



Life and Death of Habits

March 27-28, 2025

Université de Picardie Jules Verne

Logis du Roy

Square Jules Bocquet

Amiens

A conference organized in the framework of the IRN NOVI

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NOVI International Research Network

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March 27, 2025

9:15 Welcome coffee

9:30 - 11:30 **Session 1 - Chair: Sandra Laugier**

Francesca Raimondi, *The Double Negativity of Habit in Hegel and Marx*

Luke Edmeads, *Habits and Liberation in Menke and Adorno*

Judith Revel, *Inventing habits: repetition, institution, modes of life*

11:30 - 11:45 *Coffee Break*

11:45 - 13:05 **Session 2 - Chair: Judith Revel**

Susanne Lettow, *Emancipatory ecologies: Rethinking habits from eco-feminist perspectives*

Perig Pitrou, *Habits and Inhabitation: From Techniques of the Body to Architecture and Urban Planning*

13 :05 *Lunch*

14:15 - 15:35 **Session 3 - Chair: Estelle Ferrarese**

Sandra Laugier, *Habit and the education of experience*

Federica Gregoratto, *Concrete unfreedom. Depression, habits and the reproduction of social life*

15:35 - 15:50 *Coffee Break*

15:50 - 17:10 **Session 4 - Chair: Francesca Raimondi**

Mara Boccaccio, *Habits and the Poetics of Resistance: Presence of Mind and Transformation in Chandra Livia Candiani's Writings*

Sivia Pierosara, *Narratives as Habits. Critical Perspectives*

March 28, 2025

9:00 - 11:00 **Session 5 - Chair: Perig Pitrou**

Jamila Mascat, *The Ethos of Partisanship. Of Good Habits in Radical Politics*

Ada Reichhart, *Cooperation as Labour: The Precariousness of a Habit*

Clara Han, *TBA*

11:00 - 11:15 *Coffee Break*

11:15-13:15 **Session 6 - Chair: Jamila Mascat**

Anne Gonon, *Creativity in John Dewey's thinking about habits*

Alyson Cole, *Rethinking Perceptual Habits*

Fred Lyra, *Improvisation: for and against habits*

13:15 - 14:15 *Lunch*

Mara Boccaccio (University of Cape Town), *Habits and the Poetics of Resistance: Presence of Mind and Transformation in Chandra Livia Candiani's Writings*

In this paper we explore the transformative potential of habits and awareness in Chandra Livia Candiani's writings, both poetry and prose, working from her alignment with Buddhist principles of presence and impermanence. Through her works we seek to show how habits can also become sites of resistance and personal liberation. Through poetic mindfulness and the mindfulness of poetry, the awareness of habitual actions can challenge oppressive systems, and offer a path to new, liberating ways of being that cultivate individual and collective freedom. In Candiani we find a 21st-century, Occidental grappling with ancient ideas about the dialogue between the self and the world. We argue that it is not solely in the "teachings" or contents of Buddhism or its interlocutor (Candiani), but in the practice of poetry itself that new habits of language, thinking and behaviour are forged.

Alyson Cole (CUNY), *Rethinking Perceptual Habits*

War, natural disasters, illness, and other crises upend ordinary routines. Coping typically involves retaining those habits we can or attempting to cultivate new ones. Both sorts of practices aspire to stabilize the unstable by normalizing the rupture, or at least its aftereffects. In this essay, I examine some of the visual habits that took shape in the aftermath of 10/7/23.

Luke Edmeads (University of Brighton), *Habits and Liberation in Menke and Adorno*

In his recent work, *A Theory of Liberation*, Christoph Menke reiterates the argument that the formation of habits produces a second nature that perpetuates servitude. Habituation, understood as the process of transforming oneself into one's own accomplishments, is governed by the law of identity—a dominating repetition of determinacy. I critically examine Menke's account through the lens of Theodor Adorno's philosophy. I argue that habit functions as a mediating force and that non-identity is already internal to identity itself. Following Adorno, I contend that the mediation of concepts by other concepts and materiality renders universalising claims, such as Menke's, untenable. Thus, Menke's view of habit as a perpetuation of servitude underestimates habits mediating potential and overlooks how the capacity for non-identity already resides within habitual identity itself. By framing non-identity as a radical **break, Menke misses the movement between identity and non-identity that is key to resisting domination.**

Anne Gonon (Université Doshisha, Kyoto), *Creativity in John Dewey's thinking about habits*

Using examples from the Fukushima disaster, we will examine the process by which new practices emerge, drawing critically on John Dewey's notion of habits.

Federica Gregoratto (University of Lucerne), *Concrete unfreedom. Depression, habits and the reproduction of social life*

In the talk I recast and expand Ratcliffe's phenomenological account of depression as a distorted mode to inhabit the world with the aid of a Hegelian framework. I suggest that depression should be understood as "homelessness": individuals are not and do not feel at home with their fellow human beings, with themselves, in their bodies and in connection to others' bodies, in their social institutions and arrangements, as well as in natural environments and in relation to non-human entities. According to such Hegelian metaphor, human beings are and feel, namely, unfree, as they inhabit the loss of a certain mode of connection between different and interrelated dimensions of social and natural life, a connection that is constitutive to them. More precisely, I try to make sense of the unfreedom of depression by explaining Hegel's statement that human beings may "die as a result of habit". Finally, the paper specifies how depression is not only an individual (Ratcliffe) but also a social and political form of suffering, that amounts to a systemic difficulty in reproducing social life. Depression, it is claimed, is then a paradigmatic form of what today has been called a crisis of social reproduction.

Clara Han (Johns Hopkins University)

Sandra Laugier (Université Paris I-Panthéon Sorbonne), *Habit and the education of experience*

Fred Lyra, (USP/Alameda), *Improvisation: for and against habits*

There will be two parts to this communication. Firstly, we will try to expose and critically analyse the connections and tensions raised by musicians Steve Coleman and Steve Lacy, sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and philosopher Gary Peters between improvisation and habits. We will then try to show that one of the determining features of a possible dialectic of improvisation consists of discerning how it has been constituted, among other things, for and against individual or collective habits.

Susanne Lettow (FU Berlin), *Emancipatory ecologies: Rethinking habits from eco-feminist perspectives*

In this paper I discuss the meaning of habituation and of habits for an emancipatory ecologies. In the first part I discuss the notion of emancipation as situated politics of subjectivity with reference to Antonio Gramsci's understanding of the human as "historical block" and his critique of everyday common sense. Habits and processes of habituation, I argue, do not amount to subjection and the formation of fixed identities but can also be understood as relays of individual, collective and social change. In the second part, I discuss this in more detail by focusing on eco-feminist perspectives and contemporary challenges for emancipatory ecologies.

Jamila Mascat (Utrecht University), *The Ethos of Partisanship. Of Good Habits in Radical Politics*

This paper explores the habits of contemporary radical politics. It begins by revisiting first-person narratives of partisan political engagement from the 20th century within socialist, feminist, and anticolonial contexts to develop the concept of partisan experience. Drawing on Hegel's notion of *Erfahrung* in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and Adorno's interpretation in his essay "The Experiential Content of Hegel's Philosophy" (1963), the paper conceptualizes partisan experience as a historically cumulative, object-oriented process of political subjectivation, enabling the emergence of a collective partisan subject.

Building on this, the paper explores partisan experience as the foundation for an ethos of partisanship, conceived as a political habit of conduct rooted in historical belonging and shared memories of struggles. After examining the ideological, linguistic, and affective mechanisms which underlie and sustain the ethos of partisanship, the paper will critically engage with the widespread habit of "woundedness" as a basis for political identity and emancipation (Brown 1995, Halberstam 2014) that has been gaining prominence among anti-racist, feminist and decolonial movements. By interrogating the pitfalls of the habit of "woundedness" centered on "the neoliberal rhetoric of harm, danger, and trauma", the paper ultimately advocates for an ethos of partisanship that prioritizes habits of exposure over feelings of vulnerability and practices of self-care.

Sivia Pierosara (Università di Macerata), *Narratives as Habits. Critical Perspectives*

How can narrative practices and gestures be defined, to what extent can they be naturalized, is narrative a transcultural construction, or is it impossible to universalize the forms and contents of narratives - be they mythical, religious, political or ethical? How does critical theory help us distinguish between the uses and abuses of narrative? To answer such questions, I draw on critical theories of narrative, with a focus on the first generation of the Frankfurt School, and explore the realm of so-called «unnatural» narratives.

Perig Pitrou (CNRS, Maison Française d'Oxford), *Habits and Inhabitation: From Techniques of the Body to Architecture and Urban Planning*

Based on ethnographic descriptions of certain techniques of the body (walking, swimming, sleeping habits, etc.), this presentation will explore the connections between bodily habits and the use of space in architecture and urban planning.

Francesca Raimondi (FU Berlin), *The Double Negativity of Habit in Hegel and Marx*

This paper explores the role of negativity in Hegel's and Marx's analysis of the emergence of modern (laboring) subjectivity, with a particular focus on the theory of habits associated with it. It argues, however, that an in-depth examination of the destructive forms of negativity inherent in this mode of embodiment can only be achieved through the insights of feminist and queer theory.

Ada Reichhart (Université de Strasbourg), *Cooperation as Labour: The Precariousness of a Habit*

This presentation seeks to explore labour as a set of habits, whose alienating potential is directly tied to its repetitive and disciplinary nature. In this context, being accustomed to labour becomes the very condition for its execution. While some envision transforming this relationship to labour through the lens of a rupture—or a «Grand Soir»—others propose, and this will be the focus of this presentation, the development of cooperative habits as a precursor to the social transformation of labour.

Judith Revel (Université Paris I-Panthéon Sorbonne), *Inventing habits: repetition, institution, modes of life*