

Nuclear Cultures

Dominic Kelly
University of Warwick
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DANGER
POISONOUS RADIOACTIVE  WASTE BURIED HERE
DO NOT DIG OR DRILL HERE BEFORE A.D. 12,000

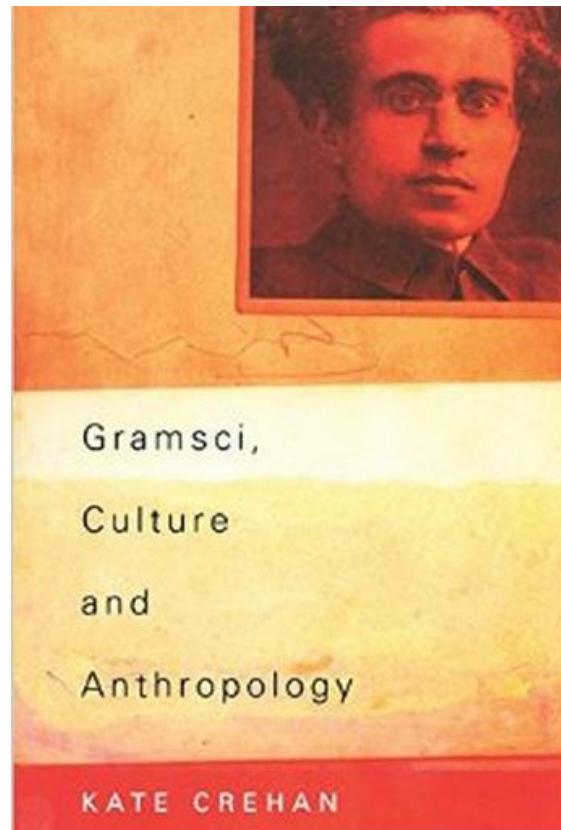


Frameworks...

Culture

- Gramscian take on this.
Culture is never:
 - Seen as an autonomous domain
 - Treated as epiphenomenal
 - ... a reflection of fundamental economic relations
 - Fixed historically
 - Historical processes / context is central

Kate Crehan

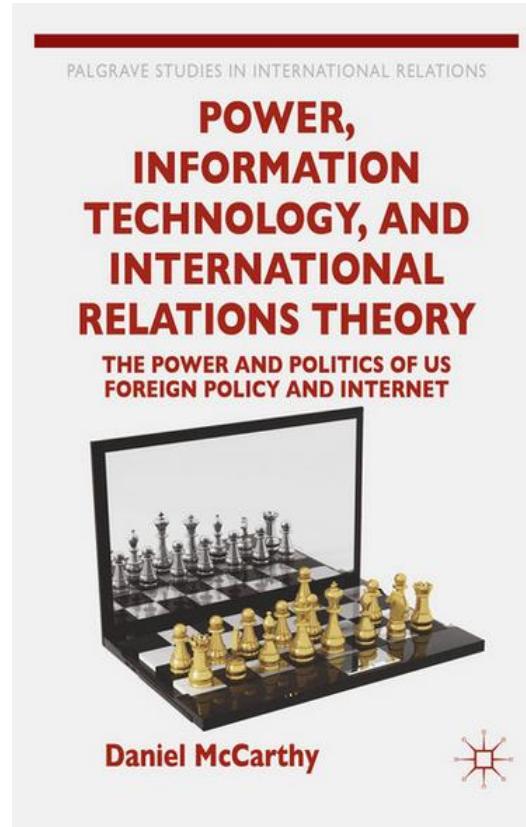


Frameworks..

Technology & Capitalism

- (Nuclear) Technology as an outcome of the social relations of production within a particular mode of production
- Innovation as an outcome of 'struggle' in other words
 - Between classes
 - Between capitalists
 - A thorough 'mapping' of technology into a Marxist framework

Daniel McCarthy



Broad Theme: Power

Generating Consent

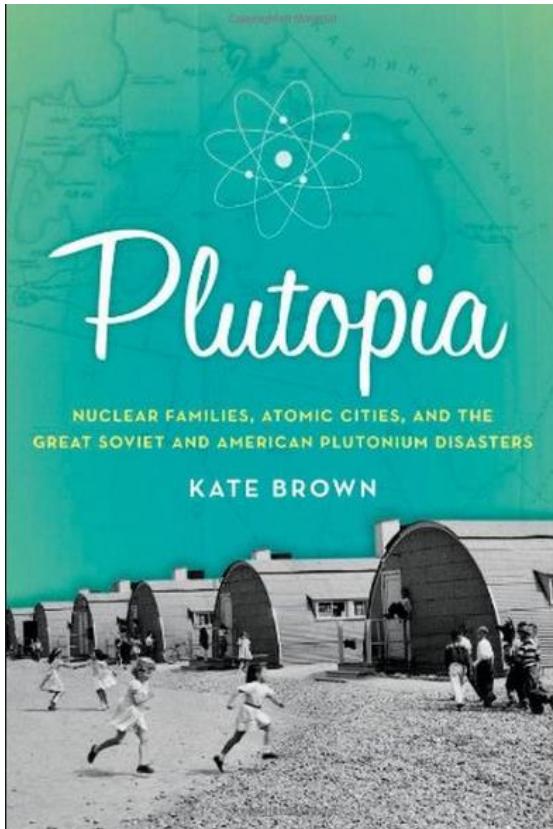
- For and through political, economic, and social means
 - Strategic concerns / creating the 'good' life / countering deprivation
 - Money; Propaganda; Exhibitions; Media; Advertising
- Generally, it's about security:
 - through missiles / technology; and through the promise of endless consumption.

Siting Issues

- Landscapes of Power
 - Usually in deprived areas already heavily polluted by industrial, agricultural or military activity
 - The 'Dead West'
- Possibility to build in comparative work
 - Japan, France & the UK
 - Cumbria - Sellafield – waste storage

Theme 1: Imagining the ‘Good Life’

Kate Brown



Plutopia

- Examines the construction of the Hanford nuclear facility in Washington State
 - Imagined as an ‘ideal’ community – a vision of the American dream (white, middle class ‘nuclear’ families etc).
 - Built on expropriated Indian land, by poor working class people segregated along racial and gender lines.
 - No “Asian’s” allowed; African-Americans trucked in from ‘elsewhere’

Theme 2: Risk, Regulation, Resilience

Structures

- The impossibility of containing radiation within physical structures
 - Fukushima; Chernobyl; Three Mile Island etc

Processes

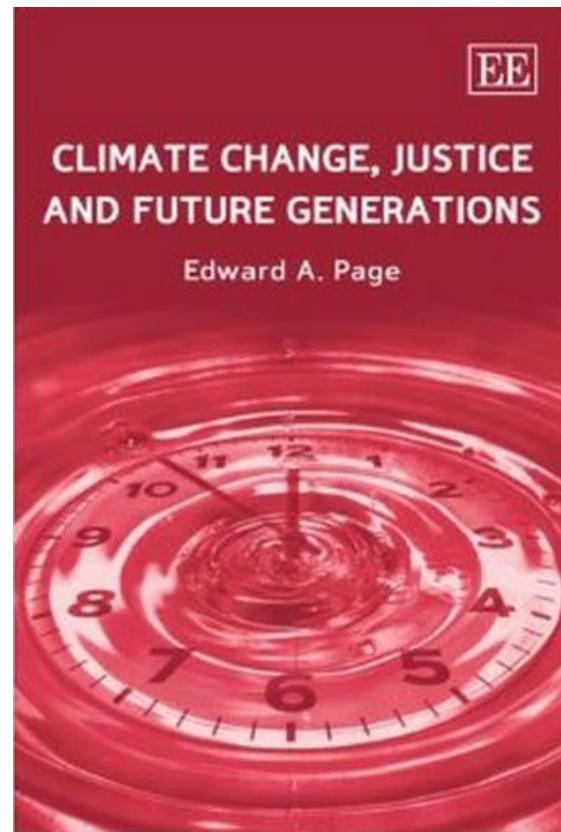
- Regulatory frameworks
 - ‘acceptable limits’
 - Of exposure to radiation
- Oversight
 - Privatisation / sub-contracting
 - Close links between government & business etc.
 - Corruption / incompetence
- The politics of blame

Theme 3: Inter-generational Justice

The Question of Waste

- What do we do with nuclear waste?
- Should we tell anyone about it and, if so, how?
- Who is responsible?

Ed Page



Case Study: WIPP



Overview

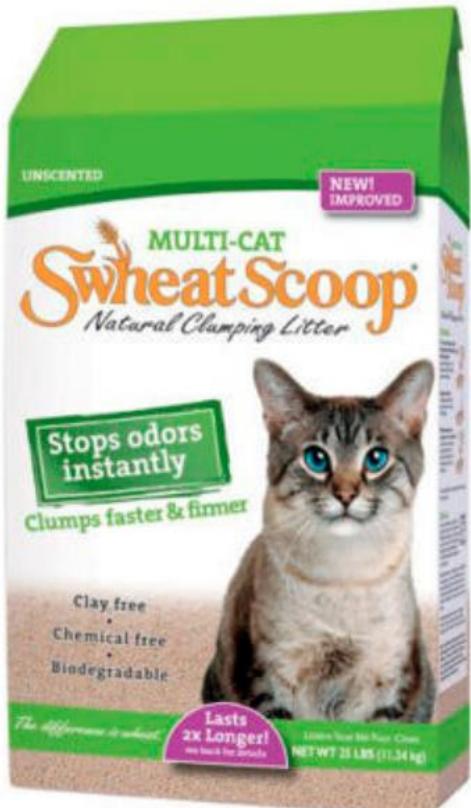
- The only deep geological repository for nuclear waste in the US
- Handles ‘low level’ transuranic waste
 - Equipment; clothes; tools; soil and other residues from nuclear production
- Conceived in the 1950s; starting taking waste in the late 1990s; due to be sealed in 2035
 - <http://www.wipp.energy.gov/wipprecovery/about.html>

WIPP & My 'Themes'

- Power / Consent / Siting Issues
 - WIPP is located in the 'dead west'
 - Carlsbad is an area characterised by relatively high deprivation
 - Winding down of the potash industry in the 1970s
 - The town 'invited' the DoE to assess the area as a site for WIPP in the early 1980s
 - WIPP was tied up in legal battles through the 1980s until the US Congress intervened in the early 1990s.

WIPP: Risk, Regulation, Resilience

The Kitty Litter Catastrophe



The Truck Fire



Figure ES-1: EIMCO Haul Truck 74-U-006B after Fire

Contamination & Cover Up?

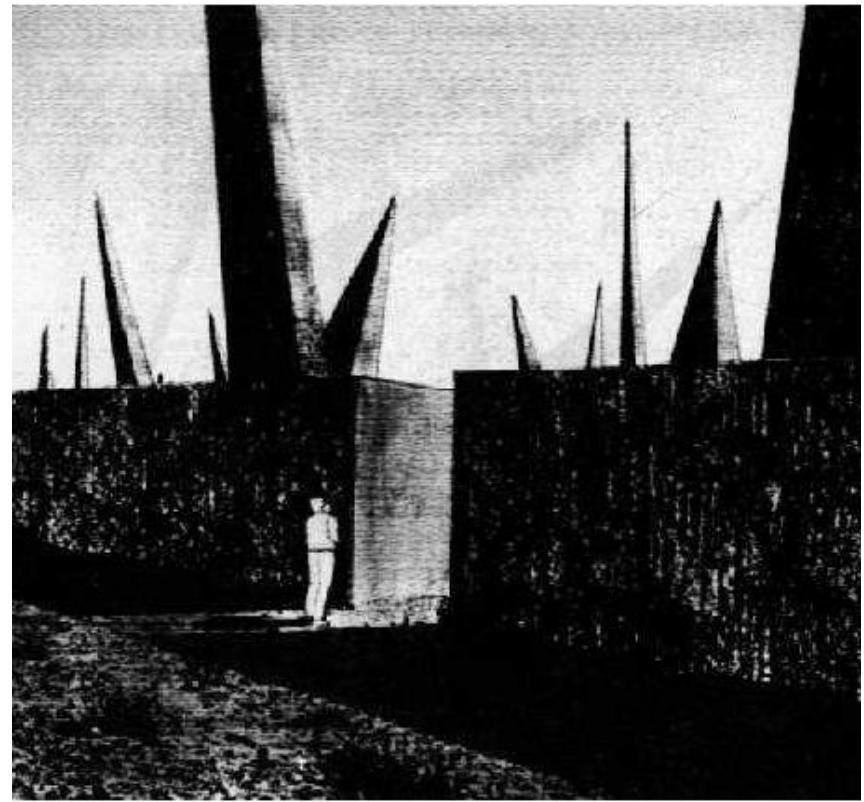
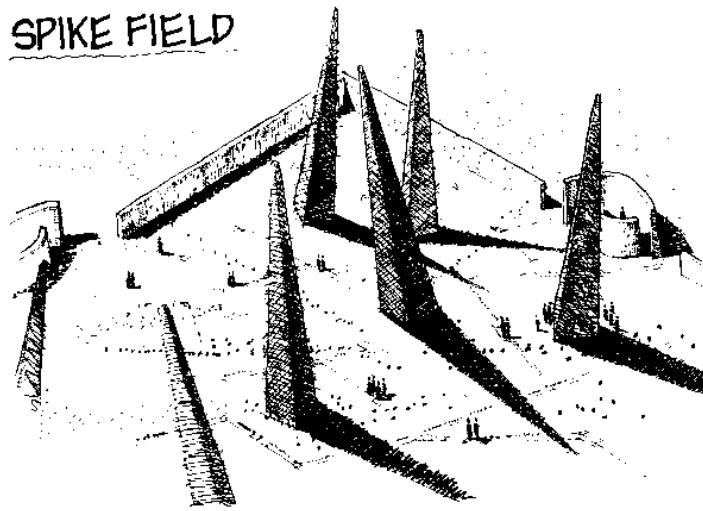
- No injuries from the fire
- 22 workers contaminated by the radiation from the burst barrel
- Evidence emerging this year that a simple transcription error set the chain of events in motion
 - ‘inorganic kitty litter’ became ‘an organic kitty litter’



WIPP: Inter-generational Justice

- The Permanent Markers Implementation Plan
 - In 1990 a panel of experts commissioned to draw up
 - Scenarios for future human activity in and around the WIPP site
 - Plans for permanently marking the site so as to deter ingress by humans
 - The time span was set at between 200 and 10,000 years into the future
 - They came up with a plan based upon:
 - A massive physical structure; semiotics; dispersal

SPIKE FIELD



Forbidding Blocks

FORBIDDING BLOCKS

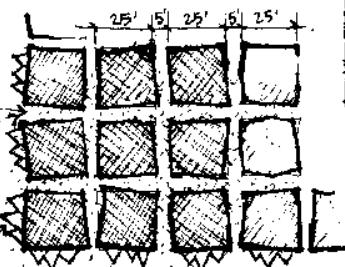
Exploded landscape, but now irregular, an irregular regularity, scattered but not reorganized

massive effort
to do this

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like form

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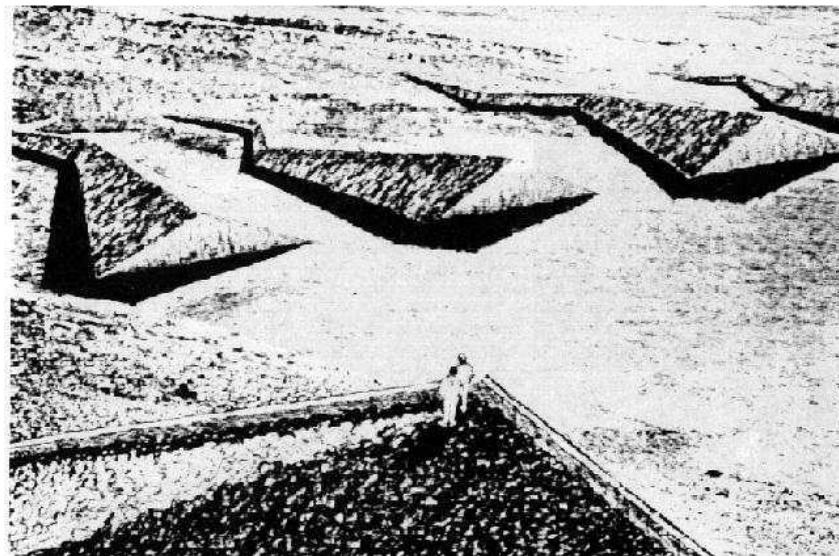
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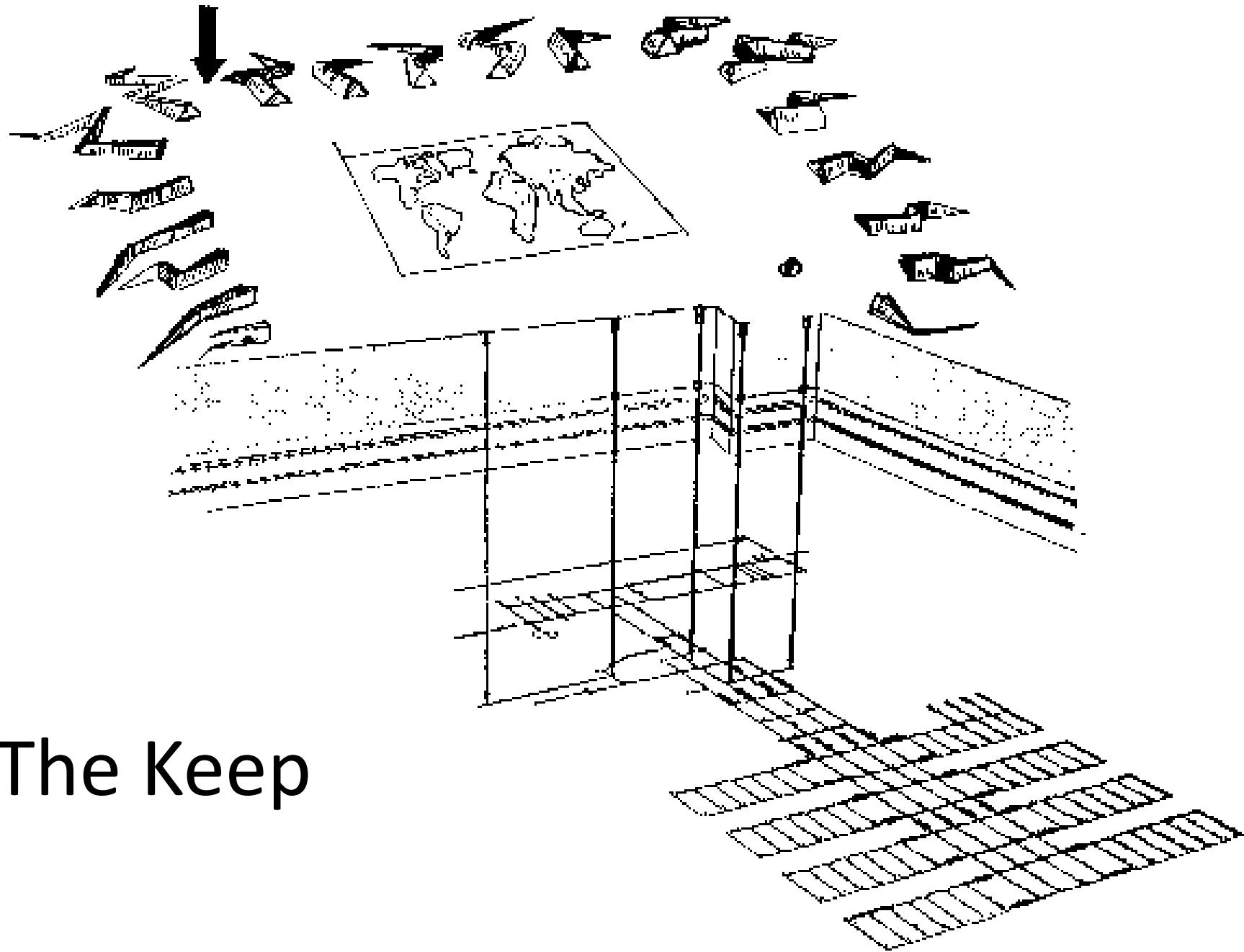


hollow square of blocks
around a rubble core



Menacing Earthworks





The Keep