Schedule

Registration 09.00-09.50

Introduction & Welcome 9.50-10.00

Opening Keynote (Paul Crosthwaite) 10.00-11.00
Chair: Andrew Rowcroft

Tea & Coffee (foyer) 11.00-11.15

Panels 1 & 2 (Parallel Panels) 11.15-12.45

Panel 1:
Future Visions: Utopia & Dystopia (MC 0024)
Chair:

Panel 2:
Spectres of Marx: Ghosts, Magic, Realism (MC 0025)
Chair:

Lunch (Served in The Swann) 12.45-13.45

Panels 3 & 4 (Parallel Panels) 13.45-15.45

Panel 3:
Unhappy Marriages & Queer Unions (MC 0024)
Chair:

Panel 4:
Time, Philosophy, Politics (MC 0025)
Chair:

Tea & Coffee 15.45-16.00

Closing Keynote (Stuart Sim) 16.00-17.00
Chair: Andrew Rowcroft

Wine reception 17.00-17.30

Conference Dinner (Côte Brasserie) 18.00
There is now a near-consensus amongst climate scientists that current levels of atmospheric greenhouse gas are sufficient to alter global weather patterns to possibly disastrous effect. Like the hole in the ozone layer as described by Bruno Latour, global warming is a ‘hybrid’ natural-social-discursive phenomenon. And science fiction (SF) seems increasingly to occupy a critical location within this nature/culture nexus. This paper will take as its subject matter what Daniel Bloom has dubbed ‘cli-fi’. Proto-ecological thematics have clearly been long present in written SF. Recently, the visual media - especially graphic novels, comics and cinema - have also engaged in fictional and non-fictional representations of climate change. The paper will argue against the view that catastrophic SF is best understood as a variant of the kind of ‘apocalyptic’ fiction inspired by the Christian Apokalypsis, on the grounds that this tends to downplay the historical novelty of SF as a genre defined primarily in relation to modern science and technology. Drawing on the work of Marxist and neo-Marxist critics such as Darko Suvin, Fredric Jameson, Raymond Williams and Franco Moretti, it will describe how a genre defined in relation to science finds itself obliged to produce fictional responses to problems actually thrown up by contemporary scientific research. It will argue that climate change sometimes functions as a setting for some other more central ‘novum’, to borrow Suvin’s term, but that elsewhere it is itself the primary novum. And it will examine and explain the narrative strategies pursued in texts where anthropogenic climate change is indeed the hegemonic novum.

Anil Kahvecioğlu (Bilkent University)

Utopian Thought in Transformation: Alain Badiou’s Ontology and the Inversion of Classical Marxist Utopia

In the literature of the theory of utopia, the concept of utopia is not considered within a monolithic context; rather, disparate meanings and characteristics are granted to the concept by various scholars, which specifically stems from the fact that it has not one stable framework. Despite the ambiguity of the term, what is striking in the literature is that there is a certain break as to the context of the concept, which has experienced a substantial transformation. Without doubt, the transformation involves serious efforts in order to efface the so called bad reputation of the term, which paves the way for new discussions pertaining to utopian studies. In these discussions, contrary to conventional notions of utopia displaying features such as perfection, finitude, hope for future, and reproduction of the same, new approaches attempt to grasp the concept in an opposite sense by concentrating on imperfection, infinity, hope for now, and the possibility of novelty.

As a matter of fact, the rise in the number of studies striving to reverse the concept of utopia is not an isolated phenomenon, but emerged simultaneously with new perspectives in philosophy that prioritize infinity over finitude, novelty over augmentation of the same, validity of flaws over perfect states. In this study, I will specifically focus on the ontology of Alain Badiou, who is one of the most prominent philosophers of the 21st century and who carries the banner of Marxism particularly through his endeavor to revitalize the idea of communism. In the context of Badiou's ontology, this study will prove that there are certain parallels between new approaches in the theory of utopia and his ontology which will suggest that classical boundaries of Marxist utopia is in the process of inverting itself in Badiou's contemporary Marxist philosophy.

Anil Kahvecioğlu took his bachelor's degree in the Department of International Relations in Bilkent University, and master's degree in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration in Middle East Technical University. He completed his master's thesis titled “Alain Badiou's Ontology and Utopian Thought”. After he received his master's degree, he participated in a conference on set theory ontology and the philosophy of event in The University of Liverpool and made presentations on subjectivity and faith in the context of Badiou's political ontology in Istanbul and Ankara. He is currently a first year PhD student in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration in Bilkent University and studying on the role of political ontology for transformative actions.
One of the core insights of Slavoj Žižek’s work on postmodern ideology is that it resists the old ‘unmasking’ methods of critique. Pointing out the self-interest of politicians, according to Žižek, is no different from remaining silent on it; the strategy of making visible what was hidden is no longer effective. This diagnosis raises some important questions for contemporary Marxist criticism. How might cultural works express resistance to the thoroughgoing cynicism of neoliberal capitalism? And how might we, as readers, detect them? I propose to examine this problem through a reading of Paul Verhoeven’s RoboCop (1987), a dystopian science fiction film that seems (at first sight) to depict the sinister and criminal workings of corporations in a manner reminiscent of the ‘old’ ideology critique. My thesis, however, is that the film does contain some properly utopian impulse. I will pay particular attention to RoboCop’s dream-sequence, which affirms the persistence of human subjectivity in the machine: here the film uncouples the dream’s content (Alex Murphy’s particular fantasy of domestic life) from its form, the universality of dreaming itself, a utopian signifier of collectivity. What matters in RoboCop is not the identitarian relationship between Murphy and the robot, the degree to which the former persists in the latter; it is rather the surprise emergence of subjectivity in the first place. This analysis will prepare me, in conclusion, to reflect on the effectiveness of utopian thought in general as a means of opposing neoliberal cynicism.

Harry Warwick is a PhD candidate in English at the University of Southampton. His thesis explores the utopian impulses latent in 1980s science fiction films.
Critical discussion of the English ghost story of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has in recent years tended to get absorbed within the broader fields of ‘Gothic studies’ and the ‘spectral turn’. And yet the ghost story cannot be reduced to the Gothic, and poses questions about literary form, markets and ideology which ‘Gothic’ and ‘spectral’ approaches cannot answer.

Simon Hay’s recent book *A History of the British Ghost Story* is a brave challenge in that it dares to tackle this topic from a Marxist direction. However, it is hampered by its narrowly Lukácsian approach, choosing to ignore other schools of Marxist criticism; and by its peculiar interpretation of Lukács’s theory in general, and his notion of literary realism in particular.

Taking Hay’s book as a point of departure, my paper will propose a different approach. I will draw upon the – admittedly very different - Marxisms of Lukács, Eagleton and Williams, to address the nineteenth and early twentieth century English ghost story from three directions: as literary commodity, produced to generate a profit by virtue of its printed production, circulation and consumption by readers; as ideological representation, signifying its meanings through its presuppositions and silences; and as a field of literary experiment which at times anticipates twentieth century modernism.

I will develop my argument by reference to the writings and careers of key figures in this field, both authors and entrepreneurial publishers, including Charles Dickens, J. Sheridan Le Fanu, Mary Braddon, Vernon Lee, Henry James and M.R. James.

*Martin Spence has spent over thirty years working in film and television, first in production and recently as a full-time trade union negotiator for the media & entertainment union BECTU. He has published articles in various Marxist journals including Capital & Class, Capitalism Nature Socialism and Monthly Review, plus two books, on energy policy and urban history.*
Anindya Raychaudhuri (University of St Andrews, Scotland)

Advertising (Across) Borders: Fetishizing Humanism and the “Magic” of Capitalism

While the way borders are imagined, re-imagined, configured and re-configured through cultural representation has long been of interest to scholars of literary and cultural studies, there has been, to date, little or no work done on the way borders feature in advertising. This is very surprising not least because advertising has arguably been of central importance in the ways in which globalised capitalism has apparently elided national borders in the second half of the twentieth century and since. Over the last thirty years there have been at least a dozen advertising campaigns for various companies and various products that use borders, partitions and reunifications as themes and motifs. In these advertisements, the actual physical border gets appropriated to represent difference and divisiveness in more abstract forms. The product being advertised can then be linked to the act of transcending said border, thereby creating the marketing narrative necessary for effective advertising. In this paper, I will examine these advertisements in order to analyse what they reveal about cultural conceptions of borders and partitions, and how advertising works at once to transcend and reinforce said borders. How do these multi-national companies with huge markets on either side of the border create particular narratives to suit these different markets? How do they reinforce cultural differences in the process, and therefore in some senses construct these differing markets for their products? What do advertisers hope to gain by incorporating such politically sensitive events in their advertising campaigns? In my argument, I apply Marx’s idea of commodity fetishism and Raymond Williams's analysis of the magic system of advertising to argue that these advertisements are actually fetishizing a particular form of transcendental humanism. The use of partition and borders in advertising reveals the infinitely adaptable nature of Capitalism as the presence or absence of borders, acts of partition or reunification, can never seriously challenge the ultimate hegemony of capital.

Anindya Raychaudhuri is a Lecturer in English. He was previously British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow, first at University College London and subsequently at the School of English, University of St Andrews. His primary research interest is in the cultural representation and collective memory of war and conflict. He is also interested in critical theory (especially Marxism), as well as postcolonial and diasporic identities and cultures. He is the author of two forthcoming monographs: Narrating Partition: Agency, Memory, Representation and Homemaking: Radical Nostalgia and the Construction of a South Asian Diaspora.
Worker, Technical Specialist, Political Cadre: Class Struggle in Romanian Fiction During Communism

After 1989, the analysis of Romanian literature produced during communism was dominated by the totalitarian theoretical framework of the antagonistic relationship between the individual versus the party/state. In contrast, this paper will argue that the theoretical framework of class struggle is a more useful and less reductive way in comprehending the social antagonism informing the fiction of the communist period. Using the class theory proposed by George Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi in their book, The Intellectuals on the Path to Class Power, this paper will explore the changing articulation of antagonistic relationships among workers, technical specialists, and political cadre as it unfolded in Romanian fiction during the communist period. The paper’s focus will be on two major literary directions: Socialist Realism, dominant in the 1950s, and the literature of the troubling decade (literatura obședântului deceniu) which emerged in the 1960s and remained dominant until the end of the regime in 1989. I will argue that while workers held an important place in the communist regime’s symbolic horizon, their position was always subordinated to the social antagonism between the technical specialist and the political cadre. Moreover, the articulation of the antagonism between the technical specialist and political cadre suffered a complex transformation in the transition from Socialist Realism to the literature of the troubling decade. Socialist Realism was dominated by the figure of the political cadre from working class or peasant origins. The figure of the technical specialist became the dominant one in the literature of the troubling decade. The paper will argue that this change prepared the ideological ground for the post 1989 development of the dominant anti-communism and anti-Marxism, and to a general retreat into conservative social values.

Alex Boican (UCL, School of Slavonic and East European Studies)

After 1989, the analysis of Romanian literature produced during communism was dominated by the totalitarian theoretical framework of the antagonistic relationship between the individual versus the party/state. In contrast, this paper will argue that the theoretical framework of class struggle is a more useful and less reductive way in comprehending the social antagonism informing the fiction of the communist period. Using the class theory proposed by George Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi in their book, The Intellectuals on the Path to Class Power, this paper will explore the changing articulation of antagonistic relationships among workers, technical specialists, and political cadre as it unfolded in Romanian fiction during the communist period. The paper’s focus will be on two major literary directions: Socialist Realism, dominant in the 1950s, and the literature of the troubling decade (literatura obședântului deceniu) which emerged in the 1960s and remained dominant until the end of the regime in 1989. I will argue that while workers held an important place in the communist regime’s symbolic horizon, their position was always subordinated to the social antagonism between the technical specialist and the political cadre. Moreover, the articulation of the antagonism between the technical specialist and political cadre suffered a complex transformation in the transition from Socialist Realism to the literature of the troubling decade. Socialist Realism was dominated by the figure of the political cadre from working class or peasant origins. The figure of the technical specialist became the dominant one in the literature of the troubling decade. The paper will argue that this change prepared the ideological ground for the post 1989 development of the dominant anti-communism and anti-Marxism, and to a general retreat into conservative social values.

Alex has a BA in Humanities from Birkbeck, and an MRes in East European Studies from UCL/SSEES. He has recently passed his viva at UCL/SSEES, with the thesis ‘Rearticulating Socialist Subjectivities: Class and Gender in Romanian Fiction During Communism’. Alex has interests in the following fields: 20th century literature, especially post WWII; Socialist Realism, both Soviet and Romanian; Marxist literary criticism, particularly Georg Lukács; Freudian and Lacanian theories of the unconscious; and comparative literary studies. At the moment, he is looking into ways to apply the theory of world-system analysis to the development of Romanian literature during communism.
Panel 3:

Unhappy Marriages and Queer Unions: Marxism, Feminism, Psychoanalysis

Glyn Salton-Cox (University of California, Santa Barbara)

Uneasy Bedfellows: Marxism, Vanguardism, and Queer Theory

The relation of the socialist left to radical theories and praxes of gender and sexuality is one of the most vexed questions of twentieth-century literary, cultural and intellectual history. Marxism and queer theory in particular have usually been seen as the most awkward of bedfellows; they have, however, very recently been put into productive dialogue by a number of scholars in the US, who focus mainly on mid- to late-twentieth century American culture (Roderick Ferguson, Kevin Floyd, Elisa Glick, Rosemary Hennessey, Daniel Hurewitz, José Esteban Muñoz, and Matthew Tinkcom). Drawing on the theoretical ground broken by these scholars and on extensive archival research, my paper turns instead to another salient site of the contestation of the leftist sexual subject: the 1930s, when queer writers in England came increasingly within the orbit of socialist left, and the Communist Party in particular.

Through a reading of the queer Communist writer Sylvia Townsend Warner, this paper argues that the 1930s presented the opportunity for a series of vital encounters between Marxist and queer “counterpublic formations” – my term for the period’s overlapping spheres of cultural production, by which I put the work of Michael Warner and Raymond Williams into dialogue in order to theorize 1930s radicalism. In particular, I argue that the Leninist concept of the vanguard is crucial for the development of Townsend Warner’s vision of non-reproductive futurity in her 1936 novel Summer Will Show. This analysis opens up a longer history of articulations between Marxist and queer cultures, for the often maligned category of vanguardism is an important heuristic not only for 1930s leftist writing and early- to mid-twentieth century Marxism, but also, I argue, for both early gay liberation, and certain strains of contemporary queer theory.

Glyn Salton-Cox is Assistant Professor of English and Affiliated Faculty of Feminist Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His work has appeared in journals and books including Modern Language Quarterly, Comparative Literature, and The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century War Literature. He is guest editor, with Leo Mellor, of a special edition of Critical Quarterly on “The Long 1930s” (October 2015), and is currently working on a monograph on queer leftist writing of the 1930s.
Arguably, a fundamental mediation between Marx and Freud occurs on the level of method: both begin an immanent social critique by retracing mediated end products, presumed self-evident: the commodity and the individual, respectively. Ultimately, both show these products as antagonistic unities (of material wealth/value, and the libidinal/death drives), anticipating the possibility of a social crisis. Just as Freud’s crisis of civilization results from aggressive desires as the external manifestation of a generalized death drive; for Marx, the competition between capitals is the expression of a general compulsion, the contradictory drive of capitalism to devalue itself. As the antagonistic character of the commodity today becomes actualized in the destruction of material wealth to preserve value in the system, Freud’s death drive can no longer be disregarded, but must be treated as an actually existing category. Here, the maintenance of value-form society, even as valorization occurs at the expense of social reproduction, necessitates state violence, generalized social destruction.

It is the aim of this assessment to present these antagonisms as obverse sides of the same social crisis—a link made manifest in Post-Fordist global capitalism. As the unconscious dimension of value mediated society, Freud’s death drive parallels the social compulsion to destroy the material conditions of life, despite an increasing superfluous population. However, while Freud’s crisis is naturalized as immanent to a ‘civilizational’ order that must be preserved; Marx, historicizing a particular social synthesis, posits social contradiction as the inevitability of an alternative.

Deborah Young is a fourth-year doctoral student in Comparative Literature at UC Davis. She works with English, German, and Greek literature, with a designated emphasis in Critical Theory. Her current research seeks to position Freud’s crisis of civilization and Marx’s social contradiction as obverse sides of the same social crisis, in light of Post-Fordist capitalism. This assertion is grounded in an examination of method, in that both Marx and Freud begin an immanent social critique by retracing social objectifications (the commodity and the individual). This project examines the above relationship in the work of modernist novelists (Döblin, Brecht, Dos Passos), in whose work reflects negatively the social totality, revealing its repressions, social contradiction. In particular, this project focuses on the use of state coercion to maintain value-form society, as valorization occurs at the expense of social reproduction. This project also involves re-examining the Frankfurt school aesthetics (Adorno, Lukács, Benjamin), in light of Postone’s re-examination of Marxian social theory.
Katharina Fackler (University of Graz, Austria)

Re-Reading the ‘Unhappy Marriage’ of Marxism and Feminism through Dorothy Allison's Life Writing

This presentation explores how Dorothy Allison’s life writings intervene at a key juncture in long-standing debates about the relationship between Marxism and (queer) feminism. Traditionally, Marxism and feminism have had a complex and conflicted relationship, poignantly described as “unhappy marriage” by Heidi Hartmann in 1979. While Marxism has often dismissed gender issues as a distraction from the critique of capitalism, feminism has essentialized the experience of white heterosexual women from the middle class. Dominant narrative strategies in American literature (as well as in literary criticism) have powerfully reinforced the erasure of the complex double bind of capitalist exploitation and patriarchy. For instance, Amy Schrager Lang has shown how female characters’ “womanliness,” i.e. their submission to norms that reaffirm both the ideological and material dimensions of male privilege, affirmed their rightful place in the middle class. ‘Writing back’ from the margins of poverty and non-normative femininity, Dorothy Allison’s highly successful life writing profoundly troubles these dominant patterns in American literature, rendering a more nuanced version of (Marxist) feminism. Focusing on Skin and Trash, this presentation seeks to locate Allison’s writings in and beyond the debates about Marxism and feminism as well as literary representations of class and gender. For instance, her status as femme lesbian places her beyond the traditional focus of Marxist feminism on unpaid household and reproduction work for men. Allison acknowledges the insufficiency of traditional categories when she writes: “Should I use words like patriarchy and male madness and class oppression? I tried. But every time, I found myself stopped, the words sour and mean” (Skin 236). Unable to express her experience through traditional categories, Allison resorts to life writing. This mode of writing allows for a greater emphasis on ambivalence and affect, enabling a more nuanced and complex take on Marxist and feminist categories and their intersections. This presentation seeks to gauge how Dorothy Allison’s Skin and Trash enmesh her ‘white trash’ class status with the material and ideological implications of white queer femininity.

Katharina Fackler is an assistant professor in American Studies at the University of Graz, Austria. Her recently completed dissertation analyzed the visual politics of poverty photography in the 1960s in varying contexts, such as Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty and Martin Luther King, Jr.’s 1968 Poor People’s Campaign. Her research, funded, among others, by a Moody Grant of the Lyndon B. Johnson Foundation and a U.S. Ambassador’s Grant for Young Researchers in American Studies, has taken her to different venues in the U.S., such as the LBJ Library in Austin, Texas, the Library of Congress and the National Archives in Washington, DC, Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, and the Futures of American Studies Institute at Dartmouth College. Her articles on the representation of class in photographs of the Civil Rights Movement, on “(Trans-)National Iconographies of Hunger in Cold War America,” and on the re-mapping of the geography of class in photographs of the 1968 Poor People’s Campaign are forthcoming in European and American essay collections. Katharina is a co-editor of the postgraduate online journal COPAS.

Darko Vinketa (Central European University)
Dispossession and Futurelessness: Remarks for the Future Conversation between Queer and Social Reproduction Theory

In this paper I will delineate some contours that the future critical praxis of bringing social reproduction theory into a productive conversation with queer theory should acquire. I engage with this task by proposing a notion of the dispossessed subject which emerges at the epistemological disjuncture of psychoanalysis and neoliberal economics. I argue that with the advent of neoliberalism, the reified knowledge of the market economy steps in to perform the epistemological labor of normalization of the crisis of social reproduction, whereas Oedipal normality no longer promises the ability to sustain the conditions for the accumulation of capital. This invites the contemporary social reproduction theory directly into conversation with queer theory, whose critique of normalization of heterosexuality through reification of psychoanalysis can offer valuable critique of the contemporary regimes of normalization through reification of neoliberal economics.

Following the tendencies towards privatization of previously public services and spaces, I argue that the dispossessed subject is increasingly interpellated outside the enclosed and privatized spaces of reproduction which allocates it in the same urban space as that of the queer subject. I then propose that this displacement is normalized by the austerity discourse which operates at the same level of social consequences as that of the psychoanalysis in the previous era of accumulation through closed mass production – mass consumption circuit within the register of Keynesian welfare economics. This comparative perspective between the two epistemes will be done by the work of reframing Edelman’s (2004) queer critique of normalization of ‘reproductive futurism’ in historical materialist terms. I will argue that the loss of future suffered by Edelman’s synthomosexual increasingly resonates with the neoliberal discursive configurations of future, which cast every enjoyment of the dispossessed subject as achieved at the expense of the social order.

Darko Vinketa holds a B.A. and an M.A. in Political Science from the University of Zagreb and he is currently enrolled in an M.A. program in Critical Gender Studies at the Central European University. His research interests lie at the intersection between contemporary performativity theory and critical political economy, particularly the issue of how to conceptualize the concept of reproduction as it is figures in contemporary queer and Marxist feminist theory. He has previously presented on topics of queer sexuality in post-socialist urban spaces.
Panel 4:  
Time, Philosophy, Politics

Lindsay Weinberg (University of California, Santa Cruz)  
Time in Post-Fordist Societies of Control

This paper analyzes the relationship between time and the expropriation of value under post-Fordist societies of control. I define post-Fordist societies of control as societies structured according to economic principles of flexibility, information flows, and target markets, made possible by the ubiquity of work place and leisure-time surveillance. The paper begins with a discussion of the relationship between time, wage labor, and industrial capitalism through Moishe Postone’s analysis of Karl Marx’s mature works. Subjects are dominated by the structuring of time, which allows for the workday to be segmented so that labor-time can be measured. The paper then argues that while under industrial capitalism, capital’s fundamental characteristic is the mediation of subjects through the concept of labor in order to produce surplus value, under post-Fordism, capital accumulates value through the production of information assets that are not always subject to the same time constraints as labor. Particularly, the fact that value can be produced through commercial forms of surveillance that are placed on the subject during so-called leisure time (meaning time outside the wage-relation), shows that with transformations in capital come transformations in time. Wage labor is a particular abstraction of time necessary for producing commodities under the capitalist organization of life; with the rise of computation and information technologies, information assets allow for the realization of value through future gains: options and the right to make market choices are tailored to subjects whose behavior is most monetizable and most likely to guarantee a return on investment. Subjects that are determined to be likely to function as a return on an investment of capital are presented with particular options and choices, while others are limited by the information accrued and assembled by predictive models of risk. Subjects are considered responsible for maintaining flexibility and making timely choices, while the structure of information aggregation remains impervious to social scrutiny as an “objective” institutional arrangement.

Lindsay Weinberg is a third year graduate student in the History of Consciousness Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She received her BA from Binghamton University in New York in 2012. Her research interests include digital economy, critical theory, U.S. military history, and the history of technology. Her graduate research concerns how value is produced out of personal information online and how this can inform a Marxist theory of information.
Mark Cowling (retired from the University of Teesside)
The Dialectic in Marx and Hegel – An Outline

This paper offers an outline of the relationship between the dialectic in Hegel and Marx. It identifies four major forms of the dialectic in Hegel. These are, most importantly, the dialectic of method, meaning the dialectical development of categories; the dialectic of historical development through human intellectual labour, and the conception of the social totality which results from this; the dialectic of the concrete real, as found particularly in Hegel’s Philosophy of Nature, and finally the dialectic of human physical labour. I then look briefly at the major forms of the dialectic in Marx. In order to do this it is necessary to divide Marx’s work into periods. I discuss the extent to which the dialectic in Marx is derived from that of Hegel. I conclude that the only part of Hegel’s dialectic which is significant in the older Marx is his dialectic of method, which suggested a scientific method to Marx.

The paper has at least a limited contemporary relevance: if the approach to Marxism based on a conception of it as scientific socialism were to have any traction today, then relating Marx to Hegel is largely a blind alley. This suggests that other approaches might be more fruitful, such as developing a theory of justice with a strong socialist dimension, or working in the area of Marxist theories of globalisation.

Mark Cowling is now retired but worked as a Professor of Criminology and Marxism at Teesside University.
Wealth, Efficiency & Truth: The Relegation of the Leftist Project

“It’s easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism.” This notion, little more than a rephrasing of the Fukuyama thesis, begs the question: has the rise of what is commonly called “neoliberalism”—the set of reforms in the aftermath of the crisis of Fordism that sought to open trade and labor markets, deregulate and privatize industries, and flatten marginal tax rates—effectively foreclosed the possibility of large-scale radical non-capitalist Leftist political organization? This paper departs from the working hypothesis that it has and attempts to trace the Leftist project from the prediction of proletarian revolution to the formation of the partial welfare state to the apparent rebranding of the State as, more openly than ever, “a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole of the bourgeoisie.” Taking *The Communist Manifesto* as the founding document of the contemporary Western Left, it seeks to reconcile the forces described as foretelling revolution with the failure of that revolution to arrive, reading the Keynesian reform of the inter- and post-war years as a sort of capitalist apologetics; the physical dispersal wrought in the postwar years as the masked manipulation of a population in the service of moneyed interests; and the major theories of the postmodern as indicative of the changing nature and structure of knowledge, especially the epistemologico-linguistic operations by which that knowledge is made to serve the interests of capital accumulation. It seeks, above all, to establish the existence of a relationship in the contemporary West between wealth and the production of ‘knowledge’ or ‘truth’ that shrouds the possibilities of political control and subjugation that are the natural externalities of capitalism generally and neoliberalism specifically.

*James holds a first-class MA in English (Contemporary Literature, Culture & Theory) from King’s College London and is currently deciding between PhD offers in King’s English department and the Queen Mary Political Science. At present, he teaches full-time while working on pieces for Jacobin and other publications. He was educated in the US prior to the MA, but has lived in London for the last three years.*
Every time attempts are made by critics to relegate Marxism to the ground, it seems to rise from the dead. Decades after the collapse of Soviet Union, and the death of Marx, Marxism has continued to draw opponents and supporters alike. The doctrine continues to act as an essential influence in responding to issues of global injustice and inequality, class, and, economic and Political disparity especially in Africa. Yet, many studies have come hard of Marxism and its acolytes on the ground that it places so much emphasis on class and class struggle while ignoring struggles against oppression, racial, sexual, and national issues. Critics also point to historical examples arguing that it has been in the nature of Marxist states to turn into totalitarian regimes rather than lead to a condition of equality and cohesion between the classes. Others have equally claimed that Marx overemphasized the power of the Proletariat. However, what these studies have over looked, which this study therefore attempts to fill a gap in the literature, is the fact that, in spite of such criticisms, Marxism has continued to influence a great deal on a new generation in Africa, especially with those largely bothered particularly on the problem of Political elites and wealth accumulation. Resultantly, this study contends that the question whether Marxism is relevant or not in the 21st century depends not only on whether his set of ideas has helps us explain the world today, rather that, it presents itself as a science, ideology, philosophy as well as an analytical tool that helps us to understand and organize the struggle for change in society, especially in Africa, where corruption, great disparity between the rich and the poor remains the other of the day.

Nicholas Idris ERAMEH is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science, University of Ibadan. His area of Specialization includes International Relations and Africa, human rights, humanitarian intervention and responsibility to protect in Africa. He has co authored an article published in Africa Journal of Elections, titled, The Institutional Framework of the 2012 Elections in Ghana, Consolidating or Reversing Democratic Achievement. His passion for Marxism started in his undergraduate days, emerging as one of the best students in the course titled "POS 361; Marxism". As doctoral student, he has equally assisted Mr Tunde Oyekannmi (lecturer in charge of the course) in teaching undergraduate students, while also engaging in discussion with colleagues on the continuous the relevance of Marxism. He is currently researching on "International Relations Theory and Humanitarian Interventions in Africa". Erameh has also attended several academic conferences where his academic ideas have been shared.
Closing Keynote:

Stuart Sim (formerly of Northumbria University)
Marxism & Post-Marxism in a Neoliberal Cultural Climate

This paper will examine where Marxism stands in the wake of what could be called the 'neoliberal crisis', as well as where this leaves post-Marxism, the most sustained critique of Marxism from within the Marxist fold. I will consider what role Marxist and post-Marxist thought could play as a response to neoliberal hegemony, in terms of theory, politics, aesthetics, and the arts world in general.

If the response to the crisis is framed in its classical communist form, however, it is highly unlikely to gain much support. Communism's history is hardly a persuasive advertisement, as post-Marxist theorists have made very clear. Post-Marxism illustrates the dilemma Marxism has in facing this kind of crisis: does it stick dogmatically to its original theoretical principles, or seek to reorient itself against changing cultural circumstances in the manner of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's post-Marxism? The hostile reaction the latter received from classical Marxists illustrates what is arguably Marxism's greatest failing as a theoretical movement: its inability to deal with internal dissent. Yet they were surely right in their belief that if the Marxist tradition of thought was to be maintained at all then it had to lose much of its theoretical baggage, to incorporate the spirit of Marx rather than the letter. We need to consider how to apply that spirit to debates about theory, politics, and creative art practice in an era of neoliberal hegemony, which is just as dogmatic as communism at its worst, particularly when it comes to its obsession with applying free market principles to every walk of life – including the arts. Marxism's most fruitful legacy may well prove to be in the area of critical theory – as long as it can distance itself from its doctrinaire past.

Stuart Sim is retired professor of Critical Theory and Long Eighteenth-Century English Literature at Northumbria University. He has published widely on critical and cultural theory – particularly poststructuralism, postmodernism, Marxism, and post-Marxism – and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English prose fiction. Amongst his recent books are Fifty Key Postmodern Thinkers (Routledge, 2013), A Philosophy of Pessimism, (Reaktion, 2015), and The Edinburgh Companion to Critical Theory (Edinburgh University Press, 2016). His current book project, for Reaktion, is The World of Greed. He was elected a Fellow of the English Association in 2002.