

# Thinking the 'Political'

This collection explores the role of political theory, literature and practice in transforming our understanding of 'politics' and 'the political' in the contemporary world. In recent years, dominant definitions of 'politics' have increasingly been questioned. Featuring work from a range of disciplines, including philosophy, literary studies and political theory, the collection explores the following questions: What is 'the political'? Which aspects of life, and kinds of activity, count as 'political' today? How do new and diverse modes of political contestation challenge established ways of defining and doing politics? In short, what does it mean to 'think the political' today?

**Audience:** Scholars • Students

## Organization

Academic institution • Caponeu Consortium Member

**University of Brighton**

## Curated by

Caponeu Team Member

**Joanna Kellond**

# Workshop: Thinking the Political

This two-day workshop held at the University of Brighton in May 2023 brought together academics from a variety of disciplines to address questions of how we think the political across a variety of contexts, and how those contexts relate to one another.

Caponeu event

**Workshop: Thinking the Political**

## Philosopher/Writer Workshop: Exploring the politics of Fiction with Natasha Soobramanien and Luke Williams

In the first collaborative workshop of political authors in discussion with political theorists, authors

Natasha Soobramanien, Luke Williams, discuss their co-authored book *Diego Garcia* with Dr Olivia Umurerwa Rutazibwa Professor in Human Rights and Politics at London School of Economics.

Caponeu event

**Philosopher/Writer Workshop: Exploring the politics of Fiction  
with Natasha Soobramanien and Luke Williams**

# **Rethinking the Political: Narrative, Protest and Fiction in the 21st Century**

The first decades of the 21st century have witnessed a fundamental rethinking of politics and of the political. Rather than begin with universal theories of the polis in the abstract, contemporary theorists focus on how dominant notions of the political depended upon racist and gender based violence, the destruction of the planet and of those lives that do not conform the proper bounds of the polis. For many decolonial and black pessimist theorists any common ontology of the political fails to recognise the coloniality of Being (Wynter 2015) constitutive of life in the polis, and the human. Likewise, for queer critics of identity politics, bodies and selves are 'fragmented, unfinished, broken beyond-repair forms' (Halberstam 2018) that resist any common ontology. Despite their radically different starting points these accounts all view politics as a contested and contingent space that concerns both the drawing of borders, and the contestation of the borders drawn. They point to the moments of rhetorical and sometimes violent excess that betray the contingency, and the inequalities, of political orders. At this conference we aim to think the political from a starting point outside the long history of 'the polis' and its various declensions. Instead we think politics in terms of care, practice, and the enactment of an equality that is never finally realised.

Caponeu event

**Rethinking the Political: Narrative, Protest and Fiction in the 21st  
Century**

## **Special Collection: Thinking the Political**

This special collection for the Open Library of Humanities Journal explores the role of political theory, literature and practice in transforming our understanding of 'politics' and 'the political' in the contemporary world.

**Thinking the Political: Theory, Literature, Practice**