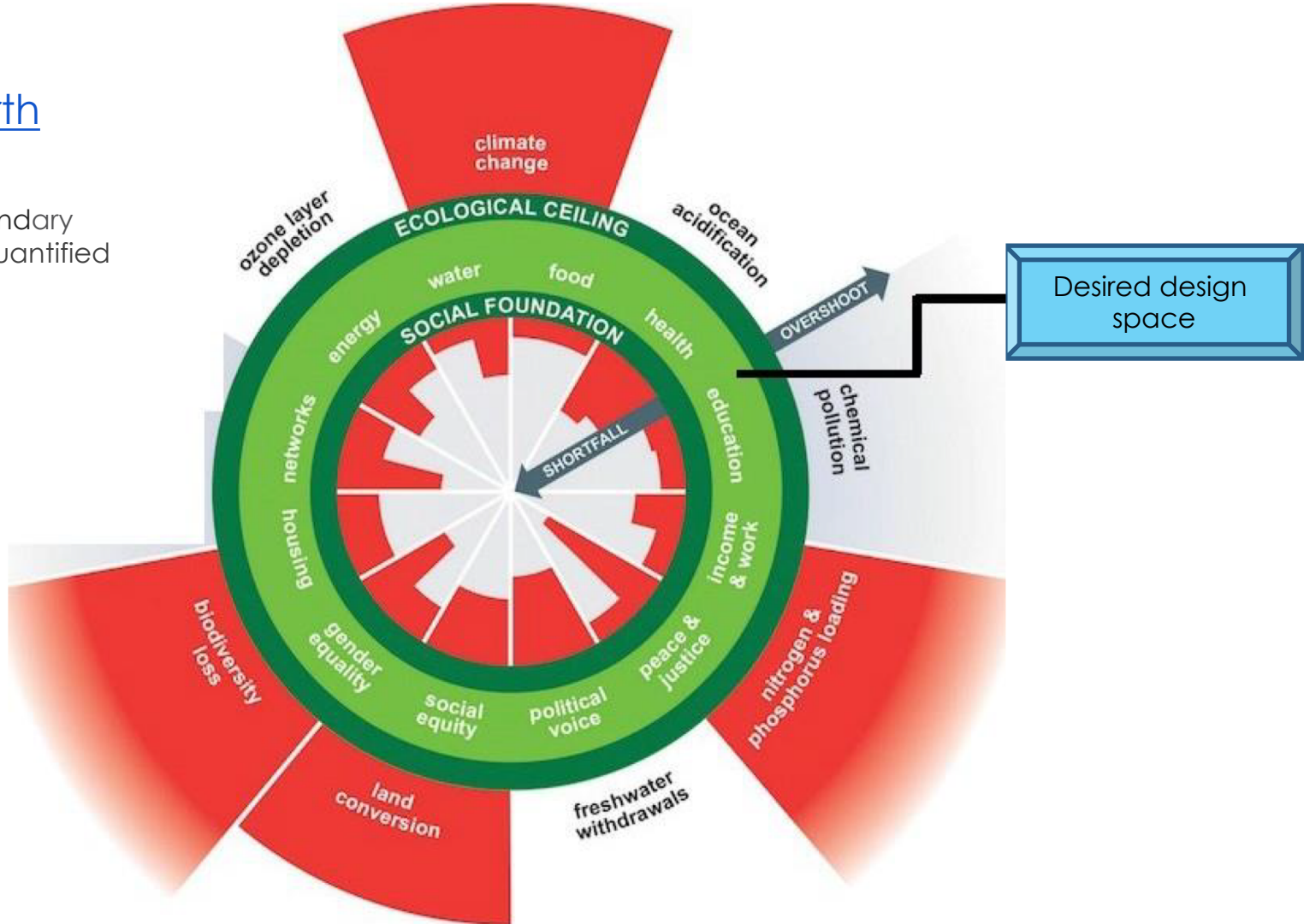# On Design & Sustainable Futures

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Outline

- Design toward sustainable futures

- Transitions

- Personal knowledge

- TD framework – components explained

- Examples

- Discussion

Kate Raworth

- Beyond the boundary
- Boundary not quantified

Desired design space

" *This transition [toward a networked and sustainable society], is a broad, complex social learning process, by which everything that belongs to the mainstream way of thinking and behaving in the old world will have to be reinvented: from everyday life to the very idea of well-being.*

Manzini, Ezio. *Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation*. MIT press, 2015.

Design

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Design towards sustainment is about future

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- Present: a clear and comprehensive account of designing in complicated social situations, including processes, precedents and theoretical frames that amount to a robust alternative to conventional product-dominated designing

- Future: design is about the mindset, integrity, integration (of different fields and knowledge), mechanisms of change that lead towards sustainment – leading to designing the futures that we want

Design for Interactions

Built World
Products
Communications
Environments

Design for Service

Design for Social Innovation

Transition Design

Natural World

Design Tracks

Areas of Design Focus

Context for All Design

A Continuum of Design Approaches

Mature discipline

Design for Service

Design within existing socio-economic & political paradigms

Solutions reach users through many 'touch points' over time through the **design of experiences**. Solutions are based upon the observation and interpretation of users' behavior and needs within particular contexts. Service design solutions aim to provide profit and benefits for the service provider and useful and desirable services for the user (consumer). Solutions are usually **based within the business arena and existing, dominant economic paradigm.**

Developing discipline

Design for Social Innovation

Design that challenges existing socio-economic & political paradigms

Design that **meets a social need more effectively than existing solutions.** Solutions often leverage or 'amplify' existing, under-utilized resources. Social innovation is a 'co-design' process in which **designers work as facilitators and catalysts** within transdisciplinary teams. Solutions benefit multiple stakeholders and empower communities to act in the public, private, commercial and non-profit sectors. **Design for social innovation represents design for emerging paradigms and alternative economic models, and leads to significant positive social change.**

Emergent discipline

Transition Design

Design within radically new socio-economic & political paradigms

Refers to design-led societal transition toward more sustainable futures and the reconception of entire lifestyles. It is based upon an understanding of the **interconnectedness and inter-dependency of social, economic, political and natural systems.** Transition design focuses on the need for **'cosmopolitan localism',** a place-based lifestyle in which solutions to global problems are designed to be appropriate for local social and environmental conditions. **Transition design challenges existing paradigms, envisions new ones, and leads to radical, positive social and environmental change.**

Scale of time, depth of engagement, and context expand to include social & environmental concerns

> **"** *Transition Design is a new area of design practice, study, and research that advocates design-led societal transition toward more sustainable futures*

Escobar, Arturo. Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds. Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2018.

Irwin, Terry, Gideon Kossoff, Cameron Tonkinwise, and Peter Scupelli. "Transition Design Manifesto", 2015.

Yee, Joyce, Emma Jefferies, Lauren Tan, and Tim Brown. Design Transitions: Inspiring Stories. Global Viewpoints. How Design Is Changing. 1st edition. Amsterdam: BIS Publishers, 2013.

Characteristics and aspirations

- Cross-disciplinary

- Design led

- Transformative

- Leading to change in lifestyles and norms

- Values focus on both ecological and social sustainability

- Shift the trajectory of an entire system toward a more sustainable future (e.g., SDGs)

- Unfold over long arcs of time – pronounced temporal focus, futuring

- Address complex problems with multiple stakeholder groups with conflicting agendas

- Leverage the power of living systems and/or indigenous, place-based wisdom as strategies for transition

" *When you sit down to design something, it can be anything, a car, a toaster, a house, a tall building or a shoe, what you draw or what you design is really a culmination of everything that you've seen and done in your life previous to that point* ~ *Hatfield*

Personal
Knowledge

PERSONAL
KNOWLEDGE

Towards a
Post-Critical
Philosophy

MICHAEL
POLANYI
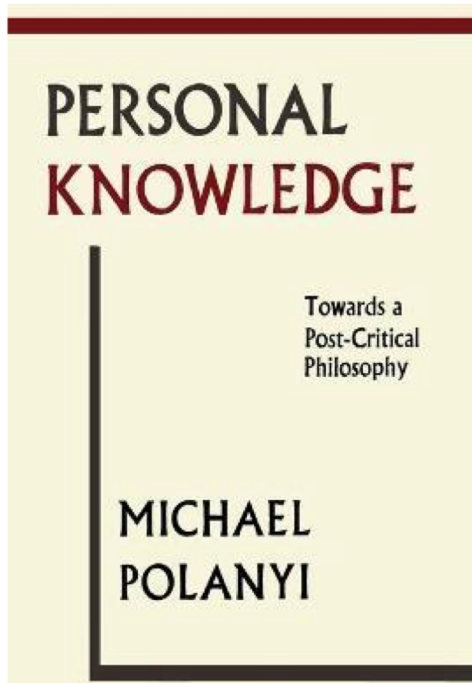
Personal knowledge is an intellectual commitment, and as such inherently hazardous. Only affirmations that could be false can be said to convey objective knowledge of this kind. … Throughout this book I have tried to make this situation apparent. I have shown that into every act of knowing there enters a passionate contribution of the person knowing what is being known, and that this coefficient is no mere imperfection but a vital component of his knowledge

The Transition Framework

A vision for the transition to a sustainable society is needed. It calls for the reconception of entire lifestyles that are human scale, place-based but globally connected in their exchange of technology, information and culture. It calls for communities to be in a symbiotic relationship with their ecosystem.

New ways of designing will help realize the vision but will also change/evolve it. As the vision evolves, new ways of designing will continue to be developed.

The vision of the transition to a sustainable society will require new knowledge about natural, social and built/designed systems. This new knowledge will, in turn, evolve the vision.

Vision for Transition

New Ways of Designing

Theories of Change

Posture & Mindset

The transition to a sustainable society will require new ways of designing that are characterized by:

Ideas, theories, & methodologies from many varied fields and disciplines inform a deep understanding of the dynamics of change in the natural and social worlds.

Changes in mindset, posture and temperament will give rise to new ways of designing. As new design approaches evolve, designers' temperments and posture will continue to change.

A new theory of change will reshape designers' temperaments, mindsets and postures. And, these 'new ways of being' in the world will motivate the search for new, more relevant knowlege.

Living in & thru transitional times requires a mind-set and posture of openess, mindfulness, a willingness to collaborate, and 'optimistic grumpiness'

Diagram by: Professor Terry Irwin, Dr. Gideon Kossoff and Dr. Cameron Tonkinwise
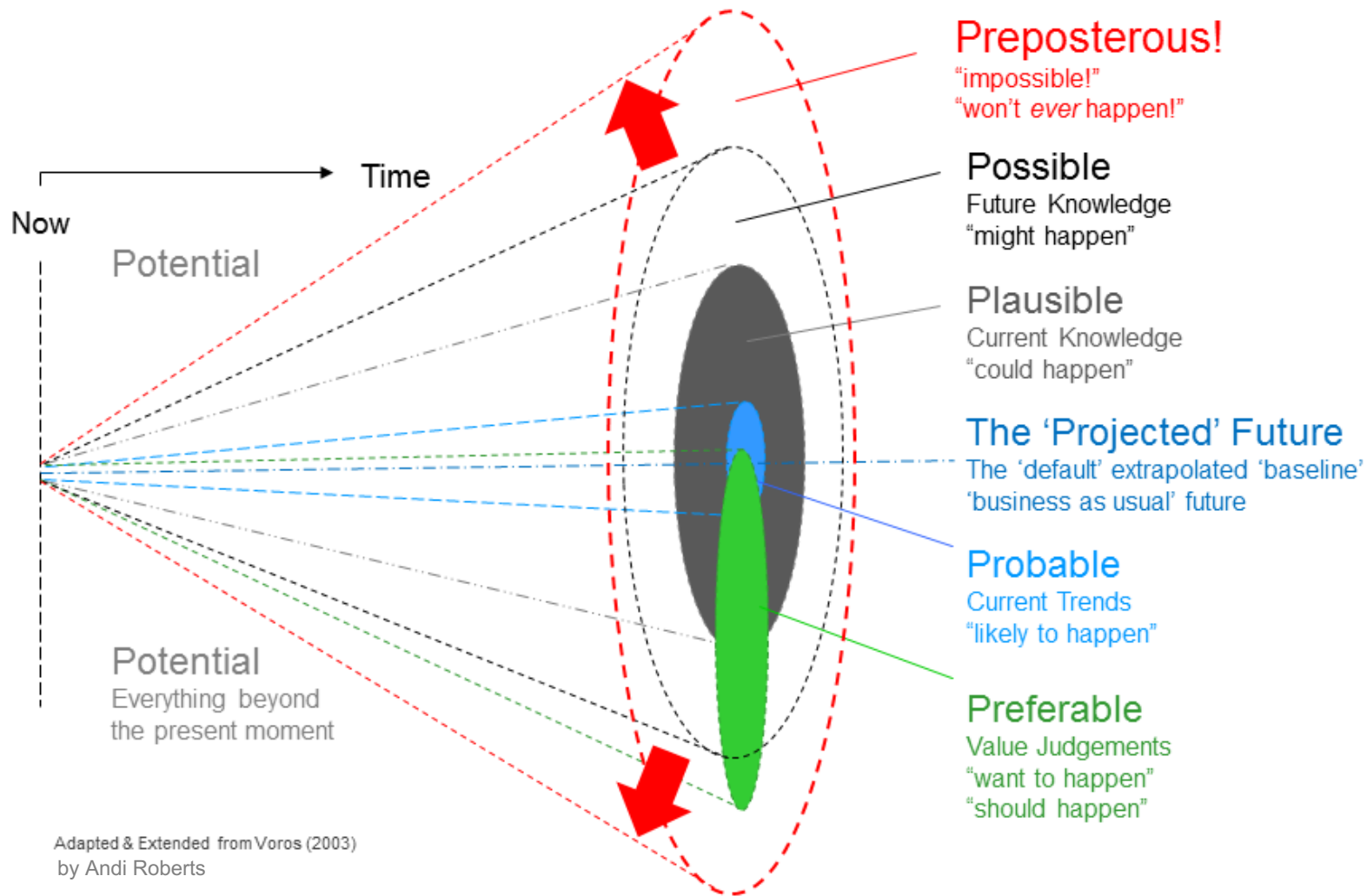
1. Vision

Most people would argue that transition toward more sustainable futures is necessary, but until recently, there have been few compelling narratives about what those futures might look like.

The environmental movement has long been criticized for its inability or failure to develop visions that are based upon a high quality of life rather than impoverishment and abstention.

Transition Design proposes that more compelling future-oriented visions are needed to inform and inspire projects in the present and that the tools and methods of design can aid in the development of these visions. Tonkinwise (2014) argues for "motivating visions as well as visions that can serve as measures against which to evaluate design moves, but visions that are also modifiable according to the changing situation." Dunne and Raby (2013) argue that visioning is crucial; it creates spaces for discussion and debate about alternative futures and ways of being and it requires us to suspend disbelief and forget how things are now and wonder about how things could be.

Preposterous!
"impossible!"
"won't *ever* happen!"

Possible
Future Knowledge
"might happen"

Plausible
Current Knowledge
"could happen"

The 'Projected' Future
The 'default' extrapolated 'baseline'
'business as usual' future

Probable
Current Trends
"likely to happen"

Preferable
Value Judgements
"want to happen"
"should happen"

Time

Now

Potential

Potential
Everything beyond
the present moment

Adapted & Extended from Voros (2003)
by Andi Roberts

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2. Posture (attitude) and Mindset

- Transition Design argues that living in and through transitional times calls for ==self-reflection== and a new way of "being" in the world.

- This change must be based upon a new ==mindset or worldview== and ==posture (internal)== that lead to different ways of interacting with others (external) that informs problem solving and design. All of these are mutually influencing.

- Our individual and collective mindsets represent the beliefs, values, assumptions, and expectations that are formed by our individual experiences, cultural norms, religious/spiritual beliefs, and the socioeconomic and political paradigms to which we subscribe.

- ==Designers' mindsets and postures often go unnoticed and unacknowledged== but they profoundly influence what is identified as a problem and how it is framed and solved within a given context. Yet, design ==methodologies and process rarely take these important factors into account.==