**Poetry Reading & Workshop: Conversations on Capitalist Crisis Poetry with Taylor Johnson**

**December 3, 2021, 4-7 pm CEST | 10 am-1 pm EDT (on zoom)**

**Poet Taylor Johnson** (Washington, D.C.), whose debut collection *Inheritance* appeared in 2020, is joining us for our third installment in this series. Taylor Johnson received fellowships from Cave Canem and the Conversation Literary Festival and their work has appeared in *The Paris Review* amongst others. Julianna Drew Björkstén wrote “Johnson’s impressive collection acts as a nexus for thinking about the ways that language, identity, and ownership collide. As a Black, trans person, Johnson’s own identity exists at an intersectional space. On the page, this yields a rhetoric of ‘liminality,’ one that extends beyond language or ownership and into uncharted territory. … The poems’ oscillating tones and juxtaposed references present a complex, many-sided picture of life as it is made and inherited” (October Hill Magazine).

This workshop series seeks to debate the links between politics, poetry, and capitalism. That is, we ask how poetic language constitutes and defines subject categories so far barred from existing in the symbolic order of current, late-capitalist political contexts. The social and political functions of poetry, it can be argued, have a lot in common with actual policy-making processes. Both can be propelled by a sense of progressivism, urgency, social justice, and their strong appeal to the imagination, i.e. that things can change, or rather that things can be thought and be thought differently. Both poetry and politics are interested in how the subject is structured and how it relates to others, society, the world at large, even if with very different trajectories. Neoliberalism, in contrast to both democratic politics and poetry, has a primary interest, however, in isolating the subject from fellow subjects as well as from any institutional responsibilities. Many of our contemporary political crises are the product of ‘Late Capitalism’ and what William Davies (2016) calls “punitive neoliberalism” (130). Today’s audits and assessment centers restrict access to resources to a select few and curb the autonomy of the individual. In this context, poetic practices represent a creative, liberating force that can allow the subject to regain (some) autonomy.

Rather than a traditional workshop, we want to create a forum for a transatlantic conversation on capitalist crisis poetry. Therefore, workshop meetings are structured in two parts: **in Part 1, which is open to the public, a currently active poet reads a selection of their poems followed by a Q&A which allows us to assess their work in light of capitalist crisis poetry together with the writer.** In Part 2, we broaden the conversation to critically contextualize and discuss the link between politics and poetry from the individual workshop participants’ perspective. This way we seek to work together towards a living forum that traces the various ways in which poetry intersects with the current capitalist crises and political work.

In order to register, please get in touch with the organizers via email:

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