17th December

9.30 Welcome and Coffee

10-11 Reading group #1
- Wages for housework campaign pamphlet

11.15-12.45 Provocation #1
Ishani Chandrasekara: “Parenting Tales/Fathering Tales”
Once pregnancy/parenthood established, how people will insist on asking the big questions. Some of those big questions have no answers. Some have too many answers. Some will be asking yourself for the rest of your life. I would like to converse more immediate philosophical and metaphysical conundrums, while shamelessly delaying the more complicated ones until later.

Stephen Shukaitis: “Thought at speed of social reproduction”
My ‘intervention’ would roughly be trying to work through some of the tensions between thought and social reproduction, sort of along the lines of the blog post I wrote on it: http://nihilistoptimism.blogspot.co.uk/2014/03/thought-at-speed-of-social-reproduction.html

12.45-2.15 Lunch (provided)

2.15-3.15 Reading group #2

3.30-5 Provocation #2
Fabian Frenzel: “Slum Tourism and the Organisational of Care”
Tourism in slums is in many ways a peculiar and niche phenomenon that one could simply dismiss as bad taste but of not much importance at all. I argue however that it is remarkable that tourism increasingly operates as a forum in which issues such as poverty, slums, and inequality – the social question – are debated, reflected and importantly experienced. Tourism is thus comparable but also more comprehensive than other cultural forums of such discourse, like films or novels, as it offers real life experience beyond representation. Importantly the experiential domain of tourism enables direct action and intervention. But what do these interventions entail and in which form are they organized?

For the most part tourists are getting directly or financially involved in the provision of care in areas of poverty. A broad spectrum of organisational forms exit in which tourists may get involved. Some operate as businesses capitalising in equal measure on the desire to care of the globally rich and the need to be cared for by the poor. Most are charitable organisations of service provision in constant struggles for funding. Charities turn to tourism as a form of financing and become slum or poverty tourism operators. This is evident in the burgeoning international volunteer tourism sector as well as in the organisational forms of many slum tourism providers who operate charities for child care, schools or women empowerment projects. Organisational forms of care in these formats tent to operate in the near total absence of state based organisation of care. I see slum tourism thus as an answer to the global social question that arises in the absence of state based forms of the organisation of care, and as something that might prefigure the re-organisation of care in the context of the neoliberal retrenchment of the state in the global north.

18th December

9.30 Coffee

10-11 Reading group #3

11.15-12.45 Provocation #3
Stephen Dunne: “Carers of the Disappearing Selves”
I’ll begin by sketching a few discontinuities between Foucault’s early concern with the psychiatric construction of the mad (specifically demented) body onto his later concern with the ethics of care (of the self). Although this is an interesting conceptual exercise in its own right, I have a practical problem in mind, namely, Western mental health care provision in an era of heightened mortality and dwindling public resource. I’ll use my intervention slot to ask whether Foucault has anything useful to say about this problem, suggesting, uncharitably, that he almost certainly does not.
Matt Allen: “Television in sites of care: Elderly and Pre-school audiences”
(abstract TBC)