledge. Therefore FuMee’s efforts, quite naturally, build on the stimulating confrontation of diverse knowledge territories as well as look for most challenging recombinant models across disciplines.

See website: <http://www.fumee.org/>