

LONDON CONFERENCE IN CRITICAL THOUGHT PROGRAMME

24th & 25th June 2016 Birkbeck, University of London

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Conference Streams

The Affective Life of Austerity, Precarity and Vulnerability

Stream Organisers: Jacqui Gibbs, Billy Holzberg, Aura Lehtonen

Contagious Terms: Critical Inquiry into the Transmission and Effects of Language across Disciplines

Stream Organisers: Sara Constantino, Emmett Zeifman

Data as Things: Dis/assembling the Stuff of Data and Data's Coming to Matter

Stream Organisers: Claudia Aradau, Rocco Bellanova, Gloria González Fuster

The Event

Stream Organisers: Ben Dalton, Jacob Bittner

Inside/Outside

Stream Organiser: Andrea Vesentini

The Micro-Politics of Desire: Connecting Institutional Psychotherapy, Schizoanalysis, and Anti-Psychiatry

Stream Organiser: Edward Thornton, Eric Harper, Tom Waterton

Objects of Memory and Rituals of Memorialisation as Fields of Struggle

Stream Organisers: Federica Rossi, Kanika Sharma, Ozan Kamiloglu

Passionate Work

Stream Organisers: Murray Robertson, Martin Young

Publishing Critical Thought: Media, Infrastructure, Content

Stream Organiser: Matt Mahon

Reclaiming subjectivity? subject(s) after the Death of the Subject

Stream Organiser: Sara Raimondi

Recuperation

Stream Organiser: Andrea Liu

Virtual Raciality / Race IRL: Critical Approaches to the Concept of Race in the Digital Age

Stream Organiser: Christine Goding

Overview

Friday 24th June

Location: Birkbeck Main Building, Malet Street (MAL)

Registration - 9:00 – 9:30

CLO (Clare Management Centre) Basement Foyer

Parallel Sessions 1 – 9:30 – 11:00

MAL 629 – Event 1

MAL 630 – The Micropolitics of Desire 1

MAL 631 – Objects of Memory 1

MAL 632 – Passionate Work 1

Break – 11:00 – 11:15

Parallel Sessions 2 – 11:15 – 12:45

MAL 629 – Data as Things 1

MAL 630 – Inside/Outside 1

MAL 631 – The Affective Life of Austerity 1

MAL 632 – Publishing Critical Thought 1

Lunch – 12:45 – 14:45

Parallel Sessions 3 – 13:45 – 15:15

MAL 629 – Data as Things 2

MAL 630 – The Micropolitics of Desire 2

MAL 631 – Reclaiming Subjectivity 1

MAL 632 – Objects of Memory 2

Break – 15:15 – 15:45

Parallel Sessions 4 – 15:45 – 17:15

MAL 629 – Contagious Terms 1

MAL 631 – Reclaiming Subjectivity 2

MAL 632 – Recuperations 1

Reception and Journal Launch – 17:15

CLO (Clare Management Centre) Basement Foyer

Saturday 25th June

Location: Birkbeck, Clore Management Centre (CLO)

Registration 9:00 – 9:15

CLO Basement Foyer

Parallel Sessions 5 – 9:15 – 10:45

CLO 101 – The Micropolitics of Desire 3

CLO 203 – The Affective Life of Austerity 2

CLO 204 – Objects of Memory 3

CLO 306 – Contagious Terms 2

Break – 10:45 – 11:15

Parallel Sessions 6 – 11:15 – 12:45

CLO 101 – Virtual Raciality

CLO 203 – The Affective Life of Austerity 3

CLO 204 – Reclaiming Subjectivity 3

CLO 306 – Passionate Work 2

Break – 12:45 – 13:45

Parallel Sessions 7 - 13:45 – 15:15

CLO 101 – The Event 2

CLO 203 – Reclaiming Subjectivity 4

CLO 204 – Inside/Outside 2

CLO 306 – Objects of Memory 4

Break – 15:15 - 15:45

Parallel Sessions 8 – 15:45 – 17:15

CLO 101 – The Micropolitics of Desire 4

CLO 203 – Reclaiming Subjectivity 5

CLO 204 – Recuperations 2

Reception and Book Launch – 17:15

CLO Basement Foyer

Post Conference Drinks

Pub to be announced

Rooms Overview

Friday					
		MAL 629	MAL 630	MAL 631	MAL 632
	9:00 - 9:30	Registration			
Parellel Sessions 1	9:30 - 11:00	E1	MPD1	OM1	PW1
	11:00 - 11:15	Break (15 mins)			
Parellel Sessions 2	11:15 - 12:45	DAT1	IO1	AA1	PCT
	12:45 - 13:45	Lunch (1 hours)			
Parellel Sessions 3	13:45 - 15:15	DAT2	MPD2	RS1	OM 2
	15:15 - 15:45	Break (30 mins)			
Parellel Sessions 4	15:45 - 17:15	CT1		RS2	R1
	17:15	Journal Launch			

Saturday					
		CLO 101	CLO 203	CLO 204	CLO 306
	9:00 - 9:15	Registration			
Parellel Sessions 5	9:15 - 10:45	MPD3	AA2	OM3	CT2
	10:45 - 11:15	Break (30 mins)			
Parellel Sessions 6	11:15 - 12:45	VR1	AA3	RS3	PW 2
	12:45 - 13:45	Lunch (1 hours)			
Parellel Sessions 7	13:45- 15:15	E2	RS4	IO2	OM4
	15:15 - 15:45	Break (30 mins)			
Parellel Sessions 8	15:45 - 17:15	MPD4	RS 5	R2	
	17:15	Book Launch			

Friday 24th June

Registration – 9:00 – 9:30
CLO Basement Foyer

Parallel Sessions 1 – 9:30 – 11:00

MAL 629 – The Event 1

The Genius-Event

Mike Haworth

In his essay 'Psyche: Invention of the Other', Derrida outlines the paradoxical relation between invention, *qua* the event of the new, and the 'statutory context'¹ which provides the conditions for its emergence. No invention can occur outside of a contextual framework governed by a more-or-less explicit set of rules and conventions, and yet no invention can have been programmable or predictable within this context. As such it must suspend and retroactively modify that which will have made it possible. This constitutes an aporia, where the inventor/s must – *at once* – work with and without the guidance of rules. Classically, the motif of genius has been invoked as a means of evading this aporia: genius obfuscates the problem by appealing to a mystificatory natural or divine agency. However, my argument in this paper is that, rather than being the *solution* to the aporia, genius in fact names the aporetic structure as such. I will show, through appealing to Ann Jefferson's 2015 book *Genius in France*, that this structure is evidenced in the polyvalence of the word genius itself, where among its (apparently unconnected) significations are: genius of the language, *genius loci*, genius of the nation as well as the more conventional sense of exceptional creative ability. Typically this has been seen as evidence of its incoherence but what Jefferson's study allows us to see is that it designates a dynamic structure, where collective genius (of language, place, etc.) provides the conditions for individual genius, which in turn transforms that collective context in what Bernard Stiegler (following Simondon) would call a 'transductive' relation. Finally, I will demonstrate that all of this is consistent with Derrida's own account of genius in the late text *Geneses, Genealogies, Genres and Genius*, where the question of genius is mapped on the structure of the gift.

Relational Events

Joel White

The driving concern of this paper, and it is laid out as a concern, will be the demand that *the definite* still imposes on *the indefinite*. In other words, why does the demand for (and from) the universal persist as a demand for an understanding of the Event? In short, why *the* Event? What does the singular and definite structure of the Event tell us about the philosophical and political demands of our times? I argue that the necessity to safeguard the Event as a singularity safeguards the metaphysical structure of the definite. The Event acts, as Nietzsche would call it, as a 'metaphysical comfort' *par excellence*. In turn, this metaphysical comfort structures the Event onto-theologically (Heideggerian rather than Kantian). In that it acts either as a first cause or as a cause *tout court*. In order to move beyond this metaphysical short-sightedness, I will propose a critical reading of Andrew Benjamin's book *The Plural Event* alongside his more recent work *Towards a Relational Ontology*. Through an explication of the central arguments at work in these two books, I propose that in its persistence the metaphysical structure of the Event always effaces the relational structure that produces it. The argument is that the Event, thought of as singular and definite, exists *as if* without-relation. Existing *as if* without-relation the Event hence takes on a concerning metaphysical

status. It becomes revelatory in and of itself - *noumenal*. Thinking through this concern, I will affirm a philosophy of events that is plural, anoriginal, relational and open to indeterminate reflection.

Event, in Theory?

Jennifer Yusin

The leading question of this paper will be: can we think the Event without meaning? At the heart of the problem lies the symbolic. Particularly with Lévi-Strauss and Lacan, the notion of 'symbolic order' substitutes for the 'symbol,' which is purely linguistic and aesthetic. The main function of a symbol is not its signification, but the introduction of a gap in language and meaning, which it both comes from and opens. Accordingly, the self-reflexive, contingent play of the symbolic consists in transforming structures into events. At its most basic, the Event proper is consistently conceived as an appearing that is always the appearance of a new mode of the immutable horizon of being which asserts the necessity of a gap of negativity into reality. The intersection among psychoanalysis, critical theory, and western philosophy bears witness to the symbolic as the proper situation in which the Event is brought to its truth by means of its own self-negation.

Positioning myself against the priority of the symbolic as that which allows the Event to happen, I will show that what underlies the current global phenomena of trauma is the radical novelty of the empirical, meaningless, material event through which emerges a new experience of finitude that cannot be fully absorbed into specular recuperation. The challenge that trauma makes to the category of the Event is related to the character of the structure of reality in-itself, demonstrating that the awareness of one's own fragile finitude is transformed into the experience of one's own impregnable pluralities.

MAL 630 – The Micropolitics of Desire 1
Chair: Maria Kekki

Institution, Revolution, Unconscious

Edward Kazarian

As is well-known, Anti-Oedipus raises the possibility that 'revolutionaries' on the macro-level might, at a micro- or unconscious level, sustain investments that are effectively counter-revolutionary. Indeed, such investments are held up as factors for explaining the frequent self-sabotage of revolutions and revolutionary parties—and as the basis for a general injunction to attend to the micro-political character of our own investments, what Foucault called the project of 'non-fascist living.' I want to focus on Guattari's own writings in order to bring into relief the institutional dimensions of what a micro-political or a molecular revolution might look like. In the 1950s and 60s, Guattari argued that diagnostic and therapeutic potential of psychoanalysis was constrained by its classical setting—the "subject-to-subject" relationship of analyst and analysand. When organized correctly, the institutional space of the hospital provided a richer field for expressive, signifying and therapeutic production, one which is less prone to divorce psychical investments of desiring and political types. Later, Guattari came to reject 'institutional analysis,' which he saw as tending toward "psycho-sociological" models that simply "overcode" existing models for the analysis of the unconscious. As an alternative, he proposed the theory of collective assemblages of enunciation—but it remains important to recognize that institutions can be involved in and by such assemblages, and so that and how the micro-politics of desire retains an 'institutional' dimension.

The Mental Health Act and territories of confinement: A perspective of advocacy and lived experience
Laura May Palmer

This paper charts the inadvertent ethnography emerging from my work as an independent advocate in psychiatric hospitals. Through the daily practice of supporting inpatients, I unexpectedly came to occupy an enclave between - yet simultaneously on the fringes of - these institutions, the apparatus of the Mental Health Act (MHA) and individuals detained in their care. These coordinates exposed latent territories of confinement seemingly created through the iterative encounters between inpatients and the bureaucratic systems of their clinical gatekeepers. The quality of these novel spaces and relations will be explored through three vignettes of people I worked with. Greta's account, firstly, centres upon the meeting of two estranged systems of *lived* and *clinical* knowledge, resulting in the coexistence of refracted, antagonistic versions of her bipolar disorder. Her story facilitates a discussion about the precarious site of the 'voluntary stay' and, also, the prescience of vision in psychiatry by drawing upon Haraway's critique of disembodied objectivity. James' account shifts focus to the potency of 'risk' and 'insight' in contemporary psychiatric discourse and how these constructs materialised as complex mechanisms of constraint. This vignette further examines the *unheimlich* potential within spaces of detention by relating hospitalisation to Bachelard's psychoanalytic treatment of the home. Thirdly, Harry's account describes his negotiation of a space outside his confined status. With reflexive intention throughout, I also explore my condition as an advocate - a vicarious extension of the patient's voice and, by virtue, an object of transference and displacement for distressed individuals and clinical professionals alike.

Analysis as Method: The institution as collective process

Susana Caló

This paper draws upon the institutional analysis movement in France, from its foundations laid out by Francois Tosquelles in Saint Albans during the war years, to the clinic La Borde created by Jean Oury and Félix Guattari to put forward a notion of institution as collective emancipatory process. With the aim to directly respond to the invitation to analyse the convergence of psychotherapy and politics proposed by this stream, I take as case study the clinic La Borde and the militant-analytical writings of Félix Guattari to focus on a definition of analysis as a counter-hegemonic militant practice for the development of collective forms of subjectivity. In the framework of institutional analysis, this implied to view the institution as a collective process and to emphasize the group as agent of resingularisation. Whilst Guattari's theory of groups is clearly inspired by Sartre's dialectical sociology (modelled on the concepts of 'seriality' and 'group-in-fusion') the paper will show how Guattari reinvests the dialectics of group-institution with a creative-constitutive dimension with a potential for change, thus defending the creative capacity of institutional processes. The thinking of institutions as creative collective processes can be applied to a contemporary context where a simply negation of institutions needs to be urgently re-addressed.

MAL 631 – Objects of Memory 1

Suppressing Collective Memory: Chechnya's 'Day of Memory and Grief' and the Rehabilitation of Stalinism in Today's Russia

Cornelia Clocker

The 23 February marks the beginning of the deportation of Chechen and Ingush people to Siberia and Central Asia by Stalin in 1944. This day was remembered as the 'Day of Memory and Grief' in Chechnya (replacing the celebration of the soviet Red Army Day on this date). However, in 2011, the deportation commemoration was moved by the Putin-loyal Chechen government from the 23 February to the 10 May – the day the former Chechen leader Akhmat Kadyrov was buried after his

assassination. In addition, the 23 February turned back into the Red Army Day, which Putin renamed the 'Defender of the Fatherland Day' in 2002.

The way in which the commemoration of the deportation was handled by the authorities has led to an increasing debate of the issue and demonstrations on the 23 February following the amendments – equalled by the authorities with dissent. This strategic move coincides with a rehabilitation of Stalin and Stalinism witnessed in Russia more broadly and worryingly depicting the current political situation.

The authorities' reaction to Chechnya's 'Day of Memory and Grief' represents one of many initiatives Putin has instigated to re-write Russia's history in a way beneficial to his own position and strategy. The almost cynical move to replace this commemoration with the 'Defender of the Fatherland Day', given Stalin's justification of the deportation with the alleged collaboration of Chechens with Nazi Germany, is signalling the stance that only the regime's version of history is going to be accepted in today's Russia.

Family Shrines and Mao: Everyday Ritual in a Naxi House

Peter Ran Guangpei

This paper examines the domestic ritual practice in a Naxi community in Yunnan, based on an eleven-month fieldwork in a Naxi village in southwest China. A Naxi family shrine is believed to be the site where the latest deceased three generations rest. It is perceived as the sacred centre within a house. Making offerings to the shrine on a daily basis, for those still living, is regarded as fulfilling their filial duties to return a debt of suffering they owe their ascendants. This ritual is thus crucial to the prosperity of a household.

Between 1957 and late 1970s, family shrines were abandoned and replaced with Mao's portraits. Accordingly the everyday ritual practice was substituted by a similar form of showing loyalty to Mao three times a day (ch. *sanzhongyu*). The shrines were revived in the early 1980s. Since then, the ancestor worshipping ritual has been reinstated in everyday life. On the other hand, Mao posters are still put up above or alongside the shrines, not simply for nostalgic purposes, but also to gain protection for the family. The changing ritual practice serves to reassert, as well as maintain the sense of sacredness in domestic sphere. It enables, but at the same time constrains the way people make sense of the continuities and ruptures characterising their history over the past half-century or so. Through ritual revitalisation and poster decoration, the Naxi created new ways of imagining their social relations with the deceased and the state in a world of huge change and uncertainty.

Reconciling legal rituals in post-apartheid South Africa

Valeria Vázquez Guevara

This paper develops the theoretical framework for a research project that I will carry out in South Africa between July and December 2016. The project examines how 'reconciliation' is being constructed through the discourse of the South African Parliament as well as indigenous rituals and practices. 'Reconciliation' is widely understood in terms of unity and harmony. On this understanding, sources of non-state law can become problematic in so far as they express a diversity and difference that challenges the unity and harmony of the nation-state. By contrast, critical approaches to 'reconciliation' seek to understand how this diversity and difference are *fundamental* to nation-state building after violent conflict. The South African 1996 Constitution was designed as a social, political and legal mechanism to symbolize reconciliation after apartheid. Among other provisions directed at overcoming racial segregation, the Constitution recognized the authority of

traditional leaders and the application of customary law. However, while the Constitution embraces diversity and pluralism as unifying elements in South Africa's national reconciliation process, there remains a tension between the established legal and political supremacy of state law, which tends towards 'closure', and the constitutional principles of diversity and pluralism on which the new South Africa is founded, which tends toward 'openness'. In other words, whereas reconciliation in South Africa pulls toward 'unity' as 'closure', the existence of indigenous law pushes toward 'openness'. The aim of this presentation is to think through these theoretical issues in conversation with conference participants, to receive feedback prior to carrying out the fieldwork in South Africa.

MAL 632 – Passionate Work 1: Passionate Education
Chair: Martin Young

No Title

Giulia Mensitieri

My proposal of communication is based on a crossed ethnography of the fashion industry in Paris and Brussels. The fieldwork was done with creators, designers, stylists, models, photographs as well as others professionals involved in the sector.

In Fashion work, passion has an important role to play: it's at the same time the reason to enter in this world, to stay in it, and to accept domination and asymmetries.

"I'm passionate by the thing to be creative and to express myself", told me Leonard, make up artist, to explain his subjection to his despotic boss.

Actors use the notion of passion to define their relationship with fashion, with beauty and with creativity, and they also identify passion as the reason to endure in precarious conditions of labour and in asymmetries. In fact, the etymology of word passion refers to the Latin verb *patior* which means to tolerate, to suffer, to endure.

What is the role played by this affect in the construction of the subjectivities of workers, in their relation with work, in affective relations at work, and in the maintain of hierarchy? This communication will address these questions.

Through the notion of passion it is possible to explore the permeable border between subjectivation and subjection in work of contemporary capitalism.

"I smiled when I had to smile, but they weren't going to get to me like the last time": Emotional Excess and Care in the Classroom

Murray Robertson

Even as labour and capital become further aware of the emotional content of work, unsanctioned moments of emotional excess are discouraged in the workplace (Hochschild, 1983). The venting of work-related anguish is meant to be a quiet, private affair, and as such, passion's potential to disrupt the workday remains. This tension is only heightened in work centred on emotionally charged acts of caring. This paper examines passionate 'excess' in one such labour of care: education.

Investigating the ways passion allows for – and spills out of – care work in the English primary school, this paper highlights the ill fit of emotion and educational care labour conducted by a wide and often unwaged network of people: from the emotional exhaustion of teachers to the passionate outbursts of play workers who aim to avoid burnout.

Stressing the “importance of understanding the political values involved in caring” (Fisher & Tronto, 1990: 56), this paper begins a discussion on emotional excess not simply as by-product of the conditions of work or a warning sign of mental distress, but as an opportunity to answer unresolved questions of care, work, and production. Informed by feminist Marxist discourse on social reproduction that interrogate philosophical ethics of care and critical labour theory (Dalla Costa, 1972; Fortunati, 1995; Weeks, 2001), this paper uses moments of flaring passions in and around the classroom to lay the framework for a responsive politics of care.

No Title

Deborah Keller

Navigating the sometimes rocky terrain of students’ freedom of speech versus instructors’ academic freedom presents ongoing challenges for those of us who engage in critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy involves problematizing lived experience with one’s students in order to act to transform. For Freire (2003) this involves what he referred to as “problem-posing” education, in which the students *with* the teacher engage in critical *reflection* upon the world and *act* to transform. Paramount to this process is critical consciousness, or *conscientização* – “the learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (p. 35). The purpose of critical education, according to Freire, is “humanization,” or “authentic liberation,” and this involves *praxis*, action and reflection of individuals upon their world to effect transformation. It is dialogic and involves *naming* the world as an act of love; “only by abolishing the situation of oppression is it possible to restore the love which that situation made impossible” (p. 90).

It is at this juncture that I turn to my passion as a critical instructor. In my presentation I will look at how this passion/love often butts up against the wave of student resistance. I will examine the sometimes delicate balance between taking a critical stance and making space for dissenting voices, and discuss the challenges of addressing issues of oppression in majority White classrooms and of attempting to fulfill expectations of the university to embrace “diversity” vis-à-vis its expectations to respect students’ freedom of speech.

Break – 11:00 – 11:15

Parallel Sessions 2 – 11:15 – 12:45

MAL 629 – Data as Things 1

Deconstructing the data4development paradigm in post-colonial Egypt

Nancy Salem and Eman Shahata

Ever since the thorough adoption of data into the development complex, it has been taken for granted that data is a) novel and b) necessary model that needs to be universally applied. In this paper we will be looking at what has been conceived as a fundamental lack of data in the Middle East and emphasis on creating a “culture of data” as a process that normalizes and naturalizes many discourses around both “data” and “development”. Contemporary rhetoric on the need for a data revolution in the Middle East, that has been recently part of international development paradigms, reflects paternalistic attitudes of civil society organizations that are far from being apolitical or detached from the modes of power surrounding them. We will also be making the argument that

data as a non-negotiable and neutral “thing” (statistical practices, censuses) are shaped by 19th century processes of formalization and standardization. The latter have a violent history as they were enforced and inculcated during the period of colonization and modernization in Egypt. Thus, they reflect a similar extension of control and the transplantation of models that are uniform and eurocentric. This pervasive datafication becomes perceived as a superior mode of governance as opposed to more discursive practices that have been prominent since the 19th century modernization phases. This need for a “culture of data” in Egypt mirrors familiar orientalist discourses around the stagnancy and backwardness of Egyptian society, which is seen to be detached from political and material processes and theorized as a “constant thing”.

Data as "lifeblood" and "raw material" in development discourse

Stephanie Felsberger

Data are aggressively promoted by the development industry as the panacea to most shortcomings in development. I propose to ask what conceptualization of ownership and claims to representation underlie discourses around data and more specifically open data in the development industry in Egypt. I examine these claims and conceptualizations before the background of the development industry’s historic roots in colonialism and its relation to intellectual property.

The UN report “A world that counts” (2014) describes data as “the lifeblood of decision-making and the raw material for accountability.” Words like “lifeblood” and “raw material” hint at the deep-seated assumptions about data I wish to interrogate. First, the corporeal and fleshly language insinuates a biological naturalness. I ask what claims to representations of truth and reality can be detected in this discourse and how this feeds an “invention and reinvention of nature” (Haraway 1991, 1). Second, regarding data as “raw material” suggests parallels to other physical objects, ready to be claimed as property. The discourse around specifically open data claims to espouse openness, but remains within the global regime of intellectual property. By situating the notion of property and ownership within its colonial history – based on Brenna Bhandal’s (2014) analysis of connections between property, law, and race and Cheryl Harris’ (1993) insights into whiteness as property – I ask how the development industry in Egypt thinks data: Who does data belong to? How does this inform conceptualizations of data? And what claims to representation of a presumed ‘reality’ are ascribed to data?

Governing others: anomaly and the algorithmic subject of security

Claudia Aradau and Tobias Blanke

Abstract TBC

MAL 630 – Inside/Outside 1

Chair: Thomas Waterton

Contra Spatiality

Tom Trevatt

Much critical or political thought is based around ideas of spatiality; there being a clearly delineated “inside” and “outside” around which to construct arguments and positions. Furthermore, politics as such is often seen as the activity of drawing boundaries. The outside is seen as the site of resistance, whereas the inside acts as the site of power. In this paper, I want to argue that this characterisation of definite spatial distinctions risks misunderstanding the deeply entwined nature of political reality. The use of spatial language to describe the extra-linguistic world risks applying semantic acuity to non-distinct spheres of activity that are, rather than clearly defined, tied into metabolic systems –

where energy and information is transversal. This metabolic understanding more accurately describes a world where there is a recursive relation between nested elements in a system, where individual parts are intrinsically linked to a whole and where the particular and universal dialectically relate to each other.

This paper will import lessons from economics, mathematics and systems theory to draw conclusions about the language we use to describe the political, specifically focusing on the economic work of Mario Giampietro and Kozo Mayumi on the legacy of William Stanley Jevons and the work of Fernando Zalamea, specifically his reading of C.S. Peirce.

Outside-In: Nick Land and the Vector of Metaphysics

Stephen Overy

This paper shall consider the metaphysical approach of the philosopher Nick Land, who, though now retired from the discipline, left a set of texts which are still influential upon readers of Deleuze and Guattari, Nietzsche and Kant.

Land's critical insight was that the vector of traditional metaphysics is from inside to outside; that is, it takes ideational content as it appears to the subject, and attempts to reconcile this content to facts about 'reality' on the outside. For Land, this method is inherently flawed, as the content available to the subject is necessarily conditioned to misrepresent reality.

Building upon this critique, Land began to explore what it would be for metaphysics to work outside-in. Such an approach, constantly pushing against the constraints of subjectivity (and the Kantian injunction that the noumenal is inaccessible), is at the very least a problematic position, if not an impossible one.

The paper asks where Land's attempts at moving from inside-out to outside-in fit in the history of philosophy. The antecedents of his position, in his own assessment, are Heraclitean flux, Kantian critical philosophy, Schopenhauerian pessimism, Nietzsche's theory of recurrence, Freud's unconscious, and various scientific approaches. Having established this genealogy it shall go on to discuss if there is anything distinctive in Land's approach, or if it just a recapitulation of pessimism, using the lexicon of late twentieth century thought.

Cosmetic Performances, Neoliberal Silences

Sanaz Raji

Since September 2015, an ever growing roster of British universities are now offering refugee scholarships, sometimes strictly for Syrians only, as in the case of University of East London. Almost unanimously, activists academics and mainstream (NUS) and leftist student activists alike applauded and also are advocating for these initiatives showcasing their respective universities as proof that they were "welcoming" of refugees. Ignored and conveniently sidelined in these congratulatory utterances is the growing surveillance of nonEU international students and university staff both by UK Visa and Immigration and now PREVENT policy in addition to the already exorbitant tuition fees that nonEU international student are required to pay, the bureaucratic violence that casualised nonEU international university staff are met with along with the continued racist and xenophobic victimization by the state that universities are happily colluding with.

A word I coined for such perceived activism or solidarity, otherwise called cosmetic performance activism, defined as performing a type of solidarity that actually permits for neoliberal racist and xenophobic silencing and violence to occur. This paper will explore this through the refugee university scholarships and various student and leftist activism concerning refugees, asylum seeker and nonEU migrants. What this paper will explore how antiracist and migrant rights activism is strangely working towards neoliberal interests that in turn marginalizes those communities most oppressed by state violence.

MAL 631 – The Affective Life of Austerity
Chair: Aura Lehtonen

Politics of Poverty: From Scarcity to Invisibility

Moniza Rizzini Ansari

This paper presents a research in progress concerning poverty in today's neoliberal global south. In this study poverty is problematised as a political category, rather than a socioeconomic segment based on lack of wealth, scarcity or dispossession. It is argued that *the poor* fulfils a political role in the balances of power and frequently challenges such balances. As stated by Jacques Rancière, politics causes the poor to exist as an entity when a dissenting practice forces the redistribution of the sensible, the perceptible in society. The struggle, therefore, is one of visibility and this debate is raised in the field of critical legal studies where law and the justice system are construed as yet another mechanism of invisibilisation of the poor – by means of processes of victimisation and/or criminalisation of poverty. Based on Félix Guattari's account of the repressive impacts of capitalistic mode of organisation of social life into processes of subjectivation, poverty is perceived as political subjectivity – a productive agencing process that rejects frequent victimising, pacifying, apolitical assessments. This is supported by practices found in Latin American postcolonial perspectives (specifically from Brazil) such as the manifesto on 'The Aesthetic of Hunger' and 'The Aesthetic of Dream' developed by Glauber Rocha that reframes concepts of poverty, radicalism and violence offering new takes on dissenting subjectivities, by relocating the discursive-performative disputes into territories of anti-reason in order to confront the 'irrational' phenomenon of poverty. It is thus said that poverty cannot be understood: breaking with colonizing rationalisms and prioritizing molecular and affective dynamics is the way out.

Flexible Subjects: Precarity as Social Vulnerability/Social Vulnerability as Precarity

Christian Garland

The title of this paper makes ironic use of the concept of 'flexibility', by applying it to the virtually continuous state of insecurity and flux that is also its less celebrated obverse: precarity and indeed the material terrain of 'precarious labor'. Given that 'work' is the primary means for social reproduction under late capitalism, its scarcity and insecurity necessarily mean acute social vulnerability for the atomized subjects on whom it makes limitless demands for 'flexibility': both in terms of outlook and attitude, as much as in cruder material terms.

Such precarious and indefinite limbo on such a vast scale for so many will of course have much longer-term societal effects and shocks not yet felt and it is not the task of this paper to speculate on trying to map them, but rather to critically explore some of the existing terms of precarious material and social reproduction - in this case in the contemporary UK.

Indeed, the UK of 2016 is somewhere in which the ideas of collective or social needs - and the commons - become ever harder to materially articulate under conditions of 'flexibility' and atomization in which material survival becomes more and more uncertain for a greater and greater number, demanding continuous re-skilling and indeed a constant (re) fashioning of self and acquisition of knowledge, skills and affect in which life is individualized completely while social ties are severely curtailed and not advisable for anyone wanting to survive. It is this 'actually existing' social reality this paper, coming from the perspective of a 'rebooted' first generation Frankfurt School Critical Theory will seek to examine.

This paper discusses the role of shame in political discourse on austerity. Utilizing debates about social and economic problems, I portray public policy approaches to the idea of vulnerability and otherness in civic life. Specifically, I examine the global prison industrial complex in the UK and the United States, identifying how the language of shame, disgust, and indebtedness serve to perpetuate the state's sociopolitical violence or, conversely, motivate calls for social justice and solidarity among citizenry or the public. My paper concludes by evaluating moral discourse and theorizing implications for political autonomy and engaged citizenship in the 21st century.

MAL 632 – Publishing Critical Thought

Round Table Discussion: Matt Mahon (Chair), UCL, Alice Corble, Goldsmiths, Ian Rothwell, Edinburgh School of Art, Lee Mackinnon, Arts University Bournemouth

This panel will address the themes of the Publishing Critical Thought stream: the relationship between critical thought and its conditions of production. How do the conditions under which critical work is produced affect the nature of critique itself? What forms of production of research (and what publishing methods) are recognised as critical, and under what conditions? How might the medium in which critique is produced itself be critiqued as form?

Ian Rothwell will discuss the failure of traditional forms of criticality online, exemplified by Ian Bogost's *Cow Clicker*; Alice Corble will speak on libraries and Critical Library Studies; and Lee Mackinnon on images. The discussion will be framed by a recent controversy around the definition of Digital Humanities as a 'postcritical' discipline, and address questions of how the digital complicates the question of criticality, how outputs other than published paper could be thought of as critical, and how the conditions of criticality are affected by the medium in which they appear.

Lunch – 12:45 – 13:45

Parallel Sessions 3 – 13:45 – 15:15

MAL 629 – Data as Things 2

Digital Sensing vs 'Big Data': A Case Study of Digital Activism in Jakarta

David Chandler

Aradau and Blanke (2015) set up the problems of Big Data security assemblages and establish a research agenda where the production of data itself is the object of social, political and philosophical enquiry. This paper seeks to contribute to this project and is concerned with how international digital humanitarian projects articulate their understanding of the production of data in distinction to 'Big Data' approaches. The area of concern is security in the Anthropocene - rather than approaches to terrorism, the organisations engaged with work in the environmental-urban poverty-resilience nexus and include the UN's Global Pulse Lab, Humanitarian Open Street Mappers and digital flood warning NGO PetaJakarta. All these organisations seek to distinguish their approaches from 'Big Data' and thereby construct a set of interesting understandings of the emancipatory role of data-based approaches which are seen as socially and politically transformative through seeking to revision communities and their relations rather than to reproduce them digitally. As one digital activist put it to me: 'Big Data merely traces the existence of the Anthropocene it does nothing to

enhance its unfolding.’ These community-centred digital activists, seeking to develop open source software, articulate a different way of accessing the world and its relations, understood as real time empiricism, without the limitations and constraints of Big Data’s possibilistic and predictive modelling.

Depictions of immortal governance

Abdelrahman Hassan

In my contribution I will mainly try to examine the performative role of data in fostering a sense of immortality, not only in individuals but in governments . I will first look at imagined accounts of ‘ubiquitous governments’ ,appearing in blockbuster sci-fi movies, that promise immortality, or promise the production of a system that actively recreates the human experience and outlives its participants. These accounts would include deconstructions of the omnipresent role of ‘the Machine’ and ‘The Creator’ in the Matrix , ‘God’s Eye’ in Fast and Furious, and of the depiction of the ‘technological singularity’ in Transcendence. Building on Badiou’s notion that immortality is a liberative and emancipatory process, I will argue that ubiquitous access to data creates a mode of existence which deems the algorithmic reproduction of human experiences possible. By this I will hope to deconstruct the perceived materiality of data and instead frame it as an instance of and an extension to Latour’s inquiry into the modes of existence.

In this imagined context, I will highlight two main shifts undertaken in data: First, the shift that data makes from being produced in a private space to spaces where it gains increasing motility. Second, the shift where data is produced and curated as a material object but then functions to create an immaterial, rather post humanist historical moment.

Finally I would like to survey the gravity of such imagined accounts of data in shaping current governmental spaces, and show instances in governance where science fiction becomes science fact.

No Data No Fiction? A conversation about how to think surveillance with/against Netflix

Rocco Bellanova and Gloria González Fuster

MAL 630 – The Micropolitics of Desire 2

Chair: Adam Gallagher

Instituting Ethico-Aesthetic Practices: Guattari, Ecosophy, and Micropolitics

Andrew Goffey & Janna Graham

Taking the concept-practice of “transversality” and its initial function as a device for problematising the authority of analytic knowledge as a starting point, this paper will explore the trajectory of the work of Félix Guattari and the centrality of his engagement with institutions and processes of institutionalisation for an understanding of micropolitics. The paper will pay particular attention to the importance of the aesthetic, or “ethico-aesthetic,” in his work and in that of institutional psychotherapy more broadly and will seek to set out the specificity of the challenge that analysis framed in terms of institutions and ecologies poses to understandings of collective practices. A key point of reference for our discussion will concern the ways in which Guattari’s thinking may be used for an engaged analysis of the instituting of art practices.

The Art of Emotio-Informational Exchange [Workshop]

Rich Thornton

This workshop draws on educational theorist Paulo Friere's concept of dialogic learning and artist-psychoanalyst Bracha L. Ettinger's notion of subjectivity-as-encounter to encourage the participants to practice and question meaningful emotio-informational exchange.

Participants are split into groups of three. The facilitator asks each individual to choose three 'things' they know about, e.g. hitchhiking in China, how to calculate life insurance, the Myth of Sisyphus. Each participant then asks the rest of their group which 'things' they would like to hear about.

Each group chooses one member to perform to the other two, and the groups begin their exchange simultaneously. The 'lesson' lasts for three minutes.

The facilitator then asks: How does it feel to be cast as the 'knower'? Is it nutrifying to be given a captive audience, rather than having to work for one - as we must do in unstructured social exchange? In contrast to Lacan, Ettinger searches for a non-psychotic return to the m/Other. She uses her artworking to process past family traumas of the Holocaust; subjectivity crosses time and space. Can a structured Frierean process of emotio-informational exchange, like we attempt in this workshop, be a form of subjectivity-as-encounter, that through role-changing reduces the hierarchy of conventional social encounter? etc.

The group is given another chance to perform the exchange. After which, the facilitator asks: Did the fact that you were now conscious of a theoretical background to the exchange influence your experience as knower or unknower? Social activist Freire believes critical consciousness is essential to revolution, psychoanalyst Ettinger believes subconscious aesthetic exchange is proto-ethical. What do you think?

MAL 631 – Reclaiming Subjectivity 1

Chair: Sara Raimondi

What does the subject mean? Trans-individuation in Deleuze and Althusser's regional theories

Chris Henry

Louis Althusser's work has recently been recast by Alain Badiou following the protracted pause in Althusser studies after him having killed his wife. Determined to turn back the supposed erasure of the subject under post-structuralism, Badiou appropriates Althusser's anti-humanism to underpin his claim that subjects actualise truths within certain situations. However, there are significant inconsistencies in his appropriation that undermines Badiou's claim that the subject is prescribed by an ontological "truth procedure" at the same time as it actualises a procedures' truth.

My paper will elaborate an almost-unstudied note that Althusser distributed early in his career to recast Althusser, not as best befitting Badiou's ontological formalism, but the transcendental empiricism of Gilles Deleuze. In lieu of Althusser's suggestion that Deleuze distinguish between differentiation/differenciation, I will show that an encounter between Althusser's general/regional theories and Deleuze's ontology of difference can furnish the latter with an epistemological nuance important to political resistance. Far from killing the subject, Althusser's work shows the creative importance of the subject in the field of ideology, and the practical effects that this subject has in the "relatively autonomous" fields of politics, science and philosophy.

Ultimately, the aim of this paper is two-fold. First, to weaken Badiou's appropriation of Althusser and build a conceptual bridge between Althusser and Deleuze. Second, to use Althusser's work to

argue that asking “what is the subject?” is both naïve and ontologically misguided. We can more productively ask, “what functionality does subjectivity have within certain situations and discourses?”

On the paths of transindividuation: a fond farewell to subject, freedom and critique

Riccardo Baldissoni

Sixty years ago, Simondon opens the way for rethinking individuals as processes of individuation, and he appeals to a transindividual dimension in order to express the necessary interpenetration of these individuation paths. Forty years later, following Simondon, Stiegler defines this interpenetration as transindividuation. We may well apply the latter definition to the ongoing production of interpenetrating multiplicities, which Deleuze and Guattari propose as an alternative to both individual and collective subjects. Of course, such multiplicities should not be understood simply as dynamic and processual alternative representations of subjects, but rather as produced and producing subjectivities. In turn, the overcoming of subjects as represented entities radically questions a constellation of concepts that use to radiate, so to speak, from the subject, such as the modern notions of freedom, autonomy and critique: it may be time to bid a fond farewell to all of them.

MAL 632 – Objects of Memory 2

Bench by the Road

Senjuti Chakraborti

In an interview with *The World Magazine* in 1989 Nobel laureate Toni Morrison had bemoaned the lack of recognition of the history of the enslaved Africans. At the time she said, “There is no place you or I can go, to think about or not think about, to summon the presences of, or recollect the absences of slaves. There is no suitable memorial, or plaque, or wreath, or wall, or park, or skyscraper lobby. There’s no 300-foot tower, there’s no small bench by the road. ... And because such a place doesn’t exist ... the book had to.” That book was *Beloved*, published in 1987 to mark that history.

In 2006 the Toni Morrison Society based at South Carolina launched a ‘Bench by the Road Project’ as a memorial history and community outreach initiative. It is a 6ft steel bench in black built to commemorate all those unmarked sites that have historical meaning for the African-Americans as well as hold significant places in Morrison’s own novels. Today there are a 14 such benches serving as outdoor museums in both United States and abroad.

This paper, therefore, will first look at how and under what circumstances literary texts themselves become memorials, and then at how the sheer force of fiction institutes actual memorial sites engaging them as part of public memory. In doing so, Morrison’s novels and such ‘sites of memory’ not only imagine a community around unarchived lives and struggles, but also engender direct conversation with the American literary canon and the American nation itself. For canon building is nation building; canon defense is national defense; and canon critique is a critique of the nation.

Diyarbakır's "Objects of Memory": Urban Struggles Around the Four-Footed Minaret

Laurent Dissard & Ceylan Begüm Yıldız

On November 28, 2015, Tahir Elçi, a prominent Kurdish human-rights lawyer, was shot dead in front of the four-footed minaret of Sheikh Matar Mosque in Diyarbakır, the largest Kurdish city in

Southeastern Turkey. Two days before, Elçi tweeted a picture of the minaret to condemn its recent damage caused by crossfire between the operations of Turkish military and resisting Kurdish youth. “We do not want guns, clashes or operations here” were pronounced by Elçi shoulder to shoulder with other activists during a press statement calling for the end of violence in the city. Gunshots quickly erupted in the back of the crowd and the lawyer was killed amidst the shooting with a bullet in his head. Elçi’s assassination serves here as a starting point to first examine how social worlds are not only unmade, but also remade, by violence. In this collaborated reading of the event with an interdisciplinary approach of critical legal studies and urban anthropology, the presentation aims to illustrate how a city’s history of violence is simultaneously made visible and erased in its urban landscape (while some collective traumas are reified, other contested identities are forgotten amidst rumbling stones). In relation to this, it aims to reveal the interplay of violence and subjectivity that took place under the four-footed minaret, once representative of the city’s cultural heritage and now a monument symbolizing devastation by violence. Lastly, the paper analyses the act of remembering itself as a repository for an understanding of violence and subjectivities, as well as a place where healing and recovery can take place.

Plaque struggles. Contested memorial stones and the conflicting memories of the “years of lead” in Italy.

Federica Rossi

The 1970s were characterised in Italy by the radicalisation of radical left political groups, but also by far right bombings in public spaces: the decade is still today a subject of strong political and historical controversies. This paper will present the cases of two commemorative stones in two Italian cities, how they have become areas of contention and how they embody the conflicting memories of the “years of lead”.

The plaque at the station of Bologna in commemoration of the bombing on the 2nd August 1980 has been contested several times over the last twenty years by right-wing politicians for the adjective “fascist” used on its inscription “Victims of the fascist terrorism”. On the other hand, the stone in memory of the death of the anarchist worker Giuseppe Pinelli, “fallen” from a window of the police station in Milan in 1969, has had a difficult existence since it has first been put in 1975. Thus, the controversies about this memorial stone epitomise the long-lasting disagreement over Pinelli’s death.

These two cases offer an example of how « places of memory » can be highly charged with political meanings and reveal competitive interpretations of the past as well as contemporary political oppositions. Plaques represent not only an attempt to inscribe the memory of an event in the urban space, but also to shape the political identity of a city and to re-signify past events.

Break – 15:15 – 15:45

Parallel Sessions 4 – 15:45 – 17:15

MAL 629 – Contagious Terms 1

The Return of the Sacred: Historical Temporality and the Failure of Criticism in ‘Trauma Theory’

Máté Zombory

The paper argues that it is the currently prevailing temporal experience of losing the once allegedly intimate contact with the past that lies behind the cross-disciplinary and public dispersion of the term of trauma. Being a temporal notion, similarly to the concepts of memory and identity, it establishes a seemingly unquestionable and natural relation between the past and the present, providing a sense of security called into question by the openness of the future and technological conditions of possibility. Paradoxically, the concept of trauma, applied of choice by post-modern and post-structuralist thinkers, turns out to be a source of the sacred. The paper will focus on the myth according to which through trauma it is History that is manifested by analyzing the work of Cathy Caruth.

However, the price for the sacred presence of the past is high: the sacrifice of the subject. The notion of trauma necessarily takes into operation the boundary between the representable and the unrepresentable. As a regulatory concept of discourse, it presupposes a particular way of subjectification that the paper will discuss by analyzing conceptualizations of witness testimony. It argues that in cultural and scholar discourses around the term of trauma, though seemingly give back the voice of the subject, withdraw the capacity of agency interpellating the subject as the unconscious victim of its own past, with no hope of “therapy”.

Finally, by analyzing the work of Shoshana Felman, the paper empirically proves that the interpretation of events as trauma is an attribution lacking any empirical grounding.

What Does it Mean to Be a Partner?

Athina Papanagiotou

In the civil legal tradition, Civil Codes represent the densest territory of normative meaning. They supposedly communicate clear, concrete meanings through transparent terminology. They are autarkic and cohesive –in terms of meaning– codes. For traditional methodology perceives legal interpretation as a discovery process of a more or less hidden sense. *Literal interpretation* of statutory rules or the *purposive approach* are good samples of this conception.

My study, through the use of the Derridean concepts of *writing* and *iteration*, indicates alternative interpretive potentials of legal texts. *Literal interpretation* cannot be limited to the discovery of a pre-existing meaning. Legal terms are meaning carriers through repetition, which at the same time constitutes an alteration, a modification of the same. Legal text, in order to make sense, cannot be entrenched in legal codes. For example, the legal concepts of *family*, *partners* and *marriage* do not *naturally* refer to heterosexual nuclear family, as Greek courts accepted even though the explicit reference to gender in the legal text is absent. In my approach, this *absence*, which in a way always already exists, becomes a point of reflection: the relevant terms have systematically been contaminated by international legislative trends and the rich literature on gender. Ignorance of the aforementioned resignification deprives law of its justified meaning.

MAL 631 – Reclaiming Subjectivity 2

Chair: tbc

Don DeLillo's Point Omega: Mediated Vision and the Novel After the Subject

Daniel Barrow

In Don DeLillo's *Point Omega* (2010), experimental narrative structures both decentre the individualised subject that the postmodern novel continues to take as its basis and reconstitute it. The central interior monologue gives little sense of the narrative's story level, whilst the frame story,

the only scene of apparent meaning, centres on a depersonalised cinematic image of denaturalised digital time, leading through a labyrinth of filmic intertexts. Through a close reading of its narrative structures, this paper will argue that the novel's radical reworking of point of view reconfigures narrative as a dialectical movement across an absent centre – the subject itself, disoriented by what Paul Virilio calls an “era of instantaneity” and voided of experiential plenitude. *Point Omega* at once substitutes technological vision for a collapsing or degenerated subjectival perspective and insists on a fragmented, disarticulated and opaque narratorial individuation. Developing and drawing on work by Jonathan Crary, Guy Debord, Fredric Jameson and Maurizio Lazzarato, this paper resituates these formal shifts, in an interdisciplinary account, within the context of a contemporary spectacular regime and the ongoing development of forms of digital immaterial labour. It will thus demonstrate how the political aesthetics of DeLillo's novel responds to technologies and processes of subjectivation, after the end of the bourgeois subject.

From Subject Crisis to Critical Subjectivity. A Theory of Discourse for The Man of the Crowd

Marco Castagna

As happens in the pages of the well-known tale by Edgar A. Poe “The Man of the Crowd”, the unveiling of the void hidden under each presumption of “clear consciousness”- or “absolute meaning” (that is the “essence of all crime” in Poe’s work) - seems to determine the only possible existence for the “subject” in an unsolvable dichotomy between “autism” of the individual and “anomie” of the multitude.

However, we can observe that it is the semiotic nature of the human “being” that denies every certainty of Subject; and so it is in the pragmatics of languages that we have to look for resources of any attestation of a Self with the Others in the World.

In this perspective, the proposed speech will be focused on the Theory of Discourse, and how this was systematized by French linguist Émile Benveniste (and re-reading by some of the most important thinkers of the last Century, such as Foucault, Lacan or Ricœur).

In fact, in the Discourse, the subject-speaker is called to an act of telling that is never only “individual” but also and always “social”, because every Discourse requires the use of one or more shared code systems - mainly linguistic; and, vice versa, what determines each system is not only “social”, since it exists only in the act of the individuals who use it.

Thus, Discourse does not obtain its regularity a priori, but it defines a space of meaning that can be subjected to stability and to heterogeneity of the possible at the same time. In this (utopian) space, the static Absolute Subject of Modernity has no reasons to exist, and it is replaced by a dynamic Critical Subjectivity, fully responsible for the continuity and coherence of its position.

MAL 632 – Recuperations 1

Chair: Andrea Liu

Collective reading, reproduction and resistance

Claudia Firth

I would like to address some of the issues around recuperation through the concept of resistance and in particular in relation to examples of collective forms of learning and knowledge production. As a metaphor resistance comes from the discipline of physics pertaining to an equal and opposite

force. However, placed in a Foucauldian understanding of systems of power it starts to take on a more complex relationship, being both in response to and in production of the relations of power it resists. On the one hand, resistance can strengthen the very thing it opposes or on the other can become elided with resilience and the tactics of survival and adjustment. However what is important to comprehend are the processes through which constellations of power can be broken down and reconfigured. I will start by setting out some key theorisations and debates about this ambivalent and slippery term (e.g. Caygill, Douzinas, Deleuze, Proust, Ranciere), and then ask what this means for the production of critical knowledge and culture.

Instead of the large social masses more associated with political movements, I will concentrate on smaller social groups and in particular those that 'read' or learn together, treating them as sites of social reproduction.

Often arguments around recuperation revolve around anxieties about mechanisms of capture and through charting how radicality becomes incorporated, seem to at times betray a subtext that apportion blame to those that demonstrate agency. What seems to get lost in these arguments is a historical perspective about how knowledges and practices build over time. I will argue that we need to take into account how knowledge moves, builds movements and changes those that produce it as much as understanding how it gets recuperated.

Between Socialism and Neoliberalism: The Trap of Independent Culture in Serbia

Danilo Prnjat

Since the late 60s, Yugoslavia gradually opened itself towards a more deregulated economy. Yet the socialist system maintained a controlled system of social products in key areas: healthcare, military, education, some factories, and significantly – the system of culture. The idea of an "independent culture" in Serbia (Independent Cultural Scene of Serbia – ICSS) from the 90s onwards therefore was based on the separation of culture from the official culture that existed under the auspices of a State led by the Socialist Party of Serbia (Milosevic's Party). Initially, the "independent" institutions saw themselves in opposition to the dominant state apparatus' policy. At the same time, the state made an effort to meet them, increasingly taking on characteristics of elite culture and becoming representative of private capital. Both these domains gradually converged: the state gradually "liberalized" itself, letting in more and more private (market) and "independent" influence, while Independent culture paradoxically consolidated its identity by being separate from the state. At the same time, these processes were increasingly conducted by the state itself, so that both sides were able to reproduce the relations of political and ideological domination/ subordination. This paper attempts to trace the push-pull and intricate triangulation of state, independent culture, and private capital in Serbia, and how the Independents' support for "democratic" movements of social change were often recuperated as support for the deregulation/privatization of the economy into the field of culture.

Museum of Non-Participation: resistance, co-option, withdrawal

Karen Mirza

This talk will address the politics of non-participation. The Museum of Non- Participation addresses withdrawal as an active stance, a tactic of resistance and empowerment. Non-Participation is a process of withdrawal from neoliberal pressures, destabilizing both global hegemonies and underlying power structures. Non-participation is not a negation—it is a threshold, a political plastic that expands and contracts, that is both unstable and malleable. This is an international neoliberal life condition , frequently unconsciously or passively exercised. How can withdrawal (from the art world, or from neoliberal structures in which culture is imbricated) be made visible, how can non-

participation be made active? This talk will also address “withdrawal” in the context of the filtering of government and corporate policies and agendas through the arts and arts funding in the UK.

art activism: estrangement, institutionalism and recuperation

Paul Stewart

This presentation is following an email correspondence between Paul Stewart, Alistair Hudson, (Director, mima) Jeni Fulton (Sleek Magazine) and Sam Thorne (Director, Nottingham Contemporary). The paper concentrates on Hudson and Thorne’s shift from running art projects situated outside the institutional system in the UK, Griesdale Art Projects and Open School East respectively, and their transition to becoming directors at very mainstream institutions—specifically how this affects their politics and the work they do. Does this shift from outside to inside the institution suppress the intent of outside projects and their attempt at maintaining a level of critical discourse as a representation of the institution?

The paper will map the discussion of the correspondence on the canonization of art activism into art history and how this is translated in our biennials and exhibition programming. Is this recuperation an attempt to take ownership to avoid estranging forms of dissent to emerge in the institutional structure? The paper sees a dilemma within art and activism due to the willingness of institutions and biennials to make space for this form of practice. Are we witnessing a gentrification of art and activism? The conversation addresses the recent reenactment works by Ai Wei Wei of the drowned asylum seeker in Greece and the role of spaces such as The Silent University to function inside and outside of an institution, as an attempt to avoid recuperation.

Reception & Journal Launch – 17:15

Saturday 25th June

Registration – 9:00 – 9:15

CLO Basement Foyer

Parallel Sessions 5 – 9:15 – 10:45

CLO 101 – The Micropolitics of Desire 3

Chair: Nick Blackburn

Mad Pride, Disability, and Activism

Mohammed Rashed

At a time when different groups in society are achieving notable gains in respect and rights, activists in mental health and proponents of mad positive approaches, such as Mad Pride, are coming up against considerable challenges. A particular issue is the commonly held view that madness is inherently disabling and cannot form the grounds for identity or culture. This talk responds to the challenge by developing two bulwarks against the tendency to assume too readily the view that madness is inherently disabling: the first arises from the normative nature of disability judgements,

and the second from the implications of political activism in terms of being a social subject. In the process of arguing for these two bulwarks, the paper explores the basic structure of the social model of disability in the context of debates on naturalism and normativism; the applicability of the social model to madness; and the difference between physical and mental disabilities in terms of the unintelligibility often attributed to the latter.

A Workshop to Assess the Molar and Molecular Aspects of the DSM-5 [Workshop]

Ed Thornton

The most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, published by the American Psychiatric Association, provides the international-standard for the classification of mental disorders along with the criteria required for their diagnosis. In line with its pragmatic approach, the manual outwardly acknowledges that it cannot provide “a complete description of the underlying pathological processes” involved in mental disorders, but instead offers “the best available description of how mental disorders are expressed and can be recognized by trained clinicians.”¹

By sanctioning this distinction between the assumed chemical and/or organic content of the disorder and its social expression, the DSM model opens itself up to the possibility of an analysis of its diagnostic tools by the use of Guattari’s conceptual distinction between the ‘molar’ and the ‘molecular’. In this presentation and workshop, I will first introduce this distinction; I will explain how Guattari adopts this terminology from the natural sciences and how he relates it to the connected concept of ‘expression’. I will then lead a workshop in which we will form small groups of two to three people, with each group being given the criteria provided by the DSM-5 for diagnosing a particular disorder. Each group will then be asked to assess whether the descriptions provided by DSM-5 reflect the properties of molecular elements or molar aggregates of desire. The workshop will close with a group discussion and the whole session will last 20 minutes. No prior knowledge of psychiatry or of Guattari’s work is required.

CLO 203 – The Affective Life of Austerity 2; Chair: Jacqui Gibbs

People who work full time gain more respect

Robert Stearn

Self-Care as Activism: Negotiating Feminism in Neoliberal Times

Rebekka Hammelsbeck

CLO 204 – Objects of Memory 3

No Title

Valerie Giesen

I propose to consider *muted* struggles over memory by placing Germany’s systematic production of ignorance about its colonial history alongside Germans’ affective responses to the ongoing refugee ‘crisis’. Fiercely contested and subtly diffused, what is at stake in memorializing German colonialism is coloniality as a framework for comprehending the German present. In this sense, I hope to contribute to the ongoing muted work to write a history of the German (colonial) present (see Maisha Eggers [et.al.](#) 2005; Dhawan 2009). My approach is not to ‘prove’ the impact of a peculiarly German colonialism on the German present. Instead I ask: How can the German present serve as a diagnostic of coloniality without relegating it to ‘residues’ of a colonialism safely ‘past’ nor making

claims about straightforward mimetic versions of earlier colonial instantiations (Stoler, 2015)? I propose submitting the affective dimensions, operations and habituations that participate in casting (German) colonial pasts as distant or negligible to scrutiny and interrogate the assumption that 'responses' to the current 'crisis' are clearly of the present. Not only does every sentiment have a history (Foucault, 1977), but - I argue - sentiments also offer sites to trace the comingling of divergent temporalities and raise questions about how political projects 'of another time' assume a tangible presence and force in the present. The operations of and linkages across time that are forbidden in the ongoing muting of German coloniality thus raise crucial questions about the political force of (felt) connectivity in Germany and Europe today.

No Title

Eva Richardson McCrea

This paper engages with Walter Benjamin's writings on Bergson, Proust and Freud in relation to the structure of individual memory and experience and contemporary artist, Omer Fast's video *Spielberg's List* (2003). Fast's video centres on Steven Spielberg's 1993 film *Schindler's List*. In *Spielberg's List*, Fast returns to the site of the film where he interviews extras from Spielberg's film, some of which were old enough to have lived through both the Holocaust in the 1940s and its reconstruction in the 1990s. Their recollection of the two events is indiscernible as memories of the original event and its re-enactment are confused.

In Fast video, memory, history and experience are complicated by Spielberg's recreation. The fictional recreation comes to stand in for the memory of the original event, both of which were experienced by the film extras. This complication of memory, experience and history can be seen as a heightened stage in Benjamin's 'crisis of experience.' As memory becomes alienated from lived experience the ontology of history is radically altered. In place of individual and collective memory modernity projects the temporal logic of the commodity as fetish as a form of historical consciousness. Historical representation is reimported into collective consciousness in the form of commodity consumption. The aestheticized cultural form of Spielberg's film replaces individual and collective memory. This paper seeks to confront Omer Fast's work with Benjamin's writings on Bergson, Proust and Freud in relation to the structure of memory [Gedachtnis], isolated experience [Erlebnis] and experience [Erfahrung].

The Subject of History: Rancière, Hobbes, Winstanley

David Thomas

In *The Names of History*, Jacques Rancière considers a particular form of memorialisation, the practice of writing history, in which the choice of literary, scientific, and political strategies has profoundly political consequences. He shows how historiography is a process of exclusion of the disorderly voices of the poor. In Hobbes' political philosophy, in which in theory all men are treated as equals, he numbers among threats to the commonwealth (in Rancière's words) "the proliferation of speakers who are outside their place and outside the truth, gathering the properties of the two great bodies of writing lingering within their reach, prophetic epilepsy and mimetic hydrophobia;" people who borrow their words and names from the gospel and the classics. So Hobbes founds a theoretical tradition Rancière calls "royal-empiricism", which continues in Burke's attack on the French Revolution and the "metaphysical" rights of man, but also in an empiricist tradition of history and social science that is suspicious of the surplus words and names in which the revolutions and great movements of the democratic age are made, the "revisionists" who seek to exclude the event.

Rancière goes on to propose a new subject of history for the democratic age. I shall propose my own candidate for such a subject, Hobbes' contemporaries Winstanley and the Diggers, occupiers and revolutionaries whom revisionist historians have excluded from significance, and who are precisely the disruptive figures of Hobbes' fears, the demos in action.

CLO 306 – Contagious Terms 2

Objectile: A Concept Between Architecture and Philosophy

Angelos Triantafyllou

Many deleuzian concepts have been transformed to architectural terms. Many architects, initially American but soon followed by many others, as Gregotti, Girard, Younès, Eisenmann, used deleuzian "spatial metaphors" and concepts, often without insightfulness: fold, deterritorialization, rhizome, smooth and striated space, supple solids, diagrams. But objectile, as a concept, is a different one. Deleuze has created it after having read, as supervisor, the thesis of the Suisse architect Bernard Cache. Deleuze uses this term to point out a new status of object, closer to a temporary modulation than to a spatial pattern.

Cache helps Deleuze to conceive Leibnitz philosophy as a baroque architecture, directly governed by Whitehead's "superjet". In the other hand, Deleuze helps Cache to name and to apply "objectile" to architecture as a new mode of production of "non-standard objects". Soon after, Bernard Cache and his collaborator Patrick Baucé changed "objectile" to a trade-mark of a design and architecture workshop, "Objectile, Ltd.", including a project of topological architecture. Cache means to combine engineering, mathematics, technology, and philosophy, in order to create variable forms using different specific software, based on the software TOPCAD. Objectile belongs to the non conceptual concepts through which Cache expects to pursue philosophy through other means.

Mass Communication and Global Mobilization: Evangelization, Propaganda, and Advertising

Sinkwan Chen

The paper will scrutinize the (dis-)continuities in the semantics of "propaganda" as it crossed disciplines (from religion to politics and finally to commerce), and as it crossed national borders (from France during the Revolution to World War I Britain and especially in Cold War America and its allies).

The word "propaganda" has its origin in Christianity – the Congregatio de propaganda fide- a committee of cardinals established in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV to oversee foreign mission (OED). "Propaganda" was then secularized in politics, and it did not acquire pejorative overtone until World War I and at first primarily in the English language. From the French Revolution to Communism, "propaganda" was used in a positive manner. With the globalization of the English language after the world wars, the term turned negative in a number of languages (especially in the Liberal West). But "propaganda" remains a respectable term in China to date.

Despite the change in the semantics of "propaganda," the techniques of the "Evangelization of Peoples" have continued to be adopted not only by politics but also by commerce and humanitarianism. The structural similarities among Catholicism, politics, and humanitarian campaign to be explored in this paper will include one to two of the following: sensationalism, advertising, mass society, imaged global community, moralism and universalism, and the language of mass communication / mass mobilization.

This paper discusses usage and cross-disciplinary travelling of the term 'autopoiesis' initially developed in biological theory of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela and taken up by second-order systems theorist Niklas Luhmann. Maturana's and Varela's notion of autopoiesis and its place in Luhmann's social theory are further examined within the context of humanities in the critical discourse of posthumanism articulated by Cary Wolfe.

The idea of autopoietic closure in Luhmann is based on Maturana's study of the operation of nervous systems and the definition of living organisms as closed systems that construct their reality through their perception. Luhmann rearticulates autopoiesis as 'operational closure' of social systems. He shifts the focus from biological processes to functioning of social systems, dealing with societies rather than living systems, with consciousness not tied to human subjectivity and with social interaction between codes rather than humans. Autopoietic systems construct themselves out of unstable elements, reproducing themselves recursively out of foundations and structures that are results of their own operations. The general theory of autopoietic systems allows Luhmann to question the importance of human agency for social and psychic systems, and the anthropocentric notions within social theory.

Finally, I analyse how the concept of autopoiesis can be productively transferred to the field of art history to engage with complex multi-media art projects and conceptualise posthumanist orientation within the field of contemporary art. Through the framework of autopoiesis, structurally non-hierarchical non-anthropocentric art systems can be observed, signalling a shift and introducing new cross-disciplinary critical perspectives into analysis of visual art.

Break – 10:45 – 11:15

Parallel Sessions 6 – 11:15 – 12:45

CLO 101 – Virtual Raciality 1

Black Mirror: The Virtual Encoding of the Racial Self

Stephanie Polsky

The rapid proliferation of access to digital platforms and social media sites has radically refigured the terms and topography of racial representation, politics, and cultural expression. Within such domains race is being subtracted from itself on a microlevel and lent a verisimilitude of essential purity in which certain racial subjects portrayed as dominant, and all others consigned to an inveterate alterity. Digital media now serves to legitimise and promote a customised micropolitics of identity management. Ethnic and racial coding has become synonymous with mediation itself and the fate of bodies determined by the way the digital apparatus compels them to perform restively within a certain affective identity's limited contour. The passive reception of what is being projected cannot be classified as a leisure activity, or a frivolous encounter so long as the masses continue to perform the productive activity of making operative a system of subjective predication. Digitisation has emerged as an apparatus for reinforcing this order, through its assignation of certain identifiable traits to distinct races within society and manufacture of complex narratives for explaining and maintaining such hierarchies as an intrinsic phenomenon. As such the virtual raciality of the 21st century must be approached critically, not as something that offers greater self understanding, but rather something that gives a crucial insight into the ways in which humanity is being aggressively

mobilised to reproduce a society of control through our fascination with the capture and differentiation of ourselves and others. In this sense, the “screen” becomes a forcing arena for the digital repression of certain races.

The Strong Black Woman in the Age of Social Media

Laurie Rodrigues

The image of the strong black woman is a racial and political construct, derived from both the expectations of African American communities *and* from the needs of American culture, which frames black women in narrow ways. Once meant to counter older stereotypes (Mammy and Sapphire), the strong black woman has morphed into a damaging set of expectations for black women. While this idea may not be new to feminist or critical race scholars, social media has provided a new layer of immediacy to the issue, offering testimony and documentation of the image’s consequences for every day citizens. This stereotype has become a trending topic of criticism on platforms such as YouTube and Twitter; and its racist interpretations have found their way into the public eye through citizen news reportage of police brutality and harassment. Testimonies and articles on social media suggest that the image’s expectations inhibit women from seeking help against mistreatment, and also indicate that it has contributed to racist conceptions of black women as impervious to pain—i.e., as more threatening than other women, therefore requiring enhanced policing. Where scholarship has *described* these phenomena, social media has brought this critique out of the academy, enabling the public to see precisely *how* these damaging effects take place. In my talk, I will show examples of this online content, leading to an examination of how social media has introduced new ways of understanding and addressing social problems such as this.

Race as Ontopower in the Age of Electronic Colonialism

Christine Goding

While digital space and social media certainly facilitate new forms of protest and solidarity, this paper suggests that the central benefit to the digital turn is that it primes us to attend to the virtual elements of the concept race itself. Drawing from modes of analyzing the virtual in affect theory, I contend that accounting for race’s virtuality suggests that race operates as an ontopower, governing immanence through affective attunement, suffusing each race event with its own logic such that its unfolding constitutes an apparatus of power. Reading race as an ontopower this paper puts forward a new definition of race arguing that *race is the modulation of a body’s affective horizon—its capacity to affect and be affected by other bodies—according to its prescribed colonial legacy*. The digital provides a complimentary virtual space in which to examine this operation because for all the liberatory power of recent technology, the digital age still gives rise to new configurations of empire. This is the threat of Electronic Colonialism presaged by Thomas McPhail in which the proliferation of the new media masks the digitization of Western dominance and white power, through an emphasis on radical forms of connection, access, and consumption. My purpose, then, in thinking through race’s virtuality is motivated by the conviction that focusing only on the deepening modes of racial solidarity or expanding representations of identity alone do little to combat race’s ontopowerful force nor to hinder the spread of its dominance in the digital terrain.

203 – The Affective Life of Austerity 3; Chair: Billy Holzberg

Settler Colonial Lands: Race and Indigeneity in the Age of Apology

Roxana Akhbari

White settler societies are now lands inhabited by Indigenous people of these lands, former slaves, and white settlers, as well as multiple displaced social groups such as racialized immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants. In these colonially acquired spaces, how could the ongoing experience of marginality among non-native, displaced social groups be situated and accounted for in relation to the political question of indigeneity in colonial contexts? This problematic is specifically relevant at present, when there is an explosion of global actions and discourses around Reconciliation and Indigenous Rights (e.g., the 2007 United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the 2009 United Nations International year of Reconciliation) as well as an inflation of nation state apologies to dispossessed social groups.

The formation of hegemonic state discourses of reconciliation is a source of serious concern for anti-colonial activists and scholars in these societies as these discourses tend to undermine grassroots anti-colonial movements. In this paper, I will first explore intimate connections between experiences of marginalization in diasporic antiracist struggles of immigrant communities (with a specific focus on Muslim immigrant communities) and de-colonial struggles of Indigenous people in Canada. Next, I will elaborate the ways in which focusing on these intimate connections would open up possibilities for resisting the hegemony of state discourses of reconciliation in the age of apology. In doing so, I will draw upon Glen Coulthard²'s account of the centrality of struggle and confrontation in processes of de-colonization, Lyko Day³'s argument against anti-dialectical stances in antiracism and anti-colonial theory, and Parin Dossa⁴'s intersectional study of racialization and disability in Canadian Muslim communities.

Situating Gender in Precarity: Feminist Art Practice as Militant Research

Sarah Charalambides

My paper explores how gender issues within current precarity debates are negotiated through the Madrid-based feminist collective Precarias a la Deriva (PaD). Their film *Precarious Women Adrift* (2002) addresses the feminisation, devaluation and subsequent de-politicisation of reproductive labour that persist in contemporary society, despite feminists' insistence on the accumulation of "surplus value" by this type of work.

For my analysis of PaD's film I draw upon political theorist Isabell Lorey, who anticipates the emergence of a new and disobedient self-government of precarious subjectivities in neoliberal, post-Fordist societies. In her book *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious* (2015) Lorey writes that the fundamental social dependency of a living being due to its vulnerability highlights the eminent significance of care. By enhancing the status of care activities, PaD challenges heteronormative ideas of masculine independence and the feminisation of the need for protection. Going beyond a limited and one-sided understanding of care, in which dependents are cared for by those who are independent, PaD breaks through existing logics of security and insecurity, and opens cracks in the walls of fear and precarisation.

Notably, PaD's practice is inscribed in traditions of worker inquiries and co-research associated with the Italian workers movement of the 1970s, as well as women's consciousness-raising groups deriving from second-wave feminism. The specific methodology of PaD allows me to investigate to what extent attempts to overcome the hierarchy between theory and practice offer innovative avenues to re-politicise contemporary labour relations and create new socio-political alliances between feminised and precarious subjectivities in fragmented and individualising societies.

Work and Hope

Kyle Lewis and Will Stronge

Precarious work has forced upon us the decision between two different futures. Either we demand the return to a Fordist-era world wherein full-time, life-long work is the destiny of every individual – i.e. the strategy of the traditional Left – or we demand the reorganization of work in accordance with a thorough questioning of the culture and practice of work in society. Whilst arguing for this latter position, our paper will outline the case for work as one of the most important *political* problems of our time and note the importance of hope as an affectation.

One of the consequences of living precariously is the conscious, affective valorization of that precious jewel: a regular, reliable job. Alongside this ideological work-ethic, we have witnessed the inability to devise new political solutions to combat the threats posed by austerity. Indeed, what unites *both* the political Left and Right is the implicit cancelling of the future – either in the proposition that ‘there is no alternative’ or in a nostalgic longing for post-WW2 full-employment. Contrary to these reactionary positions, and following on from the recent revival of anti-work critiques, we argue that the current crisis of work offers an opportunity to think the *future*, to *imagine* possibilities and to construct concrete utopias as plans of action.

Key to this project is the mobilization of affect and desire: at this critical juncture, we can step back and consider what our daily activity means, how we relate to it as subjects and how we might point beyond our present condition to a future where we live more and work less.

CLO 204 – Reclaiming Subjectivity 3

Chair: Thomas Waterton

Beyond Performativity

Jen Izaakson

It is necessary to examine the problems facing critical thought if it is to transcend previous accounts of gender.

There exists a plethora of feminist literature that contests normative gender identities and deconstructs social categories, the most celebrated is perhaps Judith Butler’s ‘performativity’, now theoretical orthodoxy within Gender departments and Critical Theory. Trans subjects pose a problem to Butler’s nietzschean position, ‘there is no doer, only what is done’, where the existence of the Self remains relatively denied. To conceptualise ‘internal feelings’ as foundational for gender identity, staged in conflict with the external material body, forces theorising internal affective states within a field where the internal is treated with ambivalence.

To include the non-conforming subjectivities, we must go beyond social construction and ideological interpolation. To outflank these forms of analysis, found extensively in Lacan and Aluthsser, will require a radical and renewed emphasis on childhood development, the formation of the Self, psychic objects and the unconscious.

The necessity of the structuring principal of inside and outside comes to the fore.

The question then becomes, can we philosophically ground the problem of theorising how we all ‘fail’ at gender, through the problem of how the psychoanalytic unconscious relates to external frameworks of sociality?

This is especially difficult as including psychic life in this way requires an entirely new conversation for Gender Studies, one that breaks with previous discourse. A prior discourse that is exclusively examines subjectifying social forces around an imagined adult subject, eradicating childhood.

Atypical subjectivities: Self-portrait in the work of J. Derrida, S. Kofman and C. Malabou

Christine Morar

The paper aims at analyzing patterns of (self)writing in the work of the three mentioned French philosophers as foregrounding new practices of subjectivity after the deconstruction of metaphysics. Their innovative approaches to thinking and language redefine the nature and boundaries of philosophical practice and it is suggested here that this conceptual experimentation mirrors the personal trajectory of each philosopher.

Jacques Derrida's literary expression is notably the most accurate example of the intertwined relation between the acts of writing and thinking in contemporary philosophy. The overlapping of the theoretical and autobiographical voices in many of his texts, suggests an ambiguous theoretical link to the Algerian childhood. This bind is also the case of Sarah Kofman's philosophical readings, who for long refused any feminine or biographical identification to her own gesture. Occupied nonetheless with the analyzing of what she calls the 'becoming woman' of male thinkers, Kofman brilliantly shows how their discourses were entangled with affective and sexual positions. As for Catherine Malabou's plastic approach to the thinking of change and metamorphosis in philosophy, while engaging with the life sciences and the capacity to resist that is inherent to biology, her work is intimately linked to her lived experience as a woman practicing philosophy.

These self-affirmations, we argue, amount to forms of contemporary subjectivities compounded by an ambiguous gesture: a redefinition of the philosophical language performing its own deconstruction as a means of giving voice to repressed and alienated practices and phenomena, thus initiating an (auto)transformation of the philosophical discourse.

The Neural Underpinnings of the Self, Neuroplasticity, Lacanian Psychoanalysis, and Derrida: Unravelling the (Legal) Subject

Linda Roland Danil

This presentation will examine two texts by Jacques Derrida, specifically *Speech and Phenomena* (1973) and *Limited Inc. a b c...* (1977) in order to assess the manner in which Derrida's arguments find resonance with findings in neuroplasticity and Lacanian psychoanalytic arguments. In so doing, this article will draw out selected excerpts most prominently from *Limited Inc. a b c* in order to argue that through findings in neuroscience, neuroplasticity and Lacanian psychoanalysis, Derrida's arguments are further buttressed and reinvigorated. This is despite criticisms from the field of new materialism, specifically those levelled by Catherine Malabou. In addition, findings in neuroscience, neuroplasticity and Lacanian psychoanalysis further lend weight to Derrida's arguments in *Limited Inc. a b c...*, specifically in relation to copyright law and the existence of an original creator that is the rightful owner of the copyright to his/her works. Moreover, this is an argument that applies to the legal subject and the subject more broadly.

CLO 306 - Passionate Work 2

Stage Lighting and Industrial Boredom

Martin Young

This paper is focused on a specific piece of theatrical labour: the role of the technician who must sit through the show each night and cue lighting changes. This work has been almost entirely ignored by theatre theorists, possibly because it somewhat repudiates popular conceptions of what theatre work must be like (glamorous, exciting, creative, engaged), but it is an essential element of production in the modern theatre industry. As well as reading the work of the lighting desk operator in opposition to the (apparent) passionate excess of performers on stage, I position it within the broader concerns of contemporary labour studies; alienation, affective engagement, automation, time-discipline, and exploitation. Responding to current trends in theatre scholarship which argue for the virtuosity and emotional investment of off-stage labourers, I focus on the mundane, unvirtuosic elements of the job, and so expose the theatre, a venue for the industrial production of entertainment, as the unlikely site for a critique of workplace boredom. This culminates in a consideration of the avoidance of boredom as an unconsciously political resistance to work.

“Essential: Passion for Music”... Non-creative work in the music industry

Toby Bennett

This paper offers a contribution to theories of creative labour by emphasising the ‘passion’ that it is envisaged to call upon – but usually in a self-evident and muted way. It emerges both from professional experience and doctoral research on work in the music industry. The paper begins from the demand, ever-present in industry recruitment rhetoric and everyday practice, that *all* those who participate in its production (however defined) exhibit their ‘passion for music’. This is ostensibly uncontentious, perhaps even tautological: few would opt for (or succeed in) such a career, with its norms of low pay, high competition, instability and entrenched inequalities, if work did not hold the promise of ‘self-actualisation’. But, in music, the paradigmatic sources of innovation, valorisation and *true passion* are the ‘artists’ and their ‘intermediaries’. This lens loses sight of the majority making a living in this industry: equally ‘passionate’ workers with less glamorous roles (administrative, logistical, technical, traditional managerial and support staff) – a conceptual paradox.

Equally, Angela McRobbie (1998; 2016) has particularly stressed the role of passion in legitimating and romanticising precarity for young women by calling on ‘girlish’ enthusiasm, ‘regulating or constraining [...] not in restrictive but in expansive terms’. While a similar logic is forceful in music, its connotations, by contrast, are reversed: here it is considered ubiquitous, neutral, but tied to aggression and resilience. Hence, the discourse of passion intensifies the meritocratic logics that already regulate and constrain. Focusing particularly on the intersection of gender and ‘non-creative’ work, the paper suggests that a relational and ideational emphasis on passion supplements and reveals the limits of labour-process, entrepreneurial, and craft-production perspectives on creative work.

Lunch – 12:45 – 13:45

Parallel Sessions 7 – 13:45 – 15:15

CLO 101 – The Event 2

Diagramming the Event

Charlotte Knox-Williams

A film sequence shows a woman dragged back and forth through the water by a sea monster. Her movements are notated in a detailed set of instructions. These instructions are taught to a group of dancers who re-create them, unaware of where the movements originated. They perform these steps as part of an exhibition, and following the performance the original film sequence is revealed. What is the event? Is it the actress miming a life and death struggle for the camera? Does the audience watching the movie in the darkened cinema create the event as they imagine the underwater thrashings of the great fish? Is the event contained in the spectatorship of the gallery audience, the movements of the dancers or the realization of the swimming girl's struggle within their own dance?

The proposed paper draws upon a film and performance based art practice, specifically the exhibition S__K at Five Years Gallery in July 2015 (<http://www.fiveyears.org.uk/archive2/pages/210/SK/210.html>) that featured the performance described above. The performance, a realization of a retrospective re-creation, provides an example through which the complex temporal structure of the event can be explored. From film to text to movement, the paper will bring the example into alignment with texts from Deleuze, Whitehead and Bergson to reveal an interlaced diagram of the event.

Ex-spatiotemporal Event and the present whereabouts of Jesus Christ's physical body

Tim Jones

The rupture in theology occasioned by the first scientific revolution could be effectively undone by the second as theological focus shifts back from ontology to transformation. The question '*Where is Jesus Christ?*' would be answered straightforwardly by the premodern person; their understandings of cosmology and materiality were both conducive to this, but when these were superseded, faith was robbed of language and sought refuge in anti-materialist responses (evidenced between Luther and Zwingli at Marburg).

The concept of *ereignis* has been employed in the interim as a descriptive coping-mechanism in theological and pseudo-theological registers alike. In the wake of Heidegger, Bultmann and Barth sought in different ways to define the 'Christ-Event' in terms apart from space-time history, even at the risk of hermetically sealing-off the possibility of revelatory action from the world. Transformation Theology, a reorientation in Christian theology hailing from King's College London, takes account of recent expansions in our scientific understanding of materiality and of the self, and reopens the 'where?' question with renewed hope for an integrated account of world, selves and revelation. Incorporating insights from the positivistic reification of Being on one hand to the apophatic openings in the late Derrida on the other, a broad topography for the theological is sketched. It is against this backdrop that famous dictums such as '*Behold, I am with you*' are reconsidered, not as figurative consolation but as statement of act and transformation.

Messiah and Non-Event

Michael Saunders

In this paper, we will examine the link between "eventality" and messianism. In doing so, we will look to provide an overview of François Laruelle's "non-standard philosophy" through his theorization of the event. This analysis will extend from his ethical critique of philosophies of event—with particular attention paid to his extensive engagement with the work of Alain Badiou—to his own articulation of a generic "Christ-event." For Laruelle, the event is *coextensive* with the world. The event resides, he tells us, at the heart of a philosophical decisionism. On the one hand,

philosophies of the event posit—and thus circumscribe, appropriate—the event as the limit of philosophy. On the other, philosophy *is* an event—the event of decision. This understanding of eventuality entails a kind of violence, an authoritarianism: both the violence of subjectivation (fidelity to the event is disclosed through the intensity of one’s existence) and the delimitation of the possible (the dialectical interplay between equilibrium and interruption *is* the very structure of the world). Against this philosophical Paulinism of the event, a Paulinism that is always inaugurated at the expense of the victims of the world, Laruelle articulates an ethics of the non-event. Accordingly, we will demonstrate how Laruelle’s more Christological account of a generic “non-event”—a radical immanence exposed in the depotentializing “weakness” of victims—problematizes any elucidation of a philosophy of the event. The ethical exigencies of a theory of the non-event will be articulated through a reading of messianism and eventuality together. If the event always serves to establish a world, the victim, for Laruelle, becomes the non-event that suspends the sufficiency of the world. “*The victim opens no new world, but closes the old ones.*”¹

CLO 203 – Reclaiming Subjectivity 4

Chair: David Ventura

Living Dead - An Independence Framework

Shane Chalmers

I propose to present a paper that engages with Achille Mbembe's work on necropolitics, and in particular his diagnosis of the subject of the living dead. For Mbembe, this is a form of ‘social existence’, created through an expression of sovereignty, ‘in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead.’ Through a reading of two photographs by the Beninese artists Joseph Moise Agbodjélou and Leonce Raphael Agbodjélou, I propose a different way of thinking about what it means to be a living dead subject - a way of thinking that makes this a liberating form of subjectivity. In a reversal of the logic of capital, which makes the subject into a mere object, the two photographs reveal a representational framework that operates on the same logic but turns it from a medium of violent realism into a critical form that enables a more autobiographical expression of subjectivity. What this reading points to, I argue, is a representation of the body as subject playing with its independence. This is both positive and negative: positive in that the body is presented as a character full of life; negative in that the presentation neither allows that identity to dominate the body (the body plays with the identity) nor allows the viewer to believe that the presentation is simply real. The subject one encounters in these photographs is not some pure life free of all mediating frameworks, but a life that plays with the identity that frames it.

The Subjectivity of Becoming Black

Dirk Postma

This paper investigates the recent resurgence of black consciousness that responds to the post-1994 South African state. The black consciousness movement of the 1970/80’s was a strategic withdrawal from liberal whiteness in order to rediscover cultural sources of a subjectivity that could resist coloniality. The affirmation of blackness was a response to the racist categorising of black as an ontologically fundamental category of dehumanisation where black is portrayed as evil, violent, perverse and dishonest. The resurgence of black consciousness is directed against the neoliberal state within an era of neoconialism where subjectivity has become a major terrain of contest.

The paper aims to conceptualise a notion of subjectivity that could respond powerfully to racist, neoliberal and neocolonial forms of subjectification. This conception builds on Deleuze’s posthumanist notion of the becoming-minoritarian of the ethical subject illustrated by becoming-

woman and becoming-animal. This investigation into becoming-black aims to explore a subjectivity that is not the mirror-image of whiteness: centred, patriarchal, oppressive, violent, hierarchical, true, reactive, revengeful. Becoming-black subjectivity is affirmative, creative, productive and powerful to the extent that it is open to the multiplication of affecting and of being affected. It will be argued that becoming-black provides another way of becoming-minoritarian that could inform all becoming. While this engagement appreciates the revolutionary becoming different of black consciousness it cautions against centred and substantive forms of subjectivity.

Queer Necropower: The Neuroses of Queer Negativity

Prathna Lor

This paper examines the transformative potential of wilful self-extinguishment by bringing together Frantz Fanon and Jacques Lacan. By self-extinguishment I mean forms of submission, self-sacrifice, and self-annihilation. In queer theory, theories of what Lacan calls “subjective destitution” is terminologically recognized as “queer negativity,” or the “antisocial thesis.” Yet these theories often do not account for questions of race in their attempt to transcend the particular towards the universal. Moreover, theories of race have tended to focus on discourses of subjection, categorization, domination, and hegemony yet do not offer styles of resistance, resiliency, and flourishing. In this paper, I bring together Fanon with Lacan, in conversation with the antisocial thesis in queer theory, as well as Achille Mbembe’s concept of “necropower” in order to offer ways of thinking about subjective destitution as they bear upon questions of race and race relations. I ultimately argue that current conceptualizations of queer theory can be understood as a neurotic structure pantomiming as perversion that stands at an impasse despite its purported claim for changing, if not destroying, the social fabric that constitutes queers as subjects of death in the first place. Focusing on Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks*, in conversation with Lacan’s seminars on the psychoses and anxiety, I explore the psychotic structure of martyrdom and argue for practices of understanding psychotic structures of relationality that are still grounded upon negativity yet with the transformative potential for creative capacities as a productive counterpoint.

CLO 204 – Inside/Outside 2

Chair: Victoria Ridler

The symbology of the ‘other’: A Schmittian reading of the European obsession over the regulation of veiling

Giorgia Baldi

The image of a covered (Muslim) woman has become the negative portrait of what is called a ‘clash of civilization’ in which Islamic values emerge as ‘incompatible with democracy’. The idea that Islam is the ‘enemy’ from which all of us have to be protected, and that (veiled) Muslim women are the carrier of a chauvinist culture and thus the symbol of this ‘incompatibility’, emerges in the analysis of the so called ‘hijab cases’ at the European Court of Human Rights as well as in other European countries.

This paper will argue that the juridical regulation of (Muslim) women’s attire comes out as an act of the sovereign power to regulate the public sphere through the elimination of the ‘visible symbol’ of the ‘other’ in order to maintain the unity and homogeneity of a people. In fact, historically, clothes have operated a visible differentiation between ‘citizen’ and ‘foreigner’, ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’, ‘friend’ and ‘enemy’. If, as Goodrich remind us, metaphors produce the necessary emotional attachment to legal obedience and political love, then the visible have to mirror a specific order of

power and imaginations, and the subject of law should reflect a legitimate order of thought. Thus, by regulating clothes, law also regulates subjectivities, it places a mask on the real subject in the name of a fixed and monolithic Christian/secular/liberal law's subject: the result is the erasure of other subjectivities and other forms of social, political and legal regulations in the name of a 'war in defence of democracy'.

Breasts

Elizabeth Cetin

I am fascinated by the hierarchical, and discriminatory aspects of the inside/outside, particularly as it relates to the female body.

After all, the hierarchical nature of equality is not the basis for bestowing civil liberties, to give one example of how the body and the social body are caught up in the tensions of the body politic. It is the inherently violent nature of sexual difference, despite its banality, that concerns me here for it is the fundamental marker of difference in material (human) beings. My focus is on breasts, the focal point of a woman's chest, the chest being the centre of an individual's *being-in-the-world* (Merleau-Ponty, 1945).

Breasts, the elemental signifier of female bodies, are everywhere. These lumps of variable and vulnerable, as well as multi-functional tissue, affect physical movement and subjective and psychic identity. They form the landscape of the everyday, as objects of fascination, desire and even disgust. And yet women's own account of breasts, or the lived experienced of having breasts as opposed to *being* a breasted entity is generally absent from discourses beyond medicine and pathology. As Heidegger (1927) notes, *Being* does not have to be conceptualised in terms of objects but for many of us, objects do just that.

I will begin to examine this phenomenon through the '*slit aesthetic*', a term originally used to refer to clothing that is cut and arranged to reveal the erogenous zones of the female body. The '*slit aesthetic*' is a sublimated attempt at titillation, a direct contrast to the hyper-sexualised images of the female breast that assault the eyes in places where one wouldn't necessarily expect to see them, but which offer little in our understanding of what it means to exist within the public body as a breasted individual.

CLO 306 – Objects of Memory 4

What is an Archive? Law as Hypomnesis

Hayley Gibson

In a movement beyond its common usage to denote discrete "objects of memory" that may be examined *alongside* the law, the "archive" is presented by Derrida as a legal concept *par excellence*, in which both law and the process of recollection converge in an inextricable milieu. In a lecture given at the Freud Museum, titled *Mal d'archive* ("Archive Fever"), Derrida works with and against Freudian psychoanalysis, bringing the forgetful destructiveness of the death drive within view of an internalised and *civilising* injunction against any such forgetfulness. The resulting 'feverish' compulsion to engender always-unstable, yet necessary, forms of recollection in the absence of any truly recoverable memory (of the analysand and, by extension, of a "People"), is Derrida's "archive". A variation on the textual "substrate" examined by deconstruction, the "archive" is the *hypomnemic* substance of writing-as-recollection: always less than a true memory, yet entrusted with the task of keeping forgetfulness, within which lies the violence of disorder and destruction, at bay; it is also a

quasi-material substrate, which admits of no true origin, and which cannot be destroyed, ensnaring all psychical and political life in an iterative process of archivalisation.

This theory of the “archive” involves, however, a commitment to a specific type of sovereign violence; one which, I suggest, may be “archaeologically” undermined, together with the necessity that all emancipatory counter-memory operates as “archive fever,” always moving iteratively within the *hypomnemic* archive. I ask whether theorising the “law-as-archive” actually invites a movement *beyond* law, despite Derrida’s disavowal of Freudian “archaeology”.

Beyond Memory and Official Narrative: the French colonial archives and their making in the 20th century

Fabienne Chamelot

Nowadays managed by the *Archives nationales d’Outre-Mer* (ANOM), located in Aix-en-Provence in France, the archives of the central French colonial empire have found today a certain unity, at least in a physical sense (the papers are all gathered in the same place), even though relative. This has not always been the case. The collections gathered under the scope of the “empire” were constituted and evolved independently from one another through French colonial history, without unified beliefs or common foundations. The colonial collections from the local powers were constituted outside of the State and nation. But, in addition, by inscribing its imperial imagination on the metropolitan horizon, and not on that of the ensemble of imperial territories, the central administration of the colonies in some ways constructed its archives apart from the empire. In this sense, the French empire, such as we represent it today, is either a relatively recent construct or a representation foreign to the governmental administration. The French colonial territories, during the time of empire, were founded on a complex, changing and often unstable organisation, as the numerous manipulations to the archival collections can attest. This presentation will interrogate the French empire as a fixed and stable category effective for the exploration of the history of French colonisation.

Between Violence and Its Representation

Teresa Macías

This paper explores the ethics of archival research by reflecting on the challenges of doing research with highly descriptive and gruesome archived testimonies of torture. In this way, the paper moves beyond both commonly accepted notions that archival research does not pose ethical challenges, and deontological conceptions of ethics on which research is commonly grounded. A central argument is that an ethical reflection in relation to archival research requires that we unpack the character of archives and research as power/knowledge devices that at their very core imply violence: a violence of representation enacted in the representation of violence. I propose that the inseparable representation-violence relationship requires that we situate ourselves in the narrow, hazardous, and ever-shifting space between violence and its representation in order to turn representation into a performative, discursive, precarious and self(other)-constituting ethics in which we can engage in political and strategic practices of representation. By engaging in this discussion, the paper exists at the margins of, at the same time that it issues challenges to, commonly accepted notions of research ethics, archival studies, and research on violence.

Break – 15:45 – 15:45

Parallel Sessions 8 – 15:45 – 17:15

CLO 101 – The Micropolitics of Desire 4

Chair: Naomi Grotenhuis

Spinozist Psychotherapy: Practical Philosophy as an Alternative to Medicalization

Ruben Endendijk

The ‘golden age’ of anti-psychiatry is far behind us. Despite the efforts of several anti-psychiatric movements and/or theories of the sixties and seventies, present-day practices, generally speaking, seem to be dominated by the DSM and the consequent medicalization of society. Mental health care and its perverse entanglement with neoliberalism has reached a point of total saturation in which the ‘patient’ has become an abstract revenue model.

How can both Spinoza’s ontology of relation as well as his ‘genealogy’ of the human emotions (as formulated in part III of the *Ethics*) show their usefulness in a therapeutic context? In the forthcoming paper I intend to juxtapose Spinoza’s dynamic affective-based unfolding of the human-emotion to the rigid classification of contemporary practices in order to reinvent an affirmative and constructive practical philosophy in relation to mental health. I will argue that present day psychiatry largely denies the complexity of the cosmological, biological and socio-political fields (and their interrelatedness) in which the subject *qua body* partakes. If we take the plethora of affects which influence the subject into consideration we might arrive at better treatment and a more elaborate understanding of the *local, situational, and personal (inter-intra-personal)* unfolding of psychopathologies.

Question that emerge when following a Spinozist psychotherapy: How could practitioners benefit directly from philosophical insights? What are the implications of practical philosophy based on the affect in the consulting room? To what extent could philosophy function as medicine against medicalization?

“Oh my body, make me always a man who questions!” [Workshop]

Eric Harper & Andie Newman

This workshop brings together two pioneers who were unafraid of madness, Frantz Fanon and RD Laing. Both of these revolutionary thinkers called for a re-framing of conflict, the transversal of the analytic frame and a practice truly engaged with the alienated subject.

Laing took on the psychiatric and psychoanalytic establishments, offering a life-affirming vision that resulted in a new approach to the therapeutic relationship and a politically committed response to the problems of contemporary existence. Fanon understood that ‘free association’ involves a vital and revolutionary engagement and assemblage of both material and psychological space.

And yet, Laing is easily dismissed as ‘a terrible alcoholic,’ ‘that shrink who got naked and took acid with his patients.’ And Fanon’s innovative clinical practice has either been overlooked or appropriated in reductive ways by any number of other discourses. This workshop will be a personal engagement - from two contemporary practitioners - with the ideas of Fanon and Laing in relation to alienation, asylum and the body.

CLO 203 – Reclaiming Subjectivity 5

Chair: Sara Raimondi

The Imaginal Subject

Julian Reid

This paper analyzes the convergences between neuroscientific, psychological and social scientific theories of imagination, demonstrates the function of this convergence in establishment of a bio-perfection imperative, and critiques this function via a Deleuzian ontology of images. Much of what these three areas of theorization assume about the role of images in human experience can be seen to fall within the descriptions of what Deleuze named the sensory-motor image. These are images that perform the function and maintain the value of the utility that the bio-perfection imperative of our time demands; survival in and of the present. In contrast, and against this imperative, what our time demands is another quite different image of imagination, one that Deleuze comes close to in his descriptions of the richness and functions of the optical-sound image. For these are images that dislocate us from those spaces wherein the bio-perfection imperative is operative. These are images that may not enable us to survive better but which in their dislocating of us provide us with another image of our self; a self existing free from the necessity of a life of endless struggle and survival, given over to a temporal and spiritual movement which enriches our existence as free human beings; subjects in the true sense of the term.

Are there Rules of Spiritual Exercises? Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot

Chris Barker

The aim of this paper is to offer a critical and contemporary engagement with classical “spiritual exercises.” How do these practices contribute to the care of the self after the death of the Cartesian subject? In my paper, I briefly discuss three answers. In Habermas’s ideal speech situation, a model of inquiry is proposed that aims at consensus and explicitly avoids the “bad metaphysics” of the ancients. Habermas recognizes that his “ideal speech situation” is “regulative,” but I draw on critics in contemporary political theorists (Krause, Mouffe) to challenge the idea that consensus is achievable without hegemony. I contrast Habermas’s approach to two approaches explicitly indebted to the ancients: the care of self of Michel Foucault and the ethics of examination of Pierre Hadot. Hadot’s works and Foucault’s later lectures (1981-4) present care of self as practices structured by rules of examination and inquiry. However, neither author guarantees the political reliability of the self by guaranteeing the universality of ethical practices or the rules of inquiry and discursive behavior.

I argue that we cannot somehow use Hadot’s and Foucault’s tools to do something that they explicitly are not meant to do, namely to elevate and perfect political discourse. Even so, I argue that political participants better understand their own practical commitments by comparing ancient and modern discourse ethics. Finally, since democracies are our dominant governmental model and deliberative democracy is the key mainstream theoretical approach, problematizing the ethics of examination helps to clarify some commitments within contemporary political theory.

CLO 204 – Recuperations 2

Chair: Andrea Liu

The Gimmick: the Dominant Trope of Semicapitalism

The various forms of capitalism – industrial, informational, and the more recent semicapitalism, a recombinant semiotic machine which exhausts mental capacities through acceleration and information deluge (Berardi 2015) – have effortlessly appropriated philosophical theories (Deleuze and Guatarri), political struggles (Che Guevera), cultural resistance (punk), avant-garde art (the ready-made; events), and all forms personal defiance (cool). This process of demotion, which turns socio-cultural and political landmarks into consumer matrixes or disposable fashion accessories, is largely due to gimmickification.

Employing Bergson's theory of laughter (Bergson 1901), Stiegler's notion of affective proletarianisation as created by the pharmakon of mnemotechnics (Stiegler 2010), and Han's concept of 'perfumed time' (Han 2016), this paper develops a phenomenology of the gimmick. It argues that the gimmick, whether embedded in a gadget, software, advert, mash-up, tune or gesture, has the hailing power of a pre-modern master narrative. This is due to two factors: the iterative working of 'post-ideology' in which nothing is taken seriously but is consumed all the same; and the gimmick's appropriation of its very antidote: the Guatarran chaosmosis (Guatarri 1992) which breaks rhythms, habits, established orders and perceptual regimes. In this sense, the gimmick of the gimmick is – the gimmick.

"This Is Not an Exit": Recuperating the Subversive Body in Bret Easton Ellis' American Psycho

Nicholas Gardiner

From 'Torture Porn' to the 'New Weird', from 'Bizarro' to 'Blank Fiction', the ubiquity of unconventional corporeal forms in contemporary narrative signals the recuperation of the 'alternative body' into a new cultural paradigm. But how is the antagonistic body's alterity compromised by its widespread proliferation and what can it tell us about wider processes of oppositional recuperation?

Considering the differences between 'grotesque' and 'abject' approaches towards the oppositional body, 'This Is Not An Exit' explores the conceptual processes by which such recuperation occurs. Through an analysis of Bret Easton Ellis' *American Psycho*, it reveals how the generative materiality of Bakhtin's 'grotesque' body is reframed through the nihilistic indeterminacy characteristic of the Kristevan 'abject' and subsequently rejected.

The paper argues that, in exposing the pathological consequences of the consumer mind-set through depictions of bodily mutilation, Ellis reveals the constitutive tendency of the abject perspective and its limitations as a mode of symbolic disruption. It considers how Patrick Bateman's boredom-induced murders signify the ultimate expression of consumer-capitalism's predatory nihilism, yet become problematically recoded as the dangerous products of cultural subversion which, in turn, is demonised and rejected.

The paper charts *American Psycho's* representational slippage between constructive and destructive subversions of the human form and analyses the stylistic and formal devices used to associate bodily fragmentation with abject nihilism at the expense of more positive, grotesque readings. In doing so it advocates a new critical focus towards contemporary representations of the liminal body as a means of identifying how oppositional practices are reconfigured and expelled by consumer culture.

Striking Our Debt to Moral Tragedy

Todd Barnes

Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* compounds two significant and distinct transformational periods: the dawn of the Roman Empire and the emergence of new forms of finance in early modern England. During these periods, the basic tenets underpinning classical liberal economics were incubated, revised, and carefully crafted; then, over time, they slowly came to be understood as natural and eternal. In this way, a potentially radical and explicitly political money form was commodified and recuperated by an ascendant merchant-capitalist class. Though we've since forgotten and naturalized money's character, a careful reading of *Caesar* can help us notice the way early modern tragedy dramatized the restructuring of ancient and medieval finance. Instead of examining some transhistorical 'tide in the affairs of men', we might instead see how the very character of money is contested and crafted throughout the play. Those living through Rome's transition from Republic to Empire witnessed a series of civil wars and conquests, events that ushered in radical changes in the assumptions ancients could make about the nature of money. Similarly, but with crucial differences, the basic assumptions about money held in Jacobethan England would not survive the seventeenth century, which—with the introduction of fractional reserve lending, interest bearing loans, and depersonalized forms of transferable debt—culminated in a radical redesign of the money form, the inauguration of England's national debt, and the founding of the Bank of England. This talk works to untangle these strands and recover the differences elided by neoliberal notions of an eternal marketplace. Instead, we will see how various 'deals' in *Caesar* dramatize tensions between emerging and contested forms of ancient and early modern finance.

The Caricature of Postmodernism as "Moral Relativism"

Andrea Liu

This paper is an attempt to parse the distinction between (A) postmodernism as a value-neutral indicator of a time period versus (B) postmodernism as an aesthetic category (postmodern architecture, postmodern literature) versus (C) postmodernism as a prognosis of a cultural condition versus (D) a postmodernism of resistance, an oppositional epistemology that destabilized the grand narratives of Enlightenment versus (E) a cynical ahistorical "anything goes" postmodernism disemboweled of any element of critical resistance, complicit with neoliberal capitalist consumerism. On this one word—postmodernism—have converged completely contradictory impulses or stances. Postmodernism has been caricatured, if not demonized, as a byword for "moral relativism" (first by the Right Wing during the "culture wars" of the 80's in U.S), as a depthless "free play of signs" unmoored in any ethical or moral position, which is the antithesis of how post-structuralism began. Embedded in this mischaracterization is a conflation of (D) (a postmodernism of political resistance) and (E) (postmodernism complicit with, or recuperated by, neoliberalism à la Frederic Jameson's account). First we must clarify: is postmodernism a cause or an effect? Is it the description of a cultural condition or is it a set of polemical operations brought about (by thinkers in the 60's and 70's that catalyzed a shift in society resulting in) this condition itself? As art critic Julian Stallabrass said, "Postmodern theory itself moved from being an account of a potential utopia to a flat description of an existing reality and thereby lost its critical and ethical force. In its reduced state, consumerism and the supposed empowerment of the shopper were central to postmodernism's disquisitions. [...] Yet the ghostly apparently immaterial character of the contemporary commodity goes hand-in-hand with the rise of neoliberalism." (2004: 53) This paper attempts to disinter the postmodernism of political resistance that preceded the dissolution of postmodernism, now eviscerated and trivialized as mere "moral relativism".

Reception & Book Launch – 17:15

CLO Basement Foyer

David Chandler & Julian Reid, *The Neoliberal Subject: Resistance, Adaption, and Vulnerability*
(Rowman and Littlefield International)

Post Conference Drinks

Pub to be announced