Precarity: Poetic and Aesthetic Explorations

Online Rolling Series of Workshops Convened by:

Louiza Odysseos, University of Sussex & Ritu Vij, University of Aberdeen

25 February – 25 March 2022

These workshops offer critical-reconstructive avenues into thinking about precarity, disposability and fungibility. Contributors aim to pluralise and re-orient scholarly and activist analyses into realities, categories and analytics of 'precarity' and 'precarisation' – the always-differential governing of populations through precarity – away from conventional labourist and governance-centric approaches that centre the loss or re-inscription of sovereignty (of state, self, and capital) as their primary object(s) of inquiry. Conventional analyses re-establish being-in-secure-work as normative, whilst failing to consider the post/colonial and slavery specificities of historical and ongoing disposability and fungibility, which unwittingly erases diverse global experiences of permanent insecurity, obscuring the historical geopolitical and subjective conditions of enslavement and colonialism that enabled Euro-American conditions of work/er security through regimes of extraction, land expropriation and native genocide. Drawing on poetic and aesthetic archives and methods produced in the midst of being epistemically known and ontologically constituted as precarious life, they engage wide-ranging artistic production and practices of sociality that rupture precarity's grammar of representations. Working in co-production with artists and communities, contributors take precarity/disposability/fungibility as generative sites for reimagining life, politics and resistance and recuperating the psychic-social lives of non/post-liberal subjects beyond normative sovereignty of self, state and capital.

Below is a programme with time-zone adjusted start times. Each workshop will last four hours.

❖❖❖

Workshop 1: Friday, 25th February

Newcastle, NSW, Australia: **04.00 26th February**
Hyderabad/Delhi, India: **00.30 26th February**
Germany: 18.00 25th February
UK: 17.00 25th February
Rio de Janeiro/Minas Gerais/Bahia, Brazil: 14.00 25th February
Florida/New York/Maine/Ontario: 12.00 25th February
Illinois: 11.00 25th February
Hawaii: 07.00 25th February

1 Timothy J. Huzar, Queen's University, Canada (Bader International Study Centre), tjh41@sussex.ac.uk or t.huzar@ncis.org

Singular Vulnerability: Apprehensions of Precarious Life

In close conversation with the recent significant expansion of research on precarity, "vulnerability" has at the same time become a keyword in the description of contemporary regimes of disposability — most forcefully seen in Judith Butler's influential monographs *Precarious Life* (2004) and *Frames of War* (2009). Outside of academia, and in a similar manner to precarity, vulnerability has predominantly been used to highlight the exacerbated violences certain populations are exposed to — as seen in the designation of vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 pandemic. As Joronen and Rose (2020) have argued, thus understood, the existential stakes of vulnerability — as an ontological intervention in how existence is conceptualised, one that refuses sovereign invulnerability in the name of dependency and relationality — get overlooked. In addition to these overlooked existential stakes, in the work of the Italian feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero — a key interlocutor of Butler's and major proponent of theories of vulnerability herself — vulnerability also gestures towards the singular particularity of each existent, a singularity at odds with the abstract conceptions of the Subject or the Human propagated in the metaphysical traditions of European modernity. For Cavarero, the poetics of narrative are better able to attend to the singularity at the heart of each existent's vulnerability rather than the abstractions of philosophy. Recent black studies feminist thought has been at the forefront of offering poetic methodologies to describe forms of life rendered fungible and disposable in ways that refuse their reduction to "bare life." In this paper I explore the role that singularity plays in this burgeoning body of scholarship, where the specificities of an existent's life are articulated in novel ways — for example, Hartman's focus on "fabulation" (2019), or da Silva's focus on "poethics" (2014) — while at the same time singularity is complicated by its articulation through abstraction (Raiford 2020) or through seriality (Campt 2017).

2 Vinicius Tavares de Oliveira, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, Brazil
oliveiravt@gmail.com
Jessica S. Oliveira, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, Brazil
jessicasoliveira@gmail.com

"They already warned, they'll shoot to kill, and we know where the stray bullet is going to meet": slam poetry and re-existence in Brazil

The paper takes as an assumption that literature, art, and politics are intimately connected. The connection of texts – in both written and oral forms – with context can bring complexity to our understandings of times, spaces and the experiences and worldviews of those inserted in a specific context. With this in mind, we focus on Slam poetry produced and performed by young poets from Brazilian peripheries and the ways they critically address violence in its multiple and complex forms – such as racism, machismo, poverty, etc. Beyond their quality as portrayals of peripheric

realities – which are constructed through improvisation and author-audience interaction –, we intend to address Slam as a "mode of re-existence" (a term coined by Brazilian Linguist Cynthia Agra de Brito). As slammers perform and claim for themselves their condition as artist and poets, they also subvert elitist understandings of culture, art, poetry and of peripheric spaces and subjects as helpless victims and/or dangerous offenders unworthy of attention. In other words, they become agents of both "resistance" (to silence, obliteration, and, importantly, victimization) and "existence" (as political subjects whose words and attitude aim to awakening the audience to reflection, awareness and the need for social change).

3 Sam Okoth Opondo, Vassar College, saopondo@vassar.edu & Michael J. Shapiro, University of Hawaii, shapiro@hawaii.edu

Better Than Us: Empathy, Precarity, and Futurity

Our analysis begins with Philip K. Dick / Ridley Scott texts – the novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* and film Blade *Runner* in which the android/replicant-producing Tyrell Corporation operating under the banner, "More Human Than Human" uses empathy as a marker of the difference between human beings and the replicants it extracts value from while limiting their life spans. With the vagaries of empathy as referent, we turn next to Ken Liu's short story *The Caretaker* (appearing in Neil Clarke's "More Human Than Human" anthology) where the family of the bed-ridden protagonist 'employs' a 24/7 robot caretake from Sunshine Homecare Solutions - who "is never off-duty " - only to discover that the robot is operated remotely by a migrant laborer struggling with a precarious life. We conclude our analysis of how empathy works to value and order human-human and human-non-human relations with a reading of Andrey Junkovsky's Russian science fiction series *Better than Us*.

4 Julio César Díaz Calderón, University of Florida, jdiazcalderon@ufl.edu & Zafo Erick Obando Arenas, Visual Artist, erick.obandoarenas@gmail.com

Un-Goring IR Through Poetry and Photographic Images: Necro-Lives, Insecure Academic Spaces, and the Bloodshed of War

This paper aims at showing the bloodshed of the so-called 'war on drugs' in Colombia and Mexico through the creative intervention of two arti(vi)sts as a process of transformative politics. Aesthetically, the resulted poems and the photographs from this collaboration seek to break with a recent artistic tendency to either create shocking representations of the brutality of violence for 'trauma porn' or present abstractions of violence into forms that comfortably place the spectator at a 'safe' distance from represented 'gore' spectacle. These pieces' (im)possible task is to locate researchers and arti(vi)sts in a complicit liminal space of thinking with and through the everydayness of the necro-lives produced around us with us and for the perpetuation of different versions of imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchies. The work of these aesthetics is done when the seer starts a process of movement with and beyond that bloodshed. In a traditional

academic format, it includes a discussion about the implications of the seeing/not seeing dilemma in politics of representation through the global artwork on narcotrafficking violence. Furthermore, it critically engages this arti(vi)st intervention to Sayak Valencia's transfeminist political philosophy work on Gore Capitalism.

5 Shree Deshpande, University of Hawaii, sdeshpan@hawaii.edu

Precarious Subjects of International Relations/ 'Human Resources': Insurgent Recruitment, Willfulness, and Expression

I analyze CIA documents on agency and insurgent recruitment as well as on unemployment and disenfranchisement published around the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 along with texts on vocations and professionalization to bring into relief a poetics of the Human which may speak to the subjectivization of precarity and the geopolitics of precarity in international relations. I utilize the poieses of Sylvia Wynter's 'pieza framework' (Wynter, 1992) and Michel de Certeau's formulations of 'use' and 'consumption' (1984) to plumb how different subjectivities are assembled and constituted in order to extend and delimit the episteme inaugurated by the transatlantic slave trade. In other words, I attempt to defamiliarize the 'Human' in international relations/this brand of 'Human Resources' by tending to its genesis and the mobilization of its component-parts with an eye to recruitment, willfulness, and expression. I also seek to enrich discussions of precarity rooted in land, labor, and migration by following what congeals out of their deterritorialization. Finally, while I treat would-be insurgents to be an example of precarious subjects at least in this instance, I do not take for granted the many lines that complicate subject-formation; on the contrary, this interplay is what animates the work.

❖❖❖

Workshop 2: Friday, 4ᵗʰ March

<mark>Newcastle, NSW, Australia: **00.00 5th March**</mark>
Hyderabad/Delhi, India: 18.30 4th March
Germany: 14.00 4th March
UK: 13.00 4th March
Rio de Janeiro/Minas Gerais/Bahia, Brazil: 12.00 4th March
Florida/New York/Maine/Ontario: 09.00 4th March
Illinois: 08.00 4th March
Hawaii: 03.00 4th March

1 Shiera S. Malik, DePaul University, shiera.malik@depaul.com

Unlearning with Poetics, Aesthetics, and Profanity

This paper starts with Sam Opondo's *Diplomatic Para-citations* to explore how experimental aesthetics and poetic creativity opens up space for us to center the stakes of conceptions of precarity as well as what is at stake in the possibilities that they foreclose. With others (Minh-ha, Sharpe, Azoulay, Singh), the paper examines this profane academic-speak on questions of a new precarity for some in the face of permanent precarity for others. These thinkers push aside, disregard even, claims for or against humanism, humanity, legal-liberal institutionalism and against any notion of pastness. They use pictoral images, images in verse, narratives, and various forms of analysis and argumentation in order to interrupt closures and to remain focused on politics and the beings, knowledges, and ecologies that are at stake in contemporary struggles. From their insights, this paper takes from Opondo's conception of amateur diplomacy and concludes with a set of provocations for thinking about how to identify sites of struggle and productive spaces for critical analysis.

2 Farai Chipato, University of Ottawa, farai.chipato@gmail.com

Precarity in a Black Anthropocene: Dispossession and alternative temporalities in Black Speculative Fiction

Precarity in global politics is increasingly being understood through the framing of the Anthropocene, a new geological era characterised by destructive human impacts on planetary life. However, theories of the Anthropocene have been critiqued by Black and Indigenous scholars, who highlight the ways in which environmental issues disproportionately affect marginalised people. These perspectives also note the ways that Anthropocene theorists either ignore or co-opt important ontological and epistemological critiques of modernity that have been developed by those outside the West. In this paper, I wish to build on these critiques, by engaging with the Black speculative fiction of N.K. Jemisin as a form of aesthetic theorising that opens up new ways of thinking about precarity in the Anthropocene. It will explore Jemisin's post-apocalyptic fiction, and her depiction of the entanglement of precarity, geology, and environmental destruction in the production of speculative worlds. By reading her work as theory, we gain a new perspective on debates about race, climate change and mass extinction, as well as gaining new ways to destabilise the linear temporality of modernity and Anthropocene notions of the end of the world.

3 Emily Merson, McMaster University, Ontario mersone@mcmaster.ca

The Climate of the Uncanny: Embodying Precarity in Amitav Ghosh's "Gun Island" and "The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable"

Decolonial speculative fiction writers are truth-tellers who name the injustices of patriarchal colonial impunity through world-building that foregrounds creating new relationships of accountability and care. International Relations scholarship on Cold War era science fiction has demonstrated the intertextual authority of colonialism as a metaphor for understanding the global hegemony of the United States and the neoliberal world order. Decolonial feminist intersectional analyses of embodied hierarchies of precarity in the planetary condition of climate change also call attention to hierarchies of authority in knowledge claims about priorities for climate action, from evidence-based scientific research to Indigenous peoples' land and water-based knowledge

systems. Drawing on Dipesh Chakrabarty's "The Climate of History in a Planetary Age", my analysis of decolonial speculative fiction storytelling focuses on characters and communities' embodied relationships with land and water. In Amitav Ghosh's book of essays "The Great Derangement" and speculative fiction novel "Gun Island", transnational uncanny encounters in the planetary condition of climate change are a poetic-aesthetic technique of confronting the dehumanization of the colonial violence of dispossession and the neoliberal abandonment of human dignity in order to envision creating new relationships of decolonial care and accountability.

4 AbdouMaliq Simone, The Urban Institute, University of Sheffield, a.t.simone@sheffield.ac.uk

Dirty Computing: Propositions from precarity

In Janelle Monae's opening cut, "Dirty Computers", of the album similarly titled, reference is made to black queer life being the equivalent of a dirty computer whose processor must be wiped out, cleaned, not so much of particular data and files but of the specific way in which calculations, computing, and processing is actually conducted. The dispositions of such processing may indeed be hard to handle, but what is more dangerous is their capacity to generate outcomes that normative regimes of sense-making and sense-enforcement cannot readily anticipate; that they surface propositions for the world that appear to come from the world in ways that disrupt the ability to know in advance just exactly what that world comprises of. This is why Monae talks about being subjected to, made a subject from the erasure of processing, to be reduced to a body that does not compute. Seelampur, a vast working class district on the near-eastern shores of the Yamuna River in Delhi, is the place where dirty computers go to die, to be cannibalized for their parts, where wires are stripped, melted; screens are converted, mother boards are resoldered— where the individual unit is stripped of recognition. This is an extremely dirty job performed by a dirty people, a common appellation for Muslims. Here the body of the machine is what generates value—its neodymium, gallium, lutetium, tantalum, rutherfordium, and zirconium, its plastics and alloys. Workspaces are replete with toxic dust, child labor, rough words, long hours, and dirty cops. Within the popular imagination this is a business that epitomizes environmental and human catastrophe, yet it persists unabated in part because it generates enormous profits for the big brokers and end-use corporations, but also in part because it generates a wide range of consumables otherwise unaffordable for poor and working class residents. Rather than being completely captured by predatory supply chains that access important raw materials for cheap prices, the process of dismantling, recycling, and remaking acquire their own vast networks of complementarity that utilize apparently disadvantageous positions to grow their own "popular economies". These entail specific calculations for diverting materials into intricately distributed chains of manufacturing specialization that support their own markets, conduits of distribution, and retailing systems. Very little of these arrangements are found on paper. Relationships among bulk suppliers, sifters, burners, truckers, welders, manufacturers, brokers, buyers, and marketers may be governed by long-standing norms and implicit regulations, but each position is always being re-calibrated in relationship to each other, recomputed in terms of the prevailing local and international trends, demands, regulatory changes, and political alliances. This is dirty computing where different components all offer specific propositions for the world that enjoins them, is not simply the recipient or enactment of a stalwart or imposed logic of relations, but an active agential force in the stretching and contraction, intensity and extensiveness of the shifting interfaces that

lend distinction among these components. Here computation is a process of different kinds of actors—human and non-human "feeling out" each other (Hayles 2017). As Massumi (2017) suggests, each occasion of sensing, of apprehension always proposes for the world a surplus of patterned potential, a surplus of sensibility, a way of taking the combinations of the past and finding within them the potential of the recombinant—for sociality is always a matter of recomposing, recombining. This is why the dirty operations in Seelampur manage to persist through albeit half-hearted attempts to shut them down, or at least curtail them to strictly monitored regulatory frameworks. For all kinds of propositions are unpredictably "taken up" within the circuit of exchanges that occur among the competencies, impulses, histories, and materials that make up this trade. These propositions are not so much generated to represent what is really going on, or to make determinate judgments in a crowded field of representational possibility, the best or most definitive rendering of what is taking place. Rather, as Whitehead (1967) considered propositions, they are a form of definitiveness for actualities yet to be formed whose value is based on the correspondence between what is experienced as physically actual and what conceptually felt as possible. This is a matter of exploring with people ways in which the conditions they aspire to, struggle for are already evident, operative in what it is they do. In long-term engagements with a wide range of "precarious" urban districts in South and Southeast Asia, practices of proposition-making have increasingly come to the fore; something that residents do with each other across an array of pubic spaces. Propositions that might appear outlandish, infeasible, but valued for their prospects of bringing new improbabilities into the world. "The love you are looking for is four blocks away, ring the bell, ask for Rudi, and he will give you the key to the heart you have been looking for, if not, come back here at 6, we will have a snack, and go see my sister about the job;" Such propositions may mostly be responded to with indifference or fleeting curiosity, yet, now and then, are taken up as a means for generating surprising connections between things or scenarios that are not supposed to go together, or for accounts of events that might be taking place but exist beyond the known conventions of verification. Propositions are not simply rhetorically issued, but also take the form of extended tongues, various hand gestures, stylized ways of walking, thrust hips, kicked feet, exaggerated vocalizations of satisfaction or disgust, an entire panoply of glossarial and haptics that instigate an interruption of flow, that punctuate the attentional field. Who knows what all of these propositions do? What kind of computation could render them deliverable as plausible explanations or causal effects? If everyone were to be tallying the results, evidence of failure would be everywhere, but few seem to care. The contribution will explore these questions as a confluence of logistics and aesthetics that attempt to mobilize the increasing uncertainties urban residents face across varying situation of precarity.

❖❖❖

Workshop 3: Friday, 11ᵗʰ March

Hyderabad/Delhi, India: 18.30
Germany: 14.00
UK Time: 13.00
Rio de Janeiro/Minas Gerais/ Bahia, Brazil: 10.00
Florida/New York/Maine/Ontario: 08.00
Illinois: 07.00
Hawaii: 03.00

1 Swastee Ranjan, University of Exeter, S.Ranjan@exeter.ac.uk

Aesthetics and Poetics of Law: Creating Precarity through Ordering the Urban Form

Law plays a crucial role in mandating the form of the city. It intervenes in the planning, management and controlling of the urban environment. Yet the scholarship surrounding the relationship between law and the city, broadly has focussed on its relation to planning, property and land law. In this paper, I examine the aesthetics of law as it comes together to dictate the urban form. I argue that the aesthetics of law, discloses not merely the urban form but also create conditions of precarity by rendering and obfuscating the role of affective-materiality. Understanding aesthetics as affective which includes not only judgment of taste but also affective sensorial experiences of living in the city, I will discuss how law mobilises the materiality of the city to create conditions of precarity. I will especially locate this paper in the context of urban legal environment of New Delhi and draw on recent scholarship of speculative realism, new materialism and affect theory to illustrate that law's aesthetics and poetics are crucial sites of instituting sites of precarity, vulnerability and dispossession.

2 Aparna Devare, University of Hyderabad, adev73@gmail.com

Rethinking the 'Radical': Exploring South Indian Literary/Performative Poetics

D.R. Nagaraj, the Indian literary theorist points out, the language of social science and the 'modern' 'political' is unable to capture or appreciate the rich literary life-worlds of subalterns that have often questioned authority and structures of power. Referring to the poetic expressions of Dalits (former untouchables) and artisan castes and classes, Nagaraj points out dissent was often articulated in 'pre-modern' India in 'radical' ways. This 'pluriverse' of expressions such as poetry, songs and stories were deeply rooted in spirituality and religious metaphors along with using irony, humor, and satire. In this paper, I use Nagaraj as an entry point to further examine some of these poetic expressions he refers to. The first, is the *Virasaiva* movement that originated in the 12ᵗʰ century in South India that used *vacanas* or the oral/spoken unmetered poetic form that marked a radical assault against the dominant religious institutions and practices of the time. The second, is contemporary Kannada Dalit playwright, Chandrashekhar Kambara, who uses the traditional *bayalat* (folk theatre) and ballad form but incorporates modern themes. Using the mythic mode to

write about the past, Kambara looks at ideas of devotion, self-effacing love, and 'liberation' in his plays.

3 Nancy E. Wright, Pace University, wrightnancy272@gmail.com

Precarity in Creative Works: A Comparison of Fiction and Poetry of Experience and Imagination

Precarity is most real for those who experience it. Yet, depictions of precarity in fiction and poetry by those who have not experienced it can evoke empathy that drives change. This paper examines precarity in novels and poems written between 1918 and the present. Some are written at different times than the events causing the precarity, but depict the vulnerability and resilience of their characters in ways that universalize their struggle. Others offer through their creativity firsthand accounts by those who have and continue to experience precarity. Subjects addressed include the 1918 influenza pandemic, the bombing of Malta during World War II, repercussions of globalization, nuclear testing, and climate change in Oceania, and COVID-19 worldwide. Questions examined through this representative sample are: how do images of precarity depicted in literature by those who experience and write about it during its occurrence differ from those written by authors in entirely different time periods about a precarity they have not experienced? And, what are the tradeoffs between the greater visibility of works by authors who write about a precarity they do not experience, and those who can speak of precarity from experience but lack the visibility for their stories to be heard?

4 Eva Hilberg, University of Sheffield, hilbergeva@gmail.com

Poetry and the assets of precarity: Understanding aesthetic politics as a quest for intensity

How can we make sense of expressions of precarity – in poetry, theatre, fiction – in a way that accounts for the particular qualities of challenge resting in these forms of art? This paper seeks to draw out the political dimension of poetic expression on the basis of Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck*, a figure that in many ways personifies precarity. Starting from the notion of essential challenge contained in a minor literature (following Deleuze and Guattari 1983), the paper goes on to explore the conditions of possibility of a political aesthetics of poetry and poetical expression based on the concepts of intensity and deterritorialization. This reading of aesthetics reveals their potential for challenge, for envisaging life to be otherwise – but what makes one version of this more compelling than others? By exploring intensity as a particular quality of aesthetic expression, this paper then moves beyond Deleuze and Guattari's primary focus on major and minor language and develops the notion of intensity into a more pervasive property inherent in liminal texts. This, then, allows for fundamental reflection on the very concept of poetry, and unlocks an understanding of poetic expression as an essentially liminal practice that always contains an unsettling moment of challenge.

5 Lara Martim Rodrigues Selis, Universidade Federal De Uberlândia, Brazil
laramrselis@gmail.com

From stolen jouissance to clandestine bodies: Death and Poiesis

This research departs from Spivak's proposition around subalternity, questioning whether the subaltern translates a life form of the modern/colonial system that can only be demarcated by its 'exclusion' from the symbolic arena. With this problematization, the general objective is to move away from a strictly epistemological take on the subaltern problematic towards an ontological turn capable of appreciating the experience of indeterminacy as having an ontological status of its own. In order to construct that turn, the paper articulates subaltern studies with Lacanian psychoanalysis contributions. Drawing in Lacan's theory of discourse, I propose a reading of the subaltern as a position that can only exist as a barred figure, whose message is sent (or summoned to exist) by *objet (a)* that interpellates from the position of truth. Considering such objectified means, that message comes always through non-meaningful words, as if it were the speech of a body that can only exist as a symptom. At this point, the phenomena of handwritten labels (in which an unknown, unnamed, and disembodied worker sends a clandestine call for help) becomes a potent figure to illustrate how, in the case of the subaltern, the object prevails over the subject in terms of enunciation functions. As I argue, it is a furtive and clandestine event, like the poetic act whose nature is ephemeral but disruptive. To grasp such an event I brought the Lacanian notion of *lalangue* that is used to describe the language produced at the sphere of the jouissance, which is made of misunderstandings that affect, rather than translate, bodies and thoughts. As such, *lalangue* designates a conceptual arena for a rich dialogue with the notion of aesthetics, which presents itself as an interesting instrument for us to think about the subjectivation process from the perspective of the lacanian Real. Assuming such a standpoint, I suggest that the subaltern resistance operates in relation to mechanisms of delusional metaphor, poetic-act, trauma irruptions, and so on. My statement is that, when faced by the aesthetic ethos of precarity experiences, the lost signifier of the discourse of the dependent capitalist manifests its Real emptiness as an aesthetic disposition towards negativity, one that works as the analyst, forcing an ironic and paradoxical *traversée du fantasme*.

❖❖❖

Workshop 4: Friday, 18th March

Newcastle, NSW, Australia: 20.00 18th March
Hyderabad/Delhi, India: 14.30 18th March
Germany: 10.00 18th March
UK: 09.00 18th March
Rio de Janeiro/Minas Gerais/Bahia, Brazil: 06.00 18th March
Florida/New York/Maine/Ontario: 04.00 18th March
Illinois: 03.00 18th March
Hawaii: **23.00 17th March**

1 Sara C. Motta, Newcastle University, Australia, sara.c.motta@newcastle.edu.au

Black Genealogies of Precarity: Enfleshed Reason and/as (Political) Life

My engagement begins from non-being of raced and feminised subjects of the South, in my work in Colombia and in dialogue with my work in the so-called lands of Australia. For us, fungibility and disposability is the constitutive logic of (dis)appearance and (non)being in modernity/coloniality. A Black genealogy of precaritisation thus begins 500 years ago, and not since the decline of Fordist state-market-society logics of (un)freedom and liberal (non)being. As Lugones (2006, 78) described we are constructed: 'as either invisible, not within the bounds of normalcy (that is without structural description or one as insane or deviant), as inferior, or as threatening because not rule from within by modern rationality'. It is thus that our (political) speech necessarily ruptures and overflows the modern/colonial logics of (un)reason and moves towards multiple tongues of the poetic-political in which enfleshment of reason and healing embrace of the territories of/as land and body are centred. I will explore this enfleshment of reason and (political) speech of raced and feminised women and kin in movement in Cali, Colombia and Mulumbimba, unceded lands of Awabakal and Worimi and weave my own coming to knowing-being as a thread in this yarn.

2 Louiza Odysseos, University of Sussex, L.Odysseos@sussex.ac.uk

Against Archival Abjection: The Sociopoetics of 'Wake Work', Aesthetic-Poetic Methods and Reparative Epistemological Justice

Demands for a reparatory 'accounting' of connected colonial histories (Bhambra) have recently problematised and expanded earlier calls for narrow testimonial/hermeneutic epistemic justice (Fricker). However, the violences of the colonial and slavery/indenture archives demand a reckoning with the question of what methods may both acknowledge *and* un-work the reductions of the colonised to lesserly human and of enslaved populations to fungible 'cargo' (Hartman, McKittrick). This paper draws on the sociopoetic practices of those who *are* the afterlives of circum-Atlantic slavery and explores the possibility of a critical, *disclosive* practice of 'black annotation' (Sharpe) whose aesthetic comportment with the slavery archive writ large forges new ways of making these histories sensible and their legacies accountable within everyday life. Interrupting the containment of the past, such artistic endeavours, however, aim simultaneously to reparatively annotate these silences through ethical viewing, writing and reading. Hank Willis Thomas' art collections 'Branded' and 'Strange Fruit' and Katherine McKittrick's efforts at writing 'mnemonic black livingness' form the aesthetic archive of 'wake work' (Sharpe) through which these questions are discussed. Do their efforts evade masterful and extractive visibility, however, or do they beg the ongoing question of the need for fugitivity and opacity long demanded by the colonised (Glissant)?

3 Zeynep Gülşah Çapan, University of Erfurt, zgulsah@gmail.com

Unwritable Pasts Written: Sociogeny and the Poetics of the Past

Historical IR has approached history in a predominantly uncritical manner as a repository of truth and it has been presented as an additive model whereby *more* history, *more* facts and *more* perspectives included within the story of the international will remedy the shortcomings identified. The article argues that the *additive* approach has been the result of approaching history unproblematically and framing the issue of Eurocentrism through an absence of history, facts and perspectives. The article will focus on one specific aspect of problematizing history and ask not *what is history* but rather *what does history do,* in other words what is the *function* of history? The focus on the function of history paves the way to discuss its ordering role in the maintaining of narratives of the self. The first part of the article discusses the functions of history and the questions that line of inquiry opens up. The second part of the article focuses on Sylvia Wynter's discussion of *homo narrans* as a way to further unpack what history does. The third part of the article building upon the previous discussions discusses the work of Edouard Glissant and Maryse Conde as examples of 'historical writing' that work to unsettle the narratives of the Self and functions of history.

4 Aya Nassar, Royal Holloway, University of London, Aya.Nassar@rhul.ac.uk

"Giving up on the Idea of Home": a geopoetics of home and ruination in contemporary Cairo

In this paper I turn to geopoetics to probe the inscription of self in, *and out of* the space of the city. I focus on the geopoetics of home in the work of the Egyptian poet Iman Mersal (b.1996). In particular, I attend to geopoetics of clutter, architecture, and archival rag-picking as practices of storytelling the mundane as well as the worldly. I attempt to situate the unmaking of domestic and urban space in her poetry and prose within the poetics and aesthetics of the Arab city in the contemporary representation of the Arab World. I am also keen to bring these poetics in conversation with feminist IR and Geopolitics. My aim is to investigate the poetics that mediate physical ruination and affective disillusionment with the postcolony's promise of the good life. This disillusion gains saliency in the post-2011 urban condition of Egypt, wherein the ruin has become the dominant poetic of relation. In doing this, I harness an understating of geopoetics as an intersection of world, word and materiality. Drawing on Angela Last's and Katherine McKittrick's readings of Edouard Glissant, I adopt geopoetics as a disruptive aesthetics of errantry — a methodology committed to resisting capture and mastery of the world we seek to understand.

5 Ritu Vij, University of Aberdeen, r.vij@abdn.ac.uk

Slum Aesthetics in a Global Frame: Second Thoughts

In a paradoxical reversal of what were once deemed zones of abjection, slums have recently emerged as sites of renewal for critical thought. Celebrating what Mike Davis has described as practices of 'informal survivalism', strategies of *jugaad* (making do) in *favelas, bastis, jhoppad pattis* and shanty-towns across the Global South, have gained visibility as slum artefacts and architectural styles, generating a new global aesthetic of the slum. The contingency and fragility of precarious life in the slum, recursively encoded in the materiality of broken and found objects of mud, metal, plastic and clay that characterize *jugaad* are recuperated in critical re-tellings of the slum as, inter alia, futurity (Rem Koolhaas); counter class (Žižek); or creative, vulnerable subjects with 'lateral agency' (Berlant). *Jugaad* aesthetics, in these accounts, contest dominant codes of legibility creating

alternative communities of sense that disrupt the 'regime of the sensible' (Ranciere). This paper questions this emerging sentiment by calling attention to processes of onto-epistemic capture inscribed in aesthetic approaches to apprehending precarious modes of living and being. These approaches, the paper contends, occlude the geopolitics of the aesthetic turn, but especially those colonial histories of expansion and slavery that created the "borders, lines and distinctions" (Walker) between the (Euro) modern international and the world outside in the first place. The aestheticization of non-sovereign precarious life in the slum enacts the erasure of the slum-dweller as a desiring subject of modernity, inadvertently reinscribing the very lines of distinction that constellate the Euro-Modern and its regulative ideals (sovereign subjectivity, security etc.) albeit now in a new guise. Drawing on a close reading of artefacts included in exhibitions in Dharavi, Mumbai, 'Jugaad Urbanism' in New York City, and the Pritzker prize-winning architect B.V. Doshi's *jugaad* inspired low-cost housing complex 'Aranya' in Indore, the paper attempts to elaborate the limits of the aesthetic turn in the politics of precarity.

❖❖❖

Workshop 5: Friday, 25th March

1 Jimmy Casas Klausen, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil jcklausen@puc-rio.br

The Age of the World Picture after Decolonization: The Global Aesthetics of Three Neo-Malthusian Pathologies

In the 1980s and 1990s, varieties of precarity became at once consumable and subject-producing, discomfiting and beautiful in a series of visual cultural productions that developed on the basis of neo-Malthusian aesthetics. The trilogies *Koyaanisqatsi* (Reggio 1982, 1988, 2002) and *Baraka* (Fricke 1992, 1985, 2011) and the advertising campaigns of Benetton and the Body Shop invited their audiences not only to visualize "the world" as unity but also to experience that world in a way that positioned them as members of the First World, Third World or Fourth World (of indigenous people) according to the dominant pathologies and precarities of each: respectively, overconsumption, overpopulation, and genocide induced by uncontrolled development. This paper will analyze how "the world" became an object of aesthetic experience and affective investment *qua world* for the first time *through* neo-Malthusian pathology and precarity. After decolonization, from the publication of "the Blue Marble" photo in 1972 (the most famous image

of Earth from space), through "We Are the World," to the experimental documentaries mentioned above, *global* precarity becomes indistinguishable from moralizing, racializing Euro-Atlantic popular culture.

2 Túlio Zille, Bowdoin College, USA, tuliozille@gmail.com

"'The River Was My Teacher": Poetics, Relational Sensibility, and the Belo Monte Dam

In this chapter, I reflect with the population displaced by the Belo Monte dam in the Brazilian Amazon to ask: how do people who do not claim a relationship to ancestral knowledges come to embody a relational way of living? While relational ways of living have commonly been attributed to indigenous cosmologies or ancestral traditions, the context at hand complicates this view due to the fact that some of the local population does not identify as indigenous nor have they lived in the Amazon for several generations. When calculating compensation for the displacement caused by the dam, authorities placed a large emphasis on measuring the monetary value of a lost house and the belongings within it. For most people who were displaced however, "home" included their proximity to the river and a rich relationship with it, at times that of a mother and child, at times a teacher or a sibling. Inspired by local forms of resistance to the dam and displacement, such as poetry—which are usually overlooked by scholarship critical of development—I suggest that a poetic sensibility, and not only (or perhaps in addition to) the connection with ancestral knowledges, enables a relational disposition toward what some call the natural world. I then trace parallels between the Amazon and the Caribbean as a region, and the thought of writer Édouard Glissant in particular, who has reflected on what it means for the descendants of enslaved Africans to forge a relationship with a land with which they did not have ancestral ties.

3 Marta Fernández, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, martafygarcia@gmail.com

Peripheral Aesthetic Interventions in postcolonial contexts of precarity

The article aims to discuss the potential of aesthetic practices, as performed by young people from the favelas and peripheries of Rio de Janeiro to disturb and exceed the terms, gazes and places attributed to them. From a decolonial perspective, the article proposes to discuss how "precarity" is expressed in postcolonial societies based on an asymmetric racial pact that dehumanizes expressive segments of its population. How to think precarious lives in contexts such as the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, where the state has always been absent as a public good provider but always present as the main agent of genocidal policies against black youth? From a decolonial and intersectional perspective - which allows to understand the specificity of precarity in social contexts constituted by the coloniality of being, knowledge and power - the article discusses how peripheral artists and collectives perform different aesthetic languages that disturbs on a daily basis existing visibility/invisibility regimes. Looking at the work of Maria and João Aleixo Institute and the Observatório de Favelas, non-governmental organizations based in the Favela da Maré, Rio de Janeiro, the article analyses how artistic experiences put into question the image of the favelas as a space of aesthetic lack, or as a space that produces deviant (and criminalized) forms of aesthetics. In this regard, it discusses how, on the one hand, art produced in these extremely precarious

contexts exceeds the meanings originally attributed to it, transgressing colonial stereotypes. On the other hand, it analyses how artistic practices permit that subjects define the terms of their existence against a city that deny their physical and symbolic presence and produce them as disposable.

4 Victor Coutinho Lage, Universidade Federal da Bahia, Brazil victorclage@gmail.com

Brazilianization of the World? Coloniality, precarity, and quilombism

The idea that the globalization of precarity can be understood as a "Brazilianization of the World" or of "the West", and the diagnostic that this condition has been intensified in the last decades through the so-called neoliberal era, has been constantly raised since at least the 1990s (for an early critical engagement with this literature, see Arantes, 2004; and, for a recent revival of the idea, see Hochuli, 2021). It is not the purpose of this text to thoroughly revise either the literature on neoliberalism or the one on the Brazilianization of the World, but to point out how these two combined often reproduce a spatio-temporality marked by two assumptions: methodological nationalism and presentism. From that statement, I make three moves in this text. First, I revise a certain Brazilian tradition of thought devoted to the center-periphery question as a resource to a problematization of both assumptions. After that, I interact with the notion of "Red Atlantic", proposed by one of the art exhibitions from the Brazilian artist Rosana Paulino, in order to stress the importance of coloniality to this problematization. Finally, I bring the Brazilian novel *Torto Arado*, written by Itamar Vieira Júnior, as way to highlight how precarity and coloniality can be differently understood from a quilombist perspective.

5 Hattie Cansino, Newcastle University, H.A.Cansino1@newcastle.ac.uk

Graphic Anxieties: Affective communities of precarious sense in tourist economies of northeast Brazil

This article argues that a focus on the embodied nature of aesthetics held alongside fantasies of what makes life worth living is a more useful way to understand the formation of political communities in the face of uncertainty than questions of identity. In a paradisial tourist town in northeast Brazil, global economic fortunes and trends might render populations who rely on tourism disposable. Resulting anxieties over the future mean residents turn to unexpected sources of certainty when thinking of what is necessary to ensure the tourist industry survives and their own lives go on with it. Using ethnographic data, I show they draw on multiple enmeshed histories, differently inflected by their relationship to colonial imaginaries and capital exchange to make sense of the unfolding present amid these fears. Residents orientate themselves towards various temporalities when fantasies of paradise make sense as a means of anchoring their own lives amid the deterritorialisations of the tourist economy and in the poetry of doing so, enact and generate their own fragile worlds. What emerges is the way the dissonant, arrythmic presence of certain people and objects come to represent an aesthetic sense of the potential for the continuation of capital exchange through social class, rather than solely an encounter with the other. Tracing with aesthetics the way fantasies lead to modes of power which assuage an embodied sense of precarity gives us a more nuanced understanding of the ways people navigate capital and colony.