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Neoliberalism and Everyday Life

Abstracts

Aisha Ahmad, Brunel University, UK

Laura Harvey, University of Surrey, UK

'The only thing that stops you from achieving your dreams is you': young people's aspirations and celebrity culture

This paper explores the stories that young people tell about their aspirations and imagined futures at a time of deepening inequalities in education and the labour market, and rising uncertainty and precarity characterising young lives. Specifically, we examine how neoliberal discourses of individualism, self-responsibility and enterprise feature in young people's everyday talk about 'success' and 'failure'. Our analysis draws on interview data from an ESRC-funded two-year study of 'The role of celebrity in young people's classed and gendered aspirations'. This study involves analysis of 24 group interviews and 51 individual interviews with young people in six schools in England alongside data drawn from 12 textual case studies of celebrities' media representation. We take a discursive approach to analyse how young people talk about their hopes for the future, identifying patterns and contradictions in how they spoke about 'good' and 'bad' aspirations.

Our paper highlights the pervasiveness of neoliberal discourses of individualism and meritocracy. At a time when politicians decry a 'poverty of aspirations' among British youth, we found that the young people we spoke with had many dreams, from hopes for family and friendship, to careers and travel. Our paper takes a critical lens on how young people see themselves as agents in achieving those dreams, arguing that narratives of self-discipline and hard work ran through the data, while questions of structural inequality and material barriers to their imagined future lives were very often absent.

We explore the powerful emotional nature of such discourses of self-reliance and 'striving' in the young people's accounts, exploring their relationship to individual and family biographies, as well as contemporary stories in celebrity culture. Situating our analysis in the wider context of economic crisis, high youth unemployment and rhetorics of austerity, we critically reflect on what these stories open up and close down for young people as they transition into adulthood.

Cathy Bergin, University of Brighton, UK

Patricia McManus, University of Brighton, UK

The politicisation of everyday life

“The Personal is Political” was the clarion call of second wave feminism, a demand which attempted not only to politicise the domestic and ‘intimate’ sphere but to transform the concept of what counts as politics at all. This paper addresses how the logic of neoliberalism fetishizes the subject, whilst eschewing the conditions and effects of, power . It is thus interested in how identity is made (or unmade) within the realm of subjectivity in ways that demand a very particular type of female subject, a subject framed within the paradigm of personal responsibility. How has the feminist subject been subsumed by, and transformed into, the self-governing agent par excellence?

Clare Birchall, King's College London, UK

Between transparency and surveillance: The neoliberal data subject

Thanks to Edward Snowden, we now know that the same US administration that declared it would be ‘the most open and transparent in history’ has authorised covert mining of communications data and metadata of nationals and non-nationals. But it would be a mistake to frame this contradiction only in terms of the balance between the privacy of citizens and national security. What is new here is the way that data storage and delivery technologies change the very relationship between citizen and state.

The data-driven transparency instituted by various governments around the globe - works by outsourcing responsibility. It makes ‘big data’ available and supports its dissemination, but then steps back, asking citizens to take responsibility not only for auditing and monitoring the transactions of the state, but also for making open data productive and profitable. This reliance upon (big) data provision in the realisation of open government and the democratic contract turns ‘citizen’ into a neoliberal data subject.

But as the case of the NSA’s dataveillance shows, there is a shadow side. Citizens themselves become configured as data-sets. Now the citizen as data subject doubles as data object, valuable for the information s/he will contribute to the standard within the monitored flow of metadata. Data objects are organised by degrees of deviance from a norm and the small part they play within pattern recognition. In this scenario, it is not access to data that matters, but *reduction* to data.

As such, the contradiction between data subject and data object both incorporates and surpasses the traditional contradiction between individual liberty and state security. In essence, we are describing the power of technology not simply to provide challenges to (or solutions for) politics, but to fundamentally distort the political field and change its contracts, terms of reference and relationships in the service of neoliberalism.

Julia Boll, University of Konstanz, Germany

'Though we were blind we knew the curse would come': Jelinek and the crisis

Austrian playwright Elfriede Jelinek's play *Aber sicher!* (*For Sure!*), which premiered at Theater Bremen in 2013, uses Sophokles' tragedy *Oedipus the King* as the solemn bass line for a fierce and scathing mockery of a society that finds itself at the centre of a global financial crisis. Jelinek describes a modern city which, like Thebes, is threatened by a curse, but whose citizens are convinced that they cannot be held responsible – after all, 'nobody could anticipate that we would need a seer to protect us'. In this paper, I will show how Jelinek traces a crisis heading towards a total catastrophe that did not happen in the end, because the ruins of the financial crash generated massive assets yet again. Reading the financial and economic crunch as a systemic crisis permeating the whole of society, Jelinek's play portrays the entanglement of debt, greed, dependencies and guilt as a formless monster, constantly regrouping like the chorus on the stage of the Bremen production, at times composed of blind seers, representatives of the finance sector, or of the unwitting ordinary victims of the crisis. A modern mystery play tracking our quasi-theocratic relationship to the banking sector, *Aber sicher!* also proves to be an author's furious attempt to write at high speed against society's total collapse.

Catherine Boyle, London South Bank University, UK

Steve Freeman, London South Bank University, UK

Phil Vellender, London South Bank University, UK

The Crown, neoliberalism and the end of the social monarchy

This paper examines the impact of neoliberalism on the politics of the UK in an historical and cultural context. Neoliberalism is often seen primarily as an economic policy. Our aim here is to consider it in terms of the development of political-economy. We will begin with the concept of 'Social Monarchy' as represented by the political economy in Britain from approximately 1940-1984.

Currently we are in a post-'Social Monarchy' age in which the 1945 'social contract' is being rapidly dismantled. This process stems partly from globalisation, but also from the adoption by the 'Crown' of neoliberal ideology and the failure of UK parliamentary democracy to protect its citizens, Her Majesty's 'subjects', from the fierce winds of change that have blown in from across the Atlantic. None of this recent change could have occurred without the shift in the balance of power between organised labour and corporate capital in the 1980s.

This paper first explores the concept of 'Social Monarchy' and then the significance of the 'Crown', as remade in the 17th century. Next, it considers the origins of neoliberalism in the 'anarcho-capitalism' developing at the time of the industrial and French revolutions and these revolutions' impact on republican thinking as expressed in the poetry of Burns, Shelley and Keats. It will be suggested that in this poetry resides the inspiration for a new politics. The panel concludes by further suggesting that the culture and

political economy of the last 300 years is closely connected to the British political situation in the days before the Scottish referendum.

Jane Brake, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

John van Aitken, University of Central Lancashire, UK

All materials of value have been removed: everyday cleansing in the neoliberal social housing environment

John van Aitken and Jane Brake have conducted fieldwork in a Salford (UK) housing estate since 2004. The estate has been subject to multiple processes of disinvestment, ruination, displacement and gentrification, which can be seen to characterize the neoliberal housing regime. Aitken and Brake have an extensive collection of materials related to the regeneration process of the estate, produced through embodied, visual and experimental methods. Drawing on this research they present a performative multimedia lexicon of materials, techniques and processes observed in the context of the redevelopment of the estate. Analysis exposes the way a conversation about displacement, unwanted subjects, architectural and social cleansing is activated and sustained through signage, hoardings, rubble, rubbish, notices, mark making etc.

Bob Brecher, University of Brighton, UK

Neoliberalism and everyday life

This talk is not a scholarly analysis. What I try to do is something different from that, though something which is intimately connected with scholarly concerns: namely to draw attention to aspects of “our” everyday lives that all too often and all too easily go unremarked because “we” have become so thoroughly imbued with a neoliberal consciousness that we all too easily fail to notice what is in plain sight – whether literally or metaphorically. In bringing the real world into philosophy in this way, I want to raise (though not in the talk directly to address) two things at once, two issues that I think are in the end two aspects of the same issue: first, the role of philosophers; and second, the question of what is to be done.

Having set the neoliberal scene, I shall take you for an imaginary stroll around a bit of Brighton, pointing out about what we might see the ways in which it instantiates the rapacious social Darwinism that characterises neoliberalism and inviting your observations.

Rinella Cere, Sheffield Hallam University, UK

The construction of a "common sense": hegemonic discourses of austerity and public spending cuts

Most of the media have bought the argument that some form of public sector cuts is necessary and unavoidable. From the election of the present coalition government to now, the discourse in the mainstream media and the public sphere at large has proposed that cuts are necessary to get the country on an even keel. In this process a separation has taken place between the trillion spent on bailing out failing banks and the trillion which constitutes the so called national debt. People living in Britain are asked to make 'sacrifices', ('we are all in it together') by governing politicians as well as most of the dominant media, in order to bring down a debt not of their making. This has transformed into a discourse of 'national' obligation, which the propaganda about banker's bonuses and the necessity for them to hand them back (supposedly to make sacrifices along with us), has masked further. This paper will look at examples from the media and look at whether this capitalist hegemonic strategy and 'common sense' construction of austerity is succeeding in persuading working people to consent to a neoliberal system which reinforces and continues their oppression.

Claudia Kappenberg, University of Brighton, UK

All human beings are born useless and equal in uselessness

This paper is an artist's response to the question of resistance against neoliberalism as well as an almost serious attempt to pave the way for a post-neoliberal future.

The paper is delivered as a speech and performed in costume. The speech is based on a publication by Nuccio Ordine (2013), which traces the history of the debates on use and uselessness through a selection of quotes from the realms of philosophy and literature. The speaker, an orator in the guise of a garden gnome, draws on this history as well as the Universal Declaration of the Human Right to make a claim for the human right to uselessness.

In *Darwin's Worms* (1999) Adam Philips writes: "Nature is astonishingly prolific, a prodigal process going nowhere special, sponsored by destruction and suffering." This abundance and wastefulness is today the opposite of Western, neoliberal market economies which dominate much of our lives. In these systems everything is put into the service of production and accumulation of wealth, and only the useful appears to have value. This is however not a just a postmodern condition and a critical philosophical debate on the construct of usefulness goes back as far as Aristotle. In 1963 Heidegger wrote: "That which is most useful, is the useless. But to experience the useless is today for man the most difficult thing." A large part of us is "owned by money", writes Nuccio Ordine in 2013, but the useless is that which renders us more human. This performative intervention plays with the notion of uselessness on several levels, making 'use' of Art as a space which functions according to its own paradigms; as French philosopher Catherine Clément argues, Art is a sphere in which uselessness is still possible, a space for the modern worn out individual to get lost, to recover and explore.

Nicola Clewer, University of Brighton, UK

Memorials and neoliberalism?

Monuments and memorials have traditionally been thought of and utilized as means of, among other things, attempting to instil and reaffirm shared identities, and even forms of solidarity, usually within a national, and indeed nationalist, framework. How then do we begin to think about the renaissance in monument building in the West which has accompanied the rise of neoliberalism since the early 1980s? If we think of neoliberalism as a political rationality which seeks to reconfigure all aspects of social life in conformity with the logic of the market and to interpellate atomized, entrepreneurial and self-regarding subjects, we might question the idea that symbolic structures which seek to bring people together have anything to do with it. Indeed, we might even go so far as to argue that within this context public memorials may act as important sites of “mourning” or even of resistance which exist, if not in opposition to, then perhaps uncomfortably alongside, neoliberalism.

Focusing on two recent large-scale national memorial projects – the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin and the National September 11th Memorial in New York – this paper seeks to situate contemporary memorial forms and discourses in relation to the current neoliberal conjuncture. The increasing commercialization of memorial spaces is an obvious if nevertheless important aspect of any such analysis. It is not, however, the end, or even the most interesting or significant part, of the story. While others have suggested that we now live in an era of ideologically neutral monuments which are non-nationalistic and non-didactic, I argue that we need to look behind the pluralistic and therapeutic language which is used to describe these memorials to uncover the ways in which they function ideologically within a neoliberal context. In so doing, I suggest that we might find that we need to rethink some commonly held assumptions about the nature not only of memorials but also of neoliberalism itself.

Peter Conlin, Independent Scholar, UK

Hidden in plain sight: journeys to the generic edge of neoliberalism

The starting point for the paper is to understand the neoliberal everyday through an examination of the built environment and the experience of the city drawing in both socio-economic structures and subjective experience. Although neoliberal practices are certainly exemplified by gentrification and starchitect monuments, my paper will explore neoliberalism in default constructions such as warehouses and Travelodge Hotels—particularly in areas around airports, industrial parks and strip malls on the edges of urban areas. In fact such mundane constructions comprise a large portion of the city, and in their nondescriptness and integration with everyday experience, offer insights into the way neoliberal common sense melds into what is numbingly familiar and ostensibly neutral. It is these plays of visibility/disappearance that make these sites intensely ideological and an important object of scrutiny.

Utility structures in suburban sites are frequently excluded from aesthetic consideration due to their blandness, and yet are given special interest by certain avant-gardist traditions perhaps for the very reason of lying outside the purview of serious architecture and beyond the bounds of classical metropolitan space. These non-descript zones have drawn interest from the Surrealists to contemporary artists, and we could add to this the seemingly endless pilgrimages to the mundane edgeland by gothic-Marxists and psychographers in the vein of Patrick Keiller and Iain Sinclair. But how can the nature and perverse allure of such areas be specified in the context of neoliberalism?

My paper will draw on field observations from the urban periphery in Birmingham and use this to interrogate two particularly strong theorizations of contemporary generic urbanism: anthropologist Marc Augés' concept of non-place and architect and urban theorist Rem Koolhaas' writings on junkspace. Beyond their descriptions of anticipatory solitude or the implosion of architectural purpose, generic urbanism reveals how neoliberalism is routinized and points to the necessity of making ordinary culture a site of contestation.

Lars Cornelissen, University of Brighton, UK

"The finest of neoliberalisms tricks." Why neoliberalism and democracy are wholly incompatible

Neoliberalism has quite successfully persuaded the Western world that it is a theory closely allied to democracy. Not only is the imperialist project to spread neoliberal ideology all over the globe hailed as the triumphant march of democracy, but growing inequalities, rule by corporate and financial elites, and the profound financialisation of the political are similarly justified through democratic discourse.

I will venture the thesis that not only is neoliberalism not as compatible with democracy as it claims to be, but that these two are, in fact, wholly incompatible. I will argue that even if we acknowledge that democracy is a 'floating signifier', any *meaningful* definition of the term 'democracy' will inherently conflict with neoliberal theory or practice. I will provide three arguments to make my case.

1. Drawing from Naomi Klein I will argue that historically speaking, neoliberal reforms across the globe have always required either a suspension of democratic processes and institutions or a significant decrease in public political awareness. Indeed, this strategy of suspending democracy forms the very core of what has become known as the doctrine of 'shock and awe'.

2. Drawing from both Michel Foucault and Wendy Brown I will argue that neoliberalism's conception of the subject as *homo oeconomicus* ultimately leaves no room for a conception of the subject as *homo politicus*. This in turn makes the concept of the '*dèmos*' conceptually void.

3. I will argue that neoliberalism's epistemological doctrine, which can be traced to Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, precludes any meaningful conception of popular sovereignty, because it holds that human beings are inadvertently ignorant of the results of their (collective) actions. It follows that policy-making should not rest with the people, but with markets or, in some cases, economists.

In closing I will reflect briefly on some of the more serious implications of said incompatibility.

Susan Curvers, University for Humanistic Studies in Utrecht, The Netherlands

Corporate power and the influence of citizens in political making processes

This paper reports an explorative study into the criticism towards increasing corporate power, and the opportunities citizens have, individually or as a group, to influence decisions made by formal political institutions. Aim of this research was to theorize about the possible impact of increasing corporate power on citizens opportunities for political influence on a national and international level. Equal opportunity for political influence is a democratic ideal inherited from John Stuart Mills ideas on sovereignty which can be used to look at the impact of rising corporate power on the political influence of citizens. An exploration was made of the criticism toward growing corporate power in a preliminary fashion, using the analyses of three authors on the topic of rising corporate power, Crouch (2004, 2013), Beder (2008) and Goodson & Schostak (2012). These authors worry about the development of 'post-democracy' and 'the inversion of democracy' as a result of privatization and deregulation. The hollowing out of government through privatization and contracting-out, leads to a hollowing out of democracy and a diminution of the capacity of citizens to influence the public sphere in a political way. In their everyday life citizens no longer enjoy the same opportunities to influence the public sphere as they used to. Citizens move outside of the political sphere in search of influence, creating cooperations and self-help groups to address issues of equality and sustainability, creating internet platforms to address issues of justice and freedom, and using their power as consumers to address issues in the marketplace. In their everyday life people have to find new ways to deal with the empty spaces left behind by a retreating government and the growing power of business interests, if they want to enjoy any sense of influence in the public domain. The moving outside of the political realm is a symptom of a failing democracy, where the interest of the people is no longer represented in government.

Sybillie De La Rosa, Heidelberg University, Germany

Ahistorical knowledge and neoliberal principles of education and research

The goal of the paper will be to reflect on the incentives produced by neoliberal policies that strengthen an ahistorical understanding of political science in general and political theory in particular, which then will be critically reflected by Gramsci's thoughts on the historicity of political thinking.

I will distinguish between policies like the bologna process, which affects academic teaching, and the "Exzellenzinitiative", a program designed to strengthen German research.

The bologna process has lead to changes in the curricular design insofar as the freedom of choice in courses and topics was limited. Before, courses could be arranged by the students according to their interests, and therefore according to their individual learning process. Now the first semesters are characterized by introductions that strive to impart canonical knowledge to all students, knowledge that is rarely questioned.

The Exzellenzinitiative and the policies of research funding affect research in political science insofar as they generate financial incentives to adjust research interests towards topics that are “of use”, which often means that they are of a certain political utility, which generate facts and data that can be used in the public debate. At the same time the “Exzellenzinitiative” pressed the need to define criteria of excellence which then became the criteria with which administrative bodies of the university started to evaluate the members of the faculties and departments. These criteria have been oriented towards the natural sciences. These changes might have been less effective, if the self understanding of political science was rooted in the humanities, but in order to increase its reputation many political scientists developed a self understanding which situates their work in social sciences and connects their work to the ideal of the production of objective and ahistorical knowledge.

With Gramsci it can be shown how these hegemonic procedures exclude other forms of knowledge production like hermeneutical or discursive analysis; and at the same time solidify hegemony with the claim to produce objective and ahistorical knowledge.

This form of exclusion makes it even more difficult for subaltern positions to have an impact on academic research (like critical refugee research). But an effective counter-hegemonic movement strongly depends on a vocabulary that explains the effects of exclusion and alternative practices.

Mark Devenney, University of Brighton, UK

Thinking a post-foundational politics: The improper politics of Occupy London

This paper uses the example of Occupy London, as a means for investigating what I term an improper politics. Drawing on Derrida and Ranciere I contend that a post-foundationalist account of neo-liberalism must come to terms with the articulated totality within which the production and reproduction of lives is organized. Such an account maps the relations between political reason (deliberative practices in the public sphere); productive and reproductive relations (or discursive materiality); the distribution of violence and its legitimation to maintain this order (perhaps best analysed in Schmitt’s account of the exception); the repressed that is expressed only symptomatically but which as the indirect representative of that order does not challenge it; and, last, the potential for a different order which cannot be recognized within an existing order. A post-foundationalist account challenges this stipulation of the bounds of the proper in defending and giving voice to improper forms of politics. The notions of property and the proper may be related both in terms of etymology, and through a genealogical investigation, to debates concerning what is proper to being, or *ousia* the Greek term often translated as property. Taking at face value Derrida’s deconstruction of metaphysical accounts of being, I argue that an originary violence is parasitic upon any claim about what is proper to the self, and that this violence extends outwards to the things which can then be rendered as property. This ties questions of the proper to questions of politics in four senses: first, property is political insofar as it structures our relations to each other on unequal terms; second property is tied to a particular sense of propriety to forms of behaviour and conduct rendered natural, thus neutering protest; third, property is a contingent and violent ordering of our world. National and international laws of

property immunise political order from antagonistic conflict, but lurking below all property law is an unthought violence; last, what this account of property allows is to think 'being' and 'existence' in relation to the proper and property, giving an account of the over-determined complex within which the distinction between the phenomenal and the ideal is rethought without insisting on the prevalence of one or the other.

In contrast to this rendering proper of inequality I contend that democracy is always improper. I make this argument with reference to Occupy London from the perspective of the fact of occupation, and the laws used to regulate it. At stake here are rights over property, and the claim made by the Corporation of London to lawful possession of the highway. Reading the judgement in favour of the City of London Corporation we see a combination of straightforward claims to possession and a set of claims about the inappropriate nature of the occupation, given that it violated health and safety standards, caused crime, spread noise pollution, caused the spread of vermin, and made others feel unsafe in their public right to use the highway. The judge, very politely combines these two sets of issues - property and propriety - ruling that there has been a straightforward violation of rights to possession, as well as that the protest constitutes a public nuisance. He thus granted an order for possession to the city, combined with injunctive and declaratory relief. Their acts were improper in two radical senses: they laid claim to land, and they refused to recognise the sovereign authority of the law, forcing the authorities to negotiate with, and come to terms with their impropriety. However this challenge to the politics of the proper went even further in insisting that the City of London be subject to the same sovereign law as all other territory in the UK. The judge's ruling in effect makes explicit the extraordinary status of the City as an exception to the law, which is nonetheless preserved by the law. I investigate this antagonistic dispute through the lens of the key claims made above, namely that the proper forms of politics are contingent and violent, but immunise this contingency through legal and proprietary mechanisms.

Simidele Dosekun, King's College London, UK

Only girls to be empowered?: Neoliberal femininities in the global south

A growing body of feminist cultural and media scholarship concerns itself with 'postfeminism,' theorized as a neoliberal, mediated discourse that purports women's 'equality' and 'empowerment,' and that celebrates their individualist consumer choice. The scholarship has tended to understand postfeminism as following from Western feminist histories and addressing a white, middle-class subject. Thus the related tendency has been to see postfeminism in other contexts as derivative, if at all. For instance if 'girl power' is the rhetoric of postfeminism in the global North, some scholars have suggested that it translates in the global South to '*girls to be empowered*,' as girls and women are increasingly constructed as enterprising, indeed virtuous subjects of international development investment.

This paper critically reviews and extends such claims about neoliberal girlhood in the global South. It argues that the recuperation of feminism by neoliberal international development agendas has classed effects: it constructs class-disadvantaged girls as in need of putative empowerment, which allows the simultaneous positioning of class-privileged others as already empowered, that is able to partake of

postfeminism's commodified emancipations. Thus the paper argues that neoliberal postfeminism does in fact interpellate certain kinds of girls in the global South as its direct subjects. Supporting this argument with empirical examples from an ongoing research project on new, 'elite' femininities in Nigeria, the paper shows how such interpellation occurs via transnational consumer and media cultures in particular.

Nadia Edmond, University of Brighton, UK

Constructing the 'value' of HE: the performative use of 'equivalence' in the neoliberal university

This paper examines the performative use of 'equivalence' in constructing the 'value' of education. "As education is ever more treated as a commodity, its quantitative equivalence, how it is measured and exchanged, becomes its defining feature" (Brancaleone & O'Brien 2011). In the neoliberal university, the prioritising of 'employability' as key purpose reinforces both the function of education as producer of labour power and its commodification as a positional good whose value is, at least in part, a function of its 'sign' value. The 'value' of education is reduced to the access it gives to earnings through different combinations of positionality and labour power.

We show how, in the discourse of 'equivalence' in HE, learning and experience are converted into academic credit by means of technologies such as modularisation and learning outcomes through which certain experience acquires exchange value in academia and ultimately employment. The marketization of education requires differentiation of provision but the "equal but different" discourse of equivalence rests on claims of equality between different provision which serve to obfuscate distinctiveness and inherent inequality. 'Equivalent' provision may be not just different but, in important respects, unequal.

The way in which the neoliberal discourse positions students as 'consumers' (making choices, getting their 'money's worth') has been well documented. Here, we draw on Bourdieu's argument that 'academic devaluation' increases the significance of the individual's social and cultural capital resulting in the value of the graduate's labour being increasingly linked to their 'character'. Drawing on a range of texts (HE policy, course documentation and student union websites) we show how students are positioned as engaged in a process of 'commodification of the self' and encouraged to attend to the building of their 'brand' expressed through their CV in which university, course choices and attainment sit alongside 'experience' within a range of 'brand signifiers'.

Jeremy Evans, University of Brighton, UK

Beyond neoliberal marine planning; developing ecological knowledge and the inshore commons

While privatisation of the sea is encouraged by neoliberalism, through Individual Transferable Quotas (e.g. Mansfield, 2006) and by the World Bank (e.g. Campling, 2013), a hypothetical spatial division and privatisation of the seabed for corporations that would appear inevitable under neoliberal marine planning would be inadvisable. This sell off of the marine commons would decrease local community based

ownership and turn local fisher knowledge into a commodity. Enclosures of the seabed inshore and offshore would prevent access, and create spatially based intellectual property rights through bioprospecting over previously potentially educative ecosystems. Attempts to collect rented surplus from sea users would only encourage overexploitation through additional economic pressure. It may be more appropriate to understand through fisher knowledge of the seabed how co management can lead to the marinescape being held in common by the local communities that live within them such as seen with the TURFs of Chilean syndicates and Japanese cooperatives. With specific gear zoning based on co produced sea bed mapping, the most appropriate setting for multiple small Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)s rather than few large zones becomes more apparent. This zoning could additionally allow for the local co management of towed and static geared users in the local area using the TURF system, which would allow for the continued relationship within the local commons.

Carolyn Fahey, University of Colorado at Denver, USA

Stefan Koller, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

Urbanity and morality

Detroit is often mistakenly understood to have fallen as a result of the contentious and polarizing issues of racism, which are undoubtedly there. Yet, the city has been something of an economic vacuum due to unregulated corporatism and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Unregulated corporatism allowed the major centralized companies upholding the Detroit economy to freely follow cheaper labor markets, where NAFTA helped to expand the boundaries of the labor markets American corporations had access to. Detroit's major employers followed cheaper labor right out of Detroit and often times out of the state of Michigan entirely. Thus, racism or not, Detroit's fall is better attributed to the quickly shifting boundaries of the American, or North American, labor market propelled forward by the nascent ideas of neo-liberalism.

The Detroit of today is in full recovery mode, as redevelopment, new development, and demolition are in action. The recovery is not founded in heavy investment or new industry, but the result of local residents making the best of what they have. This often manifests in virtually penniless community groups working to secure their neighborhoods and grow food enough to insure everyone in their community has access enough to eat. What these sustained revitalization efforts suggest is that cities are not *essentially* dependent on centralized monetary structures. Debunking this common presupposition leaves open the question as to what role, if any, money must play in the being-ness of a city.

In *The City in History*, Lewis Mumford presents a moral account of urbanity's history, which presents the foundation of urban life as based not on the representations of exchange in monetary terms, but rather on exchange itself. Mumford describes urban life as founded on the sharing of security, food, labor, and ideas. It is not until the lead up to European colonialism that monetary exchange becomes a dominant means of delineating the exchange of goods and services, enabling perfect strangers to engage

in exchange. Attending to the manifestation of neo-liberalism further helps to broaden the boundaries of exchange limits by foregoing the boundaries and fiscal mechanisms of the nation-state.

Alternatively, the moral philosophy of Stanley Cavell, describes morality itself as a kind of exchange in which two people are in agreement with one another and in mutual understanding. For Cavell, everyday and ordinary morality is itself the basis of community. Taking this as the case, exchange requires prior agreement and understanding of the other, neither of which exist with the definitions of (and within the confines of) neo-liberal economics. Looking again to Detroit, a case can be made that the revitalization of the city is to a significant degree founded on the kinds of moral exchange the Mumford-Cavell account puts forward. The money-free exchange has given rise to communities supporting urban life, opening the possibility that we are under no obligation to categorically define worth and value in monetary terms. Not only does the Mumford-Cavell case for morality in urban life open the possibility of operating beyond neo-liberal economics, but it presents a means of resistance.

Hannah Frith, University of Brighton, UK

The Big 'O': Neoliberalism, postfeminism and orgasmic excellence in *Cosmopolitan* magazine

Exploring the construction of orgasm in *Cosmopolitan* magazine in the context of the shift towards a postfeminist sexuality and the neoliberal shift towards the rational management of sex as work, this paper argues that magazines offer a 'pedagogy of the body' by teaching women to develop mastery over their bodies in the pursuit of orgasmic excellence. While neoliberal imperatives to improve, manage, work on and perfect ourselves have permeated the intimate spaces of contemporary sexuality (Jackson and Scott 1997; Tyler 2004), I demonstrate that orgasm as a countable, measurable and culturally recognisable 'product' or 'endpoint' of sexual activity has become reified as the tangible marker of sexual success. Gill (2009) has illustrated how this working up and working over of sexuality dovetails with a postfeminist sensibility which positions women as active 'sexual adventurers' continually working to attain new pleasures and excitements. This paper explores how postfeminist, neoliberal and pedagogical discourses merge to offer explicit instruction to women in how to develop a 'technology of sexiness' by training the body to ensure orgasmic excellence. Negotiating the tension between addressing readers as knowledgeable sexual actors whilst offering sexual expertise, the magazine offers explicit instruction to women about: 1) becoming aware of their sensory body; 2) strengthening their muscles and mastering bodily responses; and 3) positioning the body and understanding how male and female bodies fit together. Moreover, disregarding the realities of how gendered power relations operate in the negotiation of safe and pleasurable sexual activities, the magazine presents postfeminist women as actively orchestrating sexual interactions and instructing men about how to position and move their own bodies as well as how to touch the bodies of women.

Carole Geerts, Independent Scholar, UK

Conor Muldoon, Independent Scholar, UK

The unreasonable as rational

This talk offers an analysis of the implementation of a “business model” in a sixth-form college to show how neoliberalism is operating in that context. Given that a similar approach is common across both the (remaining) public and the private sectors, including charities, such an analysis may have wider resonance.

The central component of the model is an actuarial, accountancy-based view of the world. Whatever may or may not have been his own views, commitments, failings of financial understanding or anything else, the director concerned, having as director no choice but to accede to demands to lower costs, could not but describe thirty employees as “overemployed”. Neither employment law, professional competence or anything else can stand in the way of reducing costs by the most direct means available, even if that means ignoring putative “underproduction”. In fact, “dealing with inefficiencies” may lead either to improved or to reduced production; *both of these* are merely a contingent by-product of “dealing with overemployment”. Why? Because, as this talk will describe, it is that concept that most readily undermines professional relationships, unions and indeed the moral agency of everyone involved. Nothing is “personal”; whatever is implemented is required as a means of ensuring that the structure increasingly conforms to an understanding of human beings as units subject to account.

In schools as elsewhere, neoliberalism is busily reconstructing what it is to be a human being.

Eliane Glaser, Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

Neoliberalism and the Internet: Enemies or Allies?

The internet – like neoliberalism – has insinuated itself into every corner of our lives – from public work to intimate leisure, from toddler apps to online afterlife. With its translation of material things and human attributes into a universal currency or solvent – prominence and attention – the internet would seem to offer a clear analogy to neoliberalism, which employs the universal solvent of capital.

In some respects, notably its radical erosion of value, patchy success in monetisation, and the paradoxes of commodification and immateriality, the internet feels less like neoliberalism’s vehicle and more like its successor or subversive enemy. That is what its apparently countercultural Silicon Valley advocates – such as Chris Anderson in his book *Free* – would have us believe; and the open source movement provides firmer backing to this assertion.

Yet in other respects the internet appears to be in lockstep with neoliberalism. Despite claims by cyber-utopians that the internet is egalitarian and democratising and places the tools of production and expression in the hands of ordinary users, in reality it delivers in addictively ingestible form the key ideology of neoliberalism – individualised competitiveness and anxious insecurity. Users are prompted endlessly to update and improve their online profiles, and success in the form of viral fame is presented as the accessible product of aspiration.

This paper will attempt to delineate the relationship between the internet and neoliberalism. Some theorists – for example Will Davies in *The Limits of Neoliberalism* – describe neoliberalism as functioning ‘in plain sight’; others believe it disguises its operations behind an ideological veil. I argue that in both digital and neoliberal culture, the emphasis on open competition and transparency is itself an ideological subterfuge. Not only does it mask concentrations of power and wealth, but it also obscures how the imposition of mechanisms to display ‘objective’ value – whether market price or digital hits – produces an excessive, phantasmagoric and bureaucratic apparatus.

Richard Hall DeMontfort University, UK

Technology and co-operative practice against the neoliberal university

Neoliberalism is a global pedagogical project aimed at the dispossession of free time so that all of life becomes productive, and education is a central institutional means for its realisation. This project aims at marketising all of social life, so that life becomes predicated upon the extraction of value. In part the deployment of technologies, technical services and techniques enables education to be co-opted as an institutional means for production and control. This occurs inside both formal and informal educational institutions and spaces, like universities and MOOCs, as one mechanism to offset the tendency for the rate of profit to fall and to re-establish accumulation. This pedagogic project also tends to recalibrate and enclose the roles of staff and students as entrepreneurial subjects, whose labour is enabled through technology. This is achieved through learning analytics, big data, mobility and flexibility of provision, and so on. This paper will analyse the relationships between technology, pedagogy and the critical subject in the neoliberal University, in order to argue for the use of technology inside a co-operative pedagogy of struggle. This demands that we ask what education is, before we ask what it is for, or the place of technology-enhanced learning in the university. The article considers whether it is possible to uncover stories of how and where education might be used for co-operation rather than competition, and what technology-enhanced co-operative education might look like?

David Hancock, The London Graduate School, Kingston University, UK

Leo Strauss contra neoliberalism

American conservatism was, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, dominated by two distinct and divergent yet seemingly entwined paradigms; neoliberalism, interested in free market economics and personal liberty and neoconservatism, interested in the moral health of society and latterly associated with the neo-imperial foreign policy of George W. Bush.

David Harvey has suggested, but not fully worked out, the idea that a symbiotic relationship between these two schools of thought has developed. Neoliberal capitalism, which from this perspective has become a byword word economic exploitation and dramatic wealth inequality, requires a moral supplement in order

for political stability to be maintained. The neoconservative moral discourse, having overcome the apparent contradiction between capitalism and morality, has provided this supplement.

This paper intends to present a comparative study of these two schools of thought by focusing two of the key intellectual figures in their respective development, Friedrich Hayek and Leo Strauss. These two immigrants, fathers of their respective intellectual paradigms, at first glance appear to have very little in common yet their intellectual legacies have become indelibly linked. Strauss and Hayek were, during the 1950s, colleagues on the University of Chicago's Committee on Social Thought and the University of Chicago subsequently became synonymous with both neoliberal economics and Straussian philosophy.

What becomes apparent upon a close reading of Strauss is the immutable conflict between his political philosophy and the philosophy of neoliberalism, Strauss had nothing good to say about capitalism and pejoratively dismissed Hayek and his schools as "anarchists". This paper therefore allows us to do two things, firstly, to establish a Straussian critique of neoliberalism and to see what this can offer to the wider field of studies on neoliberalism, and secondly, to pinpoint exactly what is taken from Strauss by neoliberal project.

Laura Harvey, University of Surrey, UK

Ruining the moment: condom use and the gendered rhetoric of responsibility

This paper explores the operation of neoliberal rhetoric in intimate life. Drawing on data from 212 surveys, 46 interviews with 26 participants and private research diaries, the analysis shines light on how a diverse sample of participants aged 16-45 in England made sense of their sexual experiences. I explore how public health discourse and rhetoric of risk and responsibility circulate in everyday talk about sex. The paper takes a feminist, discursive rhetorical approach, combining this with an exploration of how particular discourses about condom use can be understood to be ideological.

The paper contends that there are changes and continuities in the construction of gender and race in the negotiation of condom use. In the gendered, classed and racialised discourses of sexual health, particular bodies are marked out as 'risky' or 'responsible' in relation to notions of self-management and 'sexpertise'.

My analysis found the persistence of ideas of 'unstoppable' and phallocentric sexuality, combined with newer gendered expectations to be confident, skillful and responsible condom users. The paper will examine how participants refused and took up discourses of sexual responsibility in relation to social norms of desire and intimacy. I will argue that participants found themselves required to manage the tensions between neoliberal discourses of individual responsibility and self-development, the heavy symbolism that condoms carry and discourses of embodied desire.

Fergus Heron, University of Brighton, UK

Desires grown solid: Shopping centre interiors

This presentation consists of fine art practice - based research addressing conference themes of art and the aesthetics of neoliberalism; historical perspectives on neoliberalism; neoliberalism and the built environment. The presentation involves an on - going series of photographs entitled *Shopping Centre Interiors*. These photographs are part of wider artistic work that explores how picturing commonly experienced places might make visible connections, discontinuities and tensions between the traditional and the modern. This series in particular pictures local spaces where globally produced goods are displayed, desired and consumed, proposing a way of seeing some modern interior urban spaces that could enable questions of aesthetics and the built environment in connection to notions of neoliberalism.

The series will be introduced through a historical and critical context focused on inter-related considerations about commercial built environments as photographic images that include; absence and the uncanny; the public and private; modern vision and globalisation. Within this context, the presentation will articulate the production process for the work that involves photography as a means of producing a stilled gaze, offering creative possibilities for critical distance through open - ended picture sequence.

In conclusion, drawing upon recent theories of photography and the built environment, the presentation argues that the artistic strategies involved in making the presented work can enable reconsideration of commercial urban interiors as aesthetic forms and pose questions of how some of the effects of neoliberalism might continue to be made visible.

Examples from the ongoing series of works can be seen here:

<http://www.fergusheron.com/works/shopping-centres/index.html>

Benda Hofmeyr, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Foucault and the analytics of (Neo)liberal government(ality): Assessing performance management processes

This contribution outlines the evolution of Foucault's analytics of (neo-) liberal government(-ality) in order to problematize the notion of freedom upon which such so-called 'liberal' regimes are premised.

Government(-ality) is an instructive diagnostic tool, since it embodies Foucault's belief in the reciprocal constitution of relations of power [*gouverner* or governing] and forms of knowledge [*mentalité* or modes of thought]. It therefore renders insights that deconstruct the entrenched binary oppositions of other forms of critique of neo-liberalism – between the subject and power (neo-liberalism as ideology obfuscation), the state and economics (as economic reality), and subjectivity and politics (as “practical anti-humanism”).

Within this context, Foucault draws upon a very wide conception of 'government', which refers not to the government of a state, a territory or a political structure, but to the government of people. According to him, this idea of governing people is not a Greek idea. In the *Republic*, Plato, for example, likens the

philosopher-ruler to the captain of a ship where the ship represents the city as political entity or territory. The government of people, on the other hand, is derived from a pastoral conception of power and from the practice of spiritual direction. The shepherd's power is exercised over a flock rather than over territory and, more precisely, over the flock in its movement from one place to another. Furthermore, pastoral power is fundamentally a beneficent power aimed at the salvation of the flock, making it an individualizing power concerned with the well-being of each individual sheep. According to Foucault, the history of the pastorate can be linked to the entire Western history of human individualization or subject-formation, and serves as prelude to governmentality. Therefore, governmentality is a form of power that originated in the paradoxical workings of an apparently beneficent power responsible for the constitution of the modern Western subject – a subject whose merits are analytically identified, who is subjected in continuous networks of obedience, and who is subjectified through the compulsory extraction of truth. It is through such an analytics of governmentality that I shall attempt to trace the shift from a disciplinary notion of power to biopolitics, biopower and control characteristic of neo-liberalism.

In the course of the exposition, it will become apparent that liberal regimes – not unlike the pastoral power upon which it is premised – are inherently reliant on technologies of coercion and constraint. It is this Foucaultian insight that begs the question regarding the status of individual freedom within current neo-liberal regimes. The pervasive use of coercive techniques under the liberal guise of individual empowerment is exemplified by **performance management processes** implemented within the marketized university. In this contribution, I shall attempt to further elucidate and test Foucault's theoretical framework within the everyday context of academic life ruled by seemingly beneficent quantitative measures aimed at increasing growth, development, effectiveness, and the optimal utilization of talent.

Tim Huzar, University of Brighton, UK

From *Revolting Subjects* to a counter-aesthetics

In *Revolting Subjects* (2013) Imogen Tyler sets out to both offer a rich account of abjection as it is experienced in neoliberal Britain, and to account for the forms of resistance which are enacted in response to this abjection. Tyler undoubtedly succeeds in her first goal, documenting numerous forms of contemporary abjection which make *Revolting Subjects* valuable both theoretically and politically. However, in this paper it is argued that her second goal – of offering an account of the resistance to neoliberal abjection – is not fully realised.

For Tyler, more important than the acts of resistance to neoliberal abjection are the “storying of revolts” (Ibid. 13); the ability of acts of resistance to develop a narrative which can disrupt the dominant aesthetic of neoliberal rationality. Tyler thus sees *Revolting Subjects* as contributing to this “storying” through the “restaging of protests” (Ibid), and indeed, the text is highly effective to this end. However, while Tyler develops a rich account of neoliberal abjection, and documents forms of resistance to abjection, it is argued that she only briefly accounts for how these forms of resistance contribute to the development of a counter aesthetic. Tyler argues that “[i]t is by employing revolts against abjection as a map or guide that

Revolting Subjects attempts to ‘kick over’ the dustbin of history” (Ibid. 47): it is my contention that while this is crucially important, more attention is needed on precisely how this mapping or guiding contributes to this ‘kicking over’.

To this end the paper makes use of the thought of Judith Butler and Jacques Rancière - two key references in Tyler’s text - in theoretically ‘fleshing out’ a theory of resistance premised on the disruption of the abjectifying aesthetic of neoliberal rationality. In particular, Butler’s account of nonviolence is made use of in figuring how resistance to neoliberal rationality - and its attendant violences - might be thought.

References:

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Mikko Jakonen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Community as force of production

Ever since the 1960’s the neoliberalism and the neoclassical economic theory have celebrated the ideology that emphasizes the individual as the basic unit of the society and economic production. It seems that some of the most banal and serious mistakes of the classical economic theory are repeated without any deeper consideration by the neoliberal ideologists. However, even though neoliberal theory seems to support some fundamentally wrong economic doctrines, it has been a triumphant way of understanding politics and economy in recent decades. Interestingly, in recent years the neoliberal discourse has also started to emphasize more and more the importance of the “community” in social policy and politics, but also in questions related to economic production. More and more the social dynamics of the community are seen as crucial forces of production in contemporary economic thought.

This paper concentrates on the fundamental questions concerning the changes in the modes of production in the age of post-Fordism and cognitive work. It asks how the neoliberal individualistic and atomized understanding of the society relates to the advent of the new forces of production, which are essentially based on the ideas of community, communication and intensive social participation. It seems that in the contemporary capitalism there is a strong tendency towards the making of the productive communities, where people’s lives, experiences and social relations are put in the production process. Hence, in this paper it is argued that at the core of the neoliberal politics and policies lies an objective of creating new kinds of communities that are capable of creating the social elements needed in economic production (affects, sentiments, ideas, innovations), but are at the same time politically controllable i.e. communities that do not create strong alliances of solidarity and sense of togetherness typical for the industrial production.

Guy Julier, University of Brighton, UK

Austerity and the turn from design activism to social design

If financialisation is mostly concerned with creating or pointing to sources of future value, then so is much of professional design practice. In design activism and social design this has also become a common tactic through the leveraging of 'hidden assets'. In design activism this is bound up in material processes of 'empowerment' and fostering 'resilience'. In social design the aim is often more pragmatic: to maintain or improve the public sphere through more active citizenship.

This paper draws specifically on three pieces of research as follows:

- Margins in the City – a design activist, neighbourhood renewal project undertaken by a cross-disciplinary team in the city of Leeds, UK;
- We Design For Life – a municipality-driven urban regeneration project in the Danish city of Kolding, to put design at the centre of its education, entrepreneurship and social innovation practices;
- Mapping Social Design – strategy research for the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council to help define its future support of social design research.

All three derive from responses to the economic crisis and the wider contexts of austerity politics. With falling public sector budgets and failing economies, design is understood to work as a smart, fast way of seeing us through these. The turn to service design, design thinking, strategic design, design activism and social design are all symptoms of this. These are, in turn and in limited ways, carving out new ways of engaging, particularly with the public sector and with urban citizenry in everyday life.

This paper, therefore, attends to the micro-practices of activist and social design to reveal how their political aspirations meet dominant, prevailing economic conditions. These result in compromises and uneasy alliances but also experimentation and risk.

Andy Knott, University of Brighton, UK

Neoliberalism's first theorist?

In the last few years, much has been made of Foucault's account of neoliberalism, written in 1979 and recently published in the lectures entitled *The Birth of Biopolitics* (first published in France in 2004, and in English in 2008). Much of this intrigue is prompted by Foucault's early deployment of the term neoliberalism, especially as the term has become widely used over the past decade and since the publication of David Harvey's *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* in 2005. Yet, the shift to neoliberalism had been acutely identified and theorised five years *prior to* Foucault.

This paper will outline the carefully developed account of neoliberalism provided by Antonio Negri's writings in the first half of the 1970s.

Naveen Kolloju, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

Microfinance crisis and economic development under neoliberal agenda: Field analysis on the impact of microfinance on rural poor in Andhra Pradesh, India

During the 1970s, the rise of neoliberal economic order in several advanced countries has reshaped the socio-economic and political landscape across the globe. It has brought a major shift in the political economy of many developing countries. The international donor agencies have paid significant attention towards alleviating poverty and searched for various alternatives for its mitigation. Eventually, the concept of microfinance has emerged and pioneered over the years as one of the financially steered strategies and a key alternative approach towards poverty alleviation. Off late, this phenomenon has gained wider currency in offering tiny loans to the poor for self-employment generation, who are hitherto remained financially excluded from the formal banking system. Referring to India, since the 1990s, with the advent of neo-liberal agenda, the poor have increasingly gained access to affordable credit not only through public sector banks, but also from private financial actors. Particularly, given the absence of formal banking in the remote regions, the private financial institutions have gained to play a predominant role in spreading its reach. The vacuum created by the state as a major credit facilitator has been filled up by the private institutions in lending microcredit, however with no qualms about pursuing profit.

This shift has witnessed several social repercussions in Andhra Pradesh. The idea of microfinance has been hijacked by the neoliberal economic agenda where private financial institutions have become active and adopted illegal means to extort high profits. For instance, the exorbitant interest rates, coercive recovery methods adopted by some of the private Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) have resulted in suicides by the hapless borrowers that has brought the issues of women's economic development and poverty alleviation under critical scrutiny. Given this context, the paper attempts to analyze the growth of microfinance movement under neo-liberal operation. As part of field analysis, it critically examines the role of the public and private microfinance models on alleviating poverty in rural Andhra Pradesh. It also examines whether the State policy as a response to neoliberal exploitation is eliminating the causes and consequences of the actors involved or facilitating the trend? The paper concludes by highlighting the major shift in state policy and social practices in dealing with the neoliberal orientation.

David Lea, American University of Sharjah, UAE

The future of the humanities in today's neoliberal environment

This paper approaches the decline in the study and teaching of the of the humanities within the university context from a Global financial perspective. As humanities departments are either closed down or have their curriculum attenuated, in the obvious sense we can say that the revenue that was previously present to support such programs has been not been forthcoming. Accordingly, this paper argues that resources that could have supported the humanities have been available to the university but they have been applied elsewhere. These available resources have been applied to increasing the administration and ancillary

support staff, and secondly, in support of the social sciences and increasing numbers of business and management programs. This paper links this decline to the growing financialization of the economy, the ideology of managerialism and the emergence of the “academic capitalist” regime as defined by Slaughter and Rhoades. I trace these developments to an underlying ‘neoliberal ideology. Neoliberalism, can be understood as a form of liberalism in which the market freedoms achieve an extreme dominance. One observes that higher education has increasingly embraced the central neoliberal principle that denies the concept of public good, in regarding education as a private good rather than a public good. The emphasis on the notion of private rather than public goods encourages the belief that individual choices and market exchanges most efficiently determine the allocation of resources, and necessarily entails that subjects more directly related to monetary interests will continue to take priority over the humanities.

Anthony Leaker, University of Brighton, UK

"For the talented and ambitious the future means work, not play". The representation of work as occupation in contemporary television dramas

“Entertainment under late capitalism is the prolongation of work”, writes Adorno in *The Culture Industry*, under neoliberalism, entertainment, at least on TV, is mostly *about* the prolongation of work. Contemporary television is full of reality shows, comedies and drama depicting neoliberal work practices and labour conditions. To date there has been significant critical work on the neoliberal nature of reality TV - examining, among other things, the way it features constant surveillance, fierce competitiveness with “naked displays of individualism and self-interest”, victimization and responsabilisation for moral failings. This paper will look at the way in which these same features and neo-liberal ideology more generally are central to the representation of work practices in so-called “quality” drama, in much-loved, critically acclaimed programs such as *The Good Wife*, *Borgen*, *The Killing*, *Breaking Bad*, *West Wing*. Such programmes depict work as occupation, as obsession, as the essential feature of one’s existence. Their uncritical celebration, if not fetishisation, of neoliberal work practices serve to normalise and naturalise hyper-competitiveness, self-exploitation, the loss of leisure time, and the breakdown of social and family relations, as well as physical and mental health. It is not the case that the lawyers, politicians, drug dealers and detectives, with their hyperactive networking, strategic lunching and infinite flexibility, represented in these shows are exceptional, rather they represent the ideal neo-liberal worker. The paper will use theoretical work by Franco “Bifo” Berardi and Hito Steyerl to analyse these representations of contemporary labour practice, the transformation in labour-time and the important question of bourgeois complicity in neo-liberal values.

Susan Lucas, Assistant Priest, The Walton Team Ministry, Liverpool, UK

Irony in the Neo-Liberal cultural hegemony: Transgressive poets or anti-poetic alibi?

In a talk at Birkbeck College in 2013, Slavoj Žižek remarked on the ubiquitous inability, in the cultural hegemony of neo-liberalism, even amongst those of progressive sensibilities, to hear irony. This phenomenon, though instantly recognisable, raises a puzzle; whilst there is indeed a dreary literal mindedness to neo-liberal culture, at the same time, a knowing, detached, ironic stance is its distinctive mode of expression. How can neo-liberalism's cultural manifestation simultaneously be deaf to irony and yet employ it so effectively? The puzzle deepens, since that detached ironic stance also makes it difficult to find spaces in which people can develop solidarity by speaking plainly to one another – by being present to one another in words.

This paper suggests that the puzzle can be resolved: drawing on Wittgenstein's insistence on the variety, embodiedness and relationality of language, and on Guy Debord's views of poetic misreading in *All the King's Men*, the argument is that the irony to which neo-liberal culture is dulled is transgressive and poetic and emerges out of a plenitude of meaning and presence; it is playful, poetic and plentiful – and embraces, rather than excludes the simple, direct presence of human subjects to one another in their words. It is exemplified in practice by Pussy Riot's Punk Prayer act of resistance (and when he is on form, by Slavoj himself)

The detached, mocking ironic stance of the neo-liberal culture industry is in direct contrast to this; it arises out of a dreary correspondence view of language in which words *work* – never play, and amounts to denial of the embodiedness, relationality and variety of language. It comes from lack, not plenitude, of meaning; it is an alibi for real critical thought and real presence to one another in our words, and is exemplified by the Lily Allen video *Hard Out Here*.

As Debord suggests, however, words can be made to work only *almost* full time; thus, it is a form of resistance to neoliberal culture both to refuse detachment, disengagement and cynicism; and at the same time, to be in solidarity with one another, seriously whilst being alert to the playful transgressiveness of poetic irony.

HollyGale Millette, Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton

'Ain't nobody's business if I do': Mobile disobedience in a neoliberal world

There are more boats and 'live-aboard' boaters on the inland waterways of Great Britain than there were in the late nineteenth century. Their history experienced seismic shifts throughout the twentieth century, but most recently competitive and corresponding desires have manipulated their past and contested their future. In short, neoliberalism has noticed them. Thinkers such as Wendy Brown account for neoliberalism's insidious attack on subjectivities. But boaters exist outside of what remains of the polis and disrupt its ideology. Carter defines this as a freedom, but it can also be seen as a disobedience: if they are not already antagonistic to neoliberalist ideology, their mobilities mark them as such.

This paper considers a marginal people who have, for over 150 years, suffered a schism of public understanding and a falsity of perception. Theirs is a various and vacillating unofficial history that forms the very rhetoric through which they communicate and celebrate their communal identity. Much of this community is engaged in a continued act of self-care in the way Heidegger considered it, and this too is misbehaves as a threat.

My argument is that the future histories of canal boaters are being imposed as dissident and resistant, by a charitable organisation and 'big society' rhetoric. Economists and political philosophers know that charity does not equate to justice. Now, in the neoliberal world it rather equates to 'responsibilisation' and 'erradication' of the subject – two things that these mobile peoples would view as both a threat to their inherent freedom, as Hobbes considered it, and as an injustice to their way of life as Article 8 of the European Court of Human Rights and legal scholars configure it.

Laura Moralee, University of Exeter, UK

Work in the culture of counting: 'Deprofessionalisation' and the public good

Many neoliberal institutions are riddled with tension between audit-style accountability processes and the nature of the services professionals seek to deliver. The 'culture of counting' depicts a particular social attitude to problem solving within which practices that are meant to make public services and those who deliver them compatible with a demand for transparency and value- both understood in ways that often lead to perversity- are increasingly dominant in the working lives of professionals. One of the major consequences of this is 'deprofessionalisation', which describes a change in the locus of control over the day to day endeavours of professionals from professionals themselves to external sources.

This paper outlines the nature of a 'culture of counting' and argues that an analysis of neoliberal practices in the context of professional work and public service institutions in these terms has the potential to effectively draw attention to the range of public 'goods' that can be considered at stake within a neoliberal society more broadly. Those goods can be loosely categorised into two kinds; the more tangible of which includes things like types and quality of education and healthcare, for example, and the less tangible and broader of which includes public goods such as trust, respect, community and responsibility.

I touch on and synthesise ideas from a variety of authors whose work falls within several disciplines, and whose concerns may be focused on different objects, but can nevertheless be understood as discussing aspects of the same problem. I draw, for example, on accounts of an 'audit society' put forward by Michael Power¹, analyses of trust in public life by Onora O'Neill², proposals that recognition and respect are in conflict with the reification approach to workers and workplace relationships³, claims that

¹ For example, in Power M. (1997) *The Audit Society* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

² For example, in O'Neill O. (2002) *A Question of Trust* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³ For example: Gazi Islam in Islam G. (2012) 'Recognition, Reification and Practices of Forgetting: Ethical Implications of Human Resource Management' *Journal of Business Ethics* Vol 111: 1 pp. 37-48.
and Axel Honneth in Honneth A. (2012) *The I in We: Studies in the Theory of Recognition*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

many of the pathologies of neoliberalism are strongly reflected in the current situation faced by universities and higher education⁴, and ‘communitarian’ responses to the individualism embedded within neoliberal life reflected by the hegemonic presence of principles of utility and the market in public goods and services⁵.

Michael Neu, University of Brighton, UK

The neoliberal individual (and some preliminary reflections on how to deal with it)

This talk is not a scholarly analysis insofar as I am not a scholar of neoliberalism but, quite simply, a living, observing and thinking being who desperately tries *not* to be a neoliberal, *not* to be complicit in neoliberal conduct, and *not* to allow other neoliberals to occupy the space in which I live, work, and interact: with my colleagues, students, family, friends, and neighbours. I want to offer thoughts on what I think are some of the basic characteristics of the neoliberal individuals I encounter in every-day life, followed by some preliminary reflections on how to deal with, and resist, them. My talk is a subversive plea for individual and collective action.

Phil O'Brien, University of Manchester, UK

Mapping the neoliberal turn: social change and the working class in contemporary British fiction

This paper will focus on how deindustrialisation and social change, fuelled by the dominant discourse of neoliberalism, have been explored by two contemporary British writers, Ross Raisin and Gordon Burn. *Waterline* (2011) by Raisin and Burn's *The North of England Home Service* (2003) are novels which document the reconstitution and transformation of the industrial landscape under the weight of capital. They provide a reading of neoliberalism through the dynamics of social change, as experienced by the working class, and through the ‘Disneyfication’ and destruction of urban space and urban experience. Both novels offer insights into the move away from the manufacture and production of goods to a reliance upon services and heritage as central industries. The re-packaging and taming of history is a central theme. My paper will explore how the absorption and gutting of working-class social and political history is used to transform the complex past and present into a sterile consumer experience. The processes of memory and mourning work to excavate this submerged history. *Waterline* documents the traumatic and alienating experiences of a working-class community built around, and once reliant upon, the shipyards of Scotland's

⁴ For example: Stefan Collini in Collini S. (2012) *What are Universities For?* London: Penguin Books and various authors in Bailey M. & Freedman D. [Eds] (2011) *The Assault on Universities- A Manifesto for Resistance* London: Pluto Press.

⁵ For example: Michael Sandel in Sandel M. (2013) *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets* London: Penguin, Charles Taylor in Taylor C. (1995) ‘Irreducibly Social Goods’ in *Philosophical Arguments* London: Harvard University Press and David Marquand in Marquand D. (2004) *Decline of the Public* Cambridge: Polity Press.

River Clyde. *The North of England Home Service* re-visits both the deindustrial and the rural landscape of the North East, contrasting the experience of post-war Britain and welfare capitalism with the trauma and absurdity of the neoliberal present. The contemporary working-class experience of neoliberalism, as figured in the work of Raisin and Burn, is one of isolation and decline, with both novels exploring, in different and illuminating ways, the human consequences of a doctrine which has been central to the restoration of a reconstituted class power.

Stephen O’Kane, Independent Scholar, UK

An associative democratic alternative?

I suggest that a principal reason why ‘neoliberalism’ keeps a hold is that, professional training notwithstanding, experts and their institutions do not have a better record than markets in forecasting the future. (This is one illustration that reasons for the persistence of ‘neoliberalism’ tend to be negative.) Although state institutions, universities, NGOs, an so on, are supposed to regard a common interest - unlike market speculators - their record in backing that with sagacity in determining, for example, worthwhile investments, is undistinguished.

Bearing this in mind, I argue that it is wise to try to enable alternatives to ‘neoliberalism’ to emerge from below, with a minimum of ‘top down’ direction. As an opening gambit, I propose that Paul Hirst’s ideas on ‘associative democracy’ be considered. These have the merit of leaving moral goals as well as delivery of services to associations which individual persons may join or leave as they see fit. The state would guarantee that right of exit as one of the ground rules for the system to operate. I propose including limits to inequality based on dispersal of power among individuals and their associations amongst the ground rules.

Retaining the essential element of personal choice will, hopefully, prevent the associations (and the state) from developing into a collectivist set of corporations which tells people what to do and think. Excluding any claim to an overall unifying ideology minimises the danger of people being bought off in ways that conservatism, social democracy, and neoliberalism have all been wont to do.

Mary Paul, Massey University, New Zealand

Questions of social memory and abjection in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand, the country once known as 'the women's isle'

One way into exposing the neoliberal conceptual paradigm that has become ‘naturalised’ in contemporary societies in the last thirty years is ethnographic - to examine the process of crossover to that new paradigm in individual life stories and recollections. A focus on the Aotearoa New Zealand economic ‘experiment’ provides an example of driven and particularly intense social change whereby a society that had been (with

marked exceptions) one of the most economically equal and socially inclusive in the world became one of the most unequal.

This paper reports on the beginning of a project of recording and reporting on the experiences, recollections and reflections of the first generation to grow up (in the eighties and nineties) under the early propaganda for the then new neoliberal ideology, by means of a sample of life stories (from published and interview-sources). The individuals in question are all born in New Zealand (though many are now resident elsewhere) between 1970 and 1982 and will be contrasted in further research with a sample of the same generation born in other Anglo countries, the USA, UK and Australia. In collaborative interviews with individuals, and sometimes families, questions will be put about recollections, events, and argument round ideas, as well as the interviewees everyday sense of the world (then and now) and their hopes, expectations and sense of place in the future. It is hoped that the ethnographic and life writing approach, in addition to dignifying and recording, will uncover particular stories and events that characterise how cognitive and affective responses shifted in the early days of neoliberalism. And that news of these will help to reveal current tapestries of both abjection and resistance (in Imogen Tyler's terminology) as well as the strands of attraction and opportunity, which combined can suggest a way forward.

Deborah Philips, University of Brighton, UK

Garry Whannel, University of Bedfordshire, UK

The Trojan Horse: Commercial sponsorship - the lever for neo-liberalism in public services

This paper argues that commercial sponsorship has been the Trojan horse that ushered in the presence of corporate logos and private capital into every area of public life, to the point where that presence is now seen as natural and inevitable. It is a process that has been largely unremarked, but the construction of entrepreneurship as benevolent supporter of the public sphere, begun with the growth of sponsorship, has facilitated a creeping erosion of the public sector by corporate interests. Despite the clear failures of public/private partnerships, global corporations continue to be awarded the contracts to run schools and hospitals and welcomed as the patrons of the arts and sporting events. Despite the lack of experience and knowledge they bring to the fields that they are 'supporting', these often faceless corporations have become embedded across public institutions. Given the clear potential for corruption and conflict of interest (not least among MPs of all parties, who have throughout the expenses scandal, the Leveson enquiry and the Barclays investigation, demonstrated that they are not immune), the handing over of British publically owned assets to (often global) corporate interests should be a matter of considerable concern.

German Primera, University of Brighton, UK

Disposable life and neoliberalism

Wendy Brown's notion of sacrifice as that which marks the status of homo oeconomicus in neoliberalism, helps to grasp the way in which self-investing and credit enhancing human capital is exposed to death when fails to become fully entrepreneurial. However, it remains silent as to how homo oeconomicus is produced as a disposable man in the larger context of capitalism and to how the production of homo oeconomicus overlaps with and mirrors the production of other forms of life exposed to death.

This paper examines the way in which neoliberalism (as a political rationality) and governance (as a managerial paradigm of government) are bound up, in different levels, with the production of bare life. Agamben's notion of bare life has been largely employed to describe the production of forms of life deprived of a legal status (Refugees, *les sans papiers*, Guantanamo's prisoners, etc) but it has rarely been used to examine the production of disposable life within the domain of the economy and the realm of governmentality, - partly because of the strong emphasis on the juridico-institutional decisions in Agamben's account of the production of bare life as developed in the *Homo Sacer I* (1998) and the *state of exception* (2005) -. This paper aims at rereading the production of bare life in the light of Agamben's belated engagement with the economy, showing how the production of bare life articulates the narrative of sovereign power with the immanent functioning of neoliberalism. In this sense, when examining the production of forms of life exposed to insignificant deaths under the neoliberal political rationality, this paper will not delocalize this production from the critique of the Western metaphysics and politics in which the notion of bare life is suffused.

Mikka Pyykkönen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Governmentality and 'counter-conduct'. Power, government and resistance in Foucauldian civil society notions

This paper aims at capturing the bi-dimensional relation of civic organizations and government in the liberalist practices of governance. It is an analysis of the approach formulated by Michel Foucault and his interlocutors in their studies of civil society and government in liberal or neoliberal governmental regimes and ways of thinking. Foucauldian approaches emphasize that there is no natural being or essentialistic existence of the civil society, but this realm is constructed in the power/knowledge nexuses. Foucauldian researchers emphasize that the modern government – conduct of conduct – is not formulated primarily on the basis of the coercive power and domination, but on the freedom and activeness of the individuals and groups of the society. This is especially true in neoliberal political discourses and practices, where the freedom of 'market subject citizen' tends to be untouchable. This power/freedom synthesis leads one to analyze civil society through its ambivalence: on one hand civil society is a field where different kinds of technologies of governance meet the lives and wills of the groups and individuals, but on the other hand it is a potential field of what Foucault called as 'counter-

conduct', and which primarily takes place in everyday subjectivations of the individuals and groups in the spheres of civility and civil society.

Mary-Beth Raddon, Brock University, Canada

The business of hope: neoliberalism and professional fundraising in Canada

As welfare state retrenchment gives prominence to an underfunded non-profit sector and makes professional fundraising a growth industry, so emerges a set of organized, outspoken champions of neoliberal social policies. Qualitative interviews with fifty senior fundraisers in major Canadian cities shed light on the embrace of neoliberalism by people well positioned to observe its damaging effects on the causes they seek to benefit. As they reflect on changes in the fundraising profession during their careers, fundraisers reveal the conditions that shape them as neoliberal agents who resolutely delegitimize taxation and social spending, valorize extreme wealth inequality and claim there is no alternative to the privatization of services in social welfare, education, healthcare, the arts and environmental protection. The professional fundraiser's occupational self-interest and ideology of benevolence leads them to depoliticize neoliberalism in the course of their every day work, which they conceptualize as creating a 'culture of philanthropy,' which is an idealized neoliberal culture of the market, a 'business of hope.'

Paul Reynolds, Edge Hill University, UK

Neo-liberalism and everyday sexualities: A critique of the impasse of 21st century sexual and sexuality politics

Jeffrey Weeks (2007) has quite persuasively argued that the story of the last 50 years has been one of progressive change in the way in which sexual diversity and construction of sexual pathology have been regulated and ameliorated in western democracies in the last half century. Whilst there are still a number of fault lines across the politics of sexuality - such as the relationship between human rights and equality and faith based discrimination, or the legal regulation and differential treatment of diverse sexualities - there is a general sense that a mixture of equality strategies and hate crime protections have constituted safe space and participation in civil society for diverse sexualities. Or put another way, people of diverse sexualities can enjoy a similar 'everyday' sexual life as heterosexuals as anyone else. This more liberal regime has been developed and perpetuated under neo-liberal regimes with largely conservative democratic agendas, where the general lines of regulation and prohibition of sexual lives correspond to claims of public decency and tolerance and common popular values.

Whilst any critical account of this change should not trivialise substantial legal, cultural and social changes, this paper seeks to explore how the construction of this everyday life experience of tolerance under neo-liberalism produces three sets of pernicious effects:

- It reinforces the neo-liberal hegemonic agenda, where different sexualities liberties are progressively tied to neo-liberal notions of consumerism, the consumption of rights and justice, individuation, the virtually normal of public space and the dissipation of alternative collectivities and values.
- It depoliticises, so legal change is presumed to underscore cultural change and nullifies political anger, dissipating potential agendas around sexual injustices, prejudicial and pathological approaches to some forms of diversity
- It normalises – and particularly heteronormalises - so the narrative of tolerance and sexual liberty cleverly shrouds larger problems of who determines the binary line between liberty and regulation/prohibition

The construction of the 'everyday' is particularly evident in a subtle deconstruction of sexual politics and nullification of its potential. Drawing from theoretical roots ranging from Gramsci and Marcuse to Ranciere, Foucault and De Certeau. This paper will seek to paint this sophisticated narrative and then offer points of destabilising that might energise a new politics of sexuality.

Tim Rudd, University of Brighton, UK

Ivor Goodson, University of Brighton, UK

Alternative discourse, pre-figurative practice and resisting neo liberalism in education: Towards a concept of 'refraction'

This paper offers a critique of the seemingly unstoppable imposition of educational policies and practice informed by neo-liberal ideology and the related managerialism, performativity and marketisation of education, and consider the implications this has for equality, social justice and cohesion.

The paper draws on a socio-historical analysis to locate the current ideological developments and waves of reform in education. It highlights the symbolic violence, 'newspeak' hegemonic and narrative control that has come to dominate and pervade current educational discourse in the 'reconstituted' neo-liberal period, justified through a wider 'austerity discourse' and seeming lack of viable alternatives. The paper further argues that neo liberalism pervades common and 'accepted' educational discourse to such a degree that it now exerts narrative control over public spheres and is increasingly also influencing the private and personal spheres to such a degree that the possibilities of perceiving and developing alternative educational practice is becoming increasingly unviable.

However, the paper also suggest there are more crucial areas that provide a source of resistance against the tranny of neo liberalism and which are spaces underpinning acts of resistance. These are the study and propagation of alternative forms of educational philosophies, beliefs and practices internationally, and the study and exploration of alternative narratives, pre-figurative practices and beliefs, and everyday actions through which individuals, organisations and groups negate, or 'refract' neo liberal policies and associated practice and discourse; and the analysis and sponsorship of morally informed 'life politics'.

The paper draws on empirical work focussing on narrative methodologies and individual work-life narratives; responses in various international contexts, such as Eastern Europe; and insights gained during the RIAIPE3 project, which focussed on the development of policies and practice to support social justice, equality and cohesion in Higher Education across Latin America, in order to illustrate the different paths that have, or may be taken. Furthermore, the paper outlines our theory of 'refraction' that has developed out of such work. This is a conceptual tool to support both theorisation and methodological orientation, and which accounts for supra, macro, meso, and micro analysis to situate policy directions and locate alternative individual and collective action, thus illustrating counter narratives and non-conformist actions.

Raphael Schlembach, Independent Scholar, UK

In, against and beyond one-dimensional life: Herbert Marcuse and contemporary social movements

The work of Frankfurt School authors, with the exception of that of Jürgen Habermas, is rarely mentioned in the textbooks introducing students to theories of social movements and protest. This is maybe not surprising. The early members of the Institute for Social Research did not explore protest in a way that would today withstand the scrutiny of 'social movement research', nor did they develop an explicit theory of the why and how of movement mobilisation.

Nonetheless, this paper will suggest that this is a major omission from the standard literature. More specifically, in the 50th year after the publication of the influential book *One-Dimensional Man*, the paper will pay particular attention to the writings of the social philosopher Herbert Marcuse. The object of this critique of 'advanced industrial society' is tightly connected to a historical situation where the capitalist world looked towards full employment, welfare and a growing leisure industry while communist countries were industrialising at a rapid speed. Both processes, for Marcuse, signified the predominance of an increasingly totalitarian state.

On the surface, today's persistent neoliberal attack on welfare systems in core capitalist countries, alongside a lack of a real-existing alternative to consumer capitalism sets very different historical parameters. Exploring the one-dimensional character of neoliberalism, the paper advances the argument that Marcuse's studies into rebellion in affluent society could help us grasp the logic of contemporary anti-austerity protests and allow us to interrogate today's standard explanatory models of mobilisation and (non-)participation.

Julian Simpson, University of Manchester, UK

Stephanie Snow, University of Manchester, UK

'Constrained neoliberalism' in the NHS: healthcare reform at Guy's and St Thomas' since the 1970s

Healthcare reform in the UK's National Health Service (NHS) is traditionally described as being 'market-led' and the product of a radical political agenda which emerged in the 1980s. We argue that it is more helpful

to view the NHS as it exists today as the product of constrained neoliberalism. The influence of neoliberal ideology has profoundly shaped healthcare in the UK since the 1970s but neoliberal ideas have also been resisted and reinterpreted in the context of the NHS.

Our argument is based on an analysis of fifty individual oral history interviews, five joint interviews, a Witness Seminar and archival research conducted for a history of Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals since the 1970s. The material gathered shows that the particular status of the NHS in the UK limited the diffusion of more radical ideas for reform of the public sector put forward from the 1980s onwards.

The fact that the NHS remained a state-controlled public sector organisation served to create a particular context in which resistance from groups such as hospital staff, board members and campaigners shaped the nature of change. Successive governments retained the means to intervene politically and at times did so in a way that was inconsistent with the neoliberal principles they were promoting.

Moreover, the influence of neoliberal ideas was not solely felt in national political agendas and did not always take predictable forms. Contact with the US model of care and professional interpretations of neoliberal ideas - seen as providing a basis for the optimal use of resources - also contributed to shaping provision.

Rather than being the product of 'market' reform the NHS can thus be characterised as an ongoing and unstable compromise between competing conceptions of healthcare. It is also an ideological paradox: a state-controlled system infused with neoliberal ideology.

Panagiota Sotirchou, Athens University, Greece

Neoliberalism in Greek media during the era of the IMF

For Greece the end of the first decade of the 21st century proved to be a most painful period. The impending financial downfall, resulted in the intervention of the IMF in the Greek socioeconomic scene. This development has sparked an interest in neoliberalism, and a public discussion about it, in a country where a considerable degree of state interventionism has been present for a number of decades. The policies followed by the Greek governments that have held office from 2009 up until now, are considered as attempts to enforce neoliberal practices. The heated discussion about the collective labour agreement, the option for individual agreements between employer – employee, the resultant salary cuts, along with reductions in social support, public health services and education, belong to the constituent parts of what could be perceived as the prelude to the neoliberal experience in Greece. The association of neoliberalism with the dispute over the IMF presence, and the measures imposed during these years, seem to have created a lack of focus about what neoliberalism actually is. The focal point of this paper is how it is perceived, represented and defined by the Greek media during this five-year period. Is the debate about it an integral part of the public dispute concerning the enforcement of practices, which could be actually defined as neoliberal, or is it simply part of the pro- /anti- IMF rhetoric, where neoliberalism is mentioned, but it is not defined, clearly understood or even examined? In other words, are we talking about neoliberalism per se, or about the IMF? The present paper aspires to contribute to the attempt to answer

the aforementioned questions by examining indicative articles of high circulation Greek newspaper and posts of popular blogs in the Greek language.

Zoe Sutherland, University of Brighton, UK

Rob Lucas, Independent Scholar, UK

Abjection and class decomposition

This paper will theorise the process of ‘abjection’, which we identify as a salient feature of the Neoliberal state which came into being in the 70s and 80s, and which we are seeing deepening its logic further through the current politics of austerity. Though inspired in part by recent accounts of abjection and stigmatisation, such as the work of Imogen Tyler, our account seeks to push beyond Tyler’s psychosocial level of analysis, and to sketch some material and historical bases from which we can start to explain the emergence of this abjection as something peculiar to this historical period. We find the origins of these processes in the organically entwined development of an increasingly fractious and decomposed class subject, and increasingly punitive logics on the part of the state that were developed to meet this advancing state of decomposition. Northern Ireland was the predictable seeding ground for the techniques of repression, but on mainland Britain at least, the ‘primary abjects’ at the beginning of this period were those most excluded from the regulative structures of the ‘trente glorieuses’—discontented ‘second generation’ immigrants in particular. Thus ‘race’ appeared as a key mediation at the beginning of this period, in the formation of punitive procedures which would ultimately prove more general. ‘Race’ has remained as a key focal point for such processes—even lending some flavour to modes of abjection which are not strictly about ‘race’ as such. But as anti-racism has been increasingly incorporated into standard policy since the 80s and divisions between a stable ‘white’ working class and its less secure racialized margins have eroded, the logic of abjection has spread to other sections of the decomposed working class, as the limits of that class come to be defined increasingly by the policing to which it is subjected.

Jelena Timotijevic, University of Brighton, UK

Linguistic manifestations of neoliberal discourse in Higher Education: can struggles against neoliberalism be pursued *in* and *through* language?

The neoliberal onslaught on UK education started some twenty years ago as part of a strategy by the then Conservative government to cut public sector services and public expenditure. Consecutive governments then widened the project with a view to expanding universities on the cheap. The most recent assault has been systematically realised through the June 2011 White Paper on Higher Education, which lays the basis for its privatisation.

The discourse of neoliberalism has played a critical role in assisting this wider political project, which has gradually turned neoliberalism into an ideology through which we see the world: “[neoliberalism]

is incorporated into the common-sense way of how many interpret, live in and understand the world” (Harvey 2007: 65). In the context of HE, the normalisation of neoliberal discourse is evident in marketing materials, in various pursuits that emphasise employability skills, and in transformations of academic practices and students’ (mis)conception of neoliberal discourse in development of critical thought. The implicit, systematic rise of a market-led consumerist agenda via linguistic means has not gone unnoticed amongst linguists and language researchers. Fairclough (2000: 147-148) calls for “coordinated action against neoliberalism on the part of critical language researchers.”

The paper focuses on the genre of neoliberal globalisation in education, and the consequences this has had. It examines, on the one hand, the role of students as consumers of HE, and, on the other, their place as victims of the universities’ subordination to the priorities of the market. It draws on Critical Language Frameworks to investigate the role of language in hegemonic struggles around neoliberalism and explores the effect this has in the increasing normalisation of a neoliberal discourse that shapes students’ and academics’ social reality. It will also suggest ways in which “struggles *against* neoliberalism can be partly pursued in [and through] language” (Fairclough 2000: 148).

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Tero Toivanen, University of Helsinki, Finland

Neoliberalism and the commons - on the idea of social transformation through the commons

Neoliberalism has meant a radical shift in the management of welfare. It seems that the 19th and 20th century workers movement’s progressive idea of universal welfare has been transformed to a system promoting the welfare that of the 1%. Neoliberalism is often described as a political project that attacks the foundations of the welfare state policies. Thus neoliberalism is seen as a process of privatising public resources and cutting down social security. However, the era of neoliberalism has not been only about privatising what is called ‘public’, but also what is common to all.

In the past two decades, the idea of the commons and common management of resources has entered the arena of political economy as an alternative to both capitalism and private property and socialism and public property. Thus, it has been argued, the political alternatives against neoliberalism are to be found from the spheres of commons and commoning (see e.g. Hardt & Negri 2009).

In my paper I will analyse the relation between public and commons. The history of the Nordic welfare state policies indicates that the public services and resources contribute big time to the sphere of the commons available. Thus, I will argue, the triumph of neoliberal policies should not lead to an outright

abandonment of welfare state policies. I will introduce the idea of 'commonification' as an alternative perspective to the relation between public and commons. Rethinking the foundations of Nordic welfare model can be seen as one platform for 'social revolution through commons' (de Angelis 2012) and as a historical departure point for transformation towards a new kind of common welfare.

Myrto Tsilimpounidi, University of East London, Ministry of Untold Stories

Aylwyn Walsh, University of Lincoln, Ministry of Untold Stories

Dear TINA: "We are sorry for the inconvenience, but this is a revolution"

TINA is overqualified and under-employed.

John works two jobs but struggles to pay his iphone bill.

Chris is packing dog biscuits for a pound a day in the prison workshop.

Nabil just spent his last £100 on new Nikes.

Mel charges 5 Euros for a blowjob.

Anna occupied the square and she bought the t-shirt.

Rafael buys a coke after protesting the World Cup in Rio.

They are the inheritors of the global economy. They all keep getting fucked by the system. They are all looking the other way.

These are accounts of how neoliberalism creates our desires; tales of the penetration of neoliberalism into everyday life. This *Ministry of Untold Stories* project investigates how people are being sold illusions of liberty, breath by breath.

Meanwhile, on a mountain in Chiapas, sub-commandante Marcos dies and is resurrected. Dear TINA: "We are sorry for the inconvenience, but this is a revolution."

Using radical performance practice to respond to pressing social concerns related to neoliberalism and everyday life, this performance lecture draws attention to academic labour by foregrounding the body.

Mathijs van de Sande, University of Leuven, Belgium

The politics of free time: Prefiguring a new time regime

From classical political philosophy onward, politics has often been closely related to a certain notion of 'free time'. Political action, or engagement in the public sphere, presupposes that one has a certain extent of free time at one's disposal. It is the activity reserved for those spaces and moments in which – or persons for whom – the maintenance or reproduction of 'bare life' is not at stake, so that the engagement with public affairs can be truly disinterested.

To put it stronger: this intimate relation between political action and free time is commonly understood to be at stake in politics itself. Hannah Arendt critically distinguishes action from work,

counterposing the instrumentalism of the latter to a radical conception of freedom closely identified with the former. Freedom is not the end or means, but “rather the substance and meaning of all things political.” Autonomist Marxists like Antonio Negri or Harry Cleaver argue that political action consists of the very process of subtraction from the capitalist relations of production and the time lost in it. Political struggle, Jacques Rancière stresses, can often be characterized as this continuous attempt to withdraw from dominated time. In all these perspectives, free time is neither a precondition for politics nor its end or outcome, but rather its very matter – that which is actively ‘prefigured’ in political action itself. The subtraction from dominant time regimes – not merely in order for politics to emerge, but in the first place as political action – also characterizes the practices of recent protest movements like Occupy or the Indignados.

Through strategies like precarization and flexibilization, neo-liberalism continuously colonizes – and, thus, depoliticizes – our free time. Outside as well as inside academia, this increasing pressure for all aspects of our everyday lives to be more productive, efficient, and flexible must be met by a politics of free time.

Evert van der Zweerde, Radoud Universiteit Nijmegen, The Netherlands

What neo-liberalism has been good for...

Common sense has it that “we” live “under neo-liberal hegemony” – the only ones who do not engage in this type of discourse are the people who in fact represent it: politicians, managers, business people. In my paper, I want to start from three often misread, yet famous utterances: Margaret Thatcher’s “There is no such thing as society”, Bill Clinton’s “It’s the economy, stupid!” and former Dutch prime minister Wim Kok’s “Some things are too important to be left to politicians” [about the European Central Bank]. All three statements, I suggest, are true, but not in the way in which they are usually understood.

We have to ask ourselves (and each other) what we mean when we say “hegemony” (neoliberal or other), and how we can relate to it. Also, we have to ask about the “truth” of this neoliberal hegemony: what does it really tell us? How should we “read” it? Speaking from my own, “glocal” perspective (that of a non-discriminated well-educated citizen of a prosperous liberal democratic rule of law state), I want to discuss three aspects, indicated by the three utterances quoted above, under the general heading: the good thing about neo-liberalism is the shattering of a few illusions (which some of us may never have had in the first place ... but I did, and many with me).