



CentreLGS **PECANS** Workshop 2007

Postgraduate and Early Career Academics
Network of Scholars

Final Programme

26-27th April 2007
Room 215, 309 Regent Street
Westminster University

Day 1: Thursday 26 April

10:00 Coffee & Registration

10:15 – 10:30 Introduction

10:30 – 12:00 Session on ‘The Writing Process’ with:

Nicky Priaulx (Keele) & **Sally Sheldon** (Kent)

12:00 – 12:15 Break

12:15 – 1:15 Author-Meets-Readers Session

Featuring: Lois McNay, (Oxford University).

Lois McNay is giving the 2007 Annual Lecture on the evening of 26 April.

1:15 – 2:00 Lunch

2:00 – 3:30 Session on ‘How (not) to be a Job Applicant’

Following on from the hugely popular ‘How (not) to do a conference presentation’ in 2006, CentreLGS are delighted to present a workshop session on applying for academic jobs. Featuring performances from **Joanne Conaghan** and **Didi Herman** as prospective applicants, and **Rosemary Auchmuty** and **Rosemary Hunter** as interview panel members.

3:30 - 4:00pm Tea Break

4:00 – 5:00pm Session on ‘Career Pathways for Early Career Academics’

Featuring: Davina Cooper (Kent), **Laura Beth Nielsen** (Northwestern/American Bar Foundation) & **Sari Kuovo** (Amnesty International).

5:45 Drinks Reception, 6:30pm – Centre LGS Annual Lecture 2007 – Lois McNay
Marylebone Campus (approx 15-20mins walk from Regent Street).

Day 2: Friday 27 April - 'Beyond Critique?' Day Conference

9:00 – 9:30am: Coffee

9:30 – 11:00am: Session 1 – Roundtable Discussion: 'Activism Inside and Outside the Academy'

Chair: Rosie Harding (Keele)

Discussants: Sarah Lamble (Kent), **Emily Grabham** (Kent), **Rupa Reddy** (SOAS), **Aisha Gill** (Roehampton)

This roundtable discussion will focus on the challenges of engaging in academic activism / activist academic projects, including topics such as: the meanings of engaging in academic activism; experiences of activism and how these inform academic work; roles and responsibilities of academics engaging in grassroots activism; and the challenges of combining activism and academia.

11:00 – 11:30am: Coffee Break

11:30 – 1:00pm: Session 2 – Critique, Regulation and Direct Action

Chair: Julie McCandless (Keele)

Jamie Heckert: 'Beyond the State: Direct action and the politics of empowerment'

Syahirah Abdul Shukor (Keele): 'Regulating Parents, children and the Internet: how can they be reconciled?'

Peter McTigue (Keele/NTU): 'Critiquing disability, affording legitimacy?'

1:00pm – 2:00pm: Lunch

2:00pm – 4:00pm: Session 3 – Roundtable Discussion: 'Beyond Critique? Theoretical and Philosophical Perspectives'

Chair: Julia Chryssostalis (Westminster)

Discussants: Ian Wall (Birkbeck), **Sharon Persaud** (Birkbeck), **Elisabetta Bertolino** (Birkbeck).

This roundtable discussion will cover areas such as engaging and disengaging, reform, revolt and setting alternative practices; biopolitics and 'critical theory'; 'resources' of the critical; and the political thrust of critique.

4:00 – 4:20pm: Coffee Break

4:20 – 5:00pm: Feedback session & Close

Abstracts

Beyond the State: Direct action and the politics of empowerment

Jamie Heckert.

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Drawing on anarchist and poststructuralist theory, this paper starts from the position that the State is a pattern of social relationships, rather than merely an institution. Not only are its claims of unquestionable authority backed up by (sometimes implicit) threats of violence, they are intertwined with assertions of truth. In claiming unquestionable power/knowledge, the State is a radically disempowering pattern of social relations for those who might wish to assert difference. While strategies of lobbying for law reform and recognition from the State apparatus offer formal equality (under the law, of course), direct action offers possibilities which are both critique of the State and practice of radically different forms of social relations. In particular, contemporary anarchist practices of direct action are intertwined with a prefigurative ethic - the assertion that the ends and means are inseparable. In contrast to liberal and state-socialist prioritisation of 'ends', prefigurative politics involve practicing the forms of social relations that those involved desire. In acting directly, participants come to understand themselves as protagonists in history, fully capable of participating in the shaping of the future, rather than as subjects of given relations of power. Thus, direct action offers an empowering method of social practice which is not so much beyond critique as its embodiment in practice. The paper draws upon examples of direct action from both current social movements and intimate relationships (thus challenging a division of personal and political) to demonstrate how such ideas function in practice as alternatives to legal reformism and abstract critique.

Regulating Parents, children and the Internet: how can they be reconciled?

Syahirah Abdul Shukor, PhD Candidate, Keele University, Staffordshire.

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The *English Education and Inspection Bill 2006* has proposed that teachers shall be given the legal rights to discipline their students who are involved in bullying, including cyber bullying.¹ Such a proposal is not surprising as regulating online behaviour, for the government, is considerably complicated and controversial. Complicated in the sense that the Internet provides a more interactive medium and controversial as too much intrusion to regulate could be seen as an infringement of individual rights, especially parenting prerogatives. Parenting in the advance of technology, poses myriad issues, such as the rights of parents, the child's rights and regulation of the

¹ Blair, A, 'Parents with cyber-bullies slapped with GBP 1,000 fines', *Times*, 25 July 2006, p8.

Internet. This paper begins by examining the development of parental responsibility laws and proceeds to the notion of punishing parents for their children's anti social behaviour. The analysis is based on a socio-legal analysis which has interwoven parenting, children and the Internet. This paper suggests that punishing parents for their children's activities on the Internet may not be the best solution to promote the use of the Internet; rather, it will kill the interest of parents and children to appreciate the advance of the Internet. Furthermore, the digital gap between parents and children could worsen the situation. The notion of punishing the parents for their children's activities on the Internet needs to be approached with caution and care, as it may affect the vulnerable parents who indeed need support and knowledge in facing the challenges of the Internet. Nevertheless, educating children to be responsible Internet users could be the great challenge of today's parents and educators.

Critiquing disability, affording legitimacy?

Peter McTigue, PhD Candidate, Keele University
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Legislation to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of gender and race was introduced in the mid 1970s. It was not however until 1995 that discrimination upon the grounds of disability was prohibited following the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 ("the Act").

This paper will present a critique of the legal constitution of disability employed by the Act. The concept of disability adopted will be evaluated with reference to current social models of disability. These will be employed to evaluate to what extent, if at all, the Act's definition accords with contemporary models of disability. The definition of disability will be deconstructed and by reference to both legal and non-legal sources key fault areas within the constitution of disability will be identified and critically evaluated. The interplay between the concept of "normality" and the legal constitution of disability will also be explored, as will the constitution's interplay with social disabilities and hidden disabilities. Finally the paper will consider means by which traditional academic critique can, in future, be further revised in order to be afforded "legitimacy".