

Appropriating forms

theory, practice, reflection

P E R c o n f e r e n c e

An invitation

A seed, a pyramid, a sentence structure, a political system, a social network... Forms are big and small, concrete and abstract, rigid and dynamic, appearing and disappearing. In the history of ideas, forms are conceived as permanent and persistent, or mutable and contingent. They both contain and confine, include and exclude. In theorizing about forms, we interrogate their twofold qualities: modality and plasticity, stability and mobility.

In practice, forms can do many things. For Caroline Levine, they constrain, differ, overlap and intersect, travel, and do political work in particular historical contexts. Following Levine, we ask: what happens when literary, linguistic, material, spatial, and social forms meet? How do different forms collide, overlap and intersect in interesting ways? How do they travel across territories, spheres, disciplines, time and space? How do we make and unmake, embrace and resist them?

The appropriation of forms can be empowering or harmful, conscious or unreflective. Through forms we might reflect on our need for order and configuration, as well as our obsession with reformation and change.

Part 1

Presentation Panels

(15 min presentation + 5 min Q&A)

Topics

(Including but not limited to)

- ❑ Forms in critical theory and philosophy, new criticism, formalism, structuralism, poststructuralism, new formalism
- ❑ Forms and textuality in language and literature, genre studies, creative critical writing
- ❑ Formal (im)mobility in space, architecture, infrastructure and literary geography
- ❑ Forms of power in history and political philosophy, reformation and revolutions
- ❑ Formal coalitions and collisions in art, film, media, theatre and performance
- ❑ Forms of thesis and interdisciplinary research; forms in cultural studies, gender and sexuality studies, postcolonial studies
- ❑ Forms and (post)humanity in psychology, anthropology and theology

Part 2

Two Roundtables

(45 min discussion + 15 min Q&A)

Topics

[To be chaired by: Dr James Kneale (UCL Geography), Prof Jane Gilbert (UCL SELCS), Prof Gregory Thompson (UCL Anthropology), Prof Tim Button (UCL Philosophy) and Dr. Caroline Edwards (Birkbeck English)]

- ❑ A critical reflection on the conventionalized and institutionalized academic forms in the university context. What are the pros and cons of conventional and canonized forms of academic research, writing and publishing? What are some emerging, innovative forms in our globalized and digitalized academic landscape? How much are they affected by the neoliberal turn and the pressure of marketization?
- ❑ A critical reflection on multicultural and interdisciplinary research. As interdisciplinarity and multiculturalism invite decentring, border-crossing and collaboration, are they asserting new centres, installing new borders, and advancing new dialectics? What kind of communities are we building, and who are we excluding and why?

Who can participate:

We welcome PGR students and academics from all fields and disciplines. Participation and attendance are **free** of charge.

Please send a **biography (name, academic affiliation, contact information) + paper title + a 150-word abstract (or a few sentences of description) to the event organisers, Chan Du, Michael Protheroe, Sarah Wright, and Yichun Zhang, via the email address: sarah.wright.23@ucl.ac.uk by Sunday, May 12th.**

When and Where:

Lecture Theatre G22, North-West Wing, UCL
June 11-12, 2024