



**End of the
Summer School**

**Mapping the Intersection
of Three Ecologies**



The End of Summer School

Mapping the Intersection of Three Ecologies

September 14th, 15th, 16th.
Nottingham Contemporary, Free

This three day school draws from Felix Guattari's notion of The Three Ecologies, which locates a political understanding of ecology at the nexus of environmental, social and mental concerns. The School will look at theories and struggles at the juncture of these areas and play with practices of vernacular cartography, lay research, auto-didacticism and self-organised education. The programme links academic and non-academic researchers, a cross-section of interests and disciplines, asking what such an approach leads to the creation of new alliances for producing critical knowledge, organisation and practices of survival.

Why?

As society crawls deeper and deeper into the austerity landscape, many find themselves in anxious and toxic atmospheres, burrowing holes of protection around the edges of institutions and movements, acting out symptoms of disappointment, desperation, exhaustion, nonetheless trying to imagine a path towards the possible. This burrowing is not the absurd crusade towards happiness and positivity that is demanded of us and excessively measured by current policy frameworks, politicians and representational technologies. It is a contradictory movement - between the creation of new solidarities and futures - and retreats into the self, solitudes of planning and movements towards personal gain. What do people working along these edges: in education, health care, ecological and social movements, as workers, users, learners have to teach each other about how to make something of this burrowing, to examine the edges on which we find ourselves, to act in their fray?

Day 1 – September 14th

Bad Atmospheres and Toxic Positivity

Facilitated by Andy Goffey and Colin Wright

Monday

4-6:30pm

Seminar, *The Studio*

Workshop led by Andy Goffey and Colin Wright.

7pm

Lecture and performance, *Cafe.Bar*

Three Ecologies Cartography Event.

Joe Gerlach and Tom Jellis lead a public workshop and vernacular cartography related to mental ecologies. Guattari's work asks us to think ecologically. To think ecologically is to attend to the ways in which the mental can never be separate from social or natural ecologies. More specifically, it can help to refigure not only what we consider to be 'mental' but also how this is experienced, or how new ecologies of existence can be catalysed. In this session, we want to be adventurous and mundane, hitchhiking, and explore through performance the kinds of events, spaces, and ethics that can emerge. This is a style of hitchhiking that need not involve cars or roads, but rather encounters and lines of flight; helped along by another of Guattari's 'therapeutic hobbies' - cartography – the practice of map making. More prosaically, we might wonder how to trace or even map these new becomings. This is our collective task.

The summer school will begin its exploration of ecologies with a discussion of work that challenges the current focus in mental health on the individual's responsibility for their own happiness and 'wellbeing', and on the institutional environments – the hospital but also the home, the therapy room but also the office – that supposedly facilitate such individualised 'flourishing'.

Although this focus is often couched in broadly 'ecological' terms, our first day will stress the ways in which the neoliberal discourse of 'wellbeing indexes' and 'psychological environments' falls far short of Guattari's concept of "mental ecologies" and the political practice associated with it. The latter takes seriously the idea that we are not individual psychological 'units' shut off from our environments, but fundamentally open to, and in active interaction with, the ideas, affects and sensory atmospheres that surround us. Moreover, Guattari's thinking evolves in constant connection with radical experiments in institutional forms able to provide lessons for sheltering and fostering modes of subjectivity that can resist the 'toxic positivity' of health understood as productivity.

"In the domain of digital simulation, metaphors and things become less and less distinguishable; thing turns into metaphor and metaphor into thing, representation replaces life, and so too life representation. Semiotic flows and commodity circulation juxtapose their codes and become part of the same constellation, which Baudrillard calls hyperreality."

(Berardi, 2009: 111-12)

Day 2 – September 15th

Stresses: Living with Toxicity

Facilitated by Eva Giraud, Gregory Hollin, Lynne Pettinger with Rebecca Beinart and Des Fitzgerald

Tuesday

4-6:30pm

Toxic Environments Workshop, *The Studio*.

In this workshop we explore how toxicity permeates the mental, social and ecological dynamics of life. We consider toxicity both as poison and as symbiotic with life. We will host a 'world café' workshop to consider toxic nature and toxins in nature, the toxicity of economic life and toxic spaces. We will discuss beagles and barbies, waste and deserts, knotweed and nuclear fallout, and consider questions such as: what's good about toxicity? What would detoxification involve? How does toxicity affect mental, social and environmental ecologies?

7pm

Toxic Interventions Event, *The Cafe*.

A public discussion addressing the question: How can we engage with toxic environments, as publics, as artists, as activists, as academics or as policy-makers? Dialogue and debate, preceded by short discussions of four case studies: Activist interventions in Bhopal, visual representations of Chernobyl, policy debates about rare-earth mining in Greenland, and contemporary concerns about the problems – and potentials – surrounding anti-microbial resistance.

The workshop will be oriented around four topics, all related to the theme of toxic environments: 'Toxic Industries', 'Toxic Spaces & Urban Stress', 'Toxic Nature?', and 'De-Toxifying Nature?'.
...

...the environment will seem to be yours to exploit. Your survival unit will be you and your folks or conspecifics against the environment of other social units, other races, and the brutes and vegetables. If this is your estimate of your relation to nature and you have an advanced technology, your likelihood of survival will be that of a snowball in hell. You will die either of the toxic by-products of your own hate, or, simply of over-population and overgrazing. The raw materials of the world are finite.

(Bateson, 1972: 462)

Day 3 – September 16th

**Day Release: Burrowing at the Edges /
Organising Otherwise**

Facilitated by Tracey Potts and Janna Graham

Wednesday

2pm

Meet at Nottingham Contemporary, *Front Desk*

A drift through different areas of Nottingham in which lay studies and auto-didacticism and self-organised education have taken place.

4 - 6.30pm

Seminar, *The Studio*.

A seminar looking at the educational propositions of feminist collectives, indigenous organisers, civil rights activists and university occupiers and figures such as Buckminster Fuller, Isabelle Stengers, Paulo Freire, Ferdinand Oury, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Jacques Ranciere and others. Through our analysis we will endeavour to produce a DIY pamphlet.

7pm

Lecture, *Cafe.Bar*, Talk (title to come)
by Andrew Mcgettigan.

This study day looks at how we survive social institutions, introducing the concepts of Day Release (temporary exit) and burrowing (survival strategies from within), attempting to think about models of institution making that move beyond inside/outside configurations. Taking institutions of formal education as a focal point, the session will breakdown polarities between self-organised education: auto-didacticism, lay-research, self-help and sanctioned forms of knowledge production, that are increasingly aligned with profit, in order to think about more liberatory research and learning practices.

“What do we mean by “institution”? The single rule that makes it possible to use a soap without quarrelling is already an institution. The whole of the rules allowing to define what “can or cannot be done” in this peculiar place, at this precise moment, what we call the laws of the classroom, is another one”

(Fernand Oury)

Reading List:

*Please find the accompanying texts in the reading list by following the links below.
Larger texts can be accessed via the dropbox links provided for each day.*

Day 1: Bad Atmospheres and Toxic Positivity

- Adrian Johnston - *Self and Emotional Life* - 12 - Emotional Life After Lacan
- Franco "Bifo" Berardi - *Precarious Rhapsody* - 6 - Dark Desires
- William Davies - *The Happiness Industry* - 4 - Psychosomatic Worker
- Emmanuelle Guattari - *I, Little Asylum*
- Derek McCormack - *Refrains for Moving Bodies* - Ecologies of Therapeutic Practice
- Robert Nozick - *Anarchic State and Utopia* - The Experience Machine

Access - Day 1 Reading list:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/hx2bh140fa0r8cz/AAC47A1S1maXRIzrOxETSwpIa?dl=0>

Day 2: Stresses: Living with Toxicity

Toxic Industries

- Mel Chen – *Animacies* - Lead's Racial Matters
- Alice Mah - *Open Democracy* - 'Lessons from Love Canal: Toxic expertise and environmental justice'
<https://www.opendemocracy.net/alice-mah/lessons-from-love-canal-toxic-expertise-and-environmental-justice>
- *The Guardian* - 'Jar of Mountain Air Sells for £512 in Polluted Beijing'
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/apr/10/jar-french-mountain-air-polluted-beijing>
- *Bored Panda* - '20 Photos Show How Bad Pollution in China Has Become'
<http://www.boredpanda.com/pollution-china/>
- Michael Wolf - *The Real Toy Story*.
<http://photomichaelwolf.com/#home>
- *The background to the project can be found here:*
http://jmcolberg.com/weblog/extended/archives/a_conversation_with_michael_wolf/

Toxic spaces and urban stress:

- R, Paddock - *Los Angeles Times* - 'Fallout from Toxic Beagle Experiments'
http://articles.latimes.com/1994-02-08/news/mn-20483_1_uc-davis
- E, Ramsden - *History of Science Society* - 'From Rodent Utopia to Urban Hell: Population, Pathology and the Crowded Rats of NIMH' (Focusing especially on 667-673)

- Calhoun's – *Video* - 'Rat Utopia'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Z760XNy4VM>

Toxic Nature?

- N, Clark - *Theory, Culture & Society* - 'The Demon-Seed: Bioinvasion as the Unsettling of Environmental Cosmopolitanism'
- S, Knight - *Harper's Magazine* - 'The Day of the Knotweed'
<http://harpers.org/archive/2015/05/the-day-of-the-knotweed/1/>
- CABI – *Video* - Japanese Knotweed Alliance
<http://www.cabi.org/japaneseknotweedalliance/>

If you are especially engaged with this topic, then there's an interesting article here, about dealing with (and defining) invasive species that arrived on the US west coast, post-tsunami.

- Jonathan L. Clark - 'Uncharismatic Invasives'
<http://environmentalhumanities.org/arch/vol6/6.2.pdf>

De-Toxifying Nature?

- J, Lorimer – *Video* - 'Wildlife in the Anthropocene' – (The most relevant section is from 23.45-30.00)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhd3hJEcvEo>
- Thom, Van Dooren - *Thom Van Dooren.org* - 'Albatrosses, plastic and the undoing of generations'
<http://thomvandooren.org/2012/11/03/albatross-plastic-and-the-undoing-of-generations/>

Access - Day 2 Reading list:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/o8xc5l2xflzse33/AAAf9LXvMQlalmnKFcyKiYC5a?dl=0>

Day 3: Day Release: Burrowing at the Edges / Organising Otherwise

- Harvey Pekar - A graphic short piece - *The Autodidact*
- Jean-Paul Sartre - A paragraph from *Nausea* (marked)
- Ivan Illich - *Deschooling Society* - (Ch 6 - Learning Webs, highlighted)
- Buckminster Fuller - *Education Automation* (highlighted)
- Abbie Hoffman - *Steal This Book* (Free Education, highlighted)
- Ranciere - Preface to *Proletarian Nights*
- RD Laing - *Wisdom, Madness & Folly* - where he discusses his own

- autodidactic habits in his youth (pp70-1)
- Sloterdijk - In search of lost cheekiness
 - Ditto - Ignorant Schoolmaster (highlighted)
 - Freire - Pedagogy of the Oppressed (chapter 4?)
 - Bourdieu - A page or so from – *Distinction* -which lays out the snootiness directed toward autodidacts and the consecrating function of institutions (328-9, highlighted)
 - A pamphlet on the Pleb's league
 - Whole Earth Catalogue - A few pages from the first Catalogue
 - The “Autodidact” - the Pursuit of Subversive Knowledge and the Politics of Change’, which might be useful in contrasting digital and analogue autodidacts

Access - Day 3 Reading list:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/dafud1tim15sffk/AADof-ix6amYykpovtHkBNZXa?dl=0>