

The Social Pathologies of Contemporary Civilization



Is solidarity (still) the answer?

Late modern social pathologies, emerging forms of solidarity and pathologies of solidarity itself

Budapest, 20&21 May 2022



ELTE

FACULTY OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES

Timetable

Day 1. Friday May 20th

9.30-9.45 coffee

9.45-10.15h Welcome & introductions:

- Domonkos Sik (organizer & host)
- Bert van den Bergh (on Social Pathologies of Contemporary Civilization)
- Kieran Keohane (on “Bosch, Pleonexia and Mimesis”; and introducing Nidesh Lawtoo)

10.15-11.15h Keynote (i): Nidesh Lawtoo “Homo Mimeticus: A Mirror for Patho(-)Logies of the Future” (chair - Kieran)

11.15-11.30h coffee

11.30-12.30h Sessions 1 and 2 (parallel)

Session 1: Loneliness and isolation:

- (i) Keming Yang “Religion and Loneliness in Europe”
- (ii) Jody Moore-Ponce “Broken Signposts - The unmoored experience of modern individuals”

Session 2: Paradoxes of Solidarity

- (i) Robert Bolton. “‘Unacknowledged Shame’ in Modernity - The Obstacle to Solidarity”
- (ii) Domonkos Sik: “From the paradoxes of ‘organic solidarity’ towards the actor-networks of emergency”

12.30-14h Lunch [A38 ship](#)

14-15h Sessions 3 and 4 (parallel)

Session 3: Solidarity and Covid

- (i) Felicity Daly: “Exposing fault lines in solidarity in the COVID-19 response: analysing the Houses of Oireachtas Special Committee” (online)
- (ii) Angela Flynn “‘We’re all in this Together’: Solidarity and Collectivism in the context of COVID-19”

Session 4: Kinship, Alienation and Reification

- (i) Sara Abutaleb “Kinship and its Effect on the Social Ties in the Middle East”
- (ii) Csaba Olay “Lukács’s conception of reification in the light of recent interpretations”

15-15.15h coffee

15.15-16.15h Sessions 5 and 6 (parallel)

Session 5: Psy Praxes

- (i) Melissa Isabella Meyer “Disconnect or Dissonant: Uncovering and exploring the origins and implications of what it means to be ‘untethered’ through through interviews with counsellors in Ireland”
- (ii) Carmen Kuhling “‘It would be good to talk to someone’: A Discourse analysis of Representations of Psychotherapy on Irish Radio”

Session 6: Suffering and Euphoria

- (i) Dominik Koesling “From suffering to solidarity: Remarks from (early) critical theory’s critique of society”
- (ii) Kieran Bonner “Desire and Euphoria: Drinking, Thinking and Thoughtlessness”

16.30-17.30h “Musical – Visual *Intermezzo*” by Elke van Buggenhout, Adriaan Severins and Ans Mertens, followed by conversation & discussion (intro: Bert)

17.30 City walking tour (guide: Vigvári András) and on to dinner, at [Koleves](#)

Day 2. Saturday May 21nd

9.45-10h coffee

10.15-11 Keynote (ii): Máté Zombory “Social pathology in practice, or how the rise of memory politics put an end to international solidarity” (intro & chair: Domonkos)

11-11.15h coffee

11.15-12.15h Sessions 7 and 8 (parallel)

Session 7: Transformative words and objects

- (i) Kieran Keohane “‘Love loves to love love’: good words that may turn things around”
- (ii) Blahoslav Rozbořil, Josef Daněk & Ken G. Hay "Wooden web - Ground Plan of Togetherness"

Session 8: Public spheres: IRL and Online

- (i) Amin Sharifi Isaloo “How tricksters form the public sphere and create schismogenic processes”
- (ii) Dániel Hegedűs “Solidarity in video blogger discourses online”

12.15-12.20h short break

12.20-13.20h Sessions 9 and 10 (parallel)

Session 9: Insurgencies and injustices

- (i) Anioke Blessing Nkiruka & Joseph Aigbolosimon Famous. “Effect of Boko-Haram Insurgency on the Health Status of Internally Displaced Persons in Monguno IDPs Camp, Borno State, Nigeria”
- (ii) Sumit Kumar “Decolonising Justice in India”

Session 10: Seafarers and Students

- (i) Marjoire Maidu. “The ‘Key Workers’: Boosting Seafarers’ Morale and a Solidarity Call among Major Maritime Stakeholders”
- (ii) Verdi Ahern. “A re-turn to the University: mimesis reloaded, wherein ‘antidotes contra the pathologies of homo mimeticus...’ are developed and disseminated ‘...via therapeutic forms of mimetic practices’”

13.20-14.30h Lunch, [A38 ship](#)

14.30-15.30h session 11 (plenary)

Session 11: Against (neo)liberalism?

- (i) Bert van den Bergh. “Isolism and populism: the blood-curdling case of TB”

15.30-16.00h coffee; and Book Launch: D. Sik (2022), *Empty Suffering: A Social Phenomenology of Depression*. London: Routledge (chair: Máté Zombory)

16.00h transport to Budapest Museum of Fine Arts for [Bosch exhibition](#)

20h Dinner at [Mazeltov](#)



Keynote Speakers



Nidesh Lawtoo is Assistant Professor of English and philosophy at [KU Leuven](#), as well as adjunct director of [MDRN](#) and PI of the ERC funded project [Homo Mimeticus](#) at KU Leuven. His areas of specialization include modernism, critical theory, film studies, posthuman studies, political theory, and continental philosophy, with special focus on theories of mimesis, identification, and simulation. He is the editor of *Conrad's Heart of Darkness and Contemporary Thought* (Bloomsbury, 2012) and (co-)edited special issues of *MLN*, *Conradiana*, *CounterText*. He is the author of *The Phantom of the Ego: Modernism and the Mimetic Unconscious* (Michigan State UP, 2013), *Conrad's Shadow: Catastrophe, Mimesis, Theory* (MSU P, 2016; Adam Gillon Award), and *(New) Fascism: Contagion, Community, Myth* (MSU P, 2019). His next ERC-funded books are a sequel, titled *Violence and the Oedipal Unconscious: vol. 1 The Catharsis Hypothesis* and *Violence and the Mimetic Unconscious: vol. 2 The Affective Hypothesis* (forthcoming). Other book projects include a collection on *Homo Mimeticus* and a monograph on Oscar Wilde and the imitation of life.



Máté Zombory is Associate Professor at the Institute of Sociology, [Eötvös Loránd University](#), as well as senior research fellow at the [Centre for Social Sciences](#) in Budapest. His field of interest is the historical sociology of transnational memory and politics. He is author of *Traumatársadalom. Az emlékezetpolitika történeti-szociológiai kritikája* [Trauma Society. A Historical-Sociological Critique of the Politics of Memory] (2019) and *Maps of Remembrance. Space, Belonging and Politics of Memory in Eastern Europe* (2012). His current research deals with the antifascist legacy of World War II.

Book of abstracts

Friday

Keynote lecture Nidesh Lawtoo: **Homo Mimeticus: A Mirror for Patho(-)Logies of the Future**

Already at the dawn of philosophy, Plato and Aristotle disagreed about the value of mimetic representations; yet they fundamentally agreed that humans are mimetic animals who imitate other humans, for good and ill. If, for a long time, mimesis has either been restricted to aesthetic realism (Auerbach) or considered from the angle of rivalry and violence (Girard), the ERC-funded project Homo Mimeticus proposes a re-turn of attention to an immanent, affective, and relational conception of mimesis that can certainly be put to destructive pathological social use, as in (new)fascist and tyrannical regimes, but it can also be put to patho-logical theoretical use, that is, to develop a critical discourse (logos) to account for the Janus-faced nature of mimetic affect (pathos). This lecture takes some steps to propose a new theory of mimesis and the concepts that inform it (mimetic pathos, patho-logies, mimetic unconscious) in order to foreground the power of solidarity whose sym-pathos (feeling with) is constitutive of a relational, embodied, and all too mimetic species qua homo mimeticus.

Session 1: Loneliness and isolation

Religion and Loneliness in Europe

Keming Yang, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Durham University, UK

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Loneliness arises from the perception of the lack of desired social relation or the presence of an undesired one, and it has long been taken as a psychological and individual problem. At the same time, it has become a problem of global significance with increasing attention from international organizations such as WHO and national governments. Following a sociological perspective to understanding and examining loneliness represented in *Loneliness: A Social Problem* (Yang, 2019), this paper is an initial attempt to study the relationship between religion and loneliness, an intriguing as well as important issue that has not been researched extensively. Whilst loneliness could be interpreted from a religious and philosophical point of view, such as the notion of 'existential loneliness', in order to make a direct connection to existing studies, this paper will answer the following questions: does the prevalence of loneliness vary significantly across people of different religions? Moreover, does the level of religiousness relate to the degree of loneliness? And does the national context matter in these relationships? Answers to these questions remain highly uncertain because

religion and religiousness could relate to the sense of loneliness in different directions; therefore, specific empirical research is needed. This study will analyse the data collected from the seventh round of European Social Survey (ESS, 2014), with twenty-one participating European countries. The relations between loneliness, religion and religiousness will be analysed initially on the entire dataset, and then the same analyses will be done for each country separately. Other control variables such as gender and age will be included later. This study will generate new insights into this important issue with precise analyses which should lead to effective strategies for tackling loneliness at the societal level.

Broken Signposts - The unmoored experience of modern individuals

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There are certain signposts that point to places which historically have been understood by societies of the west. These signposts signified both direction and destination. What are these signposts? There are many of course, but this paper aims to explore three of them in particular; they are - confession, truth-telling, autonomous-individuality and how these three topics play out and perform under the banner of social-justice and ultimately lead to a pathological isolation for contemporary individuals.

This paper aims to examine these signposts to understand how their meaning, both regarding direction and destination, has changed to the degree that they no longer mean or point to anything. Yet they linger on the roadsides of society, creating a confusing and often uncanny sense of something familiar but also foreign. The once familiar and helpful nature of these signposts has become mired in contention and contestation about their hermeneutical importance and even the validity of their existence.

Levi Strauss used the term "floating Signifiers" to conceptualize this notion of broken signposts. For Strauss, "a 'floating signifier is a signifier with a vague, highly variable, unspecifiable, or non-existent signified. Such signifiers mean different things to different people: they may stand for many or even any signifieds; they may mean whatever their interpreters want them to mean. In such a state of radical disconnection between signifier and signified, 'a sign only means that it means' Goldman & Papson (1994:50). A "floating signifier" may "mean different things to different people; they may mean whatever their interpreters want them to mean" Chandler & Munday (2020). Whether it is a broken signpost or a floating signifier, there is a contemporary experience of feeling unmoored, adrift in a sea of confused meaning.

In this cultural moment there is very little solidity, cohesion, or commonality in how individuals read or interpret these and other signposts and so society endeavours to find its way without them, locked in what Rieff calls "radical contemporaneity" Rieff (1985) an experience of being unmoored from the received common understandings of the past and the present community, leading to almost total isolation.

Session 2: Paradoxes of Solidarity

'Unacknowledged Shame' in Modernity - The Obstacle to Solidarity

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This paper draws upon empirical data from an ethnographic PhD study on how young men (aged 12-18) perform masculinity to make a theoretical contribution to Goffman's (1967) sociology and the question 'Is solidarity (still) the answer?' Interpreting young men's masculine performances using Scheff's (2006) psychoanalytically informed approach to Goffman's work, the paper makes a key claim that is crucial to the question: Goffman (accidentally) showed that in modern society, we have no interaction rituals with which to acknowledge shame. This idea has also been suggested by Goffman (1952) by unacknowledged in his early paper *On Cooling the Mark Out*. Instead, shame is unacknowledged through 'face work' and 'poise', in line with Scheff's idea that 'shame is taboo' in modernity. This results in bonds of pseudosolidarity based on suppressing true feelings.

The paper draws upon the empirical data which exemplifies how shame is unacknowledged and hidden in three ways: by (re)performing signs which signify identity; performing humour; and enacting rage. The paper particularly focuses on rage, resulting from the state of being 'ashamed of being ashamed', producing the 'feeling trap' of what Scheff calls a 'shame-rage spiral'. This is the result of the individual's inability to display and communicate shame due to its stigma, yet too humiliated to enact 'poise' and keep this display of shame hidden.

Rage resulting from the 'taboo on shame' exemplifies the opposite of what 'true solidarity' should be comprised of: 'attunement', the 'accurate understanding of both parties of the other's thoughts and feelings'.

Unless the current 'adequate procedure' of acknowledging shame is moved out of the therapeutic encounter and considered a legitimate and adequate 'move' of human interchange, 'true solidarity' in the form of 'attunement' and its outcome cannot be realised, let alone considered 'key to late modern crisis'.

From the paradoxes of 'organic solidarity' towards the actor-networks of emergency

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Solidarity is not only a key concept of sociology since the birth of the discipline, but also a central notion of moral and political philosophy. Accordingly, the questions concerning solidarity have multiple stakes: the social integration, the dignity of the subject and the democratic quality of the political sphere are equally related to them. To avoid arbitrary reductions, a multi-layered framework is needed, which is capable of operating on all of these levels – a task requiring appropriate social

theoretical apparatus. A comprehensive social theoretical grounding provides opportunity not only for taking into consideration the various stakes of solidarity, but also enables a systematic analysis of the structural transformations reconfiguring the space of possibility for solidarity. The emergence of global capitalism (Castells), information society (Lash), risk society (Beck), acceleration society (Rosa) are just the few of the most important transformations creating new dimensions of inequality and new forms of social integration. Due to these transformations, the networks of solidarity also became contingent both on practical (as the communities and welfare institutions of solidarity become fragmented), phenomenological (as the normative frames of worthiness and responsibility are blurred) and structural level (as the welfare state is weakened due to the rise of global capitalism), which tendencies threaten with disintegration and the distortion of justice at the same time.

The presentation aims at exploring this ambiguous late modern solidarity, which is not based anymore on the proud and optimistic enthusiasm of the Enlightenment, but rather on compromises and hybrid forms aiming at treating certain forms of suffering without promising to find long-term solutions to the overwhelming challenges and paradoxes. Firstly, classic and contemporary social theories are overviewed in order to describe the structural transformations resulting in the emergence of 'post-organic solidarity'. Durkheim's model is used as a reference not only because of its substantive conclusions, but also due to its exceptional theoretical comprehensiveness. Durkheim explains how the premodern paradigm of mechanic solidarity was gradually giving place to a new organic form: the latter did not completely replace the former one, instead complemented it, while also transforming it – overall resulting in a new constellation including both of them. The model of post-organic solidarity is introduced in a similar fashion: its emergence is explained as a consequence of the functional inadequacy of the mature expression of organic solidarity (that is the national welfare state facing global challenges); its main features ('Sisyphean' efforts of harm reduction without the promise of long-term solutions) are explained as an adaptation to the late modern structural constraints (the uncertainties and inequalities of globalized informational capitalism); also its impact on the prevailing elements of mechanic (negative collective consciousness) and organic solidarity (deconstruction of welfare state) is elaborated into a comprehensive model.

The description of post-organic solidarity is followed by a brief analysis of the actual praxis of harm reduction interventions. It is argued that the hybrid networks of solidarity relying on the 'logic of emergency' threaten with the suspension of any sort of morality, including those principles, which are used in the public sphere as a legitimizing force of intervening humanitarian or health related catastrophes – that is the undermining of the very possibility of even post-organic solidarity.

Session 3: Solidarity and Covid

Exposing fault lines in solidarity in the COVID-19 response: analysing the Houses of Oireachtas Special Committee

Felicity Daly DrPH, University College Cork, Institute of Social Sciences in the 21st century

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Re-building a post COVID-19 society will entail re-imagining and re-inventing the moral foundations of economy and society based on mutual respect and reciprocal generosity (Mauss, 2002 in Keohane, 2020). Perspectives from the feminist ethics of care will help redress inequalities in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity that have been perpetuated despite seemingly solidaristic responses to the pandemic.

This paper presents analysis of the Houses of Oireachtas Special Committee on COVID-19 Response to explore current discourses about care in Ireland. Utilising the Trace method of policy analysis (Sevenhuijsen, 2004), grounded in the feminist ethics of care, reveals how care has been constructed in political and public debate during the pandemic. Care ethics perspectives have demonstrated how care is a lynchpin of social values by contrasting a dominant ethic of justice that foregrounds values of equality, fair distribution, impartiality, and non-interference with an ethic of care which centres solidarity, empathetic responsiveness, mutual concern and trust (Held, 2006). Care and solidarity have been identified in terms of their value to human life, the work they require and the role they have in achieving social change and equality (Lynch and Walsh, 2009). Furthermore, care ethicists conceived of the *homines curans* (caring people) to counter the dominance of *homo economicus* (Tronto, 2017).

This analysis exposes realities behind the rhetoric around solidarity in Ireland's response to COVID-19. It considers how the trope of the heroic carer obscured professional and domestic care burdens carried by the largely female and migrant health and social care workforce. It demonstrates politicians confronting the inhumanity of conditions in direct provision (DP) accommodation for asylum seekers spurring solidaristic campaigning to end DP. Ultimately, the paper presents a verdict on Ireland's COVID-19 response hampered by privatisation, austerity and feminist analysis of the absence of a caring aspect to Ireland's political economy.

“We’re all in this Together”: Solidarity and Collectivism in the context of COVID-19

Angela Flynn, University College Cork,

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The coronavirus pandemic has impacted health care, economies and societies in ways that are still being measured across the world. To control the spread of the virus, governments continue to appeal to citizens to alter their behaviours and act in the interests of the collective public good so as to protect the vulnerable. Demonstrations of collective solidarity are being consistently sought to control the spread of the virus. Catchphrases, soundbites, and hashtags such as “we’re all in this together”, “stronger together”, and other messages of unity are employed, invoking the sense of a collective struggle. However, this approach is fundamentally challenged as collectivist attitudes run contrary to the individualism of neoliberal ideology, to which citizens have been subjected.

This paper argues that attempting to employ the concept of solidarity is inherently challenged by the deep impact of neoliberalism in health policies and draws on the work of Durkheim to examine the concept in a context in which health care has become established as an individual responsibility. The paper will argue that a dominant private-responsibility model and an underfunded public system have eroded solidarity weakening its effectiveness in generating concerns for the collective.

Session 4: Kinship, Alienation and Reification

Kinship and its Effect on the Social Ties in the Middle East

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The aim of this dissertation is to examine the importance of milk for shaping social ties in the Middle East, specifically in some parts of Jordan and Egypt. Breastfeeding, known as Al-Ridaa in Arabic, has been described as a key factor in shaping the system of kinship ties in certain Middle Eastern societies. Across the history of the Middle East, women who undertook wet nursing were known for exploiting the power of milk in, redefining, and using social ties. Peter Parkes (2007) claims that "[m]ilk kinship in Islam [...] appears to be a culturally distinctive, but by no means unique, institutional form of adoptive kinship" (308). Milk can be used to foster health care in short and long term, building a healthy immune system, and some nutritionists and medical experts (Horta, 20113) believe that milk can cure certain diseases; moreover, it is believed in some traditional societies like Morocco that milk produced by exceptional women has the potential to revive a dying child just as that of other women can kill a child.

Milk and breastfeeding have been delegated a special role throughout the centuries. Among other things, as Ensel (2002) describes it, it was seen as an effective medium for resolving disputes among tribes. Receiving breastfeeding had been one of the important rituals and practices, especially with the arrival of Islam, because it nourishes and strengthens the mother-child relationship. Soroya Altorki (1990) and Françoise Héritier (1994, 1999) have written extensively about the myths and conflicting theories surrounding the Sunni Arab concepts of kinship, being among the first scholars to attach importance to the notion itself from an anthropological perspective. The Qura'n and the Hadith, which are considered to be the major sources of legislation in Islam, confirm this pre-Islamic practice. Milk had been strategically used by a woman to enhance her power and achieve security and stability in the old times.

In this dissertation, this particular form of kinship will be described based on extant research in relation to nursing by a non-biological mother as well as through the eyes of the local women who have had the experience in wet-nursing or who have witnessed other women practicing it.

Further areas, organically related to the key undercurrent of the dissertation, to be explored are as follow: affinity, canon law, fictive kinship, Hadith, Shia and Sunni Islam, wet nursing, consanguinity marriages

Lukács's conception of reification in the light of recent interpretations

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Lukács' theory of reification always raised interest, and not only from those grown up in the Marxist tradition. In this talk, I would like, first, to reconstruct the main lines of Lukács's conception of reification, and then, second, I shall discuss Honneth's more recent presentation of Lukács in connection with a discussion of present-day descriptions of reification and alienation (Jaggi, Rosa). With regard to these recent developments, my focus will be directed to what can be proposed against reification, e.g. in form of a non-reified state, situation, or activity. "What is the opposition of reification and alienation?", so runs the neuralgic question that needs an answer if the discourse on reification and alienation should be productive.

The major claim of my talk will be that we find non-reified, non-alienated situations and activities both in certain fields – human relationships will turn out to be much more resistant to reification and alienation than Lukács (and Marx) thought them to be – and in certain idiosyncratic activities that are meaningful for us to an extent that talking about reification or alienation hardly makes any sense. Concerning Lukács's diagnosis, this perspective agrees with him on there being deep reifying tendencies in capitalist society, whereas disagrees on how the problems of reifying tendencies might be solved, or at least, counterbalanced and neutralized.

Session 5: Psy Praxes

Disconnect or Dissonant: Uncovering and exploring the origins and implications of what it means to be 'untethered' through through interviews with counsellors in Ireland

Melissa Isabella Meyer, PhD Candidate (Sociology) at University College Cork, Ireland

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Anxiety, depression, and suicide ideation had become so common place amongst young adults in Ireland that it is barely still considered pathological, instead it's just considered a symptom of the times. To investigate what might be underlying the strains and stressors of this particular generation, exploratory interviews were conducted with counsellors working with young adults. Findings suggest that, in considering social pathologies of contemporary life, dissonance is not entirely to blame. Instead, it is the disconnect to our world that leaves us untethered and more susceptible to the whims of contemporary life's dissonant chaos. It is the unstable foundations laid out in the formative years that leaves the individual wrong-footed, compromised and undermined. The formative processes should ideally develop a sense of self, a connection to their social, and how to situate oneself in it.

These are primarily:

- Establishing core identity within the first social. "He is the Smiths' boy"
- Situating oneself within a supported, stable trajectory. "My family runs a bakery"
- Learning self-regulation through interdependent reliance. "If I cry, someone responds."

However, as the contemporary industrialised individual has adapted, so has child-rearing practices. This paper seeks to make these practices explicit by exploring how they came to be, and their effects.

Inspiration is taken from Lynne Layton's work on the relational unconscious and reflexive subjectivity, while the bio-psycho foundations of the life-course theory offer insight into how these practices create an individual that is highly reactive, untethered, unstable in themselves and therefore in their environment, that struggles to situate themselves and feels the need to find identity, validation, and worth in social institutions and structures designed to prioritise certain individual profiles above others.

Everything else we're seeing – is symptoms of this.

“It would be good to talk to someone”: A Discourse analysis of Representations of Psychotherapy on Irish Radio

Carmen Kuhling, Department of Sociology, University of Limerick.

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Several radio programmes are currently being aired in Ireland on mental health which interview “guest experts” on mental health related topics or adopt a radio therapy format whereby people email in their problems, and various psychotherapists, psychologists and psychiatrists attempt to help them. In 2021, I conducted a discourse analysis of such programmes where I selected, transcribed and analyzed 21 radio segments in order to evaluate the taken-for-granted assumptions about the purpose of psychotherapy in Ireland; to analyze the various discourses about medicine, the self, and society that emerge in these radio programmes regarding mental health; and to identify which psychotherapeutic modalities and techniques that are most visible to the listening audience. As a critical sociologist who is also a practicing psychotherapist, this study alternates between a Foucauldian perspective which challenges the individualizing, reductionistic and psychologizing tendencies of psychotherapy practice; and a humanistic/ psychodynamic perspective which presumes that “talk therapy” can and does bring at least some relief to clients. Six themes emerged: (1) the idea that “talk therapy” leads to symptom relief and personal discovery; (2) ambivalence towards biomedical notions of expert authority and power; (3) a diversity of perspectives regarding the power of diagnosis and the biomedical model; (4) the dominance of particular constructions of the self, “rock bottom” and recovery in addiction narratives; (5) a reflexive understanding of the corrosive effects of excellence culture and surveillance; and (6) a collective concern around the impact of Covid on mental health. This research examines what these findings mean in the context of the history of the 19th century Irish asylum system (Brennan, 2014), transformations in Irish collective identity and self- understanding, the decline of the Catholic Church as a “Big Subject” (Dufour, 2017), and the rise of neoliberalism and new forms of subjectivisation.

Session 6: Suffering and Euphoria

From suffering to solidarity. Remarks from (early) critical theory's critique of society

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When studying Horkheimer and Adorno it becomes clear that one of the main aspects of their critique of society is suffering and the structures causing it. While suffering undoubtedly is sufficient for such a critique as a negative normative concept illustrating what ought not to be, the question arises whether there might be a complementary concept derived from suffering, which indicates positively what ought to be. At first glance, compassion seems to serve such a purpose as it connects inherently to suffering of others. While both critical theorists acknowledge that compassion indeed evokes reaction towards an abolition of suffering, they still criticize it tremendously as it e.g. tends to focus too narrowly on singular individuals or does not address suffering's structural basis in society. Yet unlike other critics of compassion, they do not condemn it but try to preserve its positive aspects in an understanding of solidarity, which tries to overcome restrictions imposed by concepts such as class solidarity.

In my presentation, I want to address the outlined topic in three steps: At first, I want to depict the significance of suffering in the works of Horkheimer and Adorno. Afterwards I want to address their illustration and critique of compassion before shifting towards the remarks on solidarity they provided us with. At last, those remarks, combined with some thoughts of contemporary works of critical theorists such as Jaeggi, might give a hint on the leading conference question Is Solidarity (still) the answer?, depicting it as a desirable social connection, but one which is neither simply given nor easily obtained and which might actually be quite demanding and challenging – theoretically and practically.

Desire and Euphoria: Drinking, Thinking and Thoughtlessness

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“Euphoria” comes from the ancient Greek and it means “to bear well.” It has now entered everyday usage to refer to the feeling of well-being or elation, especially in relation to the “high” associated with alcohol consumption (Edwards 2000, 8). The sense of euphoria when one's favorite team has just one the championship, as was the case with Toronto after the Raptors won the NBA finals for the first time or when Tipperary won the All-Ireland Hurling Championship – after a long ‘famine’, are easily recognizable as ephemeral expressions of solidarity.

This paper will explore the nature of euphoria and its ineffable relation to intoxication, thinking, and thoughtlessness as a way to address the tension between desire and wisdom as essential to understanding and living the grey zone of well-being. Disparate topics (like William James on the

relation between the mystic consciousness and the drunken consciousness; Gadamer on health, illness, and well-being; and Arendt's reflections both on a selection of classical Greek thinkers regarding their experience of thinking and on Eichmann and his thoughtlessness) will all be shown to be interconnected with and through the experience of elation or euphoria. This narrative journey through the apparently disparate texts and experiences is itself a demonstration of the dialectical method of reflexive analysis.



Saturday

Keynote lecture Máté Zombory: **Social pathology in practice, or how the rise of memory politics put an end to international solidarity**

Though metaphors of pathology have been applied in social criticism since the very beginning, the large-scale and institutionalized practice of social pathology is a recent phenomenon. Since the 1980s, a set of policy interventions, based on the normative concept of collective memory, has been put into practice in order to "heal" traumatic, post-conflict, or to be integrated societies. Implementing a "proper way of remembering" was believed to lead to solidarity in the broadest meaning of the term, including reconciliation, political integration, and social cohesion. What is more, even the possibility of

a world polity appeared on the horizon, promising a global order of post-national solidarity backed by the norms and values of universal human rights. Now, that the supposedly global liberal regime of "coming to term with the past" is crumbling, it is high time not only to better understand the normative implications of memory politics' practical social pathology, but also to contextualize its moral economy in the broader political history. The talk will at least partially comply this challenging task by, first, recapitulating the model of memory politics as a practical social pathology, and, second, by locating its historical ascendance as a coercive shift from international solidarity to humanitarian compassion.

Session 7: Transformative words and objects

“Love loves to love love”: good words that may turn things around

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In our present contexts of ‘post truth’, propaganda, social media mimetic influences and other intensifications of mythic consciousness, this presentation explores good models using the power of words to create positive mimesis to turn things around; to contain contagious scapegoating violence, and to find grounds of community and horizons of solidarity. I begin with a discussion of ‘the word’: on ‘empty words and full words’ in the ear of the analyst (Lacan); on corrupting influences on social and bodies politic by dropping poisonous words in the ear (Shakespeare); and how the good word enters the word by ‘impregnation via the ear’ (in scriptures of Annunciation). I look in particular at a pivotal scene in Joyce’s *Ulysses*, the ‘Cyclops’ episode, [one hundred years old this year, as we spiral again into darkness] wherein Leopold Bloom finds himself in a theatre of contagious mimetic envy, monstrous doublings, intensification of myth, and escalating spirals of scapegoating violence. The scene, subordinated ‘toxic’ masculinity of subaltern subjects beset on all sides by enormous phallic powers of empire & militarism, capitalism & commerce, swarming panoptical disciplining & policing, and swirling mass mediatized mythologies -all resembling our present circumstances. Joyce’s hero [Bloom] uses discursive strategies and carefully balanced words to [try to] subdue the powers of competing & converging would-be ‘Names of the Father’ and to preserve & defend a democratic ‘empty place of power’, while articulating grounds of community and horizons of solidarity in terms of positive mimeses of mutual care and escalating powers of love.

Wooden web - Ground Plan of Togetherness

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This paper reports on art projects of Czech artist Josef Daněk which he has worked with a number of collaborators in the past few years. Together with his former pupils and some colleagues, especially with Scottish artist Ken G. Hay, formed a free association called the Frozen Academy which was active between 2007 and 2013.

FA focused on exploring relations between digital and analogue technologies such as Photoshop / photography and the conventional media of drawing and painting. Other themes has included the relationship between individual and collective or collaborative creative practices and the distinctions between physical conversation and mediated discussion, and between real time and internet time. Humor and irony has been often present as a deliberate tactic to circumvent some of the obstacles of the contemporary art world and its structure, but also because it reflects the makeup of the group and their method of social interaction.

The Wooden web project (building on the spirit of FA) consists of a line of serialized meetings, collective exhibitions and other communal activities held at different locations and in different countries (the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Ireland, South Korea, France and Cyprus). The basic motif of the Wooden Web project is the nonsensical idea of building together a wooden internet, i.e. a more or less complicated, hand-made device or object, created mainly of intertwined branches and other wooden material.

Daněk's activities move along the boundary of an original project, a curatorial action, community project and implementation of an art education program. Elements of an absurd play with the imagined, or real non-functionality of the system under construction, or possibilities of its quasi-operational use, make it possible to draw attention to the general problems and pathologies connected with running commonly used communication systems and strategies.

Session 8: Public spheres: IRL and Online

How tricksters form the public sphere and create schismogenic processes

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This paper explores the relationship between society, politics and media, in the context of a comparative sociology and anthropology, focusing on a set of interrelated master concepts such as liminality, imitation and schismogenesis. It investigates the tight and often paradoxical links between politics, society and the public sphere, focusing on the enduring power of symbols, images and rhetoric in our contemporary societies.

This paper employs the content analysis methodology to study the media and published documents, images, symbols, video clips, etc. and to demonstrate how the public sphere is formed during the last two decades to spread racism and hate in Europe. In other words, it illustrates how tricksters form the public sphere and create schismogenic processes which, in turn, helps them to enhance their power in the political arena.

Solidarity in video blogger discourses online

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As of this day, digital spaces are fully embedded into our daily lives, and they fundamentally shape public spaces and everyday practices that may be exercised in them. Affordances of these premises have enabled and encouraged higher user activity in the form of uploading contents, commenting, and engaging with them. The emerging long-tail (Anderson 2004) and demotization (Turner 2010) effects of such technologies have created entirely new fields where celebrities might emerge from: one of them is videoblogging. Many video bloggers gained great reputation through peculiar micro-celebrity practices (Marwick 2015, Senft 2012), and, as a result, became key figures in distributing ideas, values and knowledge in today's society. These cognitive patterns are disseminated with a discursive apparatus that is largely based on social media activity, including posts, tweets, self-imagery, and the videos themselves, which are tied to a certain logic according to environmental affordances, creating the possibility for fans to interact (share, comment, like, retweet etc.) with artifacts of the celebrity. According to this, videobloggers might be understood as peculiar expert systems (Giddens 1990) that are capable of distributing values, attitudes, or other cognitive and behavioral patterns on a large scale. As such, the whole discursive ecosystem acquires a sort of disciplinary role (Foucault 1976) that can heavily influence what ideas are represented in the given discourse and how exactly they are represented to the audience. It is necessary to point out that disciplining also means some sort of integration where common knowledge and its representation has a key role, therefore it is very possible that celebrities and their discourses might appear to fans as actors of solidarity. Most importantly, all of these public interactions are accessible for scholars to conduct scientific research. Although the disciplining expert system quality cannot be validly measured in its effect, the features of the constructed discourse can, letting social sciences explore potential forums of modern solidarity.

Session 9: Insurgencies and injustices

Effect of Boko-Haram Insurgency on the Health Status of Internally Displaced Persons in Monguno IDPs Camp, Borno State, Nigeria.

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The alarming rate of insurgency in the North-east Nigeria is a factor of humanitarian crisis which has displaced many people in Borno State. Globally, about 25 million people are displaced ([UNHCR, 2013). In 2018, 541,000 (violence & Conflicts) and 613,000 (natural disasters) people were displaced in Nigeria (IDMC, 2019). In the light of the above, this paper addresses the effects of Boko-Haram Insurgency on the Health Status of IDPs in Monguno IDPs Camp, Nigeria. Study applies quantitative method both primary and secondary analysis. Findings indicates that Boko-Haram insurgency has significant effects on the psychological life, social life, economic life, and health of IDPs Monguno camp.

Decolonising Justice in India. A solidarity-based approach to post-colonial justice

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According to Luhmann, Justice can only get introduced into a legal system through irritations it receives from its environment. Gandhi on the other hand believed that the pre-colonial system of Nyay Panchayats in India rather than applying pre-determined law constructed justice for itself. The Panchayats did not function on a political or adversarial approach but through a conciliatory approach to achieve relational justice rather than punishment. The source of this approach lies in what Gandhi describes in his conception of a solidarity-based society rooted in mutual trust and respect for everyone (Sarvodaya).

This system of Panchayats suffered a catastrophic event with the colonization of India which almost led to its extinction until it was partially restituted after independence. However, during this time the colonial legal system had already entrenched itself within the Indian society. Colonial justice is dependent on an adversarial process which is institutionally resisted by the Indian society. The people in India were simply unable to adapt their practice and habitus when dealing with this new concept of law and the agents within the field simply could not comprehend the rules of the game itself. The character of the symbolic capitals within the field changed and in the absence of any clear rules of the game structural corruption got introduced into the field. Solidarity in the Indian society is now based on a struggle for recognition within the social fields. From a Gandhian perspective these struggles create a cycle of violence and therefore can only lead to injustice and punishment.

To decolonize justice in Indian society, there is a need to reconstitute the indigenous conciliatory mechanisms. This paper uses Luhmann at a macro level and Bourdieu at an intermediate level to theoretically attempt a Gandhian solidarity-based approach to decolonization of Justice in India.

Session 10: Seafarers and Students

The 'Key Workers': Boosting Seafarers' Morale and a Solidarity Call among Major Maritime Stakeholders

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The International Maritime Organization's (IMO) designation of seafarers as "key workers" during the pandemic highlighted their essential role in the global transportation industry. The inherent characteristics of shipboard life with a multi-ethnic crew and layered operational hierarchies provide for a fragmented working environment. The designation, in effect, serves as a solidarity call for individual and institutional stakeholders to positively respond to issues related to crew change, access to medical care, and seafarers' prioritization for COVID-19 vaccination. As ships are prone to virus outbreaks, seafarers' economic, social and mental well-being were exposed to more uncertainty, seclusion, and pressure. Onboard peer support, external support, and internet access have become beneficial to nourishing seafarers' mental health. In response to the call, welfare organizations modify their mode of accessing seafarers to provide them with moral and spiritual care. The Philippine state, which supplies thirty percent of the global seafarers, opens a 'green lane' that allows the free movement of seafarers and personnel across borders. The international and local media also emphasize the 'key worker' discourse, permitting seafarers to return home to a more accepting society. Many of them are stigmatized as 'virus carriers' within the first few months of the pandemic. Applying Bourdieu's theoretical framework on capital, field, and habitus, this paper explores how Filipino seafarers navigate the volatility of their seafaring profession through the use of different forms of capital and strategies. This paper also aims to explore how the 'key worker' discourse operationalized solidarity among the maritime stakeholders to benefit the Filipino global seafarers. Data were drawn from 28 Filipino seafarers' narratives, the researcher's field notes during a visit to a welfare organization, and secondary sources.

A re-turn to the University, mimesis reloaded, wherein "antidotes contra the pathologies of homo mimeticus..." are developed and disseminated "...via therapeutic forms of mimetic practices"

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'All learning is by mimesis' (Aristotle; Girard; Lawtoo). What is learned from models are the models' desires: the ideals that the models represent and profess, so that students learn to desire what their models desire. Neoliberalism is a mode of thought whereby there is no authentic control by the body (polis) in 'thinking' neoliberalism into existence. Taking the plague of neoliberalism as a mechanism, unable to change but only able to assert its demands upon the body politic, it can be seen that humans, and humanity, are the victims of a process wherein there is no individual to 'blame'. Ultimately, we,

the body of society, we the university, need to make (a la Nietzsche) an “attempt at self-criticism”, and think our way out of this toxic, contagious system.

Channelling Lawtoo, and mimesis reloaded, I contend that university students are being scapegoated by the plague of neoliberal education. The University has been seduced and in turn seduces others into this poisonous existence as it appeals to the vain, greedy element in all of us. As an institution which should model the highest Ideals, the university has a moral responsibility to mediate against the contagion. This will allow the critical distance necessary to overturn mimetic criticism of viral contagion. Using the Covid 19 pandemic as a genealogical mirror, the reflection is indeed familiar: the Janus-like pharmakon is ourselves, homo mimeticus. The potential exists to convert the mimetic pathology into a mimetic therapy for both human and nonhuman life on Earth. Universities can become models wherein “antidotes contra the pathologies of homo mimeticus...” are developed and disseminated “...via therapeutic forms of mimetic practices.” An example is the Rite of Convocation, which possesses the features and effects of a rite of passage (positive mimesis), and evidences care through practices of social solidarity.

Session 11: Against (neo)liberalism?

Isolism and populism: the blood-curdling case of TB

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Populism, one could say, is a bad answer to a good question. The question is how to resist isolism. The answer indeed has to involve something like a ‘commitment (...) to establish a deep mutual connection’, like TB (Dutch populist leader) states. But what does this entail? And should one (still) call this ‘solidarity’? On the SPCC website we state: ‘everyone is dependent on others in the sense of being potentially reliant on their material or symbolic assistance, while reciprocally they are expected to make efforts and sacrifices for the others’. TB would agree. He too fiercely opposes what on our website is indicated as ‘hyper-individuation and homo oeconomicus, the ideal-type rational choice subject of the neoliberal revolution’, while declaring himself a Romantic, like Hartmut Rosa does in *Resonance*: ‘Resonance may be understood as a Romantic idea insofar as the basic ambition of Romanticism is to reconcile these same divisions and oppositions with each other – it stands in opposition to the reifying concepts of a rationalism oriented toward calculation, specification, domination, and control.’ And TB writes: ‘Romantic ideals have become untenable in the modern age, since individualism has made profound, long-term relationships impossible’. Is this ‘romanticist’ focus on solidarity confusing, because deeply connected to both neoreactionary and ‘neoresisting’ (Dany-Robert Dufour’s term) responses? Therefore indeed, so it seems, we should underline what is stated at the end of our CFP: ‘last, but perhaps first: what about the concept of solidarity itself? Does it still stand? (...) Are we in need of another concept to resist the ultraliberal temptation? Are we facing so many pathologies of solidarity today, that we should conclude that solidarity cannot be the answer to the crises of our times?’



We stand with the people of Ukraine
and all those who are speaking out for peace