

Nieuwsbrief 276

September 2024

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SAVE THE DATE: FRIDAY 13 DECEMBER – ASCA30

On Friday 13 December we will celebrate ASCA's 30th anniversary, so please save the date. We are planning to have two panels in the afternoon (from 13:00 in the Doelenzaal), with one panel focusing on the forthcoming publication with Amsterdam University Press of *The Future of Cultural Analysis: A Critical Inquiry* (edited by Murat Aydemir, Aylin Kuryel and Noa Roei). Ideas for the second panel are welcome. After the panels, there will be drinks and a dinner, so keep the evening free! If you want to help us organize the festivities, do get in touch!

NEW PHD REPRESENTATIVES: HANNAH POON AND SERRA HUGHES

From September 1st 2024, ASCA has two new PhD representatives on the AIHR PhD Council. The PhD Council advises the AIHR directorial board on all matters that affect the interests of PhDs (for e.g. issues

regarding teaching, contracts, dissertation defense, availability of hardware, mental health, etc.).



[Serra Hughes](#) will act as representative of self-funded PhD candidates. Serra started her project entitled *Worlding Communication: Novel Communication Barriers in Global Science Fiction and Speculative Literature* in 2023.



[Hannah Poon](#) started in 2022 and her project is entitled: *Surviving in Abeyance: Hong Kong and the Politics of Culture*. Please feel free to contact them if you have any suggestions, concerns or initiatives.

WELCOME BACK ESTHER PEEREN

She was never completely away, but per 1 September she is back: Esther Peeren. Since she has been appointed Head of the Department of Literature and Linguistics, Esther cannot return as ASCA Director. So Jaap

Kooijman will continue as interim director, and Esther takes his place as vice-director, to look after the PhD community, until 1 December 2024.

NEW PHD CANDIDATES AT ASCA

17 new PhD candidates started their projects within ASCA since the beginning of 2024. Warm Welcome!

Oscar Man, *Noisy Commons: Identity, Community, and Locality in Hong Kong Indie Pop*

Supervisors: Jeroen de Kloet, Leonie Schmidt

The project highlights and problematizes the connection between music and politics through the emerging genre of indie pop in Hong Kong. Through interviews, participant observations, and object analysis, the project locates the local community which adopts resilient cultural practices and form close ties with others in the post-movement era of Hong Kong, where political freedom is tightening rapidly. It also argues that platformization offers a new possible ground for non-confrontational political expressions and actions through culture while enabling a new form of community which is heterophonic in nature.

Andy Zhu, *Queer Cruising, Trans-Border Networking: Queer Cinema Culture in Mainland China and Hong Kong*

Supervisors: Jeroen de Kloet, Tommy Tse

The research studies queer cinema culture in the 2020s in Mainland China and Hong Kong. I use "Queer Cruising" as a central concept to analyze the resilient practice wielded by queer filmmakers, independent cultural and NGO practitioners across the two localities of Mainland China and Hong Kong. Combining textual analysis and empirical research, the project looks at the cases of queer cinema representation, venues of queer film festivals in Hong Kong, Guangdong, and Southwestern China, the screening and events of indie spaces, and the politics of platformisation in queer (micro) cinema on social media.

Faye Xu, *The Art of Liminality: Resilience of Socially Engaged Art in Mainland China and Hong Kong*

Supervisors: Jeroen de Kloet, Esther Peeren

This project studies the resilience of socially engaged art in urban and rural areas of mainland China and Hong Kong. By situating socially engaged art within the historical and socio-political context of this region, the project reconceptualizes it as a liminal practice and looks into cases that are not necessarily recognized by the institution of contemporary art. Through ethnographic research of diverse cases, this project explores tactics that make critical artistic practices resilient and explore how these practices mobilize and connect people across different geographies, generations, professions, and classes to foster dissensus and criticality amidst heightened authoritarianism.

Chenyang Zhang, *Searching for Accessibility and Inclusivity: An Archaeology of Film Cataloging Infrastructures from Cards to Databases*

Supervisors: Giovanna Fossati, Christian Olesen

Despite the technological boom of Big Data and AI, film heritage institutions still grapple with the sheer volume of data and the emergence of new media and data forms that require to be processed within their catalogs. This research unveils the transition of film cataloging infrastructures, from card catalogs to digital databases, across diverse cultural contexts. Employing a media archaeological approach, the project investigates the invisible yet essential role of cataloging systems and practices in preserving global cinematic heritage.

Sara Messelaar Hammerschmidt, *Anthropomorphic AI and Chatbots*

Richard Rogers and Natalia Sanchez Querubin

This project investigates how generative AI fabricates bodies and embodied subjects in a popular landscape that is increasingly networked and synthetic. It explores the (intellectual) history of embodiment and digital media, and examines empirically how generative AI media transforms or challenges digital media's influence on the evolving experience of embodiment. The research focuses on how AI fabricates and enables fabrication of bodies and people by investigating how practices and ecosystems around AI media democratize image synthesis and synthetic representation. It will ask how this challenges existing systems of knowing and ordering in ways that may shift the experience of biopower and agency.

Mai Abbas, *Feminism in popular culture, where art thou? A study of the representation of women in Egyptian television series*

Supervisors: Jaap Kooijman, Maaïke Voorhoeve, Joke Hermes

This study aims to provide an understanding of the current depiction of women in Egyptian popular culture through tracing the doing and undoing of feminist ideology in television series. This should assist in understanding how the representation of women works and where it stems from. The study will contribute academically through utilising a multidisciplinary approach, adding to the discussion on "high" versus "mass" culture exploring the validity of *cultural capital* in the construction and reception of cultural expression in relation to women representation, and utilising interviews to create a connection between cultural ideology and social practice..

Teresa del Sole, *Reconceptualizing pornography: empirical and philosophical perspectives for liberation*

Mari Mikkola, Selin Gerlek

This project analyses the content and aesthetics of contemporary pornographies from an empirically informed philosophical perspective. Over the last

decades, the broader social implications of the frequent exposition to mainstream pornography have been criticized as harmful, from legal, philosophical and psychological perspectives alike. But how can pornography be reconceptualized? This project answers this question and evaluates the philosophical and empirical consequences of a feminist-oriented development of pornographic contents. It uses an innovative mixed methodology of philosophical argumentation and empirical analysis, aesthetics, and several case studies, to enhance pornography's liberatory potential, in continuity with the latest philosophical analysis on the topic.

Hannah Kochs, *Making the Invisible Visible in the GenAI Supply Chain: Ethics of Human Red-Teaming*

Paula Helm, Tobias Blanke

This research aims to shed light on human involvement in AI production by investigating the intricacies of human labor practices in red teaming. In doing so, it helps to demystify the socio-technical notion of AI as a magical, autonomous system that is beyond human control. It seeks to uncover a crucial part of the socio-technical supply chain of GenAI in order to identify ethical challenges and derive practice-informed interventions to mitigate ethico-political risks in the long term.

Basma Hamdy, *Radical Design Archives: alternative approaches to archiving and digitizing graphic design history in the ARAB region.*

Supervisors: Annet Dekker, Chiara de Cesari

Radical Design Archives examines the role of digital and virtual archival collections in the preservation and reinterpretation of Arab graphic design history-making. The project focuses on four collections that center on Arab visual culture and utilize the internet to facilitate access and increase visibility.

Natalia Giraldo, *Literary Geographies in the Sierra Nevada de Gonawindúa, Colombia*

Supervisors: Irene Villaescusa Ilan, Rolando Vazquez Melken

How are *literary geography* and *natural narratives* capable of providing a critical decolonizing basis of the Western European paradigm? How do these *philosophies, epistemologies and other literary practices* provide elements of overcoming the environmental and civilizational crisis applied in processes of self-education such as *Pluriversities* and *Territorial Pedagogy*?

Ting Xu, *Hope You 'Tube' Well: Imagine E-emotional Regulation Via Educational Videos on Therapy*

Supervisors: Aylin Kuryel, Karina van Dalen-Oskam

The project leverages the YouTube Data API to collect multicultural videos on therapy in English, Dutch, and Mandarin during the COVID-19 pandemic. It aims to explore how adults aged 18-35 can learn to manage

negative emotions through "tubing" - actively searching for therapy content on YouTube out of curiosity and interest in learning. It further contrasts TED Talks's professional insights with Cinema Therapy's artistic perspectives to bridge psychological and cultural interpretations. The approach remains interdisciplinary, combining computational and qualitative methods, concepts from affect science, affect theory, emotional regulation, film, and metaphor studies. With various intellectual ideas and online therapeutic objects, the study hopes to highlight how certain usage of YouTube has the educational potential to enhance users' emotional well-being. Different public interventions are organized to see if YouTube may look inviting as an informal learning platform for those who wish to gain therapeutic knowledge and tools remotely, thus beyond the age limit.

Bilyana Manolova, *Becoming Post-Socialist: Life Writing and the Post-socialist Subject*

Esther Peeren, Boris Noordenbos

The ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war has brought global attention to the legacies of Soviet power that permeate this present. But who are the subjects that inhabit it? This project addresses this question through the lens of life writing. It studies a transnational corpus of post-1989 life narratives from Bulgaria, Russia, and Ukraine to examine how life writers narrativize their post-socialist subjectivities. It introduces a new approach to studying post-socialist subject-formation, grounded in feminist theories of relational selfhood and performative autobiographical acts.

Priyank Gothwal, *Time and Colonialism: abstraction as the mode of temporality.*

Esther Peeren, Achia Anzi

Following Annibal Quijano's (1989, 1992) and Walter D. Mignolo's (2007) thesis regarding the complicity between modernity and coloniality, this research examines the modern organisation of time in relation to European colonialism. Although widely known as a spatial phenomenon, colonialism was predicated on control and mastery over temporality. Employing a decolonial perspective, my research inquires how the experience of time was transformed in the wake of colonialism and how the modern order of time served and continues to serve imperial ambitions.

My research will investigate colonial devices and practices that were developed and introduced in India to organise time. I will analyse the influence of four significant timekeeping devices—the clock, calendar, radio, and railways' timetable—on the day-to-day lives of Indian society under British rule from the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries. My research will also include my own art practice, through which I will further the critical investigation of the modern organisation of time and imagine decolonial conceptions that undermine it.

Calvin Duggan, *Literary Tourism at the Peripheries: A Relational Analysis of the Hay Festival in Rural Wales and in the 'Global South'*

Supervisors: Esther Peeren, Niall Martin

This project investigates contemporary literary tourism through an in-depth relational analysis of different international editions of the *Hay Festival*. Tracing the literary festival's trajectory from rural Wales to locales in the 'Global South'—namely, Colombia and Abu Dhabi—this project interrogates the impact of this transposition and the ongoing colonial legacies of contemporary literary, cultural and tourism practices. Conceiving of tourism and literature as related modes of circulation through which places and people find meaning, the project combines ethnography, archival research and the close analysis of primary sources (including literature, TV, film and promotional materials), alongside posthumanist relational thinking, to interrogate the entangled relations between the various places and people that make up the Festival.

Bogna Bochińska, *Meanders of memory: The media archaeological study of environmental remembrance and transnationality along the river Oder.*

Supervisors: Patricia Pisters, Leonie Schmidt

This project proposes to understand the complexities of human and non-human relationships through the environment of the Oder River basin as a place of encounters and migrations of objects, peoples, and cultures across both time and space. Within the context of West Polish territories post World War 2, where the Oder River is a significant border-forming geographical entity, this research project examines ways in which the ecologies of the river embody the fluidity of borders and flows of migration and become a vital site for transnational memory making. I aim to follow the stream of the river and conduct a media-archaeological research of the Oder-oriented cultural texts and artifacts from the 20th and 21st Centuries, reflective of the complexity of the Oder-bound communities founded on displacement. This particular case study is an attempt to present a wider possibility for a river-oriented practice of researching border environments and transnationality.

Xinyi Zheng, *Cosmic Meridian: An aesthetics of qi in contemporary Chinese cinema*

Supervisors: Patricia Pisters, Jeroen de Kloet

The elemental turn in media studies has expanded the concept of media into a broader interdisciplinary concept through a consideration of elemental *mediation*, in the face of a haunting futurism of the ecological crisis and automation of the Anthropocene. However, while the current philosophy of elements has been mainly approached through the lens of the classic Greek elements (fire, water, earth, air), Chinese and Asian philosophical traditions of the elements have been

rarely researched in relation to media and hence this contemporary field of the discipline.

This project endeavors to complement current elemental media studies with Chinese conception of *qi* 气, a richer concept that allows us to pick up multiple elements (thoughts, facts, phenomena, feelings) and multiple dimensions (corporeal, spiritual and cosmic) in contemporary Chinese cinema. On the one hand, this project will propose a philosophy of *qi* by combining Western and Eastern philosophy in understanding our relation to nature and technology, hence contributing to a less Eurocentric elemental mediation. On the other hand, this project will bring in four case studies to explore how contemporary Chinese cinema renders an aesthetic of *qi sensible* through the alterity in percepts and affects.

Alex Zakkas, *Critical Assessment of Technologies for Remote Examination in Higher Education*

Supervisors: Geert Lovink, Christian Detweiler

Responding to the current attention on educational technologies within the field of Critical Studies in Higher Education, this research project turns a critical gaze on technologies used for remote examination. These technologies are approached as sites of contestation within wider socio-technical assemblages that are reinfrastructuring educational institutions. This is important because understanding the transformations taking place will help anticipate their effects on future educational practice. The project combines perspectives from digital humanities with critical

technical practice and pedagogy to develop new theoretical frameworks and methods for analysing current practices and to propose alternatives. It involves tracing the historical developments that have led to the development and adoption of certain technologies, case studies in educational settings that raise critical concerns from the perspective of those most affected, and interventions in digital design education that explore alternatives through critical & speculative design. It aims to contribute to the development and evaluation of new examination models.

ASCA GUEST: SILVIA VARI

Silvia Vari is a PhD student in Italian at the University of Warwick. Her current research focuses on the experience of (forced) migration in the Mediterranean area narrated in Italian comics. Aiming attention at different forms of migrant storytelling in comics (such as autobiography, reportage, and fiction) and the relative narrative framing strategies, her research analyses the potential of comics to challenge mainstream discourses about (forced) migration and displacement.



Silvia Vari is co-founder of the Warwick Comics Research Network and her academic work has been published in peer-reviewed journals such as *Mediascapes* (2/2023), *Studi Culturali* (3/2021) and *Ticentre* (15/2021).

Silvia will visit ASCA from September 2024-July 2025.

NWA GRANT: RESTITUTING, RECONNECTING, REIMAGINING SOUND HERITAGE (Re:SOUND)

Main applicant: S. Margana (Gadjah Mada University), Co-applicants: meLê Yamomo (UvA), Consortiumpartners: Johan Oomen (Sound & Vision) | NWA research into collections with a colonial context

NWO has awarded funding to 11 research within the call 'Research into collections with a colonial context'. Dutch museum collections may contain looted objects with a colonial context. This programme aims to redress injustice and strengthen trust and cooperation with the countries of origin.

Re:Sound renegotiates Eurocentric understandings of "heritage" and heritage curation through research into colonial sound collections from Indonesia located in the Netherlands. Re:Sound treats these recorded sounds as historical sources, and improves the access for source community stakeholders through Indonesian PhD research, non-academic Indonesian Visiting Fellowships, consortium workshops, and summer schools.

NEW RESEARCH PROJECT: EMERGENCIES OF AUTHORITARIANISM

New international project co-coordinated by Daniel Loick. First event on October 10th at Spui25.

Authoritarian, right-wing populist and fascist tendencies are currently gaining strength all over the world. The task is not only to analyze authoritarianism critically, but also to respond to it politically. For this purpose, this project proposes the novel concept of *Emergencies of Authoritarianism*. Emergencies implies *emergences*, the development of authoritarian tendencies

out of their "normal" latency and enabling conditions. We adopt a critical perspective that analyzes local trajectories in their transversal global entanglements and complex interactions in order to avoid both methodological nationalism and Eurocentric bias. At the same time, emergencies imply *urgencies*: they demand an immediate response. Authoritarianisms cannot be reduced to past times, nor to distant places, but can emerge, with new victim groups, anywhere.

Over the coming years, the project will organize workshops and conferences at different locations around the globe, and present its results in various publication formats. As a transnational network with equal partners from the global South, we work closely with non-academic actors such as NGOs, cultural institutions, and journalists, using locally generated knowledge to develop robust responses to the threat of authoritarianism.

The project team is coordinated by Judith Butler (Berkeley), Robin Celikates (Berlin), Daniel Loick (Amsterdam) and Zeynep Gambetti (Istanbul), and involves Debaditya Bhattacharya (Delhi), Gisela Catanzaro (Buenos Aires), Denise Ferreira Da Silva (New York), Rosaura Martinez (Mexico City) and Eva von Redecker (Berlin). *Emergencies of Authoritarianism* was initiated by the [International Consortium of Critical Theory Programs \(ICCTP\)](#) and is funded by the VolkswagenStiftung (Germany).

The first event, entitled: *Emergencies of Authoritarianism: Global Entanglements*, will take place on 18 October 2024, 19.00 h, at [Spui 25](#), Amsterdam and features a panel discussion with: Debaditya Bhattacharya (Delhi), Gisela Catanzaro (Buenos Aires), Zeynep Gambetti (Istanbul), Eva von Redecker (Berlin), moderated by Daniel Loick (Amsterdam). Details follow in the next newsletter.

TRANSASIA PICNIC

The Trans-Asia Cultural Studies Reading Group, coordinated by Jeroen de Kloet, Tommy Tse, and Pengnan Hu, invites you to a Transasia picnic on August 28, 2024 at Oosterpark, Amsterdam, starting at 4 PM, to kick off the new semester.

Meetings are scheduled for September 19, October 17, November 14, December 19.

CAPITAL: VOLUME ONE - READING GROUP

Organized by Safae el Khannoussi | Starting date: Tuesday 3 September 2024 15:00-17:00

In his highly influential work *Capital*, Karl Marx offers a rich and complex critique of the rise and functioning of the capitalist system. Marx is particularly interested in how within the inevitable crises caused by continuous flows of capital, the possibility of a new order takes shape. In this reading group, we will work our way through this important and timely book.

In this seminar, we will a) read *Capital: Volume One* in its entirety, b) read secondary literature on the text, presented by one or two participants.

We will meet once every two weeks to discuss one or several chapters. For every session, one or two people will present a reading selection to start the discussion. The reading group is open to all, but active participation and regular attendance is required. If you are interested in joining the seminar please contact s.elkhannoussielboudrin@uva.nl.

HISTORY REPEATING

Populist Imaginaries, Cultural Productions, and Subaltern Identity Formation in a Trans-Historical Perspective

Multidisciplinary Seminar organized by Salvatore Giusto: s.giusto@uva.nl and Francesca Zantedeschi | 6 September 2024 | [University Library](#), Belle van Zuylenzaal

The processes of cultural production and circulation that characterize current media outlets and online platforms of social mediation, in tandem with the forms of relationality they elicit in context, intersect the institutional life of neoliberal democracies on multiple levels, while often serving as controversial “echo chambers” for the creation, circulation, and entrenchment of rather marginalizing populist discourses and dynamics of subaltern identity formation on a global scale (Teitelbaum 2020; Mazzarella 2019; Gerbaudo 2018). For example, the recent electoral affirmations of populist parties and movements of explicit far-right inspiration and xenophobic intentions within many European, North American, and Latin American contexts of neoliberal governance, as well as the forms of social discrimination, symbolic violence, and criminalizing “stereotypizations” of various gendered, racialized, and class-based minorities they have contextually elicited, have been all supported by an intense mediatization of politics, which systematically relied on consumer-based forms of digital cultural production and online networking between populist institutional operators and their “followers.”

Accordingly, current neoliberal processes of cultural production and circulation frequently reify populism as a mode of political communication through which diversely empowered social groups (e.g.: unemployed people, precarious workers, middle- and upper-class subjects) performatively engage with the public sphere as a homogenous social body (e.g.: the “people”) due to their supposed common antagonism against more or less imagined social formations, which they culturally interpret as external to the people itself (Laclau 2005).

Given that, this strong relationship of interdependency between populist processes of subaltern identity formation and the specific ways in which cultural productions are time by time regulated and marketed (e.g.: either directly by state authorities or through indirect mechanics of economic governmentality) goes way beyond the digital age and the rise of neoliberal state-power. Such a liaison has been detected throughout history, across various geographical and

socio-cultural landscapes, especially during times connoted by conflicts, political authoritarianism, and/or abrupt socio-institutional change (Benjamin 1968 [1935]).

This workshop intends to identify and explore in a comparative perspective the historical, mediatic, and overall cultural roots of the populist dynamics of governmentality and subaltern identity formation that have characterized various instantiations of the public sphere in space and time to date. With this aim, this seminar welcomes interventions that analyze the relationship between specific modalities of cultural productions, populist imaginaries, and discriminatory processes of subaltern identity formation within a wide range of geographical, institutional, and temporal landscapes.

Read more: <https://asca.uva.nl/shared/subsites/amsterdam-institute-for-humanities-research/en/events/2024/09/history-repeating.html?origin=puxViXMR4qLMjgCvCIKGA>

AN INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY JUSTICE & ACCESSIBLE PEDAGOGY

Workshop led by Dr. Sami Schalk | Organized by Wigbertson Julian Isenia, Slava Greenberg, and Leni Van Goidsenhoven | 9 September 2024, 14:30=17:30 (with drinks) [Roeterseilandcampus - building J/K](#), REC JKK44

This interactive workshop will introduce participants to the principles of the disability justice movement followed by discussion of ways to incorporate these principles into how educators design and teach their courses. The workshop will leave space for questions, group discussion and collaborative brainstorming to address issues and concerns of participants about making their specific teaching more accessible, including acknowledging that some of us are disabled ourselves and are impacted by the ableism of our institutions in ways that effect our teaching.

About Dr. Sami Schalk:

Dr. Schalk is an Associate Professor of Gender and Women’s Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her interdisciplinary research explores the intersections of disability, race, and gender in contemporary American literature and culture, with a particular focus on African American literature, speculative fiction, and women’s literature. She is the author of *Bodyminds Reimagined* (Duke University Press, 2018) and *Black Disability Politics* (Duke University Press, 2022). Additionally, Dr. Schalk is a pleasure activist and artist who believes that pleasure is political and a measure of freedom.

Registration is required ([fill out this form](#)), as spaces are limited. Please just sign up if you really can join. If you signed up but can no longer attend, please let us know by emailing: l.vangoidsenhoven@uva.nl

This event is generously supported by ASCA, AISSR and the Decolonial Futures RPA Seed Grant

"Addressing Access Fatigue: Archival Practices through a Critical Disability Lens".

ABOLITION DEMOCRACIES

10 September 2024 | OMHP

Seminar organized by Safae El Khannoussi el Boudrin, Daniel Loick and Oscar Talbot | In the first semester of the 2024/25 academic year, the Abolition Democracies seminar will focus on presentations of the work in progress of seminar members. If you want to participate in the seminar or present your own work, please get in touch with Daniel (d.loick@uva.nl). The dates of our meetings are: 10.9., 8.10., 21.11., 12.12., 17.00-19.00.

INTERSPECIES PERFORMANCE

Symposium + Book Launch, 10 September 2024, 10:00-18:00, organized by Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca, Contact: laura.cull@ahk.nl | Registration: [here](#).

This event is a one-day symposium to mark the launch of the book *Interspecies Performance* co-edited by Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca and Florence Fitzgerald-Allsopp.

How might human ideas of performance be transformed through encounters with nonhuman animals? Or – given that how human and animals can meet is shaped by the contexts in which those meetings take place – how might animalizing the aesthetics and spatial-temporal qualities of performance enable new interspecies encounters? What happens to performance if it is made for nonhumans understood as perceiving and expressive subjectivities with aesthetic interests and preferences, rather than the mere objects of human art and attention? In contact with other species, the entire apparatus of performance is transformed.

Over the last quarter century, there has been a profound questioning of the anthropocentrism of performance leading to the manifestation of an incredible amount of interspecies arts works and projects made internationally. Interspecies Performance brings together artists and scholars from across the disciplines to interrogate the rich terrain of contemporary interspecies performance practice – specifically in relation to nonhuman animals. The book foregrounds an intersectional and ethically oriented approach that centres care, empathy and collaboration, and considers the deep entanglement of contemporary oppressions. In this symposium we will foreground the question of what performance contributes to understanding of the relationships between animal justice, decoloniality and disability justice.

Combining talks, practical workshops and performance, this event will bring together staff, researchers and students from AHK and UvA to explore the aesthetics, epistemology, ethics and politics of contemporary interspecies performance. The first activity related to Laura's new Chair by special appointment in Performance Philosophy at UvA, it will close with a celebratory drinks reception and sales of the book.

LOSING THE GROUND OF HOPE: ABANDONMENT, DESPAIR AND SUICIDE IN LONG COVID

First session in the Long Covid Conversations organized by Eva Meijer | Speaker: Prof. dr. Vivienne Matthies-Boon, Radboud University Nijmegen | 12 September 2024, 12:00 hrs. | Online | Register by sending a message to Eloë Kingma at: asca-fgw@uva.nl

Drawing on autoethnographic work as well as ethnographic observations in both the Netherlands and Germany, this paper will explore how suffering and despair is experienced by many patients with severe Long Covid, for whom suicide even become a feasible option. Suicide, I argue, becomes a feasible option in Long Covid because it is the logical outcome of existential despair experienced by these patients in face of the multileveled abandonment in the physical, social, medical and political spheres simultaneously. It is hence not only the feeling that their bodies have abandoned them, but also that friends, loved ones, medics, doctors and politicians have deserted them. Here, abandonment, I argue should hence be less equated with Agamben's idea of exception and rather with Lesham's notion of radical disinterest.

I argue that the encounter with such radical disinterest and indifference instils a deep sense of hopelessness amongst Long Covid patients, that ultimately flips into its most severe form: despair. In despair we do not merely suffer a disappointed hope or even a more generalized hopelessness that affects parts of our life, but rather in despair the very existential ground of hope is broken. The possibility to hope itself is in tatters, and neither the past nor the future can redeem the here and now. The despairing person is condemned to the here and now, robbed of a prospect of a better future and condemned to a past that appears dyssynchronous with present. Despair is hence a form of existential, nihilistic imprisonment, wherein we are abandoned to ourselves with no idea about how to go on as the ground of hope itself has been pulled from under one's feet. It is in such a state of despair, that suicide arises as a question (Steinbock 2007) - not as a mental pathology, but as a logical outcome of the multileveled experience of abandonment that crushes the ground of hope itself. And thus we have to recognize that the most important responses to despair and suicide by Long Covid patients are not to be found in individualized therapy, but rather in the practice of social, medical and political solidarity. It is only this that may undo the multileveled abandonment that Long Covid patients face and work to repair the ground of hope.

[Long Covid Conversations website](#)

GAMELAB

Co-organized by Barbora Bachanová, Furkan Dabaniyasti, Riccardo Freschi, Marein van den Heuvel, Jelmer Labots, Lingyun, Yuhong Liu, Shiyun Qian and Toni Pape | Date: Thursday, September 12 | Time: 15:00-18:00 | Location: BG1 (Turfdraagsterpad 9), room 0.16

This academic year, the GameLab will be run as a tutorial for Research Master students. ASCA members are welcome to join. We plan to have five sessions during the fall semester.

Please sign up through [this form](#).

During our first session, we will try to define “video games” and study approaches to the aesthetic and narrative analysis of video games.

The readings are:

Pape, Toni. “Surveillance Stealth 1: Conspiracy Thinking and Ubiquitous War.” *The Aesthetics of Stealth: Digital Culture, Video Games and the Politics of Perception*. MIT Press, 2024, 103-128.

Salen, Katie and Eric Zimmerman. “Defining Games” and “Defining Digital Games.” *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*. MIT Press 2004, 71-91.

Veugen, Connie. “Assassin’s Creed and Transmedia Storytelling.” *International Journal of Gaming and Computer-Mediated Simulations* 8 (April 1, 2016): 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJGCMS.2016040101>.

The readings can be found in this [UvA OneDrive folder](#).

POLITICAL VEGANISM

Organized by Eoa Meijer | With a.o. Christopher Sebastian, Dido van Oosten, and Carolina Trujillo | September 16th, 14:00 -17:00, [University Library](#), Doelenzaal

Veganism is more than a lifestyle or health choice: eating animals is also a political issue, for many different reasons. Because the way we treat non-human animals is political and non-human animals are also political actors, because eating animals contributes to the rise of zoonoses and pandemics as well as the climate crisis – one of the biggest political problems worldwide –, and because the exploitation and exclusion of animals is intertwined with the exploitation and exclusion of humans. On this afternoon we discuss the politics of veganism, or perhaps veganisms, and intersections between different forms of oppression. There are lectures on queer veganism and just farming, a literary intervention by Carolina Trujillo and a plenary discussion about veganism in politics. Everyone is welcome!

Programme

14.00-14.15 Welcome

14.15-15.15 Christopher Sebastian *Queer Veganisme*

15.15-15.45 Dido van Oosten *Stichting Kapitaloecen en rechtvaardige landbouw*

15.45-16.00 Break

16.00-16.15 Reading Carolina Trujillo

16.15-17.00 Panel discussion about veganism in politics with Leonie Gerritsen (Party for the Animals The Hague), Jasmin Gerritsma (Plant-Based Universities),

Tim Reysoo (animal rights activist), Carolina Trujillo (writer), Lisette Weustenink (Plant Based Treaty).

Registration: please email dierfilosofie@gmail.com. Space is limited, so only email if you really plan to come. There is no option to attend this event virtually. Please note that Christopher Sebastian’s talk will be in English, the rest of the talks will be in Dutch.

THE REARGUARD OF THE REVOLUTION VOL. 3: THE BLACK(NESS) FILES

Reading Group organized by Yorgos Karagiannopoulos & Aristotelis Tokatlidis | Every Monday at 18:00 hrs. First session: 16 September 2024 | Location [P.C. Hoofthuis](#), PCH room 3.19

In this third iteration of the reading group, we will survey key moments from the history of the Black radical movement, such as The Niagara Movement, Negritude, the Black Panthers, the 1992 Los Angeles riots, and Black Lives Matter. The idea will be to read the theory produced through, by, and for those movements. We’ll ponder on the relationship between the intellectual and the movement: vanguard or rearguard? Studying contemporary texts alongside classics, we’ll look for the continuities and different trajectories of the concepts yielded by Black radical thought.

The meetings will take place every other Monday at 18:00. For the program and the texts feel free to contact g.t.karagiannopoulos@uva.nl.

CAPITAL: VOLUME II - READING GROUP

ASCA Reading Group Organised by Oscar Talbot and Veerle van Wijngaarden | Starting date: Tuesday 15 September 2024 16:00-18:00

Marx’s *Capital* is one of the most influential works of the modern humanities. After Volume 1, we will now continue reading Capital Volume 2. The reading group aims to be a focused place to tackle this imposing and voluminous text, from a philosophical perspective. We will meet once every two weeks on Tuesday 16.00-18.00, starting September 15th, 2024. For every session, we will read one or several chapters and one or two people will present the readings to start the discussion. The reading group is open to all who have read Volume 1 before (not necessarily in this reading group). Active participation and regular attendance is required.

If you are interested please contact v.a.vanwijngaarden@uva.nl and o.l.talbot@uva.nl for the location.

CAPITAL OWES YOU NOTHING. ON LACAN, PASCAL, AND PURE LOVE

Masterclass by Dr. Dominiek Hoens, Royal Institute for Theatre, Cinema and Sound

First 2024-25 session of the *We Have Never Had Sex* seminar, organized by Marija Cetinić, Tessel Veneboer, Stefa Govaart, Persis Bekkering, Catrinel Radoi, Imogen Grigorovich | September 18th, 15-18h, Location t.b.a.

Collective debates on sex among feminists in the late 1960s and 1970s elicited two polarizing views: sex positivists and those deemed “anti-sex”. This dyad unleashed a prolific energy of discussion, argument, and analysis — driven as it was by the hope that either bookend would one day complete the daunting task of articulating the essence of “woman” in its unabating subordination to “man”, that is, of pinpointing the essence of woman on the terms of sexual difference. Yet, as Andrea Long Chu remarks à propos this history, “the stronger feminist theories of sex got, the less effective they became” (“The Impossibility of Feminism,” 63). Ushering in a third wave of feminist thinking, the focus of critical inquiry shifted with the emergence of queer theory in the North-American academic context in the 80s and early 90s. Rather than foregrounding sexual difference as the very grounds from which sprang a well-reasoned landscape of social identities, “queer” halted that considerable faith in identitarian intelligibility. Historically analyzing the usage of the word by field-defining figures such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and David M. Halperin, theorist and linguist Mel Y. Chen concludes that “[queer theory] departs from dominant feminisms in the United States...in its refusal...to advocate or politically favor any particular category other than the (sexually) nonnormative” (*Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*, 69). However, if sedimentation best describes the social temporality in which bodies materialize, antinormativity is itself regulated and constrained by that which it denounces. In line with Robyn Wiegman and Elizabeth A. Wilson’s “invitation to think queer theory without assuming a position of antinormativity from the outset” (in the introduction to the special issue of *differences*, *Antinormativity’s Queer Conventions*) we ask, How to approach normativity on something other than dyadic terms?

We Have Never Had Sex is an attempt to think a more contradictory site than the norm/anti-norm topology still present in queer theory today. Asserting that sex *is* (the) non-relation, Jacques Lacan’s “There is no sexual relation” is an essential precursor. Importantly, Lacan’s statement in the negative never aimed to ontologize this constitutive non-relation that sex *is* into intelligible (non)relationships. However, this didn’t prevent it from being canalized in precisely that way: from “relationships are impossible” to “true love doesn’t exist”. Such truisms vis-à-vis relationality misconstrue sex’s confrontation with (the) non-relation as “the *cause* of the oddities and difficulties within all concrete relationships” (Zupančič, *What is Sex?*, 23). To falsely decode the non-relation as an obstacle is to think it can be overcome. But for Lacan it wasn’t an obstacle *to* but the (il)logical condition *of* relational possibility. So sex names a structural antagonism without the optimism of ontological completeness: “We have never had sex,” declares philosopher Oxana Timofeeva.

Prone to installing a logic that exploits difference for the sake of unimaginative sameness, negativity cannot be rendered politically coherent. Negativity is relentless, unnatural, contrived. However, the *We Have Never Had Sex* seminar series does not seek to reduce sex *to* — nor celebrate sex *as* — negativity as if it were a bad thing, or, “antisocial”. Sex will have meant work, work *in* and *on* the social to which we stay committed and with which we enjoy, too. Heeding the circumlocutionary mode that speaking of sex demands, this seminar series will think sex in its ontological relevance (Lacan, Butler, Zupančič); its relation to negativity and nonsovereignty (Berlant & Edelman 2014, Bersani 2018, Chu 2019); the relatedness of transness and Blackness (Bey 2017); its figuration in cultural objects (Trojan 2014, 2020; Elagoz 2021). An experiment in forms of speculation, the seminar gathers poets, philosophers, artists, performers, and scholars to grapple with questions of foundation, logic and limit, asking how sex is a site of or an encounter with negativity that troubles totality, a “relentless force that unsettles the fantasy of sovereignty” (Berlant & Edelman, *Sex, or the Unbearable*, viii).

Dominiek Hoens, PhD (Ghent University), teaches philosophy at the Royal Institute for Theatre, Cinema and Sound (RITCS, Brussels), where he also does research under the heading of “Capital owes you nothing”. Recent publications include an edited collection on Marguerite Duras (www.lineofbeauty.org), a chapter on Jacques Lacan in Routledge *Handbook of Psychoanalytic Political Theory* (2020), and several articles on Blaise Pascal.

SOCIAL DEDUCTION GAME “MAFIA”

Join us for this one-time play session! The session will be guided by ASCA Ph.D candidate Samaneh Asadi who is also an expert and aficionado of the game. | Date: Thursday, September 19 | Time: 15:00-18:00 | Location: BG1 (Turfdraagsterpad 9), room 0.16

During this extraordinary session of GameLab, we will play the social deduction game [Mafia](#). Some of us will play as “mafiosi” whose task it is to take out the other players. The others will play as uninformed “citizens” who will try to identify the mafiosi. The session will be guided by ASCA Ph.D candidate Samaneh Asadi who is also an expert and aficionado of the game.

Please sign up through [this form](#). Please note: Depending on the number of sign-ups, not everyone may be able to play. But the game is also very enjoyable as an audience member.

THE NEW FANTASTIC: REFLECTIONS ON CRITICISM, CREATIVE NON-FICTION AND THE NOVEL TODAY

Lecture Nicholas Royle on 19 September 2024, 17:00, location PCH 1.04. Organized by Esther Peeren, in collaboration with the English Department.

This lecture proposes the idea of a ‘new fantastic’ in the context of contemporary literary and cultural studies. How might we understand the recent emergence of ‘creative non-fiction’, other than as a handy catch-all term for publishers and library cataloguing? What is going on with the striking proliferation of books that are described as ‘one of a kind’, and don’t conform to the conventional categories of novel, autobiography, memoir or academic monograph? At the same time, how might a critical thinking of the ‘fantastic’ provide a new approach to a world of so-called ‘post-truth’, ‘alternative facts’, deep fakes and misinformation? The lecture begins with Tzvetan Todorov’s classic study *The Fantastic* (1970), noting that Todorov himself concludes with the evocation of a ‘new fantastic’ in relation to Kafka. Drawing on more recent theoretical accounts of the uncanny (Royle 2003, Masschelein 2011, Ravetto-Biagoli 2019) and the weird and eerie (Macfarlane 2015, Fisher 2016), the lecture seeks to give force and shape to a ‘new fantastic’ for the twenty-first century. Exploration of recent novels such as Ahmed Saadawi’s *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, Natasha Brown’s *Assembly* and M. John Harrison’s *The Sunken Land Begins to Rise Again*, as well as works of creative non-fiction, enables a fresh appreciation of why ‘the fantastic’ matters today, both in the field of literary studies and the humanities and in the social and political realms more generally.

Nicholas Royle is Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Sussex, UK, where he established the MA and PhD program in creative and critical writing in 2001. He has also taught at the Universities of Oxford, Tampere (Finland), and Stirling; and has been a visiting professor at the universities of Århus (Denmark), Santiago del Compostela (Spain), Turku (Finland), Manitoba (Canada), and Lille (France). His publications include *Telepathy and Literature* (1990), *The Uncanny* (2003), *Veering: A Theory of Literature* (2011), and *David Bowie, Enid Blyton and the Sun Machine* (2023), as well as studies of the work of Elizabeth Bowen, E.M. Forster, Jacques Derrida, William Shakespeare and Hélène Cixous. Royle is the author of two novels, *Quilt* (2010) and *An English Guide to Birdwatching* (2017), and *Mother: A Memoir* (2020). In addition, he is co-author with Andrew Bennett of *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory* (Sixth edition, 2023) and *This Thing Called Literature* (Second edition, 2024). He is joint-managing editor of the *Oxford Literary Review*.

CONTEMPORARY FICTION, CREATIVE NON-FICTION AND CREATIVE CRITICISM

Masterclass Nicholas Royle on 20 September 2024, 10:00-13:00, OostIndisch Huis Room E 014C. Organized by Esther Peeren in collaboration with NICA.

In this masterclass Nicholas Royle will reflect on the nature of contemporary fiction, creative non-fiction, and creative criticism. A reading pack is provided, containing a selection of Royle’s writings in these areas:

essays on ‘Reading Creative Non-Fiction’ (co-authored with Andrew Bennett) and ‘Creative Critical’, as well as extracts from the novels *Quilt* and *An English Guide to Birdwatching*, the memoir *Mother*, and his most recent book, *David Bowie, Enid Blyton and the Sun Machine*.

Places are limited. Email Esther Peeren (e.peeren@uva.nl) by 5 September 2024 to register and receive the reading materials. Research MA students can get 1 ECTS for attending the masterclass and submitting an assignment based on the readings. More on Nicholas Royle see above.

CREATIVE WRITING FOR ACADEMICS: USING CREATIVE WRITING AS A TOOL IN ACADEMIC

Workshop animated by Marie Beauchamps. This workshop is for ASCA Staff members only--ASCA PhD candidates can join Marie’s workshop offered in the PhD Skills program. | 20 September 2024 & 4 October 2024, 09:30-13:00.

This workshop makes space to explore a diverse and creative pallet of writing styles in academic writing practices.

The choices we make when we write have profound effects on the reality that we observe. Giving an account of our observations requires a multitude of styles of writing for achieving the greatest accuracy. Finding the most accurate style of writing for a particular purpose sometimes implies letting go of a seemingly neutral style of writing, instead embracing a plurality of voices, such as staging a dialogue or exploring a more poetic style. This workshop aims to explore what happens when we loosen up the frame of our habitual academic writing practice, inviting multi-layered stories to bubble up and become part of the conversation unfolding on the page.

In this two-sessions interactive workshop, Marie Beauchamps will lead you through a series of hands-on exercises to make you experience creative writing within your academic practice. You will practice writing scenes, working with sensory details, defining the main characters driving the story of your work, and staging conversations between them. There will be time for peer-review, and we will take time to reflect on what it takes to make space for creativity within our academic work.

Practicalities:

Space is limited due to the interactive nature of the workshop. Registration is required. Send a message to Eloë Kingma at asca-fgw@uva.nl. Please indicate if you can attend on location or not (see below). Registration deadline: 15 September.

Participants will be asked to bring a text of their own to work on during the workshop. It can be an outline, a very first draft, a finished article, or everything in-between, as long as they feel comfortable working with it for the time of the workshop.

Marie Beauchamps is an Amsterdam-based poet, creative entrepreneur, and an academic working across humanities, social sciences, and law. She holds a PhD

from the [Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis, University of Amsterdam](#) (2015); she was a Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoc fellow at Queen Mary University of London from (2019-2021), during which she pioneered in the in the [Deepening Creative Practice programme of the Tavistock Institute for Human Relations](#) (2020-2021). She is certified in creative writing from the [International Writers Collective, Amsterdam](#) (2019-2022). Her article [Doing Academia Differently](#) (2021) tells the research story that paved the way for these workshops creative writing for academics. Since 2021, she works as a creative entrepreneur, exploring research and writing from new perspectives. She currently serves as a policy officer at the Royal Netherlands Academy of the Arts and Sciences.

The workshop will be on location, unless there is a majority of people who prefer to do it online.

ASCA PHD MEETING

Tuesday September 24th, 16:00-17:00 hrs. | [PCH 210/211](#)

All ASCA PhD candidates are cordially invited to our bi-annual general ASCA meeting with the directors. Please join us and bring your input, advice and concerns along!

SHAME AND SHIT: THE UNDERSIDE OF QUEERNESS?

Queer Analysis | September 26, 2024 17:00 hrs, location t.b.a. | For more info: d.semerene@uva.nl

Misha Kavka, "Queerness and Hontologie, or what can Baby Andy tell us about shame?"

In the 'clinic' of television, otherwise known as the 1990s/2000s classic *Sex and the City*, a curious exchange takes place at a baby shower that the urban, single girlfriends reluctantly attend (season 1, episode 10). A beaming mother says of her 11-month-old son, 'Andy's a god and I tell him so every day', leading pragmatic Miranda to do the work of the analyst when she asks Carrie, 'Thirty years from now, what do you think the chances are that some woman's going to be able to make Andy happy? I'm gonna go with zero.' This comic encounter, which imagines a (male) baby propelled by maternal love into a future unhappiness with women, provides the elements to be explored in this paper: babies, a queer trajectory, an overwhelming ego ideal and a vague sense of shame hovering around it all. Although it is not clear whose shame it is, something and someone in this encounter has been exposed. To die of shame in the Real is impossible, says Lacan in Seminar XVII, but this makes it all the more important to engage with *hontologie*.

In this paper I will refuse the easy way out, namely, to argue that Baby Andy will grow up to be queer because his mother loved him too hard. This argument, an unimaginative reading of Freud if there ever was one, leads to a certain fixation of 'queer shame' as internalised homophobia (presumably the mother's,

since she tried to set a good example for heterosexuality by loving Andy so much). Instead of tying queerness to same-sex relations and projecting this into Andy's future, I will argue the opposite: that Baby Andy is *already* queer, precisely to the extent that all babies are a field of turbulent being (in Lacan's sense). In this reading, the mother who props Andy up before the mirror, telling him 'you're a god!', is delineating not just an ideal ego with which the baby must identify for self-coherence, but also a set of ego ideals which will bind him to the (heterosexual) social order of the Other. This is the same as saying that that which escapes signification in the living being of the baby – presumably so much more turbulent than the socialised child or adult – is the *objet a* reimagined as an unsignifiable but compelling queerness.

As I will argue, shame is both the hontological exposure of the subject's lack-in-being to the Other *and* the site from which queerness could be made to speak in the clinic. Green and Vanheule (2024) cite Lacan to claim that the exposure of the ego's fantasy of unity should be considered a breakthrough in the psychoanalytic treatment, making shame a productive affect. If what is exposed, however, is the queerness of babies that precedes the fantasmatic capture of the ego, then this is equivalent to (re)discovering the queer baby – that is, the baby-as-queer – at the limit point of the Symbolic.

Diego Semerene, "Cathexis of Shit: toward a Lacanian erotics of fecal matter"

In *No Archive Will Restore You* (2018), Julietta Singh's baby daughter molds her own excrement into a penis to cover her vagina. In Lucas Rijeneveld's *Discomfort of Evening* (2018), a young child refuses to poop after their brother's tragic death. In Neige Sinno's autobiographical account of incest, *Triste Tigre* (2023), it is as a turd that the abusive stepfather shows up at a costume party. In the opening of Camila Sosa Villada's trans* novel *The Queens of Sarmiento Park* (2022), a *travesti* sex worker finds a newborn covered in feces in a swamp and promptly feeds him her industrial-silicone breasts. The shit-covered baby is soothed as he latches on to the milk-less breast. Here we have lactation of a very different kind, which Villada describes as rare, reparatory, and even magical. *Travesti* lactation is a hallucination. It shows us it isn't just the materiality of milk that the baby is after, that matter arises through a framing, a gesture, a trace (of memory), which can eclipse the pleasures of its own material gifts. In this talk I argue defecation, its ancillary practices, and associated signifiers (excrement, stench, flatulence, coprophagy), to hold the potential for the hallucinatory qualities Villada sees in *travesti* lactation. This hallucination is a precondition for a meaningful encounter with another's body, and one's own, which blows sense into it, turning the body into (new) parts, and certain body parts, along with the substances they bring forth, into loci of attraction.

Digital networks such as *X*, *Scatboi* and *Darkfans* are rife with pornographic scatological content and role-playing “daddies” giving their lovers diaper checks. And yet, speaking about feces as substance for creativity, pleasure, and analysis, remains taboo. What is it about this under-theorized substance that insists on emerging – in literature, in sex— despite our most visceral attempts at disavowing it as disgusting, useless, or non-existent?

In Seminar 3, Lacan reminds us that babies don’t repress, they express. Repression doesn’t appear until the Oedipus complex disappears, at which point the division between identification and object choice must be staged. I look to the baby’s relationship to feces, and erotic praxes involving fecal matter later in life that harken back to this early moment when the subject was able to revel in shit as material for articulating what he/she couldn’t in any other way. I thus theorize the queer potentiality of fecal matter through the work of Lacan by tracing the creative usages and symbolic meaning of feces in literary and digital cruising worlds.

Reading: Jacques Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis, Seminar XVII* (excerpt tba)

ENCOUNTERS IN ARTISTIC RESEARCH

Minerva Art Academy, Groningen, 26 - 27 September
[Invitation and registration](#) | contact: Meines MF, Myrthe <m.f.meines@pl.hanze.nl>

Encounter fellow researchers and explore various methods of conducting research in the arts. This research community event is for professors, lecturers, researchers (PhD/PD candidates, postdocs, teacher-researchers), teachers, and (MA) students in the arts. The event offers inspiring days filled with presentations, workshops, an exhibition, and discussions at Minerva Art Academy.

The first day focuses on artistic research as a “love practice”, emphasizing openness, vulnerability, and trust, akin to love. This attitude underpins meetings on key themes: art and care, art and technology, and art and rural areas. New insights on artistic research methods such as autoethnography, body-centered research, and material-based research will be shared. Additionally, Tale Naess will give a keynote speech, followed by a performance of the Kiribati Notes at the Prince Claus Conservatoire.

During the second day, artistic PhD candidates think together about how to write about their research. They share experiences and practices, pose questions, and formulate ambitions through public dialogues. Researchers with an art-based / artistic PhD respond.

Encounters in Artistic Research is organized by the Research Centre Art & Society and the Research Centre for Arts in Society of the University of Groningen.

COSMOLOGIES WORKGROUP - THE BIFURCATION OF NATURE

Organised by: E. Biolchini, J. Leeuwenkamp, and H.H. Kuipers | The first reading group this year will be held on Friday the 27th of September at 15:00 (Location t.b.a.). | To participate send an email to: h.h.kuipers@uva.nl

Thinking in cosmology proposes an interesting alternative to the all too human thought of our modern era, its insistence on a separation of Nature and Culture, and thus its removal from the world – thought, Deleuze and Guattari once asserted, crosses the universe in an instant. In this workgroup we explore the numerous possibilities the cosmological might open up to and how it moves in the works of some of the most important thinkers today: from the work on non-modern cosmologies and ontologies in the so called “ontological turn,” spearheaded by figures such as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Phillipe Descola, and Eduardo Kohn; to the process philosophical works of Alfred North Whitehead which again flourishes in the cosmopolitics of Isabelle Stengers and in ways Bruno Latour; to works problematizing the modern perspective from specific ecologies, mental, social, or environmental, such as in the works of Maria Lugones, Marisol de la Cadena, and Donna Haraway; to its possible deployment in relation to technics in Yuk Hui’s cosmotechnics. What is the relevance of such cosmological thinking for the Humanities?

Reading group #11: the bifurcation of nature

For our first session this year we will dive into the problem that is seemingly at the heart of our cosmological inquiry, and which we have been spinning around continuously last year: the nature culture divide. We’ll approach it by what might be one of the most powerful conceptualizations to date, Alfred North Whitehead’s “bifurcation of nature.”

Readings

Debaise, Didier. “Introduction” and “Chapter One: The Cosmology of the Moderns” in *Nature as Event: The Lure of the Possible*. Thought in the Act. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017, pg. 1-39.

Whitehead, Alfred North. “Chapter 2: Theories of the bifurcation of Nature,” in *The Concept of Nature*. Dover Science Books. Mineola, N.Y: Dover Publications, 2004, pg. 18-32.

NEW STAFF MEMBERS MEETING

Tuesday October 1st, 11:00-12:00 hrs. | [PCH 210/211](#)

On Tuesday October 1st. all new ASCA staff members are invited for an informal informative meeting with the ASCA directors. All welcome, no matter how new you are!

ASCA THEORY SEMINAR: NEW AND NOT SO NEW HUMANITIES

On October 2nd, 15:00-18:00, we have the first session on the 2024-25 ASCA Theory Seminar. You may register by sending an email to Eloë Kingma asca-fgw@uva.nl. Read more: <https://asca.uva.nl/programme/seminars/asca-theory-seminar/new-and-not-so-new-humanities.html>

In this year's Theory Seminar we focus on what it means to situate our research in the humanities and, more specifically, within the newer fields of the humanities that are often explicitly oriented towards interdisciplinary research that also looks beyond the humanities. As Jeffrey J. Williams notes in his 2019 *Chronicle of Higher Education* article "The New Humanities," "these new alloys emphasize commerce between other disciplines, particularly STEM or professional fields, and humanistic ways of thinking." What do we still have in common as humanities scholars when we work in vastly different fields like the digital humanities, the environmental humanities, the medical humanities or the blue or oceanic humanities? And what is truly new about these fields and what perhaps not so new? In this regard, it is important to note that Williams is by no means the first to proclaim a new humanities – similar claims were made in the 1990s and go back at least as far as Felix E. Schelling's 1914 "New Humanities for Old" in *The Classical Weekly*. There, Schelling states: "The humanities! the very term is redolent of times long gone and smacking of generations before the last. Beside glittering, new-minted epithets like 'sociology', 'criminology', and 'degeneracy', 'civic service', 'conservation', 'equal suffrage', the very word 'humanities' looks dim and faded in this new century." Can the new humanities of our time make the humanities – widely perceived as under attack and in crisis – glitter and shine again, and do so in a way that unsettles old and new humanities' eurocentrism, anthropocentrism, phallogocentrism, ableism, etc.?

Session 1: Humanities Past and Future (2 Oct.)

Hall, Stuart. "The Emergence of Cultural Studies and the Crisis of the Humanities." *October* 53 (1990): 11-23.

Mignolo, Walter. "Globalization and the Geopolitics of Knowledge: The Role of the Humanities in the Corporate University." *Nepantla: Views from south* 4.1 (2003): 97-119.

Friedman, Susan Stanford. "Both/and: Critique and Discovery in the Humanities." *pmla* 132.2 (2017): 344-351.

Malabou, Catherine. "The Future of the Humanities." *Transeuropeennes: Revue internationale de pensée critique* (2018).

https://www.transeuropeennes.org/en/articles/voir_pdf/The_future_of_Humanities.pdf

Session 2: Digital Humanities (13 Nov.)

Liu, Alan. "The Meaning of the Digital Humanities." *pmla* 128.2 (2013): 409-423.

Murray, Padmini Ray, and Chris Hand. "Making Culture: Locating the Digital Humanities in India." *Visible Language* 49.3 (2015).

Ruberg, Bonnie. "Queer Indie Video Games as an Alternative Digital Humanities: Counterstrategies for Cultural Critique through Interactive Media." *American Quarterly* 70.3 (2018): 417-438.

Venturini, Tommaso, et al. "A Reality Check(list) for Digital Methods." *New media & society* 20.11 (2018): 4195-4217.

Session 3: Environmental Humanities (11 Dec.)

Neimanis, Astrida, Cecilia Åsberg, and Johan Hedrén. "Four problems, Four Directions for Environmental Humanities: Toward Critical Posthumanities for the Anthropocene." *Ethics & the environment* 20.1 (2015): 67-97.

Whyte, Kyle. "Critical Investigations of Resilience: A Brief Introduction to Indigenous Environmental Studies & Sciences." *Daedalus* 147.2 (2018): 136-147.

Moulton, Alex A. "Plotting a New Course for Environmental Humanities: Provision Grounds, Race, and the Future." *Environmental Humanities* 16.2 (2024): 271-290.

Session 4: Blue Humanities (12 Feb.)

Oppermann, Serpil. "Storied Seas and Living Metaphors in the Blue Humanities." *Configurations* 27.4 (2019): 443-461.

DeLoughrey, Elizabeth. "Toward a Critical Ocean Studies for the Anthropocene." *English Language Notes* 57.1 (2019): 21-36.

González-Ayala, Sofia N., and Alejandro Camargo. "Voices of Water and Violence: Exhibition Making and the Blue Humanities for Transitional Justice." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 64.1 (2021): 183-204.

Session 5: Global Humanities (19 Mar)

Pillay, Suren. "The Humanities to Come: Thinking the World from Africa." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 37.1 (2017): 121-131.

Lowe, Lisa, and Kris Manjapra. "Comparative Global Humanities After Man: Alternatives to the Coloniality of Knowledge." *Theory, Culture & Society* 36.5 (2019): 23-48.

Denecke, Wiebke. "Comparative Global Humanities Now." *Journal of World Literature* 6.4 (2021): 479-508.

Session 6: Medical Humanities (23 Apr.)

Atkinson, Sarah, et al. "'The Medical' and 'Health' in a Critical Medical Humanities." *Journal of Medical Humanities* 36 (2015): 71-81.

De Schauwer, E., et al. «Animating Disability Differently: Mobilizing a Heterotopian Imagination." *Qualitative Inquiry* 23.4 (2017): 276-286.

Wright, Shain. "Biohacking Queer and Trans Fertility: Using Social Media to Form Communities of Knowledge." *Journal of Medical Humanities* 44.2 (2023): 187-205.

CALL FOR PAPERS AMERICAN HISTORY/AMERICAN STUDIES

International PhD Seminar in American History / American Studies, Middelburg, NL | 27-29 November 2024

The Roosevelt Institute for American Studies (RIAS) is a leading research center and graduate school, partnered with Leiden University, dedicated to the study of American history, politics, and society.

We kindly invite applications from current doctoral candidates whose research covers any aspect of American culture, media, society, politics, or foreign relations, recent or historical. We are particularly interested in studies in the following research areas:

- U.S. in the world
- Culture and ideology
- Environmental issues
- Race and gender studies
- Social justice movements, civil and political rights

We welcome proposals for research papers (e.g., a dissertation chapter) or papers that give an overview of the PhD project. Participants will present their paper and contextualize it within their research project in 15 minutes. Each presentation is followed by a group discussion of approximately 45 minutes, providing extensive opportunities for feedback.

Applicants are invited to submit their proposals, consisting of a 300-word abstract and a CV, both in pdf, no later than Sunday, 15 September 2024. These should be addressed to the seminar coordinator, Jeanine Quené, and sent to info@roosevelt.nl.

To support a culture of diversity and inclusion, we strongly encourage proposals from students that reflect the diversity of our field in terms of gender, ethnicity, and disability.

Participants will be expected to have a paper (approximately 6,000 words) ready for pre-circulation by Friday, 8 November 2024.

The RIAS will provide accommodation and meals in Middelburg.

For further information, please consult our website at www.roosevelt.nl or contact the seminar coordinator at j.quen@roosevelt.nl.