

Minor Movements

How to Create Space to Think Personal and Political Change?

Critical Humanities Seminar Series 2022-2023



Location: Utrecht

Dates: 8 sessions from October 2022 to June 2023

Time: 15:00-18:00 (Thursdays)

Organizers: Niels Niessen and Jeroen Boom (Radboud University)

Credits for PhD candidates and RMA students (pass/fail): 2 ECTS for Fall 2022 / 3 for Spring 2023

Requirements: attendance, discussion questions, brief final reflection

Register: jeroen.boom@ru.nl

Introduction: How to Think Change?

This year-long seminar creates a space to become more conscious of how the small movements of body and mind are shaped by intersecting power structures. How does capitalism determine our daily habits? How do online platforms like Google re-orient people's desire? And how does patriarchy affect the ways we love? At the same time, the seminar thinks through tactics to achieve social and political change: the minor movements to resist power. How do groups like Extinction Rebellion interrupt our burn-out routines? How does MeToo expose a culture of sexual violence? And how does the Left—as a minor movement in populist times—reinvent itself in the face of Big Everything (Big Tech, Big Bank, Big Pharma, Big Oil, etc.)? Our understanding of movement and change is inspired by the 1960s feminist rallying cry “the personal is political.” Resistance starts with consciousness and consciousness start with collective analysis of how we are moved as subjects. We imagine this seminar as a collective living room to think small and indeed personal about the large questions of our times.

We meet eight times between October 2022 and June 2023, mostly in Utrecht (because of its centrality), sometimes in Nijmegen (because of this seminar's affiliation with the Critical Humanities group at the Radboud Institute for Culture and History). Each of the seminars is structured around the encounter between a cultural object and a number of theoretical texts. The objects range from literary novels to media streams, and from a documentary on the climate crisis to essay films on migration. In dialogue with these objects and the texts (sometimes from seemingly clashing traditions) we will engage the question that stands central that day: *How to... ?* If this "How to?" questions convokes a self-help discourse, that is exactly the intention. After all the goal is to become more critical subjects.

Schedule

1. Action & Analysis – How to Move and Be Moved? (Oct. 13, 2022)

Object:

Beautiful World, Where Are You? (novel by Sally Rooney, 2021) (selection)

Texts (selections):

Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*

Lauren Berlant and Michael Hardt interview, "On the Risk of a New Relationality"

Slavoj Žižek, *Like a Thief in Broad Daylight*

2. Orientation & Control – How to Resist Technofeudalism? (Nov. 17, 2022)

Object:

your own hybrid life (an exercise in self-observation)

Texts (selections):

Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control"

McKenzie Wark, *Capital Is Dead*

James Muldoon, *Platform Socialism: How to Reclaim our Digital Future from Big Tech?*

Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology* (on orientation)

3. Revolution & Routine – How to Change One's Habits? (Dec. 15, 2022)

Object:

TBA

Texts (selections):

Amelia Horgan, *Lost in Work*

Carolyn Pedwell, *Revolution and Routine*

4. Migration & Obstruction – How to Arrange Strange Encounters? (Feb. 2023)

Object:

film *Purple Sea* (dir. Amel Alzakout and Khaled Abdulwahed)

Texts (selections):

Jacques Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics*

TJ Demos, *The Migrant Image*

Igor Krstic, “Accented Essay Films in the Age of Migration”
Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters*

5. Extinction & Rebellion – How to Fight Climate Catastrophe? (Mar. 2023)

Object:

Film *Bigger than Us* (dir. Flore Vasseur, 2021)

Texts (selections):

Greta Thunberg, *No One is Too Small to Make a Difference*
Dipesh Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*

6. Love & Desire – How to Liberate Sexuality? (Apr. 2023)

Object:

Episode from podcast *Where Should We Begin* with Esther Perel

Texts (selections):

Mona Eltahawy, *Headscarves and Hymens*
Maggie Nelson, *On Freedom: Four Songs of Care and Constraint*
bell hooks, *All About Love* (“Honesty: Be True to Love”)
Amia Srinivasan, “The Right to Sex”

7. Grief & Mourning – How to Live with Loss? (May 2023, facilitated by Katrine Smiet)

Object:

Episode from the *Griefcast* by Cariad Lloyd

Texts:

TBA

8. Reckoning & Consciousness – How to Create a Collective Subject in Populist Times? (Jun. 2023)

Objects:

Edouard Louis, *Who Killed My Father?*
Edouard Louis, *Change: Method* (fragment)

Texts (selections):

Zizek, *Like a Thief*, section “Welcome to the Boredom of Original Times”
Chantal Mouffe, *For a Left-Wing Populism*
Cinzia Arruzza et al, *Feminism for the 99%*
Devra Woodly, *Reckoning: Black Lives Matter and the Democratic Necessity of Social Movement*

Participation

The seminar is open to researchers, PhD candidates, RMA students, and everyone else interested. PhD and RMA students can receive credits (max. 2 ECTS for the Fall and 3 for the Spring): we ask you to commit to participate to all three sessions in the Fall and/or at least four out of the five sessions in Spring. Requirements: attendance, discussion questions, brief final reflection. The meetings mostly take place in Utrecht. A few times we will meet in Nijmegen. The seminars will be a combination of mini-lectures, close readings of artistic and theoretical objects, and discussion.

If you are interested in participating, you can send an email to jeroen.boom@ru.nl. If you want to participate for credits, please include a brief motivation on why this seminar is of interest to you (4-5 sentences). The maximum number of participants is 16.

Organization

This seminar series is part of the Critical Humanities group at the Radboud Institute for Cultural and History (RICH), in collaboration with the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Analysis (NICA) and the Research School for Gender Studies (NOG).

Fall dates: Thursdays October 13, November 17, and December 15.

Time: 15:00-18:00 (with break)

The dates for the five sessions in Spring 2023 (February-June) will be announced later

All materials will be shared on Surfdrive.