Heather Robinson (00:00):

Good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us here this morning. On the second day of the 2016 Adelaide festival of ideas, my name is Heather Robinson and I'm the executive producer and a board member of the festival of ideas. So I am so pleased to see so many of you out here on a Sunday morning to join us and celebrate thought leadership in Adelaide. And I would now like to actually introduce professor Alan Gamlen, who is the director of the Hugo center for migration and population research. And he's also associate professor at the university of Adelaide. And I'd like to you to make a particularly warm welcome today because it's his first time as part of the Adelaide festival of ideas. Thank you, Alan.

Alan Gamlen (00:47):

Well, thank you very much for that introduction. And thank you all for being here today. It's my great pleasure to be a visitor here on Ghana land and to welcome you here to benign and hall for this Memorial lecture in honor of the light professor Graham Hugo professor Hugo was an eminent demographer here at the university of Adelaide for more than 30 years. His ideas have influenced several generations of migration and population researchers and policy makers around the world. And so it's very fitting that we're celebrating his memory here at this vibrant and exciting festival of ideas. For those of you who knew Graham personally, a special thanks for coming out today and in this way dignifying the occasion some of you will recall that the first Graham Hugo Memorial lecture was held in this spot around the same time last year, both in order to commemorate Graham in the immediate aftermath of his passing, but also in order to begin the work of building on his legacy and take it and taking it in in new directions.

Alan Gamlen (02:02):

And that work continues in the work of the Hugo center for migration and population research, which is building on the team and the momentum that Graham established here over a period of several decades as it stands today, the Hugo center is an interdisciplinary team of 30 researchers based around a core staff of 10 in the school of social sciences at the university of Adelaide working on migration population and spatial analysis research across different disciplines at the university of Adelaide and beyond. And our vision is to become a global hub for migration and population scholarship for groundbreaking work and our innovate. Our mission is to produce innovative scholarship that spends across disciplinary borders and works in partnership with decision-makers and opinion shapers both here locally, but also at the national and international levels. So we're very much looking forward to working with you all in working towards this vision of building Graham's legacy.

Alan Gamlen (03:06):

People keep telling me as the new director of the, of the center that I have big shoes to fill, and I keep on reassuring them that I brought my own shoes. I relish the challenge of taking up the Baton from Graham and today it gives me great pleasure as the presenter of the first Graham who go lecture to pass the Baton to the second lecture professor Paul James, as many of you already know, professor Paul James is an eminent social theorist of globalization. So social change and sustainable urbanization based at the university of Western Sydney, where he's director of the renowned Institute for culture and society. And Mike's many other things he's behind the 16 volume series. So I see, is it 17 volumes, 16, 16 volume series, massive work called central current soon globalization. And he's been the source of key ideas in the approach called engaged theory.

Alan Gamlen (04:03):

Many of his ideas and his research had been impactful far beyond academia. He's advised many governments and international organizations and his research has changed the way that urban development happens in many parts of the world. So we're very lucky to have you here and welcome today, Paul. Unfortunately, Paul has some bad news for us. The title of his talk is the future of humanity does not look good. So please join me in welcoming Paul to the podium to explain to us why it's a great honor to be here in this magnificent hole. And I acknowledged the Aboriginal custodians of this land, and I also acknowledge the elders past and present and in doing so, I want to acknowledge another elder Graham Hugo and the kind of work that he was doing, which was central to thinking about the future of this planet. I'm not going to talk so much about migration, but about the kinds of work that he was doing and how they influence a really basic question.

Alan Gamlen (05:03):

What is the relationship between numbers and values ideas and what we need to do about them? Because as a demographer, he took numbers very seriously as we should, but it's how we interpret those numbers, which I think are the key to understanding the future of the planet. And I want to talk a lot about interpretation, use a lot of numbers, but really come back to the basic question, which is the way in which the festival is framed. Doing nothing is not an option make or break. Now I started, I tried to think of the most innocuous title that I could think of with this talk. The one that sounds almost been now, the future of humanity does not look good, is intended to be gentle and quiet, understated, and yet, and yet I think we're all in deep trouble in a way that we've never been in this kind of trouble before.

Alan Gamlen (06:00):

And I want to talk about that issue. I start with a quote from mutant who was secretary general of the United nations. And this is from 1969, almost five decades ago. And he starts with the same gentle understatement. I do not wish to be overdramatic. He says, but I can only conclude from the information that's available to me as secretary general, that the members of the United nations have perhaps 10 years left in which to subordinate their ancient quarrels and to launch a global partnership to curve the arms race, to improve the human environment, to fuse the population explosion and to supplant the required momentum to development efforts. If such a global partnership is not forged within the next decade, that I very much fear the problems I've mentioned will have reached such staggering proportions that will be beyond our capacity to control. And indeed they are.

Alan Gamlen (06:57):

We're at the point now where we're now talking about the Anthropocene as the moment in which humans make profound contribution to destroying life on this planet. As we know it, lots of life will continue, but life for us will be massively changed. Now, what do I argue that it's more than two degrees or four degrees in arguments over carbon accounting. We're going to work our way through steadily the process of what it means to be humans on this planet. Now that quote was taken from a quite remarkable book, and it's a book that had almost no impact on what we do. It sold 12 million copies of that book is called limits to growth, and it had no impact on anything thereafter. In fact, it almost makes you feel that nobody read it. They put it on their shelves and they thought they had done enough by buying the book and it's full of facts and figures.

Alan Gamlen (07:51):

And it was because it was done by mathematicians, demographers, and a team of people who work in much the same field as, as Graeme Hugo, then it had its initial impact. And then we started to feel as if we didn't have to do anything more than business as usual. And then we found that we could do business as usual with a different rhetoric. We added the word sustainability into our rhetoric and we felt we were doing a good job. It set up five major concerns limits to growth. The first one was accelerating industrialization. This was an economic concern. The second one was rapid population growth and ecological concern. The third one was widespread malnutrition depletion of nonrenewable resources and deteriorating environment. They're all ecological concerns except for the first one. And that second one, which was the population growth question was the question that Graham Hugo worked on.

Alan Gamlen (08:48):

So I want to take that underlying theme from Graham Hugo's work numbers are critically important, but it's more important. You interpret them. And that was the basis of his life's work. And even the structure of his talk is related to that discussion point. Namely, it's not just ecological issues or environmental issues on the one hand or economic ones on the other that are most important to be talked about. I want to talk about using a method called circles of sustainability, an idea that culture and politics are important to economics, ecology, politics, culture have equal weighting in this talk and they're equally in crisis. And it's equally about both the relationship with numbers and the problems associated with how you interpret them. The first one is the political process. And if you I'm watching the American elections, you'll have a very clear sense that the world's in political crisis, but it's not just because of the American elections.

Alan Gamlen (09:42):

What happened in the Brexit process. It's been what happening in Austria with the rise of the right, the Netherlands Germany, and a whole series of changes around the world, which have seen what's being called and was called in the 1970s, a legitimate Russian crisis. This was a person called you can have a mass talk about this. The legitimation crisis was something where people had lost contact with politicians and thought them DB no better than dog catches in the hierarchy of human responsibilities and what we're seeing now. And I think in reinforced by someone like Donald Trump is a Madmen will get something like 30% of the American vote. And it's not because those people are stupid it's because they just disliked that mainstream politics, which is taking over and becomes business as usual. And yet they find themselves voting for a Madmen instead of the mainstream, because there is not many alternatives to take you from that first point about political crisis legitimation crisis.

Alan Gamlen (10:41):

The second one is the fact that we are still stuck at one minute, two minutes to midnight on the autonomy bulletin of atomic scientists, clock of the crisis. We fade in relation to a doctrine that started called the mad doctrine of the 1950s called mutually assured destruction and south Australians know this all too well in the 1950s because of the Marilinga process, it was brought home to Australia that we were bought into a world where crisis could occur at any time. And it was J Robert Oppenheimer. And I there's a, there's a beautiful black and white video, him crying, which he brought out in 19 65, 20 years after the bomb, he was in charge of the Elma Gordo process and the Trinity explosion, which gave rise to the bomb being used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki incidentally, the president who dropped that bomb did so as a war crime, he did it crime against humanity and has never been brought to trial for it.

Alan Gamlen (11:42):

And nor have any of the people, including those great war heroes like Winston Churchill, who we now, Lord is somehow winning the second world war. When both cases are those state terrorism, the work that was done in Nagasaki Hiroshima was stay terrorism as was the dress didn't on the other 20 cities in Germany. There were bomb to kill severe [inaudible]. Now that process J wrap it up and I, Hey man. I said, now I haven't become death. The destroyer of worlds. He said that in such a way that we should have taken note, and yet it took another book in 1982 called fate of the earth to bring out the fact that we could now destroy the world many times over and a nuclear winter would arise as the outcome of any kind of nuclear exchange, which got beyond tactical nuclear weapons. And then the last one and the most obvious one of all is in the security area of politics, the crisis over national and global security, which brings us a self reproducing war on terror and brings us the situation currently into Syria, where $9.5 million five, 9.5 million people have been displaced.

Alan Gamlen (12:55):

Most of those internally within the country and 3.5 million displaced outside side of the country. Now they are massive figures and that's from one country. And one issue. If you move to the economic crisis, we face, they are intense. We talk about them all the time, listen to them on the television. And we watched with great and beta is silence. The question of whether or not the stock market's going up and down like whether or not the weather is changing. And yet at the same time, if you go to the great recession, the so-called massive recession of the period of 2007 and 2012, across that entire period, there was a downturn of less than 1% of growth. There was a one quarter where growth went down by 8%, but that's all we're talking about. Minute fractions of the kinds of GDP. I'm talking about the American economies.

Alan Gamlen (13:51):

I use those seekers and it's a bit like when the lights go out in south Australia, they went out in Adelaide for six hours and it becomes a national crisis. And we were here for the previous discussion. There was a discussion about what it means for the lights to go out in six to six hours. We don't then take it and say, what are we going to do about it? We just move on to the next stage. The real crisis is actually one of overproduction, maldistribution food insecurity and a global crisis of work intensification. While most people have either not enough work or find ourselves with youth redundancy in Adelaide or in south Australia as a whole, the figures of currently for youth unemployment around 15%. And yet those official figures probably underestimated by about 10% because you add in a whole lot of other conceptions, like whether or not people are still looking for work officially, whether they can get through the telephone system, which doesn't allow them to register easily and whether or not they've actually withdrawn from the workforce completely, or whether, or they're finding themselves supported by parents.

Alan Gamlen (14:53):

And so on, they can come across as is bad, but the other crises are just as bad. And we barely talk about them. I want to talk about the ecological crisis. And Graham Hugo did a lot of work on the ways in which the ecological crisis was one where displaced peoples would start to move around the world in ways that we cannot predict he was a social scientist, a person who was about predicting figures and about working on ratios and, and relationships with patents. And he was saying, this is going to cause a non direct relationship between the movement of people and the kinds of consequences that occurred for climate change. But I want to take you to questions outside of that, because we hear about that one all

the time. I want to talk to you about habitat depletion and the ways in which humans have colonized this planet and use some figures.

Alan Gamlen (15:45):

And remember the figures I used before were the worst quarter that occurred in the global financial crisis. Everybody talks about for years, five years of it was an 8% decline in the economy. We're now talking about a different kind of crisis and it's humans in relation to the planet. And I'm going to use what appear to be bizarre accounting systems. It's bio mess. How many humans are on this planet and what is their biomass in relation to wild animals? Now, one of the things which has being talked about constantly is that humans are moving into cities. The work that Graham Hugo did humans have now, and it was about 1997 or the, in that period of the 1990s that or a young woman or an old man, a refugee or a child walked across the boundary into a city in the global south. And by the movement of that person, we now became an urban planet.

Alan Gamlen (16:45):

People are being every speech I go. So when I was in Quito, three days ago, every speech you goes to about the planet is about the urbanization, the planet, and this little set of figures I'm going to give you is barely talked about humans surpassed the biomass of wild animals. And when I say the biomass, just the weight of our bodies, nothing more compared to all the wild animals in the world. Terrestrial mammals, humans surpassed wild animals as a biomass white in the middle of the 19th century. It is completely striking as you start to work it out. Now we go through the figures and take you through it. One more time.

Alan Gamlen (17:27):

Humans having increased in biomass by more than four times since 1900. And we're now talking about, I'm going to give you 2000 figures. This biomass by comparison to wild animals is 55 mega tons compared to five mega tons for wild animals. I just want that figure to sink in a little bit, but then you got to add in some more figures, it's not just us as animals. It's also our domesticated animals and our domesticated animals have now moved to take up 120 megatons of biomass to the world's weight. Now add up those figures. I'm just doing something very simple here. What you get is that wild animals by comparison to humans, the animals that we eat and the animals we keep as pets are now less than 3% of the world's biomass, we have taken over the world. Let's have no misunderstanding about what this means.

Alan Gamlen (18:29):

We have colonized the planet so completely as to leave wild animals as 3% of the biomass, last of the world's population. And if you start working your way through other figures, which demographers and other people do, Agora systems now cover 12% of the world's land surface. And that's a false figure because we cover most of the world's arable and fertile land service with Agra systems, which are directed towards making humans sustainable on this planet. And then if we add up the built areas, 5 million kilometers squared, or 50% larger than India is now a built-up zone across the world. This is a crisis. I take these figures from Vaclav Smeal who wrote a book called harvesting the biomass. What are we taking from nature? This is not even a talk about species extinction. This is just talk about the basic questions of how we have totally colonized this planet.

Alan Gamlen (19:23):

Now, when we come now to talk about the Anthropocene, we now design distinct something different. Isn't the Anthropocene. It's not just the point at which humans had an effect upon the planet, because you can take that back much further than the middle of the 19th century. What happened in 1945 with the dropping of the atomic bomb or another magical moments where we started to remake nature was not just that we started to affect nature as humans. We started to affect the nature of nature that is as humans. We remade atomic relationships. Yeah. We have started through all sorts of processes through production of synthetic light forms. We can now produce since 2010, we have begun to remake and reconstitute. What nature means on this planet, not just by our very presence, not by the presence of our agricultural animals and pets, but by the nature of how we interact with nature, our home planet earth is in deep trouble.

Alan Gamlen (20:24):

And it's only us who are making decisions about living otherwise, which will give us the capacity to respond systematically. It cannot be deferred to the next generation. It cannot be counted by protest. It needs an alternative practice and will take more than 50,000 people meeting in Quito last week, where they were talking about the new urban agenda, because that process is still a mess for all the fantastic ideas that came out of Quito. The idea of implementation we're talking near, still in those sorts of generational changes. Finally, I want to talk about the cultural crisis. The crisis of meaning is one of those things. It's probably much more important and difficult to talk about. And it's hard to talk about because the numbers and indicators don't help you when you get to it, but I'll use some numbers. Anyway, on average, one person dies by suicide.

Alan Gamlen (21:14):

Every 40 seconds, somewhere in the world, that is a million people die per annum of suicide. The global suicide rates have increased by 60% over the last 45 years. So we've become a people I, people who now have colonized the planet and a people that are forced to choose and in choosing and we keep choosing, we can choose. We keep choosing to take what we currently know as the taken for granted way in which we operate on this planet. We choose high mass consumption. We choose high mobility. We choose high growth and we choose high individualism associated with fragile narcissism. So the future of humanity does not look good. And in the last few minutes, I'm going to turn to that question of what we should do about it. And the obvious point to be made is that it's a manifold situation we face. And therefore there is not one thing to be done.

Alan Gamlen (22:16):

It won't be driverless cars that save us. It won't be automated traffic light systems, which goes to work on time faster. It won't be smart cities that save us. It'll be a comprehensive sense of a response to ecological economic, cultural, and political change. And we'll take a series of events and processes, which involve all of us acting both individually and collectively to make those changes. Let's go through them just to, to finish ecologically. And it's such a simple point against an economy of growth. We have to reduce our consumption. We have to move towards an economy based on basic needs and not spend our time thinking that technology will solve our problems for us. The paperless office was the most perfect example of the problems that were going to be solved by a system of computerization, which meant you never had to print your notes out.

Alan Gamlen (23:15):

That's because I wrote mine on the plane as I was coming across here. So, and it didn't have time. I would have printed them that we actually use more paper than we've ever used before we have to move towards basic needs. Politically, we have to move against that Neo nationalist emphasis on being great. Again, you recognize Donald Trump's words there. We need to say, for example, orient our troops from military activity towards human security. Culturally, we need to move against that joy of unfettered individualism that we both had all hold. So dear, we need to move towards an idea of re-establishing community relations and reciprocal relations of family and friends, associates who are strangers, including as Graham Hugo often talked about what you do as you welcome strangers into your midst, particularly those who are strangers and need. One thing that Grimes pointed out is that those who move, who are most fearful of other poor, the poor moved by boats and by land, the wealthy moved by airplanes and strangely it's the ones who can't buy boats.

Alan Gamlen (24:19):

The were most fearful of the ones that risked their lives. The most that we worry about. So considerably, and it's mostly because they're poor. So in all these terms, ecologically, economically, politically, and culturally changes and aid in short, we need to go back to basics. I want to lead with one and I finished, started off with the words of a secretary general. I now want to move to the words of a poet because sometimes numbers are not enough. And this, this is poet from the 20th century in the last four lines. You'll know they're the most quoted lines of any 20th century poem that we have. And despite that, we somehow still go on as ever before. This is Ts, Eliot's the hollow man, and it's the last 15 lines. And he wrote this in 1925, between the desire and the spasm between the potency and the existence between the essence and the descent falls.

Alan Gamlen (25:20):

The shadow for dine is the kingdom. So obviously a reference to the Lord's prayer for Diane is, and the line stops because there's no to go. Life is for dying is the, and now we get to the last four lines. This is the way the world ends line four. This is the way the light world ends line three. This is the way the world ends. Not with a bang, but with a whimper. What he was saying there is that unless we do something, then we're at a situation where we make or break. And unfortunately, now we're into the point where it's climate change adaptation rather than mitigation. We're going to have to respond the sign of crises that we're feeling around the world and the conditions of chaos rather than respond under conditions of flourishing and yet respond. We must doing nothing is not an option.

Alan Gamlen (26:22):

Thank you, right? Well, thank you, Paul, for that really deeply thought provoking address. And thank you also for leaving time for questions. We do have some microphones in the audience rather than passing them around. We're going to keep them in two. One is in the middle of the hall and one is up in the gallery. If you do have a question for Paul, please do approach the mic and form an orderly orderly queue. As the moderator of this discussion, I only have one request, which is that you keep your questions brief and to the point so that Paul can have time to respond. And so that there's time for discussion from other people in the audience whilst people are gathering their thoughts and coming forward to the mic, perhaps if I can get the ball rolling by, by asking a question about the premise of the lecture pool you argue that the future of humanity isn't looking good, but we're in a time when many others are arguing, that things have never looked better.

Alan Gamlen (27:26):

For example two of my colleagues in golden and Chris Gitano have recently written a book called age of discovery, where they argue that we're living in the midst of a new Renaissance. Now's the best time in human history to be alive. For example literacy rights, life expectancy rates, higher education rates are higher than they've ever been before. Child mortality rates are lower than they've ever been before. More people live under liberal democracy with more basic rights, more freedoms than ever before. Science and technology are going through a period of rapid growth that hasn't been seen since the last age of discovery. So the question is why you don't these kinds of developments give you and all of us more optimism about the future of humanity. Thank you. That's a fantastic question because our optimism associated, particularly with technological change is amazing as is our feeling that when we put targets and goals, and I'm thinking here, as I say this, the millennium goals, the millennium goals included many of those things that you're describing.

Alan Gamlen (28:38):

One of those targets, which was basic was about housing. And what was able to be shown by statistics was that we'd got millions of people out of bad housing. That is millions of people have been moved out by mechanisms, which include at building high rise apartments for people in places like India and China and Indonesia. And yet every time you look at those figures and I'm very happy to take on any one of those sets of figures that are being talked about, all of them are true, and yet we actually have more people living in slums prior to that process of getting those people out than we have at the time. That is slum living is now at 1 billion people across the planet, all of the 7 billion people in the planet, one sixth or seventh live in slums, despite the fact that millions and millions and millions were taken out of it.

Alan Gamlen (29:37):

Now, in other example, we have in education, higher levels of literacy than we've ever had before. It's no doubt about it. Absolutely the case and the millennium goals were part of that process. You know, nations ran those millennium goals. And one of their targets was around the numbers associated with students who had gone to year eight at primary school, or just in the first stage high school. And they increased the levels across that period into the, in the millennium period of the goals and yet what it did because they lost sight of the principles and the meaning behind those statistics, that in many cases in the global south, that learning was less relevant to those people than most of the original learning that they were engaged in that they got to you, right? And mostly it was a waste of time for about 40% of that population because it wasn't literacy, which was crucial, crucial to their living.

Alan Gamlen (30:39):

And at the same time, they lost customary knowledge of their relationship to others, which were consequential for their relations to friends, family, and to, and to community. I deal a lot of work in Papua New Guinea. I worked in a little village called Bora where young women were taken from that village to port Moresby for education, because that's what they needed to do to be educated. And while I was working in that village for coffins came back of the senior young girls who had gone to port Moresby who had died of HIV aids because of they needed money to live in port Moresby. And they'd gone through process the human costs. Now I'm in favor of education. I work at a university. Education is critical. I'm in favor of literacy, I'm in favor of learning. I think it's basic and fundamental, but we've got our facts and figures wrong. When we think it's just about getting kids to year eight in the United States, we get kids to year 10 as the norm, and there are a whole, and I'm not sure what the percentages are. Something like 30% of children who go to the particular schools in particular zones will never go to

university and will never get a job of any consequence despite all that. Thanks, Paul. We have some questions now from the floor. If you could just briefly identify yourself

Audience member (31:58):

Stuart Swinney could I add a number to your various numbers and ask a question? The number that I would highlight, I think from the latest Oxfam report is that 1% of the planet's population on 50% of the planet's wealth that is more than the remaining 99%. I find that is at least as shocking as the interesting number you came up with regarding the wild population and the biomass, and given that reality of that number isn't it important that we think about or problems in the context of capitalism and capital and ownership, because it really is a very small number, 1% who control and make investment decisions about growth and about more or less everything else you care to think of. But as in your discussion, you tended to not use that word or that language you quite often would talk about we or, or about humans or about Oz. And I just wonder if it would perhaps not be better to more explicitly address and name and develop your thinking around that rather fundamental reality.

Alan Gamlen (33:33):

Thank you. That's a great comment. And yes, I agree entirely that number also is added to weight by a book by Thomas Piketty, which is now being discussed around the world. And hopefully we'll have more impact and all the previous books, which have talked about the problems of capital and capitalism, what Thomas Pickety describes is that number of 1% is not made up of people. Who've worked hard and simply by the sweat of their brow have made that amount of money. Most of those people inherited their money. And the process of inheritance became the mechanism through which by then secondary capital gains, they were able to establish themselves within that 1%. And Donald Trump is one of those 1%, as we all know the point of that process of taking you through that is then to say, what do you do about it? Well, then that means that there needs to be some structural changes within the form of capitalism and particularly in the form of capitalism, which takes capital accrual as an obvious gain for people who have already got wealth.

Alan Gamlen (34:39):

So I was in Mexico city in January this year. And there was a new mechanism being talked about for cities, where they asked the question, why do those that own land gain capital gains from things which they have no control over or add nothing to? So why don't we as a city say that all capital gains beyond inflation on buildings and property become turned into the social benefit for public housing and for changing the way in which we conceive of a city. Now that's the kind of radical change there'll be necessary and also at the same time. And you'll be, you'll be very aware of this if you actually did that. That is if a, if a government puts in a transport node and somebody's property goes up by 15% because you've got better transport next to it who should gain from that you, because you had the accident of being in that place where that train station was put in, or rather the community around you.

Alan Gamlen (35:45):

And that what they're saying is the community should benefit. That would be a structural shift, which would also make housing affordability. And rather than the rubbish that people go on with at the moment and saying by sprawling cities and increasing the land extension, so we can build on cheaper and cheaper land further and further out, and thus colonizing more of our own agricultural space, as well as the space of wild animals. Why don't we just simply put in place a system, which says you will not gain value out of nothing. The medieval period said that was sin. Now it's become a social necessity that

we changed that form of how capital accrues. So I agree with you completely. Thanks very much. We, I can see, we have two more questions Paul, with your permission. I suggest we take them both at once. If you don't mind responding in that way.

Audience member (36:34):

Thank you. My name is Sean roles. Thank you for another very thought-provoking discussion dog. I'm just going to the idea you just referred to about taxation of land that is of course, an idea of Henry George, which society seems to have totally before from the bat but going to th the basic problem it lies in our psychology. There are at least nine human bias, which tends to make us perception distorted. And one of them perhaps most significant is the optimism bias which drives a 90% of university professors to believe that they are above average. And another facet of human psychology, which derives from that same roots is that we have a completely distorted view of reality, which has to do with a division of worldview and their worldview, which is accepted by conservatives is one, which also has the effect of making them blind to evidence of among other things, climate change. And

Alan Gamlen (38:19):

The question mark, if we can, I'm just conscious. We have a couple more. Yeah.

Audience member (38:23):

So the question is, so how do we deal with the problem of basic human psychology?

Alan Gamlen (38:30):

Thank you. And one more question, and then we'll give Paul a chance to respond

Audience member (38:36):

Derek Hurst. My question, the bit that sort of rang a bit the most was we spoke about biomass in which that humans have actually overtaken the actual animal population, but also considering the rate of adoption we have in technology as well. Do you feel there's going to be at some point where one it's come like a sliding scale, one's going up the other's going down. Is there going to be a chance at some point that the technology age might be able to help try and slow the decline in that biomass?

Alan Gamlen (39:16):

Well, that's that question first? And that's, that is so complicated because every time you read something by the techno optimists and the people who feel as if life is better on this planet and in many ways it is, but let's not overestimate what that means. And one of the worst things I find as a kind of modernist bias as well in our own thinking, which means we think the middle ages was full of life, which was nasty, nasty shortish, and brute British, because one person happened to use those words in the 17th century to describe the way in which England worked. Now that whole question, it's a really complicated one. And it means that we have to stop thinking about a whole variety of, of, of changes, which are quite dramatic beyond. Now put the two answers together because the psychological questions are quite profound, but I actually think the cultural ones are more profound than the psychological ones.

Alan Gamlen (40:15):

I don't actually think that there are cultural essences or a psychological Universal's, which are absolute. And in, so really thinking about the questions of those technological changes, I actually don't think they're optimistic. I think that if Charles Dickens talked about the best of times and worst of times, I think we're totally contradictory rather than singular now psychology in response. And that includes the technology. We both fear technology and love it. At the same time, we both work with technology and think it's going to bring about the answers to our problems at the same time, as we're worried by all these new developments and think they have not brought about serious change. We often overstate the consequences of things like the Twitter sphere and the Netscapes and the internet and worldwide web problems to think that that's changed our psychology completely and fundamentally. And yet, at the same time, we still use those things for maintaining relationships, with friends and family.

Alan Gamlen (41:16):

So that's where we are totally contradictory in that what's, what's makes the change most hard to think about because technology will not provide the answer, but it's not actually the problem either technologies do have tendencies consequences, coordination issues. And we, I was in a taxi driver talk, talking to a taxi drivers, okay. From the airport yesterday, he said, the only answer to the problem of, of that six hour blackout is nuclear power for south Australia. And that kind of world means that people look to technology. I said to him, but focus Shamia. And he said, oh yes, but they put it on a fault line. And I said, well, what about stories that are, yes, that's a problem. And he knew he he's more knowledgeable than I was about. He said, yes, no, a thousand years half-life for a uranium 2, 3, 5. And yes, it would mean that we'd have to store this stuff for thousands of years.

Alan Gamlen (42:10):

And there are consequences for radiation and he, then he stopped and he didn't say he was pushing back. He was just simply saying, the world is too complicated for me to understand. And therefore, I don't know what to do about it. So I do go back to that thing, doing nothing is not an option. It's actually the activity. We do. The psychology of people. The present is fragile, adaptive, contradictory. We moved between happiness and despair between Jewish songs and lassitude. We move into a view that we're so tired of the world's problems. We can't do anything about it. And we turn our air conditioners on at the same time, as we fear the problems of the world. Now, under those circumstances, I feel for all of us and I feel exactly the same way, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't still do something about it. And on that note, that brings us to the close of the second Graham Hugo Memorial lecture. Thank you, Paul. You've given us a vision of our predicament, but I think also some options for how to escape it. So thank you very much to the organizers of the event. Thank you to all of you for coming out. And most of all, thank you to Paul [inaudible].