London Conference in Critical Thought (LCCT) 2018

29th & 30th June 2018
University of Westminster

Call for Papers

The 7th annual London Conference in Critical Thought (LCCT), hosted by the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Westminster, will offer a space for an interdisciplinary exchange of ideas for scholars who work with critical traditions and concerns. Central to the vision of the conference is an inter-institutional, non-hierarchal, and accessible event that makes a particular effort to embrace emergent thought and the participation of emerging academics, fostering new avenues for critically-oriented scholarship and collaboration.

The conference is divided into thematic streams, each coordinated by different researchers and with separate calls for papers, included in this document. We welcome paper proposals that respond to the particular streams below. In addition, papers may be proposed as part of a general stream, i.e. with no specific stream in mind. Spanning a range of broad themes, these streams provide the impetus for new points of dialogue.

- Art and Automation
- Capital, Event and Agency (1968-2018)
- Disruptions, Interventions and Liminalities: Critical Performative Pedagogies
- Infrastructure, “infrapolitics” and experimentation
- Politics of/in the Anthropocene
- Resistant Bodies. On resistance and its corporeal challenges
- Taking Positions
- The Politics of Truth
- Thinking Affect and Postcoloniality Together
- Time, Cities, Bodies
- Writing to Think

Please send paper/presentation proposals with the relevant stream indicated in the subject line to paper-subs@londoncritical.org. Submissions should be no more than 250 words and should be received by Monday, 26th March 2018.

Participation is free (though registration is required).

Further details on the ethos and organisational structure of the LCCT can be found at londoncritical.org. Contact us at inquiries@londoncritical.org.

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Art and Automation

Stream Organiser: Michael Haworth

This stream seeks to explore the position of the artist and the work of art in the age of mass automation.

As machines come to formalise and automate more and more of the skills, activities and professions that were previously thought to be necessarily predicated on human sensory and intellectual capabilities, the most commonly heard reassurance people cling to is that *creativity* is the one human faculty that a computer will never be capable of replicating. Creative inspiration, by definition, cannot be reduced to a set of rules or instructions and codified in the form of an algorithm.

However, increasingly, even this last outpost of human exceptionality has begun to come under pressure. Most famously, Google’s AlphaGo programme mastered the elite Chinese strategy game Go to a level which far exceeded that of all the game’s finest human players. Computer-generated poetry has been accepted into prestigious literary journals on its own merits. Considerable research efforts are being invested in the field of ‘computational creativity’, building computational models to replicate human creative processes and the exercise of aesthetic judgement. Finally, in 2016, an original, entirely computer-generated Rembrandt painting was exhibited in Cannes, built from data extracted from the entirety of Rembrandt’s existing corpus, which had been scanned by deep-learning feature-extraction algorithms.

So must we add artistic practice to the growing list of seemingly human-specific activities at risk from being replaced by machine automation? Is the work of the artist capable of being expropriated to the same degree as other human occupations? Or, rather than conceiving of creative automation according to existing criteria and seeing in it a potential substitute for human practices, can we think a rigorously *post*-human form of creativity? Whom would the products of such a practice be for? How should we situate automated creative systems in relation to broader histories of the withdrawal of physical skill from artistic labour since the Readymade? Does art offer a site of resistance to, or exit from, the creeping automatisation of all aspects of human existence? What role should art play in a post-work, fully-automated society?

This stream invites proposals exploring responses to these and other questions concerning the relation between art and automation in the 21st Century. As well as theoretical and historical approaches, proposals from creative practitioners and programmers whose work engages with these themes would be welcomed.

Possible topics might include:

- Creative machines and non-human art
- Can ‘the new’ be programmed?
- Skill, deskilling and automation in relation to art practice
- Artistic responses to the automatic society
- Art and accelerationism, or the role of art and creativity in post-work societies
- Automatic writing and automated poetry
- The delegation of aesthetic choices to algorithms
- The neuroscience of creative inspiration: is creativity already a mechanical process?
Capital, Event and Agency (1968-2018)

Stream Organiser: Guillaume Collet

This stream focuses on the interrelations between events, capital and agency, on the fiftieth anniversary of the global 1968 uprisings.

While Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Badiou, Žižek, Hallward, and others, have interrogated the notion of the event with regard to the political field, less attention has been explicitly paid to the interpenetration of capital and the event, and to the systematic theorisation of this coupling. For instance, if we are to understand an event as always both radical break or rupture and retroactive re-inscription in a social field, can we then adapt the Marxian notion of primitive accumulation to the thinking of the event within capitalism, and particularly its neoliberal variant? As David Harvey (2005) and more recently Alliez and Lazzarato (2016) have argued, (particularly late) capitalism is inseparable from the ‘othering’ or engineered fragmentation of the social field, and from the instrumentalisation of these engendered differences within evaluative hierarchies legitimising intensified surplus-value extraction. It would be fruitful to articulate this with the work of Naomi Klein (2007), and others, who have shown how events (be they natural, artificial or engineered), functioning as ‘shocks’ to the social field in question, play an important role as pretexts for the implementation of politico-juridical reforms underpinning the neoliberal accumulation of capital on a global scale.

Moreover, this stream seeks to enquire about the event’s revolutionary potential within capitalism on the fiftieth anniversary of 1968. An event, insofar as it breaks radically with what came before it, cannot be reduced to a chain of economic or political causality, but rather itself calls for the creation of a new conception of economics and politics, as well as a new configuration of subjectivity. Considering the Left’s arguable inability to reconcile socialism with the critique of the State, the rise of identity politics, and the new social movements that emerged after 1968 (nor to forestall the neoliberal co-optation of this chasm), can one argue that the concrete realisation of the event of 1968 has amounted to a betrayal of labour within global capitalism? And what has been the role of collective agency (or the lack thereof) in this process?

These questions appear particularly pertinent today given, for instance, the ongoing debates in the UK and mainland Europe over the retroactively imputed ‘meaning’ of the event of the Brexit referendum vote. What new forms of individual or collective agency may current events give rise to, and how might these events be used to either resist or enable the reproduction of contemporary capitalism?

Possible topics include but are not limited to:

• The consideration of ways to articulate and mutually enrich Marxism and intersectionality
• Critical genealogies of events in contemporary capitalism traced back to the ‘event of 1968’
• The instrumentalisation of recent events by contemporary capitalism
• Theorising relations between capital accumulation and the social re-inscription of the event
• Revolutionary and regressive modes of collective agency as mediums for re-inscribing events
• Psychoanalytic contributions to a political economy of trauma
Disruptions, Interventions and Liminalities: Critical Performative Pedagogies

Stream Organiser: Lee Campbell

In any pedagogical situation, you want the learners to feel safe. On the other hand, you must know that you may be faced with a group where there isn’t a lot of dynamics, there’s a lot of sleepiness and so on, and you want to somehow make them active, challenge them. Performative arts would have a lot of strategies (Manfred Schewe, 2016)

This stream asks: ‘What happens when performative arts meet pedagogy?’ and explores the possibilities of the emerging field of ‘performative pedagogy’ and its potential as useful and applicable to enabling learning across a range of artistic and possibly other disciplines. We welcome submissions from individuals and groups across all creative disciplines who deploy pedagogic approaches with an emphasis on performativity to drive learning. We invite papers that theorise, articulate and demonstrate some of the possibilities of using a critical performative pedagogy which may showcase good practice of making positive usage of performative teaching and learning.

Joe L. Kincheloe describes critical theorists as ‘detectives of new theoretical insights, perpetually searching for new and interconnected ways of understanding power and oppression and the ways they shape everyday life and human experience’. (Kincheloe, Joe L., 2008. Critical Pedagogy. Peter Lang: New York) With a similar curiosity around power plays, we are most interested in receiving submissions that reflect upon how power may be understood in critical pedagogy in relation to ‘the effects of power on shaping and misshaping the pedagogical act’ as a means of (re)thinking how power relations may operate in teaching practice. Applying Michel Foucault’s understanding of social power (1980), we envisage performance as a tool to make power relations visible (making performance as mirroring power plays that take place in all forms of daily human existence).

Raphael Hallett has suggested that students’ work tends to be valued in terms of a very circumscribed, clean, clear presentation. Disruption, intervention, liminalities are forms of expression that do not necessarily correspond with conventional criteria that lean towards focus, precision, clarity, coherence and structure. We encourage submissions where the strategies of performative pedagogy relate in some way to ‘disruption’, ‘intervention’ and ‘liminality’. Performance Art (and Art per se) is predicated on rule breaking, even on discomforting audiences, especially the elitist audiences of Live Art and Performance. As Dr Jane Munro recently pointed out at Tactics of Interruption, (Toynbee Studios, London, June 2016), interruption is about ‘creating new forms – allowing interruption to shape the work – not hiding them’. We are most interested in receiving papers that advocate the power of risk in teaching and learning, that explore disruption/interruption as a ‘risky’ pedagogic strategy to not only provoke students’ participation but also to demonstrate how performative pedagogy can be effectively deployed to break implicit rules surrounding the exchange of power relation between student and teacher.

Please send submissions to: paper-sub@londoncritical.org
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Infrastructure, “infrapolitics” and experimentation

This stream is interested in the politics of infrastructure, and the effect on critical thought of approaches which focus on the infrastructural. The recent turn to infrastructure as a mode of analysis in critical research can be seen across disciplines: in media and art theory in projects documented in Bishop, Gansing, Parikka and Wilk’s *Across and Beyond* reader; in work engaging with blockchain technology (for instance Catlow, Garrett, Jones and Skinner’s *Artists Re:Thinking the Blockchain* (2017)); in the critical geographies of Keller Easterling, and the Slacktivist project. Adam Greenfield has explored the limits of simple functionalism (Stafford Beer’s ‘a system is what it does’) and argued for infrapolitics (jokes, go-slow, pilferage, presenteeism, working to rule) as a critical practice. Meanwhile, the national “Infrastructure Week” initiative in the US led to Fiona Shipwright’s playful catalogue of definitions of infrastructure:

Infrastructure—something to be broken; a messy pipes aesthetic; a bundle of wires aesthetic; a sleek, wireless, post-Snowden aesthetic; something to be collapsed; that which the “half-baked-but-still-useful” term post-digital is actually referring to; the invisible but not the disappeared; a thing; a process; an individual scale system such as the browser; a Marinetti-style Earth as a “complete machine”; something human; something animal.

But what does the turn to infrastructure do to the nature of critique? Following Lyotard, we could say that the poststructuralist moment has taken us away from critique and towards experimentation. What place is there for such analysis in a world with ‘[n]o structure in the linguistic or semiotic sense; only dispositions of energy transformations. And among these dispositions, no reason to privilege (in the name of infrastructure) what regulates the production and circulation of goods, the so-called “economic” apparatus [...]’? As Guattari puts it – the project of experimentation, contra critique, is to get away from ‘traditional systems of binary determination – material infrastructure/ideological superstructure’. Alternatively, we might agree with Alan Liu and Laura Braunstein that the infrastructural is the point at which critical theory and critical making – experimentation with the tools and systems subject to critique – coincide most productively. But is this substantively different from other (non-infrastructural) approaches operating at the intersection of making and critique? And to what extent does the recent infrastructural turn enter territory that hasn’t been covered by Susan Leigh Star and the Society of People Interested in Boring Things in the 1990s?

Proposals, papers or experiments which address the infrastructural through the following (incomplete) list of topics, are welcomed.

What does showing the infrastructural nature of something allow us to do? What does it prevent us from doing? Can we experiment more easily, or differently, in this mode? On what terms is the infrastructural understood, and what are the conditions of naming something as “infrastructural”? Does this approach produce a political subject, and what are its articulations? What is the relationship between critique and escape? Can we make tools that do critical research on our behalf?

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2. https://transmediale.de/content/turtles-all-the-way-down-or-escape-from-infrastructure
Politics of/in the Anthropocene

Stream Organisers: David Chandler and Harshavardhan Bhat

The Anthropocene – the new geological epoch of humanity’s own making – promises to be a major challenge to scholars across disciplines. This stream is interested in panels, papers, conversations and performances that explore the politics of and in the Anthropocene. Does politics transform in the Anthropocene? What are its politics? As Timothy Morton prominently argued, the advent of the Anthropocene marks ‘the end of the world’ – not (only) physically, as ecological catastrophe at planetary scale, but also in a philosophical sense. The Anthropocene collapses the foundations of modernity: subject-centred rationalism and Anthropocene norms, discourses and regulations. The speed and energy of planetary changes overwhelm existing political institutions – from national parliaments to international organizations, from linear views of life to highly complex scenes of inter-species entanglements (Haraway).

For some, the realization of the Anthropocene leaves little hope for futural politics. They paint a bleak scenario in which Anthropocene politics resembles a mere management of the post-apocalyptic present: the governance of polluted oceans, flooded cities and deserted landscapes. In this new world, survival is all we can hope for. Others, however, paint a more optimistic picture. For them, the collapse of the modernist universe represents a unique possibility: to decolonise contemporary approaches (Demos) and understandings, to become attuned (Myers, Shapiro) to the needs of nonhumans (Tsing), to (re)discover non-western indigenous cosmologies (Kohn, de Castro) and cultures (la Cadena), to renegotiate core political ideas including security, participation, well-being and care (de la Bellacasa), and to establish new forms of (cosmo-)political cooperation.

For contemporary critical thought, the Anthropocene is a momentous opportunity to rethink things. So this stream is an invitation for proposals on the politics of/in the Anthropocene and what this might mean for contemporary critical thought today, and to-come.

Suggestions for prospective panels (not limited to):

- Decolonising the Anthropocene
- Time, temporality and politics in the Anthropocene
- Digital Anthropocene/Technosphere politics
- Anthropocene security: risk, resilience and resistance
- Atmosphere and toxicity
- Architectures and surfaces
- Sensing the Anthropocene: visuality, knowledge and power
- Ways of ‘Staying with the trouble’
- Microbial and vegetal agencies
- Oceanic and aerial flows
- ‘Scale’ in the Anthropocene
- Matter and Mattering
- Ways of knowing in the Anthropocene

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Resistant Bodies. On resistance and its corporeal challenges

Stream Organisers: Brigitta Keintzel and Sophie Uitz

Resistance is as much topical as it is – according to the German-Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig – fundamental to the everyday life. Turning to resistance as a resource for understanding the cohesiveness of subjectivity and society, this stream will address the following questions: In what way is resistance bound to the corporeality of resistant subjects? In what way is resistance bound to remembrance and witnessing? And, what are the gendered implications and presumptions that resistance, remembrance and the act of witnessing involve (as paradigmatically developed in Sophocles’ Antigone and its contemporary interpretations)?

This stream (inline with research currently conducted at the University of Vienna) invites to think and analyze manifestations of resistance as both reflective on a given status quo, and transforming this status quo via bodily strategies. In order to unfold its reflective and transforming capacity, we put forward a framing of resistance as the interplay between execution, perception, and interpretation: a resisting subject is being perceived and interpreted by others and unfolds its capacity – to change a given state – in this very interplay between multiple agents. The resistant subject is not self-contained, but relies on the witnessing and interpretative presence of others. Resistance, it can be argued in line with that, is fundamentally dependent on the presence of physical bodies – a circumstance most apparent in events of resistance such as demonstrations, strikes, gatherings, sit-in’s, or gestures (raising of a fist) and the expression of emotions.

Notions of resistance have undergone significant change within a continental European history of ideas. Against the background of European modernity and its collapse in the Shoah, we identify a two-fold approach to resistance, which shall serve as point of reference and of departure for this stream’s investigation into resistance: Enlightenment has produced notions of resistance rooted in agency and self-contained action, tying resistance to progress and history. As such, resistance manifests as an act with the capacity to constitute collectivity and solidarity, centered around mutual recognition. The reality of the death camps has produced a different understanding of resistance, emphasizing withdrawal, refusal and the power of remembrance. Resistance has manifested in the bearing of testimony, memory, the refusal to forget, and ultimately in the act of survival.

We seek to facilitate an interdisciplinary dialogue that conceptualizes and explores resistance as an act involving physical bodies, bound to biological life, seen within a political frame. The theme of this stream will be to discuss the corporeality of resistance along both historical and contemporary resistant subject relationships, and we explicitly welcome contributions that analyze particular instances of present-day manifestations, with reference to documents and media of all formats.
Taking Positions

Stream Organisers: Jaakko Karhunen and Jussi Palmusaari

This stream proposes an examination of politics of theoretical practice. It addresses different ways in which theory is, or can be, politically positioned. How does knowledge constitute its political positions or relate to its political legitimations? How do the specificities of given theoretical constructions relate to their political uses? How should we think the relations between the dividing lines in politics on one hand, and those in theory on the other?

Political epistemology is a recent strand in analytic philosophy. It studies and evaluates the epistemic presuppositions and beliefs of political actors, whom it understands mainly as politicians, bureaucrats, and voters. This line of thought relies heavily on the liberal democratic tradition and its parliamentary representative structures. Another kind of political epistemology could be conceived, however – one that studies the implied politics of all knowledge claims and the ways in which theoretical and political descriptions and prescriptions are co-articulated in them. This kind of discourse could not adjudicate on the truth-value of the knowledge claims themselves; instead, it would examine the intertwined nature of theoretical and political positions. The stream is looking to experiment on such a discourse. The point is to take a critical stance towards the analytical-philosophical branch of political epistemology, inasmuch as we maintain that the questions relating to knowledge are not brought to the realm of political practice from a supposedly neutral realm of epistemology. Instead, the two spheres should be treated as co-emergent in the realm of theorectico-political practice. The logics of their immanent divisions can be investigated and understood in a sphere where subjective and objective, descriptive and prescriptive, remain provisional and transitory. Even if we maintain that theory is inherently political, however, there are different ways in which theory and its politics legitimise and rationalise themselves reciprocally. By political epistemology we mean an investigation of this co-articulation. We are interested in articulating political epistemology from a broadly continental philosophical and theoretical perspective, as such a perspective is taken in different disciplines. These might include, for example, political history, history of ideas, sociology (of knowledge), science studies, anthropology, human geography, political science, analytic philosophy, literary theory, queer theory, and critical race studies.

Political epistemology could be thought in relation to the following themes (but not limited to them):
• historical disputes on the relation between science and politics
• political ontology vs. political epistemology
• epistemological perspectivism, indigenous knowledges (e.g. Eduardo Viveiro de Castro)
• (knowledge of) political enmities (the Schmittian tradition)
• conceptions of radical democracy (e.g. Rancière, Laclau & Mouffe)
• epistemic violence (e.g. Spivak)
• Althusserianism and post-Althusserianism
• feminist/queer epistemologies and science studies (e.g. Donna Haraway)
• race and decolonisation of knowledge (e.g. Denise Fereira da Silva, Achille Mbembe, Walter Mignolo)
• idea of fundamental principles (canonical Western political philosophy and its revolutionary and reactionary applications)
• description/prescription
• primacy of politics vs. authority of science in the history of Marxism
• dogmatism
• historical epistemology (e.g. Canguilhem, Bachelard, Cavaillès, Foucault, Kuhn)
The Politics of Truth

Stream Organiser: Chris Henry

Following both the 2015 LCCT stream and the 2017 LJCT collection under the name Truthful Politics, The Politics of Truth further develops questions of the conceptual, theoretical and practical-political relevance of truth within critical thought and contemporary politics in its widest sense. Whilst critical thought has long maintained an interest in the ideas of truth, doxa and truthfulness, the recent phenomena of (apparently) ‘post-truth politics’ has foregrounded the necessity to engage with them all the more. However, whilst much ink has been spilled of late by journalists and political commentators keen to attribute both the Brexit referendum and the result of the last US presidential election to a new era of journalistic malefascation and obfuscation, it is by no means clear that truth played either more or less of a role in political thought and debate than it ever had before; when were these alleged halcyon days of truthful politics?

Perhaps the label post-truth’ refers not to a lack of truth, however, but to a politics that is no longer premised, as Rorty has characterised the history of politics hitherto, upon authority representing the natural order to the citizenry (1997). If this is the case, critical thought might celebrate the downfall of hierarchy by unleashing new-found Deleuzo-Guattarian ‘lines of flight’, ‘schizo-politics’, or the multiplicity of assemblages that emerge from New Materialism. Were such concepts to fulfill what their more anarchic readings interpret as promising a limitless horizon of possibilities for creativity, contemporary politics might get rid of its Burkean paternalist shackles and finally facilitate the development of a multiplicity of ‘good lives’. Choat (2017) has argued however that new materialists, whilst undermining authoritative & hierarchical positions (such as those who profess claims to truth), might be culpable of undermining the possibility of critique at best, or, at worst, rejecting the concept tout court (i.e. Latour, cf. MacKenzie 2018). If so, whilst presenting matter by way of a model with which to analyse the world, might new materialists not ignore the importance of the determinant material conditions that historical materialism has been at pains to foreground since Marx? For example, in reducing competing interests, identities and productive forces to a single mode of analysis, i.e. ‘vibrant matter’ (Bennet), New Materialists might thus ignore both the agonistic and antagonistic factors that comprise different accounts of the political. Contemporary trends in critical thought (in this branch at least) could then consequently be guilty of a naive realism (i.e. the assumption of a mind-independent world that humans can tell the truth of given the discovery of the right investigative model) — a position that constituted the original target of critical thought. Instead, as Jones argued in his 2017 Truthful Politics LJCT article, it might be to political theology that critical thought should turn, and the importance that belief in authority has as a legitimising function for truth. At least since Hume, philosophers have been aware of the importance of belief in truth-telling, complicating Plato’s formal distinction between truth and doxa. However, is it true that belief legitimises either truth or truthfulness?

We welcome papers that investigate the concepts of truth, doxa and truthfulness from a wide range of disciplines. Topics for consideration might include (though are not limited to):

• Conceptual debates on ‘post-factual’, ‘post-truth’
• Conceptual debates on legitimacy and accountability in post-factual times
• The politics of truth/the truth of politics
• The conditions of truth and truth telling
• Immanent/transcendental truth
• The power of truth and/or its role in politics and/or political discourse
• The status of truth in anti/post-foundationalism, poststructuralism, object-orientated ontology and new materialism
• The foundations of truth claims in empiricism, positivism, and naturalism

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Thinking Affect and Postcoloniality Together

Stream Organiser: Meyda Yeğenoğlu

In this stream, we would like to invite papers that put the idea of the ontological or affective turn in a creative tension with issues of postcoloniality (cosmopolitanism, racism, migrancy, decolonization, transnationality) so as to envision a new imaginary of the subversive politics of the postcolonial condition and thereby expand the critical registers of affect theory in postcolonial contexts.

Various approaches have emphasized how colonial histories haunt the way sovereign subject relates to the colonised other, who is now embodied in the immigrant in the metropolitan space. The memory of colonialism in the postcolonial context can be understood as an affective moment where the repressed colonial scene returns and haunts today. Given the inventiveness and mobile character of affect and its ability to attach to any object, context or event, and its capacity to transform the self in relation to others in quite unpredictable ways, how can we unfold the dynamism of affect in the postcolonial context? Can the freedom and flexibility of affect enable us to reconceptualise the sovereign self in relation to the colonized other in a radically new fashion? Following Gilles Deleuze, we might suggest that such affective encounters are not simply repeated moments but are ongoing alterations between the body and emotion, doubling back upon the body and influencing the individual’s capacity to act in the world. Can we perhaps think that affect is not totally autonomous and does not have an unlimited potential to establish new connections in the current transnational postcolonial context, unburdened with the potent traces of the colonial past?

Taking affect theory’s approach on the body’s capacity to affect and be affected on board, how can we re-conceptualize the racialized body that becomes aware of itself only in relation to the affect other bodies have upon it, as Fanon’s remarks make clear in the opening scene of *Black Skin, White Masks*, where he describes how a black man is subjected to scenes of oppression via his ontology? Thinking affect in this way enables us to rethink racialized embodiment in a relational becoming, which also implies reconsidering how the body’s desires, conducts, abilities and leanings become habituated. Can we think colonial subjectivity in relation to affect and embodiment alongside Deleuze’s idea of becoming and Derrida’s notion of the trace, and unpack how this understanding might contribute to rethinking of ontology and ethics in the postcolonial condition? Can affect theory enable us to envision a postcolonial encounter beyond the category of identity politics that has been pervasive in the field of postcolonial studies?

Contributors may want to address the work of authors such as Spivak, Derrida, Deleuze, Bhabha, Said, Spinoza, Bergson.

Papers which engage with the following topics (but not limited to) are welcomed:

- Affect, memory and migrancy
- Nationalism and affect
- Subaltern affect
- Memory: trace and affect
- Affective deconstruction of self-sufficient subject
- Decolonial becomings
- Postcolonial literatures and new subjectivities
- Haunting of the colonial and occulted histories
- Colonial memory and postcolonial diaspora

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Time, Cities, Bodies

Stream Organisers: Sarah Milton and Emma Garnett

Time can be understood as an organising device for differentiating cities from other kinds of lived environments, and therefore the bodies of those moving, breathing and living within these. Time can also be a conceptual figure for probing the city and putting into question taken-for-granted realities of city life: from the forceful speed of the city, forwards and progressive, to the spaces of resistance that foster other temporal directions, such as waiting, slowing and resting. Opening-up time for empirical exploration has also revealed the various modes of ordering that constrain and make possible the emergence of a metropolitan kind of body. Inspired by Elizabeth Grosz’s proposition that the body and its environs produce one another, we ask: how are cities made into bodies and how are bodies made into cities? And how can these be made in other ways: what is new, what might be (Grosz 2005)? Orientating these questions through the mediation of time will situate critical insight around the historico-geographic specificity of bodies and cities.

Cities are interactive networks of relations that link together activities and beings with architectures, geographies and publics (Grosz 1995). The city is also an intersectional site for orienting our concerns towards familial, sexual and racial relations; the form and structure of the city and how these identify and subjectify bodies in spatial ways (Ibid). Taking a temporal, historical lens to the making and sustaining of urban environments can tell us particular tales about whom, over time, is welcome and who is not in particular spaces; who is ‘out of place’ and who is ‘out of time’.

Our empirical approach aims to focus on the design of cities (design by health, policy, NGOs, citizens) because these practices and processes are always situated in space and time. Thinking about changing, temporal and historical notions of the body, of bodies and of society is also key to conceptualising cities in/out of time. We propose that by foregrounding matters and imaginings of time, cities and bodies are revealed to us in new ways. Thus, entanglement cities with bodies (and bodies with cities) is also a way to capture the temporal intimacies of urban spaces, an intimacy that is often seen too messy or transient to be included in normative and deterministic accounts of urban life. As Mel Y. Chen’s research inspires us to ask: how do empirical and figurative accounts of bodies and cities trouble normative understandings of personal-interpersonal, human-non-human, and living and inanimate relations?

Papers in the stream would ideally focus on bodies and cities, although research on bodies in other spaces and places that offer critical comparative insight on cities as lived environments are also welcome. Some topics include, but are not limited to:

- Digital devices, bodies and time
- Urban atmospheres as local-global spaces
- Temporalities of urban design/planning (and the interweaving of the body or bodies)
- Post-human bodies and urban health
- Ageing in cities, being ‘well’ in cities
- Sexuality, difference and spatial politics
- Performing time, performing place
- Non-conforming bodies and the city

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Too often in academic contexts, written texts are seen as the outcome of a critical process: closed, definitive, authoritative, and little thought is given as to how this text has come into being or what other possible versions there may be. The process of writing is often more closely aligned to the process of conversation, being more discursive, argumentative and messy, as the writer wrestles with ideas and attempts to critically interrogate his/her own thoughts. Within this dialogue that takes place between writer and text, enter many other voices that crowd into one’s writing: other texts, films, images, objects and various and varied formal and informal conversations. As we write, a large part of our work, drafting and rejecting, rewording and carefully crafting, involves critically analysing these voices, making judgements about whose voice we allow into our texts, and why. We also have to think about how we ‘referee’ these competing characters, particularly in relation to our voices.

Rather than thinking of writing as a way to organise ideas and arguments that have already been assembled, we would like to consider what emerges through the conversations that take place between writer and text. How might these vary according to the requirements of different disciplines?

This stream welcomes proposals that address critical thinking and writing in relation to the following areas:

- The role of writing as part of practice-led research
- The messy, the unfinished, and the speculative in writing
- The writing process as thinking
- The leftovers - what is the status of the words/ideas that get cut or left out?
- Alternative forms of critically-engaged writing
- Free-writing
- Critical thinking and writers' groups
- Critical thinking in collaborative writing
- Reflective journals as critical spaces

Proposals may take the form of papers, discussions, workshops or visual presentations. We welcome proposals that adopt less traditional formats and types of writing (reflective, notes journals, creative, academic, journalistic, blogging) from any subject area.