

Emancipation as Navigation: From the Space of Reasons to the Space of Freedoms

Event Concept

If there is but one thread running between the intellectual, political, and artistic dimensions of modernity, it is undoubtedly the theme of emancipation: from dogmatic frameworks (enlightenment), inherited authorities (egalitarianism), and stagnant expressive forms (modernism). If there is but one legacy of modernity that plays itself out in post-modernity, it is still undoubtedly the demand for emancipation: from all overarching frameworks (relativism), constituted authorities (activism), and expressive constraints (postmodernism).

However, not only does this post-modern inflection of emancipation sever its negative moment (freedom *from*) from its positive moment (freedom *to*), it jettisons the theoretical resources needed to make sense of this distinction. Afraid of reactivating the worst aspects of enlightenment universalism (colonialism), it systematically refuses any unified concept of freedom, preferring to map disparate if intersecting forms of oppression (postcolonial-ism). There is nothing wrong with this cartography of injustice, but the 'lived experience' of oppression that it refuses to rise above provides us with no practical orientation within the space of possibilities and constraints it describes: there is no corresponding concept of justice, and thus no emancipatory vector.

Though this antipathy *to* (and perhaps fear *of*) the positive content of modernity is principally political, it has colonised the intellectual and artistic domains, coalescing into a pervasive cultural negativity that more often obstructs than enacts emancipation. This consists in an effective suppression of value judgements (no justice! no truth!) that is ultimately complicit with the dominant strains of liberalism to which it is often explicitly opposed. Far from being the culmination of enlightenment egalitarianism, these liberalisms are defined by the same perverse refusal to conceptualise liberty as their erstwhile opponents. That the debate between these two trends is the mainstream discourse on the legacy of modernity is perhaps the most prominent symptom of post-modern malaise.

Nevertheless, the relentless commitment to tracing the *local* conditions of thought and action that this antipathy represents must be respected, analysed, and ultimately incorporated by any attempt to revive the emancipatory themes of modernity (post-colonialism). The reactivation of enlightenment universalism can no longer safely ignore the *particular* by turning toward the *universal*, but must aim to trace trajectories that pass from the *local* to the *global*. It is on this basis that we must reconceive emancipation in *navigational* terms, supplementing the parochial cartography of injustice not only with our most abstract resources for analysing space, but with a willingness to treat these resources as constituting their own abstract spaces. This is to say that the resurrection of universalism as an emancipatory vector is oriented by a renewed commitment to rationalism, and that the relationship between local and global is elaborated by means of a movement from *abstract* to *concrete* spaces: from the space of reasons to the space of freedoms.

Event Method

The overall trajectory of this series of seminars follows this path from the abstract to the concrete, aiming to work out the significance of the relationship between the local and the global within five successive domains: mathematics, language, history, politics, and literature/art. This will result in a progressively more concrete picture of 'emancipation as navigation', moving between different complementary disciplinary viewpoints. By emphasizing the link between cognitive and practical technologies, hypothetical construction, abductive conceptualization and freedom, the series addresses both the history of reason and the future of an emancipatory rationalist project in terms of the construction of new prospects of cognitive and practical procedures. It will examine how the space of human possibility is continually reorganized through the invention of new operators that detach thought and action from their local conditions.

The seminars are organized in a way that they re-enact the systematic game of navigation. Specific problems are broken down into different sets of parameters which are then analyzed under disciplinary constraints before they are re-structured as points of entry into other domains. The transversal mobilization of knowledge-bases requires development of new intermediating perspectives and modes of knowledge transport — in short, technologies for the liberation of thought and practice from their immediate conceptual resources and applicational contexts. In this fashion, the ramifications of making theoretical or practical commitments in one field are unfolded and explored in another disciplinary domain. Problems and challenges arising from these transports across domains are subsequently used to inform and reorient original problems or alternatively, serve as new hypotheses for exploring the problem and its ramifications further. In practice, this navigational ideal will be realised by a collaborative process of conceptual mapping, wherein the crucial concepts and their connections are traced both within and between seminars with the help of all participants.

Event Format

Participants: 11 Seminar Leaders and 30 Others.

Key Topics: Freedom, Reason/Logic, Mathematics/Abstraction, Navigation/Representation, Semiotics/Linguistics, Modernity/Colonialism, Politics, Intersectionality, Feminism, Technology/Design, Art, Accelerationism, Cosmism.

Schedule: Two weeks beginning on July 1st and finishing on July 12th, with a day off on Sunday July 6th. Each day will consist of two three-hour sessions (10am to 1pm / 2pm to 5pm). The first part of each session will be taken up by a presentation by that day's seminar leader, before being given over to responses and general discussion.

Preparation: Participants will be expected to read a certain amount of compulsory material for each seminar (around 30 pages). Additional reading suggestions will also be provided.

Organizers

Armen Avanesian (Philosopher/Editor: Poetics, Literary Theory, Art), Berlin
Reza Negarestani (Philosopher: Rationality, Navigation, Functionalism), New York
Pete Wolfendale (Philosopher: Rationality, Language, Freedom), Sunderland

Seminar Leaders

Anke Hennig (Literary Theorist: Linguistics, Media Theory), Berlin
Benedict Singleton (Philosopher of Design/Strategist: Technology, Cunning, Platforms), London
Deneb Kozikoski (Literary Theorist: Science, Modernity, Anti-Eurocentrism), New York
Lucca Fraser (Philosopher/Logician: Mathematics, Desire, Gender), Halifax
Helen Hester (Cultural Theorist: Sex and Gender, Media, Feminism), London
Nick Smicek (Political Theorist: Technology, Economics, Post-Capitalism), London
James Trafford (Philosopher/Art Theorist: Rationality, Logic, Aesthetics), London
Ray Brassier (Philosopher: Rationality, Naturalism, Nihilism), Beirut

Event Programme

Day	Principal Speakers	First Session	Second Session
Tuesday, July 1st	Reza Negarestani	The Matheme of the Universal	Engineering through Navigation
Wednesday, July 2nd	Pete Wolfendale	Freedom and Reason	Navigation and Representation
1 st Evening Event	<i>Panel:</i> Armen Avanessian, Lucca Frazer, Deneb Kozikowski, Robin Mackay, Reza Negarestani, James Trafford and Pete Wolfendale	Escape Velocity: Navigating Speculative Realism	
Thursday, July 3rd	Armen Avanessian, Anke Hennig, and James Trafford	Poesis and Linguistics (Avanessian and Hennig)	Navigating Reason: Duality, Dialectics, and Speculation (Trafford)
Friday, July 4th	Deneb Kozikoski	Modernity at the Frontier	Navigability and Metamorphoses
Saturday, July 5th	Nick Srnicek	The Critique of Folk-Politics	The Future of the Left
Monday, July 7th	Lucca Fraser	Diagonalisation in the Space of Reasons	Diagonalisation in the Space of Sex
Tuesday, July 8th	Helen Hester	Feminism and Technology After Firestone	Re-Engineering Embodiment
Wednesday, July 9th	Benedict Singleton	The Long Con	The Straw Astronaut
Thursday, July 10th	<i>General Discussion</i>	Creativity, Innovation, and Emancipation	Expression, Conception, and Navigation
Friday, July 11th	Ray Brassier	Mapping and Picturing	Mapping and Picturing (Cont.)
2 nd Evening Event	<i>Panel:</i> Armen Avanessian, Ray Brassier, Anke Hennig, Helen Hester, Ben Singleton, Nick Srnicek and Pete Wolfendale	Emancipating the Concept of Freedom	
Saturday, July 12th	<i>Epilogue</i>	Navigating the Space of Reasons	Navigating the Space of Freedoms

Reza Negarestani

Reza Negarestani is a writer and a philosopher. He has contributed extensively to journals and anthologies and lectured at numerous international universities and institutes. His current philosophical project is focused on rationalist universalism beginning with the evolution of the modern system of knowledge and advancing toward contemporary philosophies of rationalism, their procedures as well as their demands for special forms of human conduct. His book Cyclonopedia was published in 2008.

The Matheme of the Universal

This presentation aims to introduce some of the recent advances in mathematics and concept-analysis through an accessible conceptual history shaped by philosophical questions surrounding topics such as particularity, universality, analysis, synthesis, orientation, quantity, quality and theory of extension. By answering these questions it would be possible to reinvent the dialectic between particularity and universality as the transition from the local to the global, therefore moving from a theory of universality to a theory of connections (Levi-Civita, Cartan, et al.) where stepwise local constructions can be coupled with a global orientation. While the transition to local-global connections resolves certain antagonisms between the local and the universal, it creates a productive space of tension through which the local can be explored beyond its immediate ambit. It is this exploratory vector that opens the local-global passage as a rule-based landscape of navigation.

Engineering Through Navigation

Why are functions important, especially in the study of complex phenomena or hierarchical and multi-layered systems where complexity arises not because of the size or the number of components or processes involved but because of the particularity of the mode of organization that orchestrates the activities and operations of various structural and functional hierarchies? One answer to this question would be because any account of change - whether in the context of evolution or in the context of normative modification, intervention, rectification and reorganization - is ultimately the change in function. Even when we change the structure, we do that with the aim of inducing a change in function i.e. what a thing does and how it can be improved or replaced by a different set of activities. But the change of function is far from easy since we need to locate the exact function we are referring to within a much wider functional organization, within an environment and in accordance with existing structural constraints. What a complex system appears to be doing is hardly ever what it actually does. In order to implement a change in function, first we should identify what a system does, how it does it, how its functions are organized and how the activity in question is orchestrated through this complex organization. In other words, we must have the knowledge of 'what a system does' in order to change a function and alter a system's or a phenomenon's behavior. This presentation extends the 'navigational paradigm' to questions regarding construction and modification of complex systems through the lens of mechanistic explanation and multi-level analysis of functional organization.

Required Reading

G. Chatelet, 'On a Little Phrase of Riemann's...', trans. Robin Mackay (available here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8xerZmONdsAS1pjdFFfdE1yMEk/edit?usp=sharing>)

R. Negarestani, 'What is a Concept?' (available here: <http://deontologistics.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/navigation-rn2.doc>)

Further Reading

M. Wilson, 'A Second Pilgrim's Progress' (available here: <http://www.philosophy.pitt.edu/applied-mathematics>).

F. Zalamea, *Peirce's Continuum*, chapters 1-3 (available here: <http://acervo-peirceano.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Zalamea-Peirces-Continuum.pdf>)

F. Zalamea, *Synthetic Philosophy of Contemporary Mathematics* (Urbanomic, 2010), ch 1.
C. Craver, 'Role Functions, Mechanisms, and Hierarchy' (available here:
<https://philosophy.artsci.wustl.edu/files/philosophy/imce/rolefunctions.pdf>)

Pete Wolfendale

Peter Wolfendale is an independent philosopher living in the North East of England. He considers himself a heretical Platonist, an unorthodox Kantian, and a minimalist Hegelian, but is equally happy being described as a rationalist. His work focuses mainly upon the intersection between the methodology of metaphysics and the structure of rationality, but also includes foundational topics in the philosophy of value, ethics, aesthetics, and social theory.

Freedom and Reason

This first session aims to outline the connection between the concepts of *freedom* and *reason*. We will begin by tracing the dialectic of the concept of freedom, beginning with Spinoza and Leibniz's attempts to make free will compatible with the principle of sufficient reason, and showing how this debate is refracted through Kant's account of *rational agency*. We will see how this refraction splits the Kantian tradition into an *authentic* Spinozan form (Hegel, Marx, Foucault, and Sellars) and a *vulgar* Leibnizian form (Schelling, Sartre, Badiou, and Žižek). We will then outline Sellars' authentic reconstruction of Kant's account of *individual agency*, and use this to delineate two strands of post-Kantian thought about *collective agency* (Hegel-Marx and Heidegger-Foucault), before integrating them with Brandom's Hegelian extension of Sellars' Kantianism.

Navigation and Representation

The second session aims to approach the connection between freedom and reason from the opposite direction, by providing an account of the specifically *linguistic* capacities that a rational *agent* must possess to count as a *rational* agent. We will begin by tracing the dialectic of the concept of language in the 20th century, focusing on the analytic tradition that grows out of the philosophy of logic at the end of the 19th century. We will do this by framing the development of this tradition in terms of Brandom's *logical expressivism* – the idea that logic is the organon of semantic *self-consciousness*, or that the role of logical vocabulary is to make *explicit* what is otherwise *implicit* in what we do. This will allow us to see the various blockages in the tradition's development as forms of semantic *false-consciousness* engendered by fixation upon a particular logical vocabulary at the expense of the more complex *pragmatics* of which it expresses a fragment. We will then attempt to show how Brandom's *inferentialism* aims to explain representation in terms of the pragmatics of dialogical reasoning, and how this identifies the capacity for *dialectical navigation* as the crucial connection between freedom and reason.

Required Reading

R. Brandom, Woodbridge Lectures (available here: <http://www.pitt.edu/~brandom/multimedia.html>; and published as ch. 1-3 of *Reason in Philosophy* (Harvard University Press, 2010)

P. Wolfendale, 'The Social Structure of Consensus' (early draft available here: <http://deontologistics.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/consensus.pdf>).

Further Reading

I. Berlin 'Two Concepts of Liberty' (available here: http://www.wiso.uni-hamburg.de/fileadmin/wiso_vwl/johannes/Ankuendigungen/Berlin_twoconceptsofliberty.pdf)

R. Brandom, *Reason in Philosophy* (Harvard University Press, 2010), Introduction.

R. Brandom, *Articulating Reasons* (Harvard University Press, 2004), ch. 1 and 6.

R. Brandom, *Making It Explicit* (Harvard University Press, 1994) ch. 8.

Anke Hennig and Armen Avanesian

*Anke Hennig teaches at the Peter Szondi Institute of Comparative Literature at the Freie Universität Berlin and is a Research Fellow in the Collaborative Research Centre 'Aesthetic Experience and the Dissolution of Artistic Limits'. Her research interests lie in the poetics of Russian Formalism, the theories of Russian avant-garde media, and the aesthetics of totalitarianism. Her recent publications have addressed the chronotopology of cinematic fiction, the present-tense novel, and speculative poetics. She is the author of *Sowjetische Kinodramaturgie* (2010) and, in cooperation with Armen Avanesian, co-author of *Präsens. Poetik eines Tempus* (2012) and *Metanoia. Spekulative Ontologie der Sprache* (2014).*

Armen Avanesian studied philosophy and political science in Vienna and Paris. After completing his dissertation in literature, "Phenomenology of the Ironic Spirit: Ethics, Poetics, and Politics of Modernity" (in Bielefeld), he was a freelance journalist and editor in Paris and a publisher in London. In 2007 Avanesian took up his current position at the Peter Szondi Institute for Comparative Literature at the Free University Berlin. In 2011 he was a Visiting Fellow in the German Department at Columbia University and in 2012 at the German Department at Yale University. In 2013 he was Visiting Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Nuremberg and in 2014 at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. In 2012 he founded a research platform on Speculative Poetics including a series of events, translations and publications: www.spekulative-poetik.de. He is also editor of the book series SPEKULATIONEN at Merve Verlag Berlin.

Poesis and Linguistics

Our point of departure is the attempt to read Brandom's theory of inferentialism in a semiotic manner. We focus upon the concept of language as a symbolical (not indexical) system to be understood via a triadic semiotics (instead of a dyadic one). Accordingly the ontology of language is relational, implies wholes, and generates inferences. In order to avoid reducing pragmatics to a simple semantic or discursive register and thereby compromising the holistic project, it is necessary to refer to a Peircean pragmatics.

The inferentialist theory as developed so far cannot explain, how something "explicit" also has reference in the first place. After entering the inferential universe of discourse why cannot one not just leave it without consequences (since the post-representational "explicit" *represent no given reference*)? And of course this also can't explain why one should commit oneself to something that does not have reference, that does not represent anything yet.

At this point where its expressivist theory of language is under-developed the inferentialist project closes the gap with the world by invoking a normative nominalism. In order to avoid such a traditional universalist concept of normativity we suggest an alternative to this somewhat autonomist project wherein one remains within the language game for its own sake. We suggest a poetonomic approach where one's ethical task is to provide the explicit with a referent. Such a referent has the quality of an "interpretant" (Peirce's 'subject of semiotics') since only a subject can advocate for it.

Required Reading

A. Hennig and A. Avanesian *Metanoia: A Speculative Ontology of Language, Thinking, and the Brain*, trans. N.F. Schott, excerpt (available here: <http://deontologistics.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/avanessianhennig-summer-school-excerpts-pp37-46.pdf>)

James Trafford

James Trafford is Senior Lecturer in cultural theory at UCA, Epsom. His work attempts to deal with issues relating to rationalism, non-standard logic and surpassing the "boundaries" of thinking on the one hand, and aesthetics and modernism on the other. His work has been published in journals, gallery catalogues and design-books. Forthcoming with Urbanomic is the collection "Speculative Aesthetics", co-edited with Robin Mackay and Luke Pendrell. He is also working on a monograph preliminary titled "Navigating Reasons".

Navigating Reason: Duality, Dialectics, and Speculation

It is pretty much a platitude that, in the attempt to erect certain boundaries of thought, thought extends beyond those boundaries (e.g. Lawvere's construction of the generic structure of Cantor's, Russell's, Tarski's, Godel's arguments). Typically, these have been understood to be "mere pathologies", which engender contradiction and inconsistency that can be excised from thought before thinking even has chance to begin. Logic is supposed to range over all "things"; a kind of semantic transcendence, prior to reasoning (emptied of navigational possibility). Indeed, there are entire sophisticated industries for the erection of prophylactic blockages to the horror of the (internally) inconceivable (Kantian nihil ulterius).

This strategy of confinement maintains that logic is based on a notion of Truth, so that the foundation of logic is outside of logic itself in pre-formatted metaphysics. Here, I pursue the idea that we can only recover the constructive role of reasoning by understanding that fundamental inconsistency does not reside at the edges of thought (shores of the island), rather, it ultimately uproots the (classical) bedrock of thinking itself. Indeed, grounding thought upon Truth is simply metaphysical fiat with the supposed formatting of semantics prior to the act of reasoning itself. In this respect, the ultimate (read incredulous) definition of truth is Tarski's: "A is true iff true-A". This essentialised truth is then nested in a hierarchy of metalanguages since truth can not speak of itself in the language in which it resides (injunction: do not speak of truth!).

Instead, we consider thinking and logic to be acts, where "truth is not a minted coin that can be given and pocketed ready-made" (Hegel). This is Hegel's insight: that the content of a concept is not the sort of thing that is containable inside the neat compartmentalisability of truth-conditions or discrete semantics. And, "logic is not a thinking about something which exists independently as a base for our thinking and apart from it" (Hegel). There is an inconsistent ground of concepts which is universal; not excisable; not containable. The imagination is limited in ways that concepts are not.

The picture that we sketch develops an account of logic and reasoning that is grounded in the normative relation of preclusion over assertion and denial in dialogue. With this in place, I show that, rather than ground logic in truth, instead truth can be constructed from the (partial) coherence of inference. I then construct a notion of "paracoherence" (neither completeness nor consistency are assumptions), with a Galois connection between the dual structures of assertions and denials. Paracoherence is a non-equilibrium state, which is the motor of a logic of speculation: an emancipation of thought from within thought itself. Given this, (and contra Kant), we have a generic navigation structure which does not require the absolutisation of any one logical structure.

Required Reading

J. Peregrin, 'Logic and Reasoning' (available here: <http://jarda.peregrin.cz/mybibl/PDFTxt/576.pdf>)

Further Reading

J. Peregrin, 'Inferentializing Consequence' (available here: <http://jarda.peregrin.cz/mybibl/PDFTxt/539.pdf>)

Deneb Kozikoski

Deneb is pursuing a PhD at Columbia University, at the Department of Latin American and Iberian Cultures and Institute of Comparative Literature and Society. Deneb researches naturalist, scientific, anthropological, fictional and non-fictional textual and visual production around the Amazon as a conceptual, economic, social and cultural frontier of processes of modernization in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Her research is centered on the epistemological and socio-cultural problems that emerge in relation to the Amazonian ecosystem's seemingly uncontrollable complexity.

Modernity at the Frontier / Navigability and Metamorphoses

This seminar will offer an exposition of the major debates surrounding modernity and modernization in Latin America from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, thus covering the main issues underlying the development a post-colonial and post-slavery condition. Emphasis will be placed on the ways in which the Latin American context intrinsically reveals the paradoxes and antinomies of modernity (conceptually) and modernization (practically). Rather than proposing Latin America as the other or the outside of modernity, or the periphery of modernizing processes, we will explore the conditions that account for the epistemic specificity of Latin American modes of knowledge production. Such configuration of modernity places certain demands on any attempt to engage with these phenomena under a globalizing navigational paradigm or universalist paradigm. We will work through the challenges that the epistemic configuration of Latin America poses as to synthetically delineate the productive encounters, translations and asymmetries between different topoi of modernity.

In the first session, we will explore the ways in which modernization was instantiated and actualized in Latin American contexts, and how Latin American thinkers detected the impasses and antinomies that emerged from different physical and intellectual spheres. We will focus on the Amazon as a veritably paradigmatic case, and on the works of engineers Euclides da Cunha and Alberto Rangel, whose self-reflexive thought on the conditions of the frontier make the antinomies of modernization visible. Writing during the intensive rubber economy cycle in the Amazon, these thinker-engineers saw the rise of a new socio-economic persona/worker, the *cauchero* and *seringueiro* –a figure seen as occupying the very margin of history ('modernization'). Close engagement with the mobilization of new languages to speak the seemingly unintelligible (the Amazon), and with the technical innovations (engineering) of writing will prove tantamount to an understanding of the spatiotemporal complexity that confronts the navigational paradigm.

In the second section we will transition from the spatiotemporal complexities detected by da Cunha and Rangel's thought on the socio-economic and physical aspects of the Amazon to the positive manipulation of theoretical considerations and concepts to be encountered by rationalist functionalism program. We will draw on the works of contemporary thinkers Fernando Zalamea (reason and Latin America) and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (Amerindian perspectivism); and writers Clarice Lispector and Guimarães Rosa to explore the dynamic relationships between moments of conception, synthesis, and translation.

Required reading: C. Lispector, *The Passion According to G.H.* p. 3-14, 90-93; and E. Viveiros de Castro, 'Perspectival Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Equivocation.' *Tipiti: Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America*. 2:1 (2004).

Required Reading

C. Lispector, *The Passion According to G.H.* p. 3-14, 90-93 (available here: <http://deontologistics.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/lispector-the-passion-according-to-gh.pdf>).

E. Viveiros de Castro, 'Perspectival Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Equivocation.' *Tipiti: Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America*. 2:1 (2004; available here: <http://genpent.b.uib.no/files/2013/03/ViveirosDC.pdf>).

Further Reading/Viewing

Werner Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo*, (1982).

E. da Cunha, 'General Impressions' *Amazon: Land Without History*

J. Guimarães Rosa, 'My uncle, the jaguar'

F. Kafka, 'The Burrow.' (initial pages of any edition)

E. Viveiros de Castro, *Metafísicas Caníbales* (can be provided upon request)

F. Zalamea, 'América, una trama integral' (can be provided upon request)

Nick Srnicek

*Nick Srnicek is a Teaching Fellow in Geopolitics and Globalisation at UCL, and PhD graduate in International Relations from LSE. He was co-editor of *The Speculative Turn* (Re.press, 2011), and is currently writing *Folk Politics* (2015) with Alex Williams.*

The Critique of Folk Politics

This first section will examine the concept of folk politics as it is embodied in contemporary radical political practice. It will start with an initial overview of the problems of folk politics, before moving onto a historical analysis of the rise of folk political thinking. It will set the concept as a response to determinate political problems that emerged post-1968, but that has today become itself a political problem. Taking folk politics as a moment to be superseded rather than rejected, we will then examine the political practices of some contemporary movements such as horizontalism, anarchism, localism, and some variants of communization theory. We will look at what should be recovered from these traditions, and what must be recognised as a folk political remnant.

The Future of the Left

Given the critique of the contemporary left, the second section will seek to build an alternative approach to politics today. This will be mobilised around recuperating modernity and its related notions of progress, reason, universality, and self-emancipation. Outlining what a neo-modern conception of these terms might mean, this section will then turn to examine the broad contours of a 21st century left focused on ideational and material hegemony. Given this understanding of the strategic aims, the project will conclude with a set of interlinked demands for the left today. In particular, it will examine how we can build platforms to leverage ourselves out of the capitalist trap.

Required Reading

N. Srnicek and A. Williams, '#Accelerate: a Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics' in *#Accelerate: The Accelerationist Reader* (Urbanomic, 2014; also available here: <http://syntheticeidifice.wordpress.com/>)

A. Negri, 'Some Reflections on the #Accelerate Manifesto' in *#Accelerate: The Accelerationist Reader* (Urbanomic, 2014; also available here: <http://syntheticeidifice.wordpress.com/>)

Lucca Fraser

Olivia Lucca Fraser in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Her philosophical work revolves around the themes of formalization, freedom, dialectics, and sex. She is a mother of five. Eager to spread herself thinly across the remaining conditions of philosophy, she splits her unspared time between poetry and feminist politics.

Diagonalization in the Space of Reasons

The notion of "the space of reasons" -- if taken as more than a figure of speech -- makes demands on reasons' structure and forms of articulation. And, conversely, how we conceive the structure of reasoning constrains our efforts to conceive the "space" or horizon in which they unfold. In the first session of this seminar, I will be examining, in as distilled and minimalistic a fashion as possible, a certain kind of conflict that happens between the structure of reason -- as articulated in mathematical logics -- and the notion of a "space of reasons", under the aegis of *fixed point phenomena* and the mode of argumentation these phenomena enable: *diagonalization*.

It is to diagonal arguments that we owe the most striking antinomies and paradoxes that mathematical logic has discovered. Frequently stemming from our simplest and most intuitively transparent concepts, these paradoxes invite comparison with the Kantian antinomies, and the historically predominant reaction to these discoveries has been overwhelmingly "Kantian" in spirit: restricting the jurisdiction of our discourse, refusing to totalise the universe to which it refers, and opting instead for its stratification. In the margins of mathematical history, however, we can detect other "orientations of thought" (to borrow an expression from Badiou). These include efforts towards a roughly "Hegelian" way of thinking through the paradoxes of diagonalization. At their best, these efforts yield potent criticisms of the "Kantian" orientation in semantics and logic, and trace the outlines what "dialectical logic" might mean today.

The aim of this first session will be to first examine, and then generalize the concept of diagonalization -- so that it might be mobilized, philosophically and somewhat hazardously, outside of mathematics -- and then to do the same for the various "orientations of thought" that have arisen in response to fixed point phenomena and diagonal arguments, so that they might later be recognized and redeployed elsewhere.

Diagonalization in the Space of Sex

This is what we will try to do in our second session: recognize and redeploy these "orientations of thought" on the terrain of sexual politics. In particular, we will examine the metamorphosis of the concept of *sex* since the mid-twentieth century, its splitting into the notions of sex and gender, and aspects of the debates that have resulted between different factions of feminism, psychoanalysis, and gender theory. I am interested in seeing whether these metaphorophoses and conflicts can be understood as reactions to a "diagonal" moment in the history of sexuality, and, again, whether it is possible to describe a *dialectical* orientation towards sex on this basis -- one that might stand as an alternative to the liberal semantics of gender, and the patriarchal fetishization of the "fixed points of sexuation".

The motive for articulating such a "dialectical" position with respect to sex is, primarily, political: the battlefield, here, is the cultural terrain of transsexuality, precariously stationed between a patriarchal ideology that makes a mystical fetish of the transsexual as the fixed point of castration in the shape of The Woman (while conveniently, by and large, ignoring trans men), a liberal ideology of "gender identity" that stratifies and diversifies the semantics of patriarchy in a classical fashion without essentially challenging it, and the radical feminist opponents of both trends, for whom the transsexual is only ever a reflection of the systems that subjugate them. The idea here is that *if* transsexuals have been ideologically stationed at a site where patriarchal ideology ensnares itself, or encounters its contradictory fixed-points, then perhaps they are also in a good position to advance a dialectical reconfiguration of that ideology, rather than accede to its liberal stabilization with a new *semantics* of gender. Formally speaking, my guiding thread in this experiment will pass between Sartre's dialectic of reflection, and the Lacanian mathemes of sexuation, taken together as

an informal schema onto which certain mathematical analogies can be mapped.

Required Reading

V. Kerruish and U. Petersen, 'Philosophical Sanity, Mysteries of the Understanding, and Dialectical Logic' (available here: <http://www.asfpg.de/english/17303/philsan.pdf>)

N.S. Yanofsky, 'A Universal Approach to Self-Referential Paradoxes, Incompleteness and Fixed Points' (available here: <http://arxiv.org/pdf/math/0305282v1.pdf>)

Further Reading

J-P. Sartre, *Being & Nothingness*, Part 2, Chapter 1: 'Immediate Structures of the For-itself'

C. Millot, *Horsexe*, chs. 2, 3, 11. (With grain of salt.)

Lucca Fraser, 'L'éclat de la dialectique dans les courts-circuits de la syntaxe: Hegel, Miller, Petersen, Girard' (available here: https://www.academia.edu/1480417/Leclat_de_la_dialectique_dans_les_courts-circuits_de_la_syntaxe_Hegel_Miller_Petersen_Girard)

Helen Hester

Helen Hester joined the Media Department of Middlesex University in 2013, after serving as Senior Lecturer in Media at the international branch campus in Mauritius. Her research interests include pornography, transgression, and sexuality studies, and she is the author of Beyond Explicit: Pornography and the Displacement of Sex (SUNY Press, 2014).

Feminism and Technology after Firestone

There is a longstanding feminist interest in engaging with science and technology, from the early agitation surrounding the under-representation of women within the STEM industries, to more recent technofeminist work addressing 'the mutually shaping relationship between gender and technology, in which technology is both a source and a consequence of gender relations' (Wajcman, 2004: p. 107). Within this already lively field, however, debates about biomedical technologies have been particularly vigorous. Discussions about the medicalization of childbirth, assisted reproductive technologies, and other scientific interventions within the sphere of gendered and sexual embodiment have generated dramatically divergent critical positions, and Shulamith Firestone's insistence on the need to 'free humanity from the tyranny of its biology' (Firestone, 1979: p. 183) has met with equal parts admiration and hostile criticism. This session will serve as a broad introduction to this problematic terrain, offering participants the opportunity to critically reflect upon the development of feminist approaches to technology since the 1970s.

Re-Engineering Embodiment

Having sketched out some of the tensions within feminist thinking on science and technology, and addressed some of the problematic and unacknowledged essentialisms which can come to underpin it, the afternoon session will proceed to consider potential new directions for technofeminism in the twenty-first century. We will consider the role played by technologies of embodiment within what Beatriz Preciado has called 'pharmacopornographic biocapitalism' (2012: p. 35), and will think about how the medical practices which alter our moods, our fertility, and the contours of our bodies have come to shape our sense of what the contemporary gendered self might be. How, we will ask, can we retain Firestone's emphasis upon counter-hegemonic speculative thought whilst reframing the debate in response to valid anxieties about the potentially differential impact of technology upon distinct demographics and communities? Where can we see the legacy of second wave feminist approaches to technology within 'accelerationist' thinking, and what might contemporary leftist politics be able to learn from more recent technofeminisms? We will finish with a reflection upon new developments in sexual technologies, and the ways in which they work to emancipate the body from gendered expectations and constraints in order to re-engineer embodiment.

Required Reading

S. Firestone, 'The Ultimate Revolution: Demands and Speculations' in *The Dialectic of Sex* (available here: http://ressourcesfeministes.files.wordpress.com/2000/01/firestone_dialectic-of-sex.pdf).

N. Power, 'Toward a cybernetic communism: the technology of the anti-family' (available here: <http://libcom.org/library/toward-cybernetic-communism-technology-anti-family-nina-power>)

Further Reading

M. Merck and S. Sandford (ed.), *The Further Adventures of The Dialectic of Sex* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)

Benedict Singleton

Benedict Singleton is a strategist with a background in design and philosophy. He is based in London, where he works on a mixture of commercial and self-directed or pro bono projects, and writes widely on the history and future of design technology.

The Long Con

Design inevitably entails an engagement with the logic of the *plot*, and this session will investigate what this abrupt and unlikely claim might mean. Even the most cursory consideration shows 'plot' to be a strange term, unusually rich. It can refer to an architectural site, as in the ground-plot of a building, as well as a workshop drawing or analytic chart; it also indexes a sequence of fictional events strung into a narrative, and, simultaneously, the subversive scheme of an unseen director, orchestrating events from somewhere in the shadowy wings of the world, from whence the *plot twist* arrives...

We will begin with a tour of the secret passageways that connect and integrate these differing senses of 'plot'. From this departure point, we'll draw on film, forensics and finance to elaborate the concept, and sketch out the peculiar dynamics that animate it: the fascination a plot exerts when we stumble onto it; the form ambition takes when it plots rather than plans; the odd and unnerving fellowship of the detective who *reconstructs* the plot with the criminal who *constructs* it, who must learn to think alike; and the tendency of plots to escalate, seemingly of their own accord, from a hustle - casual, improvised, opportune - into the *long con* of the morning's title.

The Straw Astronaut

Space exploration and settlement recast perennial philosophical and political questions as engineering problems. In the early years of this century, the provenance of life, the nature of intelligence, the relationship of humans to the future and the structure of functional societies, amongst other familiar themes, find themselves addressed most directly not by work in the arts and humanities but by programmes of space research - where the artificial production and maintenance of social dynamics, collaborations with increasingly autonomous machines, and the synthetic creation of entire living ecosystems are all under active investigation.

This session, which continues the project begun in Maximum Jailbreak, will outline some of the features and implications of this *actually-existing accelerationism*. Articulated as a twisted retelling of the Kubrick-Clarke production *2001* in which the monolith is a fugitive and distributed structure glimpsed in the contours it lends to a certain kinds of thought, talk and action, we'll contextualise present developments into a history of links between technical ingenuity, frontier exploration and the cultivation of intelligence. The iconic 20th century figure of the astronaut served as a way to present the results of enormously abstract political, economic and technological systems as a celebration of 'the human', but in the 21st century the problem is abruptly posed: if we are what we do, and this is what we're doing, then *what the hell are we?*

Required Reading

B. Singleton, 'Maximum Jailbreak' in *#Accelerate: The Accelerationist Reader* (Urbanomic, 2014 also available here: <http://syntheticeidifice.wordpress.com/>)

Further Reading

B. Singleton, '(Notes Towards) Speculative Design' (available here: <http://accelerationism.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/singleton.pdf>)

Ray Brassier

Ray Brassier is a member of the philosophy faculty at the American University of Beirut in Lebanon, known for his work in philosophical realism. He was formerly Research Fellow at the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy at Middlesex University, London, England. He is the author of Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction and the translator of Alain Badiou's Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism and Theoretical Writings and Quentin Meillassoux's After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency. He is currently working on a book on the work of Wilfrid Sellars.

Mapping and Picturing

“For the perceptive nominalist, the varieties of mapping are as multiple as simple *matter-of-factual* qualities and relations.” (Wilfrid Sellars, *Naturalism and Ontology*, p.60)

What Sellars calls ‘mapping’ is closely tied to his theory of picturing. In this seminar, I want to investigate the link between mapping and picturing. Picturing does not consist in a relation of resemblance between representation and represented. It consists in the structural equivalence between properties of relations among representations considered as natural objects and properties among represented objects. The key to what I call Sellars’ ‘methodological materialism’ lies in his claim that the dimensions of picturing (and hence of mapping) vary with the varieties of ‘matter-of-factual’ qualities. It is the latter that provide us with our coordinate systems for tracking the correlation between representing and represented. Cognitive evolution is tracked in terms of a ‘world story’ in which facts about representings are entwined with facts about what they represent. But the ‘matter of factual qualities and relations’ catalogued in this story remain provisional and subject to further emendation. This is what makes empirical theory ‘a self-correcting enterprise’. Where positivistic naturalists privilege empirical evidence as the sole arbiter of cognitive revision, Sellars grants a decisive role to philosophy. Philosophy is not only an owl at dusk, anatomizing what is already known, it is also a “herald of the dawn”, inventing new categories for the advancement of knowing. It is in accordance with this legislative task that Sellars postulates the category of ‘absolute processes’ to explain the link between conceptual categories and physical patterns. The rule-obeying activities constitutive of conceptual categorization and the pattern-governed behaviours embodying these rules are distinct but correlative dimensions of natural process. Conceptual transformations track physical patterns without mirroring them. Pure processes are postulated to explain the co-variation between patterns of representings and patterns of represented objects. This co-variation yields the two basic dimensions of cognitive mapping.

Required Reading

W. Sellars, *Naturalism and Ontology* (Ridgeview, 1980), chapter 5 (available here: http://deontologistics.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/naturalism-and-ontology_5_after-meaning.pdf).

Further Reading

J. Seibt, ‘How To Naturalize Sensory Consciousness and Intentionality Within A Process Monism with Normativity Gradient: A Reading of Sellars’ (available here: http://deontologistics.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/seibt_process-monism-final.odt)