London Conference in Critical Thought (LCCT)
Friday & Saturday, 14-15 August 2020
King's College London

Call for Papers

The Call for Papers is now open for the 9th annual London Conference in Critical Thought (LCCT), hosted and supported by the Faculty of Social Science and Public Policy at King's College London.

The LCCT is a free, inter-institutional, interdisciplinary conference in critical thought that takes place annually in different institutions across London. LCCT follows a non-hierarchical, decentralised model of organisation that undoes conventional academic distinctions between plenary lectures and break-out sessions, aiming instead to create opportunities for intellectual critical exchange regardless of participants' disciplinary field, institutional affiliation, or seniority. LCCT has no overarching or predetermined theme. The conference's intellectual content and academic tone are set anew each year, stemming from thematic streams that are conceived, proposed and curated by a group of stream organisers. The streams for #LCCT2020 are:

- Commodification of the Existential
- Common Ground: Between Geology and Art
- Critical Utopias
- Hair Salon
- Housing the City
- The Impact of REF
- Love, in Theory
- The Measurement and Surveillance of Practice
- Monstrosity in the Capitalocene
- Something about Stickiness
- The University reimagined and speculative pedagogies of hope
- Veganism: Philosophy or Fad?

Please send abstracts for papers and presentation proposals to **paper-subs@londoncritical.org** with the relevant stream title indicated in the subject line. Abstracts should be **no more than 250 words** and must be received by **Monday, 13 April 2020**. We aim to make the LCCT open and accessible to all. For any queries about accessibility requirements, please get in touch with us at: access@londoncritical.org.

LCCT is free to all speakers and attendees but registration is required.

londoncritical.org / @LondonCritical

The commodification of the existential (beyond a Neo-Marxist concern with the privatisation of the commons)

Stream Organisers: Philip Mignot, Paul Bermingham, Ricky Gee

In the context of neo-liberal capitalism, existential questions are increasingly the subject of inquiry amongst critical scholars and activists. This developing line of inquiry is connected to, but moves beyond, a Neo-Marxist preoccupation with the notion of the 'social factory' and how the reproduction of capitalism is dependent on a sustained appropriation of the 'commons' (Hardt and Negri, 1994). Prompted by discourses of austerity and precarity that draw attention to embodied states of vulnerability related to work and welfare, attention has widened to concerns about the commodification of the entire lifeworld. From this wider perspective all aspects of what it is to be human are vulnerable to appropriation by a form of Capital that extends beyond the economic to the existential realm of trust, anxiety, and aesthetics.

In this stream we want to pursue these wider existential questions. For example, how might the commodification of aesthetic judgement provoke and sustain compulsive consumption (Carroll, 1995)? How might anxiety be transmuted into new forms of productivity (Hall and Bowles, 2016)? How has the affective become a tool of global neo-liberal politics through the mobilisation of an existential sense of 'dread' (Goldberg, 2018)? How has the kinaesthetic movement of mind and body become vulnerable to a politics of speed (Virilio, 2012)? How is (mis)trust appropriated socio-politically in transactional, systemic, and dispositional forms (Tilly, 2005)?

In trying to understand existential questions such as these, we encourage submissions from a wide range of disciplinary fields, such as sociology, politics, economics, philosophy, cultural studies, art criticism, and literary studies.

We are interested in maintaining a necessarily eclectic approach in terms of both content and format, so contributors are not confined to the questions raised above, nor to the work of the authors cited. Nonetheless, proposals should express a clear interest in delineating, articulating and demonstrating the processes involved in commodifying our sense of existence. We would anticipate therefore that proposals will have a contextual orientation, addressing particular instances where commodification occurs. The principle at play here is wherever and whenever the existential is commodified, then this is an authentic experience. Clearly such a playful principle has profound implications for us all. We invite you to join us in thinking about this.

Common Ground: Between Geology & Art

Stream organisers: Sarah Strachan and Kelcy Davenport (with Nawrast Sabah Abd Alwahab, Shaima al-Sitrawi and Sally Stenton)

"The simplest form of a small scale cyclicity are herringbone structures, cross-bedded units with opposite directions of forest laminae in adjacent directions. They are formed under the influence of reversing tides. Although it is repeated in nature in the same pattern, it is an evolutionary repetition due to time. Not just a simple cycle, but a pattern of cyclicity which is evolving everything, the organism, the system."
Nawrast Sabah Abd Alwahab, Sedimentologist, Basrah

What can explorations between geology and art tell us about the dynamic processes at work in the earth's landforms and surfaces and how they continue to shape our world today? What stands to be gained through an arts approach to geological study? How may geological concepts be useful as metaphors for arts practices, for social and political organisation? What possibilities to eschew futurism are prompted by a conversation between geology and art, in the adjoined concerns of social justice and environmental sustainability?

The geologic, both as a material dynamic and as a cultural preoccupation, shapes the "now" in ever more direct ways. As such, some contemporary philosophers are experimenting with concepts that take up the geologic as metaphor and model. It seems that the understanding of earth processes can offer inspiration for how we might think about the qualitatively different ways we are sharing planet earth. For example, in Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things, Jane Bennett offers compelling arguments for why and how we might approach and understand things geologic as vital forces and active agents in daily life.

This stream encourages critical discussion and creative exploration of the intersections of geology and art from scientific, artistic, and transdisciplinary practitioners and perspectives. In doing so, drawing together geology-art research enquiries that are asking novel questions, making connections between ideas that seemed previously unrelated, and becoming familiar with knowledge in other fields. Contributions are particularly welcome from research practitioners working together to inspire one another through their different experiences, languages and stories - in the process forging new alliances and perhaps even new horizons of common possibility and shared understanding.

Artworks, papers, presentations, workshops and roundtable discussions are invited from a wide range of disciplines which draw out or discuss the intersections and common ground between geology and art. A diversity of approaches to the theme is welcomed. Examples of sub-themes might include (but are not limited to) issues around:

- Subjectivities, sedimentations, and place
- Histories, reinvestments and multiple readings
- Crossings, transformations, and utopian drives
- The archive and the contested landscape

- Commoning, commonism, and our commonwealth
- Flow, forcing, flourish and fade
- Making 'oddkin' in the chthulucene
- From emergency to emergence: the 'becoming-activist of creative expression'
- The landscapes of altermodernity
- Composition in the 'cosmopolitics' of the common
- Knowing too much and too little - towards unspecialisation

When the pressure is reduced, the solution is released as small bubbles.

Bibliography

Baucon, A., 2009. Geology and Art: an unorthodox perspective. Blurb.

Bennett, J., 2010. Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things. Durham: Duke University Press.

Demos, T. J., November 2019. Climate Control: From Emergency to Emergence. https://www.e-flux.com/journal/104/299286/climate-control-from-emergency-to-emergence/

Denzien, S., 2015. What is the exponential? In: Ellsworth, E., & Kruse, J. (Eds.) 2015, Making the Geologic Now. Brooklyn, United States: Punctum Books

Ellsworth, E., & Kruse, J. (Eds.) 2015. Making the Geologic Now. Brooklyn, United States: Punctum Books

Gielen, P. and Lavaert, S., 2018. The Salt of the Earth On Commonism: An Interview with Antonio Negri. Open!| Platform for Art. www.onlineopen.org

Haraway, D., 2016. Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene. Duke University Press.

Critical Utopias

Stream Organisers: Kelly Rappleye, Nastia Volynova, Giulia Menegale

The intolerable condition under which subjectivity labours today, as symptomized by social pathology (Han, 2012; Fisher, 2009), ecological mutations producing new forms of life due to the capitalist imperative of growth (Tsing, 2015; Moore, 2015), and the erosion of the foundation of truth and resultant vacillation of modern democratic systems (Mclntyre, 2019; Crouch, 2005) are the new normal. These are sufficient reasons to believe that the future not only should, but must be different from the present (Berardi, 2018). However, in the face of such complex issues, how can we take a critical stance that is neither naively optimistic, nor hopeless?

If we want to address the multiple urgencies that inform the current international imperative, an outside-in perspective seems to be insufficient to deal with the complexity of the world we are living in (Nancy, 1997). Gayatri Spivak conceived of the notion of "critical intimacy" in order to invite thinkers to approach their subject of study by 'actually speaking from the inside' (Spivak, 2019). Similarly, as Donna Haraway sustains in her 1988 essay 'Situated Knowledges': "We need the power of modern critical theories of how meanings and bodies get made … in order to build meanings and bodies that have a chance for life" (Haraway, 1988). In *Cruising Utopia* (2009), José Esteban Muñoz argues that a glimpse into the future entails an awareness of historically situated – current and past – struggles. This stream welcomes papers and projects that analyze key moments of the global and personal history of recent decades, which insist on the concrete possibility for another world. Some suggested case studies are as follows: mottos of resistance in armed conflicts; student strikes; civilian protests; and activism related to transnational issues. We propose the following question: How can lived experience affect the theoretical conditions that shape the ways we look at the present and interpret the past, towards the future?

We invite submissions from collapsologists, utopians, sceptics, activists, authors of speculative fictions and anyone who seeks "the possibility of a different 'political imaginary' beyond the impasses of neoliberalism" (Gunkel, Hammed, O'Sullivan, 2017). The response to the question proposed can be articulated through different formats, e.g. an academic or non-traditional essay, the proposal of an actual or hypothetical scientific project, an architectural plan, an exhibition, an artistic installation, a photograph, and other such multi-media, interdisciplinary explorations.

Hair Salon

Stream Organisers: Kelly Lloyd, Suzanne Gold & Michal Lynn Shumate (HAIR CLUB)

HAIR CLUB seeks proposals for HAIR SALON from artists, scientists, scholars, and practitioners; we welcome rigorous inquiries in any form on the topic of HAIR as material, tool, subject, object, or theme.

From devotional images of saints to satirical fashion plates, HAIR is a potent signifier for vanity, sexuality, and power. HAIR might moonlight as embroidery floss, as a drawn line, as texture, but it remains inextricably linked to its own materiality – as personal as it is universal, as specific as DNA and as generic as dust. It sprouts directly from the body itself and comprises the floating debris of our hallways; HAIR is an organic substance that is central to the rituals of daily life across centuries, cultures, and continents. As the inescapable embodiment of the personal as political, HAIR connects directly to issues of race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, and politics; it speaks to themes of loss and death, of beauty expectations, of body, illness, and health.

HAIR CLUB welcomes work on HAIR that intersects with, resonates with, or expands on any of the above.

The Impact of REF

Stream Organiser: Matt Mahon

UK academia is nearly at the critical point of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) cycle, with the census date for REF 2021 occurring on 31 July 2020. Critiques have been raised against REF and its predecessor, the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), for as long as they have taken place. REF has few equivalents in European and North American academic systems, although, as Ian Pace notes in his history of the REF and RAE, this does not mean that the alternatives are any better. This is an opportune time to critically consider the impact of REF on research.

We must consider how the exercise privileges certain forms of thought over others. REF does not necessarily reduce opportunities to write about critical theory, but might affect our ability to carry out experimental, critical research which genuinely challenges disciplinary boundaries. Does REF reduce opportunities to conduct 'slow research' by demanding immediate impact? Would the seminal works of our favourite post-68 theorists be rewarded by the assessment panels? We should consider whether any researchers benefit from the exercise. Does REF really give an advantage to researchers in STEM subjects over those in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences? The models of interdisciplinarity under REF certainly seem inadequate. We could ask: can such an exercise truly account for practice-based, non-text based, or otherwise 'experimental' outputs? Can REF only consider these to be secondary to text itself, and therefore fetishise 'engagement', as Molly Dragiewicz and many others have argued?

Finally, it is essential to consider the material impact of REF on universities' income and hiring patterns, and also on industrial relations within the institution, as excellently satirised by Julie Cupples. There was a justified outcry when updated REF guidance in 2019 indicated that outputs produced by employees who had been made redundant would still be eligible. Equally, the transparency (or lack thereof) in internal REF assessment panels can act to drastically alter power relations within units of assessment. Preparations for REF have drastic impacts on the infrastructure of the University, as institutions become responsible for ensuring compliance with Open Access requirements, and relationships between academics and support staff become increasingly stressed.

Presentations engaging with the following areas are welcomed:
- The effect of REF and similar exercises on how 'critical' research is produced and valued.
- 'Critical' work in STEM and AHSS subject areas under REF
- How the impact of critical research outside of academia is understood by REF
- How the REF (mis)understands creative practice, practice-based and non-text-based research
- Impacts on the conditions of employment and hiring patterns in HEIs
- The effect on relations between academic and support staff
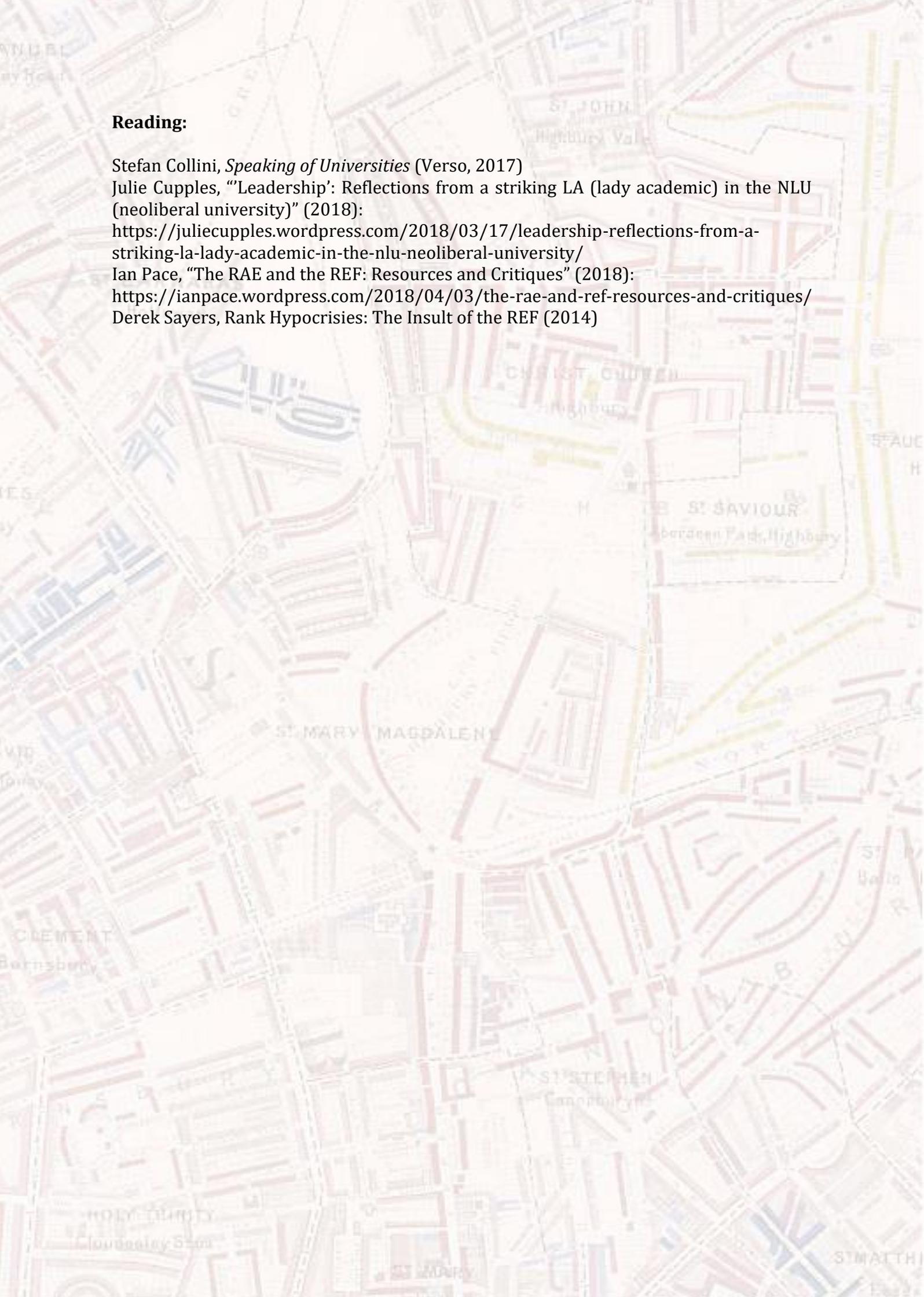
Reading:

Stefan Collini, *Speaking of Universities* (Verso, 2017)
Julie Cupples, "'Leadership': Reflections from a striking LA (lady academic) in the NLU (neoliberal university)" (2018):
https://juliecupples.wordpress.com/2018/03/17/leadership-reflections-from-a-striking-la-lady-academic-in-the-nlu-neoliberal-university/
Ian Pace, "The RAE and the REF: Resources and Critiques" (2018):
https://ianpace.wordpress.com/2018/04/03/the-rae-and-ref-resources-and-critiques/
Derek Sayers, Rank Hypocrisies: The Insult of the REF (2014)

Housing the City: Critical and International Approaches

Stream Organisers: Lynne McCarthy and Abigail Jackson

Today, the city is characterised by conflicts concerning housing, its adequacy, availability, affordability and location. These conflicts can take place at an individual level, be it a landlord demanding an increased rent or a borrower facing repossession by the bank. Increasingly, however, housing is becoming the subject of urban social movements, such as the Focus E15 mothers and the 35% Campaign in the UK, the Homeless Persons' Union of Victoria in Australia, Home Sweet Home in Ireland, Podemos in Spain and the Right to the City Alliance and the International Alliance of Inhabitants in the USA. Using social media and through political protest, these campaigns have led to a greater awareness of the precarity of urban housing, upturning housing's usual position as a matter for the private sphere and repositioning it as a socially connected public concern. Yet, there remains an issue as to how interdisciplinary perspectives can yield new approaches to the current crisis, when housing is widely understood as a commodity and less so as a home or space for shelter (Madden and Marcuse 2016; Minton 2017; Fox 2006).

It is becoming urgent and pressing for individuals and communities to have housing security in the inner city that is supported by public space and infrastructure. In countries such as France and South Africa, the debate surrounding housing has been framed using the language of rights, while in China, there has been increased investment in social housing. Elsewhere in Europe, there have been reforms to the private rented sector to provide tenants with greater security of tenure. By way of contrast, in England and Wales, the liberal underpinnings of property ownership remain at odds with the ways low-income populations can dwell and gather in the city.

This stream encourages contributions that consider the lived experiences of dwellers in the city at micro, meso and macro-economic levels, and how that may contrast with the traditional theoretical conceptions of property. This may involve the consideration of:

- housing and subjectivity
- housing and rights
- housing and protest
- housing and art/performance
- housing in postsocialism
- housing and the anthropocene
- housing and gender

All contributions are welcome, including novel formats. The organisers are particularly keen to hear from colleagues working on theoretical, empirical and interdisciplinary research, as well as those who adopt a comparative or international approach to understanding housing in the city.

Love, In Theory

Stream Organisers: Stefano Rossoni and Thea Petrou

Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.
Shakespeare

Swipe left. Swipe left. Swipe left.

The search for love has appeared in many theoretical guises over the centuries. In Plato's Symposium, a speech delivered by Aristophanes explains that love is the desire to heal a wound: a longing to find the missing half from which each being has been sundered. This attempt to seek out wholeness is derided as 'myth' by Jacques Lacan. For the psychoanalyst, unity is impossible since the relation between subjects in language is always mediated by the primordially lost object, or petit a. Feminist theorist Luce Irigaray, in turn, builds on Lacan's 'impossible sexual relation', positing the space between subjects as one that allows the individuality of each term to flourish. There is great fear in the impossibility of fully knowing the other with whom we form a relation, but the distance implicit in the use of the preposition in Irigaray's notion of loving-to (*J'aime à toi*) allows for the growth of trust and understanding.

Philosopher Alain Badiou also takes the Lacanian disjunction as a point of departure in his recent appraisal of love. In Badiou's Two-scene (*la scène du Deux*), love is an experience and development of the world 'from the point of view of difference and not identity, from the point of view of two and not one'. Badiou emphasises 'duration' and 'process' over the 'intense' and 'miraculous' encounter privileged in literary and poetic accounts of love. Scientific research seems also to prioritise the head over the heart in matters of love. Research conducted by psychiatrist Donatella Marazziti compares the effects of reduced levels of hormone serotonin produced in love to the condition of severe Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, both inducing a state described as 'not normal'. Meanwhile, biological anthropologist Helen Fisher translates the surges in areas of the brain rich in dopamine as the feeling of 'someone camping out in your head'.

Swipe right for love.

What is the nature / relevance of love in the age of information?

We invite **accounts of** love in literature, film, art, music and/or performance. You may wish to present, perform or create your response.

We also invite you to **account for** love from the perspectives of critical theory, the social sciences and / or history.

Areas of focus might include but are not limited to:
• The Encounter
• Ageing love
• Dating apps
• Different types of love; agape, eros, philia etc.

- Digital transformation of intimacy
- Love at first sight
- LGBTQIA+ love
- The line between love and hate
- Unrequited love
- Unconditional love
- Love hurts
- Love and politics
- Self-love
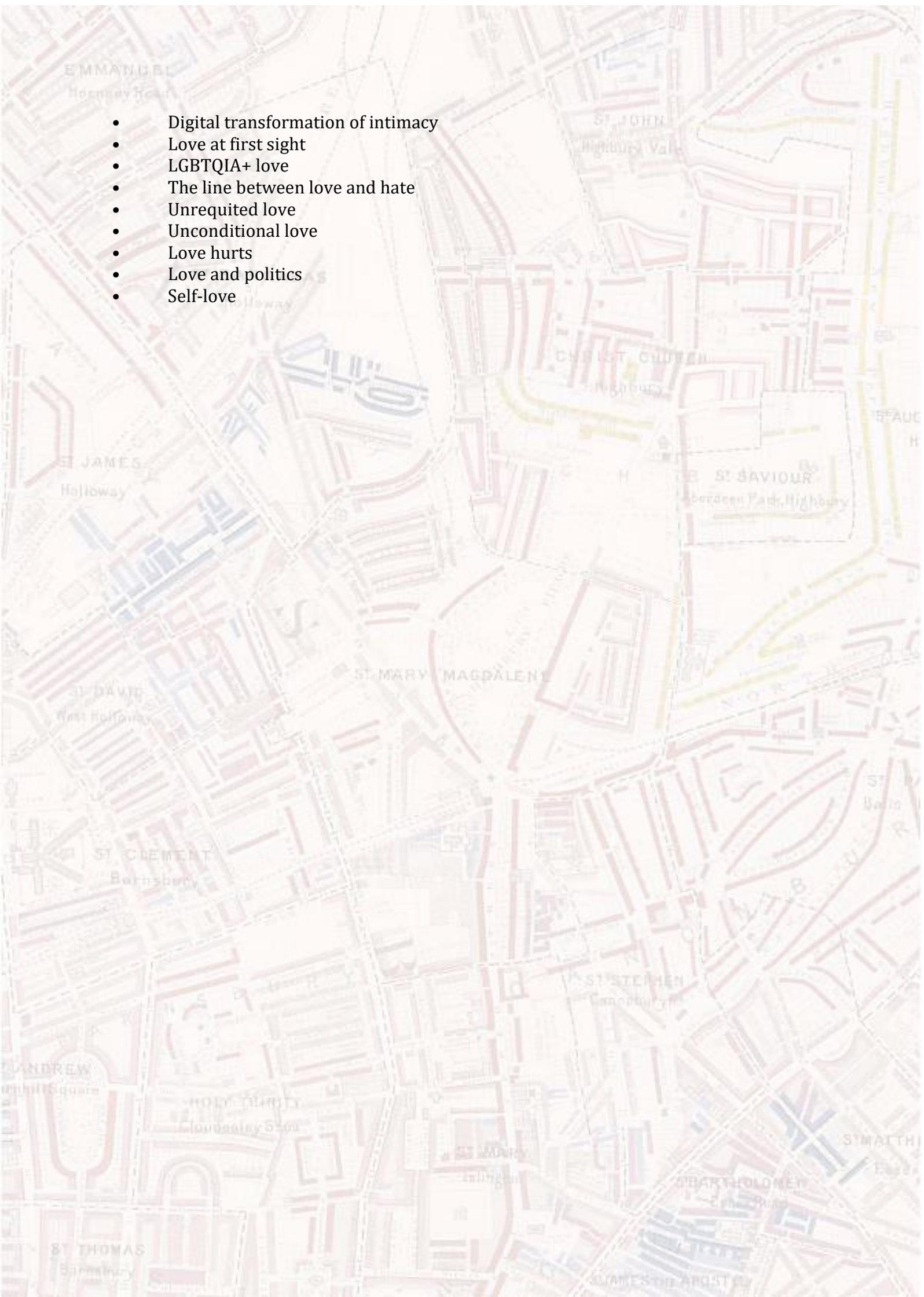
The measurement and surveillance of practice: Critical conversations and possibilities for resistance

Stream Organiser: Tania de St Croix

Impact measurement, outcomes-based performance management, target and audit cultures, social value, datafication... These distinct yet overlapping concepts have a growing significance for workers in public, voluntary, community and arts sectors, both in the UK and internationally. Shaped by a political and economic context characterised by neoliberalism, conservatism and white supremacy, practitioners and communities are experiencing increasingly complex levels of governance alongside the effects of austerity. The measurement of work and community benefit can be reductive and unethical, distorting practices, undermining professional judgement and artistic expression, and enabling the surveillance of workers and community members (Incite!, 2007; Ball, 2003; Lowe, 2013). Such practices of surveillance, othering and measurement are rooted in histories of oppression, eugenics, colonialism and social control; thus, their effects are felt disproportionately by oppressed and minoritized groups (Khan, 2013; Merry, 2011; Baldridge, 2019).

This stream aims to bring together researchers, practitioners, professionals, volunteers, activists and members of communities affected by what has been identified as 'the tyranny of metrics' (Muller, 2018). It aims to identify and share common challenges, how we respond, and how we might resist. It is an opportunity to think together beyond the boundaries of professions, research disciplines and the academic-public divide. Ideas on any of the following questions, or other relevant themes (including progressive critiques of the above analysis), are warmly welcomed:

- What does datafication look like in settings you are familiar with? (E.g. education, health, social care, social work, youth and community work, the arts, activism, others?)
- How does measurement shape or restrict work / professional practice / artistic expression / volunteering?
- Which groups or populations are most affected by datafication?
- How does measurement reinforce / disrupt persistent issues such as paternalism, deficit models and 'child saving' / do-gooder complexes?
- What are the consequences of measurement or datafication e.g. in terms of who takes part and who is excluded; who and what is legitimised as a professional in these settings; data burden and bureaucratisation; which practices are funded or not?
- What kinds of gaming and fabrication are used to meet targets or maximise outcomes?
- What forms of resistance and rebellion exist or might exist in relation to these issues?
- How do or can metrics reproduce or disrupt oppressive practices?
- What are the implications of econometric evaluation of services ('social return on investment', 'social value')?
- What are the issues around measuring previously 'un-measurable' concepts such as happiness and wellbeing?
- What is the role of technology?
- What are the surveillance implications of measurement and why does it matter?
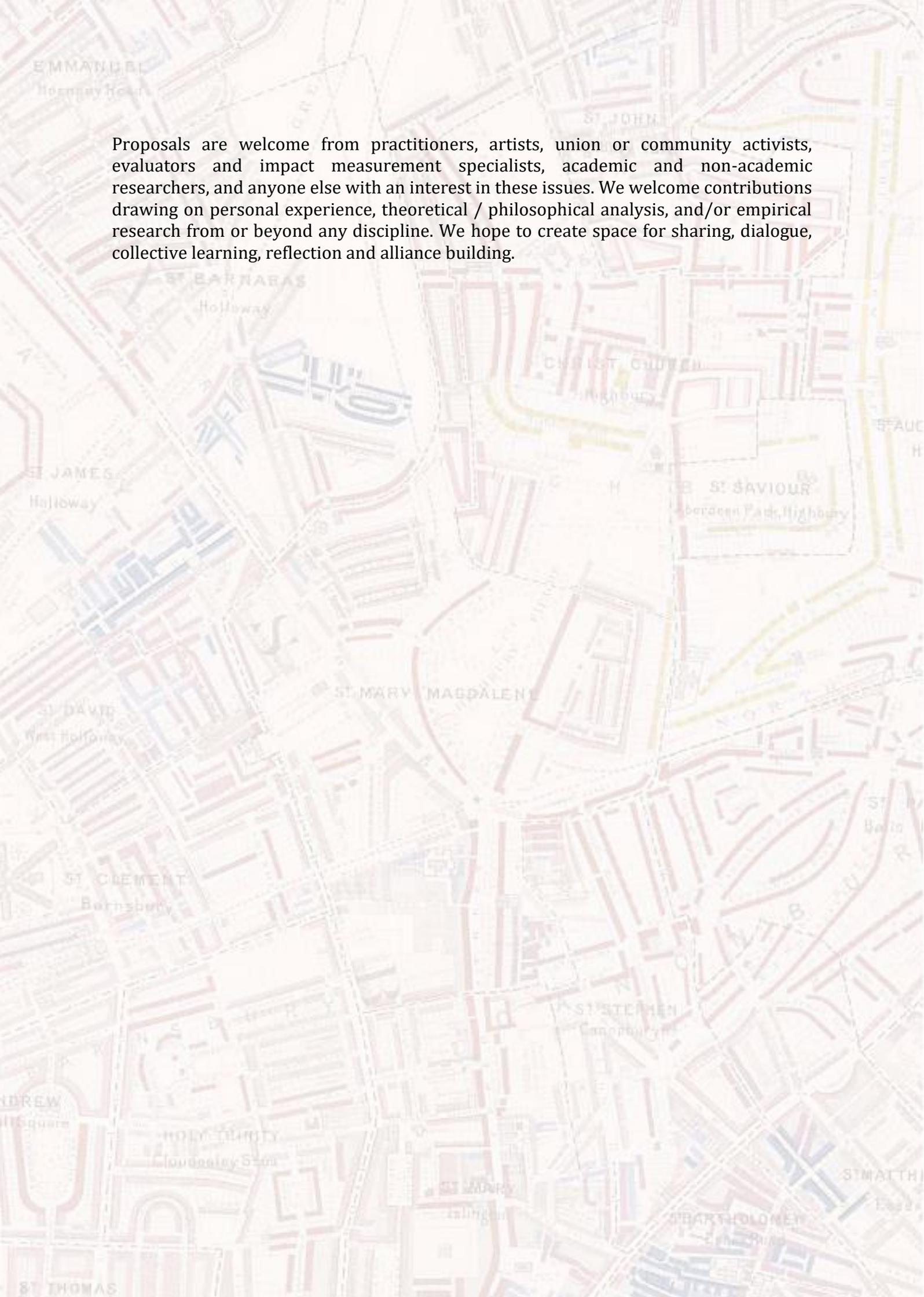
Proposals are welcome from practitioners, artists, union or community activists, evaluators and impact measurement specialists, academic and non-academic researchers, and anyone else with an interest in these issues. We welcome contributions drawing on personal experience, theoretical / philosophical analysis, and/or empirical research from or beyond any discipline. We hope to create space for sharing, dialogue, collective learning, reflection and alliance building.

Monstrosity in the Capitalocene

Stream Organiser: Katharina Donn

Karl Marx peopled the 'Capital' with monsters; the live-sucking vampire served him as a suitable metaphor for a capitalism he described to be dripping with blood. In critical thought, such figurations of the monstrous have been shape-shifting ever since, as the energy of Donna Haraway's joyfully blaspheming cyborgs rivals the zombie's death-driven "allegory for the inner logic of capitalism" (Steven Shaviro). This stream is interested in the ambivalence of the monster, which is attuned to destruction and re-birth simultaneously, and can mark a wasteland or an untameable energy alike. Irreverent of human boundaries, its disobedient nature might help us address the current moment of a doubled economic and ecological breakdown. This stream invites theorists and practitioners to explore what such monstrosities, both in their material and metaphorical form, might entail in the 21st century.

Proposals can take the form of performances, artistic artefacts or papers, and might consider questions including the following:

- Does the human need to be monstrous in order to survive? Can the monstrous demonstrate a future vision for the human in a biopolitical sense?
- How do feminist and queer practices re-claim and re-define the monstrous?
- A century and a half after Karl Marx, does the monstrous still offer provocative figurations in economic or political thought?
- What ethical challenges can the idea of the monstrous expose in the field of AI or genetic engineering?
- Can the hybridity and multi-species minglings of the monstrous help negotiate the relation between culture ecology and environmentalism?
- How have literary and aesthetic figurations of the monstrous transformed and transgressed generic boundaries?
- What do the monstrous urban spaces of the post-metropolis suggest about human life in the Capitalocene?

Something about stickiness

Stream Organisers: Rowan Lear & Harshavardhan Bhat

Anxiety is sticky: rather like Velcro, it tends to pick up whatever comes near. Or we could say that anxiety gives us a certain kind of angle on what comes near. (Ahmed, 2010)

What makes things sticky, why do bodies get stuck, and how might we imagine stickiness itself as a form of worlding – an active, embodied praxis of constituting a world? What do qualities of stickiness, moisture, viscosity, residue, grease and slime offer in the excavation of bodies, technologies, temporalities, ecologies, imperial and colonial mechanisms, sensual and affective realities, and Anthropocen(e)tric thinking? Following Lethabo King (2019), how might the sediment slow the navigation of the vessel? This stream is concerned with materialities, philosophies and narratives of interconnection, emergence, resistance and becoming.

Our digital devices are polished smooth, their residue clings to the lungs of factory workers, while our eyes and fingers adhere ever more firmly to screens. Plantations globalise as a sticky logic of biomes and extractive economics. Toxic airs and polluted waters flood endocrine systems with leaky, mucal and disruptive effects. As Murphy (2017) writes "With each inhalation, the extensive relations of finance capital are pulled into your lungs, passing through membranes, attaching to receptors, rearranging metabolism, altering gene expression."

Affective atmospheres are heavy, viscous: the residue of encounters with racism, sexism and class violence cling unevenly to certain bodies. Fieldwork reminds us that situated living is situated resistance – the labour of research and art production is ripe with the vulnerability of becoming-sticky, gathering information, telling stories, asking questions and performing otherwise. What does stickiness have to do with the textures of our knowledge? The materials of our fabrications? The financing of our movements? The complicity of our becoming?

Our invitation is to think, breathe, make and sense with stickiness. It is a call to attend to the changing textures of our natureculture and/or mingle with the milieu of matter and life. How do we stay with the slimy, the viscous, the mucal and the murky?

We invite papers, provocations, artistic interventions, performance lectures, video works and readings that are attentive and sensitive to forms of stickiness. Proposals may emerge from one or many or between disciplines. Potential subjects could include (but are not limited to):

- Bodies of water, sediment and hydrofeminist politics
- Climatic, weather and monsoonal worldings
- Air particulate, breath and breaches of the body
- Affective atmospheres and the stickiness of emotion
- Technological habits, addiction and attachments
- Allergy, inflammation, sweat, discharge and mucus
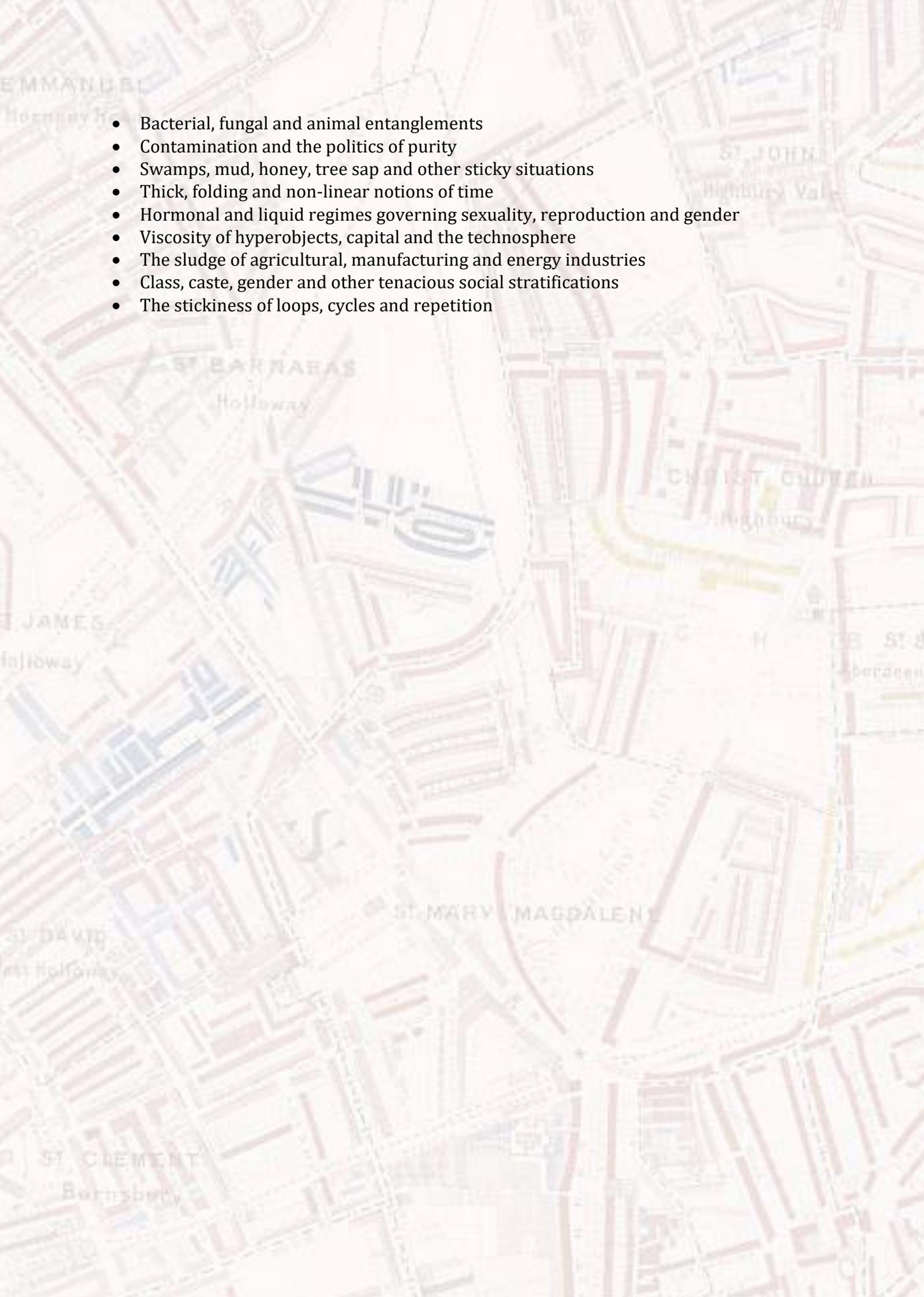
- Bacterial, fungal and animal entanglements
- Contamination and the politics of purity
- Swamps, mud, honey, tree sap and other sticky situations
- Thick, folding and non-linear notions of time
- Hormonal and liquid regimes governing sexuality, reproduction and gender
- Viscosity of hyperobjects, capital and the technosphere
- The sludge of agricultural, manufacturing and energy industries
- Class, caste, gender and other tenacious social stratifications
- The stickiness of loops, cycles and repetition

The university reimagined and speculative pedagogies of hope

Stream Organiser: Ana Baeza-Ruiz

As long as I fight I am moved by hope: and if I fight with hope then I can wait.
Paulo Freire (2017 [1970]) Pedagogy of the oppressed, p. 65.

In the current neoliberal model of higher education, the disciplining effects of the market are notable: the trebling of tuition fees pits institutions as fierce competitors against each other and students are made to operate according to a logic of private consumption (Temple 2016; Nixon 2012: 7). In this context, educational labour is increasingly subject to mechanisms of surveillance, imposing discursive closure over knowledge production in ways that threaten independence of thought and creative freedom. Among many educators, hopelessness has instituted itself as a modus operandi on the face of a system that performs, as Spivak argues, an 'incessant recoding of diversified fields of value' for what sells (Spivak 2009: 67), and a co-opting of potentially transgressive agendas. However, Spivak also posits that 'the teacher, while operating within the institution, can foster the emergence of a committed collectivity by not making her institutional commitment invisible: outside in the teaching-machine' (331). This stream takes this cue to ask how we might activate 'hope' politically and collectively to generate counter-hegemonic ways of thinking and doing education at the university.

Hope has been a grounding concept in radical pedagogies in the Global South and the USA (Freire 2017 [1973]; bell hooks 1994, 2003, 2010), and more recently has been taken up in an English-speaking UK context to query the university qua institution (Amsler 2016). Common to these pedagogical propositions is the positing of hope as a place of epistemological incompleteness and possibility, in which educators and students engage in social and political struggle towards the transformation of subjectivities. Given the ubiquitous 'crisis' of higher education, where the grounds of consensus over its constitutive nature are shifting, resisted, and problematized, the stream invites proposals for radical imaginaries of what the university 'could be' in dialogue with such pedagogies of hope. In this regard, concrete utopias can offer sites 'for learning and practices of hope on the edge of what is yet not possible' (Amsler 2016: 21). This pursuit involves as much the unlearning of hegemonic praxis and thought (Amsler 2016: 20), as the configuration and production of desire for what could come (Martin add ref). The stream seeks to bring together speculative and creative re-imaginings of pedagogical epistemologies that are 'not yet' as part of a rethinking and re-articulation of the university.

Importantly, the stream will draw theory and practice together, following the tradition of bell hooks and others wherein the classroom is conceptualised and activated as a dynamic place 'where transformations in social relations are concretely actualized and the false dichotomy between the world outside and the inside world of the academy disappears' (hooks 1994: 195). Concrete examples of educational practice as theory-making are particularly welcome, both from within and outside the university. Although the over-arching theme is 'hope', it is understood that proposals may engage in related debates to address the socio-political urgency of transforming university spaces. Such areas may include, but are not limited to:

- decolonisation and positionality
- politics of resistance and refusal
- discomforts in the classroom
- feminisms, collectivities and solidarity

References

Amsler, S. (2016). Learning Hope. An epistemology of possibility for advanced capitalist society. In Social Sciences for an Other Politics (pp. 19-32). Palgrave Macmillan.

Freire, P. (2017 [1970]). Pedagogy of the oppressed. Penguin.

hooks, b. (2010). Teaching critical thinking: practical wisdom. New York and London: Routledge.

hooks, b. (2003). Teaching community a pedagogy of hope. New York: Routledge.

hooks, b. (1994). Teaching to transgress. Routledge.

Nixon, J. (2012). Interpretive pedagogies for higher education: Arendt, Berger, Said, Nussbaum and their legacies. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Spivak, G. C. (2009). Outside in the Teaching Machine. London: Routledge.

Temple, P. (2016). The idea of the market in financing English higher education. In Barnett, R., Temple, P., & Scott, P. Valuing Higher Education: An Appreciation of the Work of Gareth Williams. Trentham Books. Available from: IOE Press, Institute of Education, London.

Veganism: Philosophy or Fad? Making sense of old and new understandings of human-animal relations

Stream Organiser: Sarah Burton

Since the 1950s, the Vegan Society in the UK has held the following definition for veganism: "A philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude—as far as is possible and practicable—all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of animals, humans and the environment. In dietary terms it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals." (The Vegan Society, 2020).

Veganism as identity, practice, and way of life has been in existence for thousands of years dating back to Pythagoras' time in 500 BCE where advocation for vegetarianism was first mentioned. Throughout history philosophers, activists, journalists, and lay people alike have debated to greater and lesser extents with the concept of vegetarianism/veganism, particularly on the principles of 'harm', 'subject', 'the other', and speciesism (Mill, 1859; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Derrida, 1991; Haraway, 2008). Scholars have continued developing these seminal works and drawn links between patriarchy, masculinity, and meat eating (Potts and Parry, 2010; Adams, 2015). Adams (2015), for instance, argues that dietary habits proclaim patriarchal and class distinctions and, as a result, "a mythology permeates all classes that meat is a masculine food and meat eating is a male activity" (Adams, 2015: 4). Similarly, Potts and Parry (2010) have explored the newly emerging concept of 'vegan sexuality' and conclude that this phenomenon "strongly suggests that the politics of sexuality, gender, ethical consumption and human-animal relations will continue to be increasingly intimately related in the future" (Potts and Parry, 2010: 65).

Furthermore, empirical research studies have been carried out with vegetarian and vegan communities exploring the nature of 'identity' and the 'self' in an attempt to gain insight into how we make sense of and navigate our sense of self in everyday becomings (see: Beardsworth et al, 1992; Jabs et al, 2000; Larsson et al, 2003; Mendes, 2013; Aavik, 2019). Whilst these empirical research studies have provided valuable insights into the lived experiences of vegan identities, there is much more to be done in the way of drawing together the ontological and epistemological standpoints that underpin veganism as a philosophical position and the manifestations of vegan-becoming in contemporary society.

We do well to ask ourselves: How have the ethical and moral standpoints of veganism shifted or adapted to new and emerging socio-political trends and discourse? What would a shift towards a vegan methodology look like and how would that challenge the way we currently re/produce knowledge? What would be the outcomes and impact of this?

This stream welcomes submissions that critically engage with the philosophical, social, political, economic, and environmental issues and debates around veganism. Presenters are encouraged to consider more interactive forms of presentation methods. Proposals for this stream include, but are not limited to:

- Veganism and identity
- Vegan methodologies
- Critical Animal Studies
- Food and consumption
- Veganism and social divisions