

CfP: The Everyday: Experiences, Concepts, Narratives

Thursday April 14 – Saturday April 16, 2011

Graduate Program in Humanities, York University, Toronto, Canada

Ubiquitously presupposed by today's critical and cultural theorists working in the fields of the Humanities, Cultural Studies, History, and beyond, is the assumption that a number of horizons of experience can be brought together under the umbrella of the 'everyday'. The everyday can be thought of as natural, cultural, inspired, popular, authentic, unconscious, and mechanical, etc... However, implicitly and explicitly, the everyday too often continues to be uncritically presupposed by academics and non-academics alike as a quasi-authentic field of human experience free from the instrumental forces of capital and technology, or a banal site of repetition and habit that mechanistically organizes social-historical formations. As a result, we need to reflect on how the idea of the 'everyday' is theorized, used as a concept, and developed into narratives as it relates to politics and ethics, power and knowledge, ontology and history. Whether seen as a reality, or a concept, the everyday is given shape through multi-layered sets of assumptions, values and ideas rooted in various theoretical trajectories that are embedded in particular cultural contexts. Therefore, this conference seeks papers that problematize 'the everyday' along with the assumptions and values particular conceptualizations implicitly and explicitly presuppose.

The contours of the conference correspond to three broad sets of questions. First, what are the experiences, events and objects we ascribe to domains of the everyday? How can we differentiate the everyday from the exceptional; the ordinary from the spectacular; or the profane from the sacred? What does such a distinction entail? What are ontologies of the everyday, or rather, how can one think about the everyday from an ontological perspective? Second, epistemologically speaking, how can this concept be of use for cultural theorists, historians, anthropologists, and other scholars from the Humanities and Social Sciences? If the everyday is a given domain of experience, should it not be historically and culturally specific? How can we engage with the everyday in a trans-national or geopolitical context? And what approaches allow us to think about, say, the everyday of early modern peasants, or of Roman citizens in Antiquity? How do different methodologies and disciplines determine particular ways of thinking, speaking and writing about the everyday? Thirdly, from the perspective of narration, how is the everyday talked about in literature, film, judicial documents, popular culture, art history or through other communication media? How is it told and retold, or forgotten? Why is it meaningful, even as a common sense idea, to this day and in our globalized culture? How do the imaginary and real, conscious and unconscious stories we tell about the everyday relate to narrations of subjectivity, forms of embodiment, ecologies, or practices of sexuality – or more generally, forms of life and nonlife, identity and nonidentity, self and other?

To this end we encourage papers that move between cultural studies, critical theory, history, environmental studies, women's studies, communication and media studies, post-colonial theory, religion, science and technology studies to grapple with the elusive (non)concept of the everyday, and how it contributes to producing cultures, histories and individualities.

Possible themes and topics for discussion may include:

- Ontologies of the everyday
- The question of 'natural attitude' in phenomenology
- Conceptualizations of difference and repetition
- The concept of 'norm', both from a biological, and a social perspective
- Habitus, the automatic, and the mechanical
- The eternal return
- L'histoire du Quotidien/The history of the Everyday/Alltagsgeschichte
- The exception and bare life in relation to the everyday

- Boredom, the ordinary, the dull, and the humdrum
- Rhythms, durations, theories of time and movement
- The material history of objects and spaces
- Gender, queer and trans theory and the everyday
- Landscapes and 'still lives' (Literary and artistic realisms)
- Micro-history, the local, and the popular in relation to the history of the everyday
- History of mentalities and the question of *longue durée*
- History of carnivals and festivities
- Cultural inertia
- Quasi-objects and quasi-subjects
- Everyday geographies and mappings (cultural, imaginary etc.)
- The everyday and terror, terrorism, war, and surveillance
- Life, death, and the everyday
- *Jouissance*, pleasure, phantasmagoria, and the everyday
- Fashion, consumption, and trends
- The unconscious and the everyday (Freud, Lacan, and psychoanalysis)
- The irruption of the real and other traumas
- 'Homogeneous time'
- Everyday representations, procedures, networks and processes
- Everyday pathology, paranoia, neurosis, OCD, and depression
- Affects, sense and intensities
- Everyday bodies and embodiments: monads, the face, touch, skin, the grasp, BWO

Confirmed Keynote Speaker – Professor Miles Ogborn of Queen Mary, University of London will be giving a keynote lecture on Thursday, April 14th. Professor Ogborn studies the everyday from a global and local perspective within the context of cultural geography and cultural history.

<http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/staff/ogbornm.html>

Please submit 250–300 word abstracts to thinking.the.everyday@gmail.com by January 31st 2011. We also welcome the submission of organized panels and we will be accepting proposals and papers in both French and English. Abstracts may be in Word, WordPerfect, or RTF format, and should include, along with the proposed abstract, a title, the author's name, affiliation, email address, and a short bio (max 50 words).

Justin Derry & Martin Parrot
 Graduate Program in Humanities,
 York University, Toronto, Canada
 Email: thinking.the.everyday@gmail.com