



FUTURES

NEWSLETTER NO.5
DECEMBER 2022

MEETING IN RADOM & FUTURE OF EUROPE



WHAT'S NEW IN
THE PROJECT?



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Although the end of 2022 is approaching, there is a lot going on in our project, which is why this issue of the newsletter will be a little more extensive. See what has happened in *FUTURES* since September. Oh, and by the way, remember December 2021? Back then, 2022 was the future. Has it met your expectations? Now **the future** is 2023 and the next years. Think about how you can use the future for personal and professional development, and not waste any day of 2023 as in 12 months it will be **the past...** Enjoy!

Bialystok University of Technology
project coordinator



LOES DAMHOF IN TEDxYouthGroningen

Loes Damhof gave a talk for TEDxYouthGroningen, the independent organisation affiliated with TED. The audience consisted of 200 youth, age 15-25. In this short introduction of ten minutes she explains what Futures Literacy is, engages the audience in a short exercise and gives powerful examples.

[Link to the video](#) 



FORESIGHT CONFERENCE ON WAR AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

The Foresight Conference on War and the Future of Europe organized by Visegrad Insight, which is the main Central European platform of debate and analysis that generates future policy directions for Europe and transatlantic partners took place on **15-16 September 2022 in Warsaw**.



During the conference, the report prepared by Visegrad Insight was discussed in detail. It contains four different scenarios which map out how European democratic security will be challenged by 2030 and how to prepare for it. On the next page you will find how the authors of the report summarize the developed scenarios.

SCENARIO 1

LOSING STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

The reluctance of Central and Eastern European countries to upgrade decision-making procedures in the European Union is driven by a fear of being dominated by the leading powers in the block. Their bias is further confirmed by a less-than-declared level of support for Ukraine. Eventually, this attitude backfires and leads to an increased vulnerability of Europe – and the CEE region in particular – to external influences. Europe loses its window of opportunity to build up its long-term resilience towards Russia and requires a continuous strong presence of the US in NATO's Eastern Flank. Hence the EU becomes more of a pawn than an actor in the ongoing global power struggle.

SCENARIO 2

UNITED EUROPEAN PATCHWORK

In the ongoing decade, Europe needs Britain in security, and London seeks to reverse the negative economic impact of the divorce. It is the grounds for moving the reversal of some critical elements of Brexit. Defence and foreign policy are the drivers of change, while Germany's economic strategy changes to prioritise energy independence and new industrial challenges. Britain wants to be part of the EU's defence build-up project while Central Europe moves towards eurozone integration when the subsequent enlargement is imminent. It sets the stage for the EU reinvigorated by the 'new Europe' within a decade.

SCENARIO 3

THE EUROPEAN DEMOGRAPHIC DEAL

The socio-economic challenges of maintaining European prosperity and peace converge with prolonged attacks by Russia on Ukraine and the unyielding support of the West. Taking bold steps to increase European industrial potential to enable further defence buildup, the EU must reckon with growing nationalist sentiments streaming primarily from demographic fears of ageing and dependent segments of the society across the block. To mitigate related risks, the EU launches new ambitious programming to address welfare anxieties and set up a new social peace.

SCENARIO 4

CAREFUL WHAT EU WISH FOR

After the EU opens a treaty change process to address a desire for more democratic legitimacy, a new transnational political movement originating in Central Europe builds up across several countries of the European Union. It exploits some of its institutional flows while climbing to the top of the power structure of the block. Built on the disenfranchised generation's resentments, it transforms the EU's participatory mechanisms into self-defeating tools of disruption. By the decade's end, it fundamentally imperils the EU's goal of building up democratic security as it turns its institutional strength against itself.

More about the initiative and the Visegrad Insight report [HERE](#) and about the conference [HERE](#).

A PARTICIPANT'S AGENCY: FINDING THEIR POTENTIAL IN THE POSSIBILITY OF CHOICE

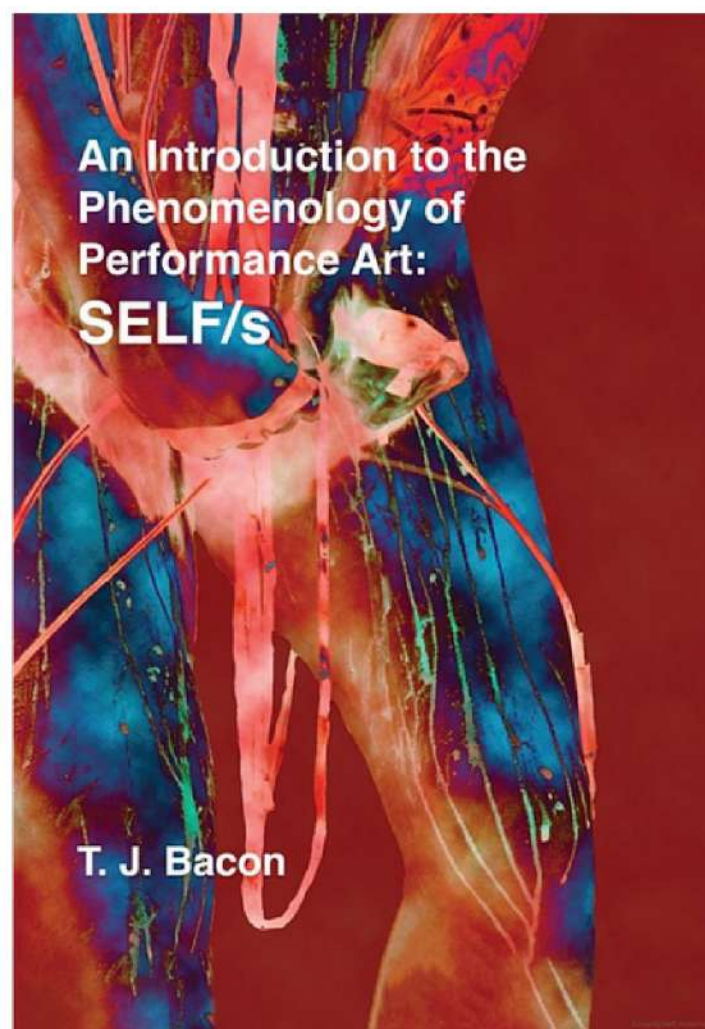
by *Dr T J Bacon*

The traditionally refined and arguably homogenised academic text is the manifestation of normative ableism expressed through the conventions of its written medium. So, whenever I approach formal academic texts I attempt to explore the modality of the writing as a means to activate the words beyond the page. I have an ongoing concern that 'acceptable' traditional academic approaches to research modalities must be challenged as they represent a certain privileged few that should no longer remain the dominant gatekeepers of what is and is not considered as valued thought. Often this prevailing and ignorant view is systemic of micro-aggressive violence against marginalised voices. New and alternative ways of presenting research and collegiately utilising the (currently problematic) blind-peer-review process to celebrate those often excluded from the academic scholarly systems must be fought for! I therefore find myself advocating for the reclamation of the written word, not to be forgotten but to become radically transgressive in the face of a system that violently seeks to homogenise all voices.

Recently I finalised my book **An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Performance Art** which utilises

a multimodal design to empower the reader in how they choose to experience it. Opening the possibility for circular, linear, fractured and non-linear approaches to reading. I designed this as I wanted the book to reflect the transgressive unrepeatable nature of the art-form it was introducing its readers to, as well expand the significance of their active participation as an audience. I wanted to invite a playfulness that would allow the reader to decide upon which mode they may want to read first and in what order. This would expose the phenomenological resonance between artist and spectator that is integral to the shared investment one experiences through performance. Ensuring that the reader could open up the book anywhere to encounter their own unique experience each time without the worry to be right or wrong in the decisions they would make was vital to an introductory text.

Such activation is central to the Middlesex University approach to FUTURES 2020-2023. Building from the success of Intellectual Output 2 (IO2), which focused upon empowering participants abilities to embrace uncertainty, we now move towards IO3.



This tackles how younger workshop participants, in high-school, sixth-form and college, can work to define a professional and personal development strategy. It is therefore vital that our approach to playfulness empowers the participant to make choices that suit them. Like the format of my recent book, we want everyone who encounters workshops from IO3 to have a sense that just because the world can seem to function in one way, it does not mean it has to continue to operate this way.

We have the opportunity to empower a new generation to embrace disruption within the safety of the workshop environment to explore choices that can inform what the future could inclusively become. During the pandemic, communities spoke of a return to normal, but it often felt like ruling hegemonies reminiscing for a status-quo that was inconsiderate of intersectionality or diversity. The marginalised individual in this context would therefore suffers at the hands of normative societal models. It is the hope of Middlesex University's approach to IO3 that we ensure that young people who stand at the crossroads of career decisions can envisage themselves and their communities in positions of significance. That they can identify the skills vital to disrupt the status quo and that they will go on to occupy professional environments at the highest level relative to their vision and their values.

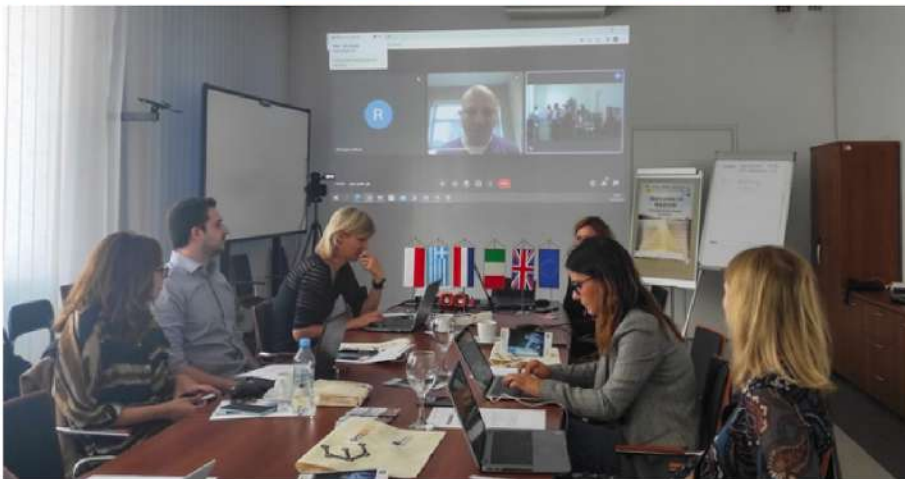
MEETING IN RADOM, POLAND

On October 3-4, 2022 a meeting of the FUTURES project partners took place at the [Łukasiewicz Research Network - Institute for Sustainable Technologies](#) in Radom, Poland.





On the first day of the meeting, the results of the work on the manual *Replay your Futures. Labs for exploring undiscovered pathways* were discussed. The manual, prepared in cooperation with all project partners, is dedicated to groups of project beneficiaries. The meeting was also attended by prof. Rafael Popper - director of the Foresight and International Cooperation Center at the Łukasiewicz Research Network. The guest emphasized the social mission of the project concerning adapting foresight research to the personal and professional development of young people.



The second day of the meeting was devoted to planning the last task to be implemented in the project, the leader of which is Hanze University of Applied Sciences. Activities activating and improving communication in the team and activities related to the dissemination of the project results were also summarized.

PRAXI NETWORK OFFICERS PRESENT A BUSINESS MODEL STRESS-TESTING TOOL FOR SMES

The pandemic and its direct and indirect effects, as well as the recent geopolitical tensions and the potentially upcoming energy and food crises, have exacerbated the challenges faced by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Europe. As SMEs represent the vast majority of businesses in the European Union, their resilience in the face of uncertainty is crucial. For this reason, PRAXI Network, a unit of the Foundation for Research & Technology - Hellas, recently designed a practical "mental tool" to help SMEs think explicitly about their capacity to handle change.

The so-called "FutureProofing" mental tool is informed by published academic research in business model stress-testing and best practices in strategic foresight and aims at highlighting functional parts of an SME's business model that might be challenged by megatrends, trends, uncertainties, weak signals, and wild-card events that appear to be signifying the future as it emerges in the present. The mental tool has been designed to be provided as a physical or virtual service to SMEs by the officers of PRAXI Network, by means of the Enterprise Europe Network, the largest network of contact points providing information and advice to EU companies.



To facilitate the communication of this business model stress-testing service, Dr. George Profitiliotis, a Foresight Expert at PRAXI Network, demonstrated the mental tool and explained its role and function within an overall consulting service to an SME, during the 2nd Meeting of the Enterprise Europe Network-Hellas consortium that was held on 29-30 September 2022 in Patras. Afterwards, Dr. Achilleas Barlas, a Technology Transfer Consultant at PRAXI Network and Coordinator of Enterprise Europe Network-Hellas, presented this tool among other solutions for SMEs that can help shape enterprise resilience strategies, during the Enterprise Europe Network Annual Conference on 25-27 October 2022 in Prague.

It is hoped that the uptake and adoption of this practical business model stress-testing tool will empower SMEs to not only face the challenges the future might hold in a resilient manner but to also utilize potential opportunities as they emerge.

DEVELOPING OUR ABILITY TO IMAGINE AND ADAPT **THROUGH GAMIFICATION**

by Dr T J Bacon

I joined the Future laboratories for professional and personal development [FUTURES 2020-2023] during the academic year of 2021-22. My Middlesex University colleague Pedro De Senna had already been working on the project for a year and I was struck by the possibilities ahead of us to play! Playing is often dismissed as a verb that invokes immaturity and often isn't considered suitable for serious grown-up work and certainly not academia! But for Pedro and I, and many of those that work in the realm of performance-making, it is through play and game that we stumble upon moments of insightful discovery. And this only emerges because we make choices. Kapp (2012) clarifies that 'Gamification is not a

cheapening or diluting of real learning. Serious scenarios are undertaken in game spaces [...to] help learners acquire skills, knowledge, and abilities in short, concentrated periods of time [...] Gamification is a serious approach to accelerating the experience curve of learning, teaching complex subjects, and systems thinking' (13). FUTURES 2020-2023 therefore had the potential to become enriched through the application of practical workshop skills lifted from the practices employed in the field of Theatre Arts.

Choice in everyday life is often subconscious due to its development through repetition in ritual and routine. We sit in the familiar seat on the bus or stand in the same area of the platform awaiting our train, patterns of behaviour become second nature and the original decision-making is resigned to history. Only in unexpected circumstance are we forced to make inventive improvisational choice. This will typically emerge through the intersection with others in our daily lives, sometimes fortunate and other times unfortunate consequences will manifest. In the workshop of the theatre practitioner however we will often play through games to explore unfamiliar scenarios so that we may be better prepared as performers. Our lived experience here is real but held in a context of safety where participants may relish in the opportunity to fail.



Necessity however holds equality in the investment rather than the failure alone. As Etchells (1999) clarifies, albeit when writing upon performance, the need to be aware of risk, in as much as one must be invested, is vital but cannot be at the expense of overplaying the status of risk above any other concern. 'Investment wants us naked, with slips and weaknesses, with the not-yet and never-to-be certain, with all that's in process, in flux, with all that isn't finished, with all that's unclear and therefore needs to be worked out [...] Investment forces us to know that performative actions have real consequence beyond the performance arena' (1999: 49). This flux resonates in the potential of play as failure in the workshop becomes necessary to ensure that experimentation with Futures Literacy is to be an honest process for the participants.

FUTURES 2020-2023 has been an opportunity to skill share practices built into the frameworks of Applied Theatre, Performance Devising, and Improvisation. And to bring these areas to fruition in developing workshops for aspiring professionals

to enter their respective industries. In collaborating with our European partners from leading institutions that sit outside of Theatre Arts practice, we have shared techniques from Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt's Oblique Strategies and Keith Johnstone's Improvisational Theatre Sports and Lifegame. The Applied Theatre practices of Boal provide the foundation to empower non-theatre makers to become activated in the realm of play, reimagining real-world experiences and testing scenarios for actual social change. This socially engaged practice sits at the heart of what we have continued to develop, adding random elements of unexpected stimulus inspired in prompt cards of Eno and Schmidt and finally acts of understanding status, ordinariness and improvised response in the skills of Johnstone.



2 DECEMBER | 14:00 - 18:00 | UNESCO HQ

WORLD FUTURES DAY

Inclusive and Resilient Futures

JOURNÉE MONDIALE DES FUTURS

Les Futurs inclusifs et résilients

2 DÉCEMBRE | 14:00 - 18:00 | UNESCO HQ

Last year UNESCO announced December 2nd to be the official World Futures Day. This fact alone asks for a celebration, since even in times of increasing anxiety, global crises and polarization, thinking about how we think about the future is in most places in the world far from common or mainstream. For us who work with futures, it seems so common sense to have a day for this you might think 'didn't we already HAVE a World Futures Day?'

Turns out, we didn't.

Naming a day around a certain theme (think about World Press Freedom Day, Human Rights Day) in itself might not seem that impactful, but it can give us a pause and the opportunity to pay attention to things that are important to us, shine a light on what is usually overlooked or celebrate (modest) successes. Realizing again that our rights, for humans and non-humans, can never be taken for granted. So naming something is important, and symbols matter. And.. there is an Indian proverb that says: Name the colour, blind the eye.

It means something like: the moment we name an object or phenomenon, we highlight a certain identity, and rob that thing/entity of other ways of being. Naming a day for something, might also force us to interpret it in a certain way. World Futures Day might lead us to think more about certain futures, but whose futures are they? Are we capable of seeing all futures, or do we turn a blind eye for others?

The role of UNESCO in this matter may seem curious as well. After all, what does an organization that is mostly known for choosing our heritage, have to do with futures?

Well... every institute that makes decisions about preservation, actually makes decisions about the future. What do we want to keep for future generations? What is worth saving? Is an old monument more important to us than a community garden?

Whose future are we saving this for?

At the moment of writing we are sitting on the Thalys towards Paris, to attend the celebration of **World Futures Day at the UNESCO Headquarters**. As UNESCO Chair Futures Literacy in Higher Education, is it important to be present. On the agenda are meeting the other (and new) Chairs, share our latest work, look for opportunities to collaborate, attend the seminar with speakers and panels. Sharing our work on the FUTURES project is definitely of interest for this network, as the Education department of UNESCO is looking at integrating futures thinking in their programs. More and more do we get the question: shouldn't we include pupils and students? And how? With our three modules, the first survey results and the lessons learnt so far we believe we can proudly say we contribute to the answer.

So what can you do on this World Futures Day? If anything, maybe just take a moment to pause and ponder over these questions:

**HOW DO YOU USE THE FUTURE?
WHAT NARRATIVES ARE DOMINANT?
WHICH ONES DESERVE MORE INTENTION?
WHOSE FUTURES ARE BEING TALKED ABOUT, AND WHICH ONES ARE SILENT?
WHICH FUTURES DO WE WANT TO PRESERVE?**

Whether you have an event planned, dream or worry about the future, December 2nd is a day that all of us can relate to, in our way, in our own time. From your future to mine. Happy World Futures Day!

IO3

THE LATEST UPDATES REGARDING INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 3

After the Radom meeting, the FUTURES partners validated the questionnaire to be submitted to high school students. The questionnaire is composed of multiple choice questions which aim to identify what are the expectations of young Europeans regarding their personal and professional future. Hanze University of Applied Sciences group, as coordinator of Intellectual Output 3, is starting in these days the analysis of the results that are expected to be very interesting. In fact, many young people left relevant comments on the final open question, expressing all their confidence in the future and demonstrating that they are aware that we can all play a decisive role in improving the fate of our planet.

The questionnaires were distributed in the official languages of the partnership (Polish, Italian, English, Greek, and Dutch) and then all partners contributed to their dissemination and subsequent translation.

Thanks to the vision of the high school students, the FUTURES team will be able to adapt the already developed training materials in IO2 to the needs of the youngest, who are the ones who truly represent the future of our Europe. The training materials will be used for training workshops and/or as e-learning materials. With respect to the content of the toolbox and Training manual:

- Ł-ITeE, BUT and ValueDo will adapt the foresight methods/tools for professional development already prepared for IO2;
- FORTH and Hanze will adapt the foresight methods/tools for personal development already prepared for IO2;
- MDX will undertake the adaptation of the foresight method/tool(s) entailing drama and performance-based pedagogies as well as theatre-based and role-playing techniques already prepared for IO2.

High school students will be invited to take part in the workshops organized by the universities and FORTH. About 15 students per partner will take part in the pilot courses (60 learners in total). The first course to be implemented will be the one hosted in Heraklion. During this pilot, a short-term joint staff training event (3 days) will take place, in order to allow the other partners to deliver training and have the possibility of learning from this experience before replicating it in their countries. The partners already agreed on the dates: the LTTA will take place between 9th and 11th March 2023. Needless to say we can't wait to fly to Greece!



THE FUTURE

IS IT A TOPIC IN HIGH SCHOOLS?

As part of Intellectual Output 3 (Foresight Toolbox and Training Manual for High School Students), a survey was conducted among high school students, the aim of which was to determine the expectations of young Europeans regarding their personal and professional future. The FUTURES team decided to also find out what high school teachers think about the future, and is it a topic or subject at their schools. For this purpose, additional interviews were conducted with teachers who answered three questions:

- 1** In what way/to what extent is the future currently (in general, professional, personal) a topic or subject at your school?
- 2** What works in this way and what could need improvement?
- 3** What (more) activities related to the future would be beneficial for your students?

The results of the interviews were very satisfactory for the FUTURES team, as it turns out that schools are increasingly willing to talk about the future and encourage their students to think about the future in the context of their personal and professional development. Check some selected answers:

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The future is certainly information technology and many vocational subjects in my school are related to this topic. Students are taught new technologies, students are talked about the professions of the future, and the benefits for humans brought by the development of technology are pointed out, but at the same time, we forget about the threats to the planet related to progress and the path of development that humanity has chosen. I believe that a significant part of vocational subjects, advisory classes, and entrepreneurship lessons are devoted to the topic of the future.

The future of a young person is associated with enormous stress in the face of progress, in the face of the need for constant learning and training to meet the challenges of civilization. Faced with such demands, young people often struggle with depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems. I believe that classes with psychologists, personal trainers, and therapists would be beneficial for my students in order to take care of their mental well-being. I believe that class teachers should be pedagogues or psychologists, not subject teachers.

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The professional future concerns especially students who, by taking five years of study at a technical school, are preparing to enter the labor market. Five years in terms of the future is quite a long time. Speaking about the future of students, we wonder how they will enter the labor market, and whether the knowledge they acquire will be adequate for the needs and requirements of the labor market in the future. The future can be a big challenge for them and the school should prepare them for it.

The topic of the future is discussed very often. In principle, there are no social meetings where there would be no conversation on this topic. Because subjectively feeling, time is running faster and faster, and the changes around are more and more intense, it has a very big impact on planning own future.

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The remaining answers will be used by the FUTURES project team to develop the final version of the IO3. We would like to thank all teachers and students for their contribution to the development of our project! Your valuable answers will certainly contribute to even better results because as the target group you know best what expectations and fears you have regarding the future. Stay tuned!

WHAT IS FUTURES?

Future laboratories for professional and personal development - FUTURES (2020-2023) is a European project which emphasizes the importance of high-quality adaptation skills as the means to support individuals in acquiring and developing key competences. A major part of these transversal competences and “soft skills” is the development of integrated and innovative ways of supporting personal development, resilience, adaptation, and critical thinking. As Futures Literacy (FL) increases individuals’ capacity to ‘use the future(s)’ to explore the present, the project aims to adopt such a methodology also to foster professional development. In particular, the project underlines the need to develop skills of young people, for anticipating and promptly reacting to scenario changes, and imagining professional career paths.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Name: Future laboratories for professional and personal development

Number: 2020-1-PL01-KA2023-082243

Duration: 36 months

Funded: Erasmus + Programme of the European Union

PROJECT PARTNERS



Are you interested in:

- interpreting futures?
- imagining futures?
- professional development?
- personal development?

If you answered **YES** at least once, the results of the project could be appealing to you!



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