

Public Pedagogies Institute 2021 Public Seminar Series

Last year PPI ran its first virtual seminar series. It was a resounding success! Each of the weekly 2 hour seminars provided an interactive session accompanied by readings and generated lively discussions. Our shared international experience of COVID has provoked the theme and context for our 2021 seminar series.

Proposals are invited addressing the theme of ‘**Publicness**’

In what ways have conceptions of publicness altered as an effect of COVID? How do we understand publicness? How do we foster inclusion that is generative of agency? Where is 'voice' in public pedagogies- whose voice and how are voices heard? How do we create an inter-connectedness of voices? Previous understandings of "publicness" are being challenged as a result of COVID. Public spaces previously conducive to relative anonymity (grocery stores, gas/petrol stations, etc.) now feel private--intimate, even--as we all hyper-focus on ourselves and our neighbours. People from marginalized communities feel even greater exposure as a result of terrible racial oppression and recent protests, while people in the religious minority feel exposed and abandoned by xenophobic policies that limit foreign entry. We necessarily obsess over mask-wearing, hand-washing, and what we or others are touching.

This obsessive thinking, too, is a result of exposure: literal physical exposure in public spaces, and figurative exposure by media and government who have made us emotionally raw from a constant supply of information countered only by an equally sufficient supply of misinformation. The media and government (who have served very much as institutions of education during this time) have traded on hope. While "hope" is not an obvious or easy choice anywhere, it is a choice most certainly made impossible under ultra-conservative regimes in many parts of the world. Others observe that boundaries between public and private lives are being crossed, blurred, expanded, and erased, and what we are left with are the exposed and jagged edges of dissolving binary spheres: public/private, personal/political, visible/invisible, heard/unheard, feelings/truths.

Resurgent public movements speaking back to patriarchy, racism, and capitalism can be understood as forms of haunting: instances in which unresolved or repressed violence is making itself known. Haunting, according to Avery Gordon (2008, 2011), is about the unavoidability of reckoning with the traumas of the past because they remain alive and present. Haunting demands that we honour memories, the lost and the disappeared, because they provide knowledge of the things behind taken-for-granted realities, that need to be changed to move toward a more just society. Because haunting is a lively state, distinctive for indicating that there is ‘something to be done’ it represents a loss and simultaneously a hope or future possibility. Other and emerging public pedagogies of haunting might be thought of as those oriented toward challenging the epistemic blindness and blocks of authoritative privilege,

engaging with more-than-human ghosts, and expanding passions for what is really at stake and what we might do about it.

Our new COVID world brings new spaces of inquiry around theorizing “publicness”: who, where, and what “counts” as “public” or “publicness”? How might we consider publicness in the light of various forms of exposure, escape, invasion, intrusion, illumination, dissolution, and dissolving of the boundaries of public and private spheres?

Program Seminar series

Times 10.30 -12.30 AEST

Dates

Friday 8th October

Friday 15th October

Friday 22nd October

Friday 29th October

Friday 5th October

Friday 12th October Plenary Session and Launch of PPI Journal

Cost: \$AUD60; free for students and unemployed; a pay-forward system will also operate

Format: Zoom meeting hosted by Karen Charman Chairperson PPI

Proposal- due date: Monday 7th June

Proposals are invited around the theme of ‘Publicness’. The abstract above provides some threads which may be taken up in the series. The seminar topics are not, however, limited to these ideas around Publicness. Keeping in mind the series will be held via zoom interactive presentations are particularly welcomed. It is requested that the proposal be limited to 800 words and accompanied by a brief synopsis of the proposed seminar agenda and at least 2 suggested pre- readings.

Please email proposals to Karen Charman – Karen.Charman@vu.edu.au

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