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# FORUM

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University of Edinburgh  
Postgraduate Journal of Culture and the Arts  
Issue 33 | 2022

<b>Title</b>	Peripheries, Margins, Voids: Critical Ecologies of Exclusion
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<b>Publication</b>	FORUM: University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Journal of Culture & the Arts
<b>Issue Number</b>	33
<b>Publication Date</b>	September 2022

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## Peripheries, Margins, Voids Critical Ecologies of Exclusion

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*What names do I have for you? / Certainly there is not name for you*  
– John Ashberry, “Just Walking Around” (1984)

For the 33rd issue of FORUM, we asked: what is modern knowledge without a little exclusion?

This, not that – us, not them – her, not *her* – here, not there. Race, gender and sexuality, caste, and class (only some of our ‘inconceivably coarse axes of categorization’, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick puts it) find exquisite form the moment we invoke that all-encompassing and all-rejecting ‘not’. After all, to know a thing – a trouble-making thing – and to know it profoundly, profitably – we must *exclude* it: isolate, exceptionalise, punish.

In this issue, we present eleven contributions that think deeply about what exclusion, and responses to exclusion, look like in culture and the arts. Across these articles, you will find emerging a particular ethical and aesthetic stance, or interpretive perspective, invested in teasing out the surprisingly generative consequences of exclusion. Each contributor, therefore, has taken up the tricky task of not only identifying some of exclusion’s myriad murky forms, but also foregrounding radical, creative responses to them in a well-chosen text, genre, or discipline.

Exclusion, we thus find, is self-annihilating. Its very presence triggers the conditions for its absence, through the production of unexpected kinships, subaltern communities and social scenes, inclusive counter-cans, and alternative modes of knowing, being, and feeling. Most, if not all, of our issue is dedicated to exploring these possibilities within a lively ecology of exclusionary practices.

Why exclusion, and why now? We began work on this issue just following the end of the 2021 Covid-19 lockdown in the United Kingdom. Many tight-knit student communities across the country – built on personal, political, and intellectual solidarities – were almost completely frayed by this time, given a range of exclusionary mechanisms spanning difficult self-isolations and quarantines, to devastating racial and income inequities in our emergency health services. It was evident that these factors would continue to impact collective learning, teaching, and research, particularly at the graduate level. Even more apparent was that these circumstances would be exacerbated by the long standing austerities and precarities that define the profession of higher education. Cuts to pay and pensions and alienating workplaces above and beyond a

global health crisis: what forms, we wondered, might graduate knowledge production take under these exclusionary conditions?

As editors, we championed FORUM's potential to serve as a crucial intervention into this state of affairs. The 33rd issue, we hoped, would bring together writers, editors, peer reviewers, and readers at an important time, constituting a space that could capture a spark of the community feeling that we had lost over 2020–21. It certainly helped that 'exclusion' is a generously inclusive concept (at least as a theme for a journal issue), prompting graduate researchers at The University of Edinburgh and far beyond to respond enthusiastically to our call for papers.

All of our contributions have, in one way or another, tackled the subject of exclusion on the level of form. Suspicious of binaries and catalogues, each article rightly levies critiques of forms of knowledge – narrative or otherwise – that obscure the processes of exclusion that give them power, thereby banishing certain experiences to the margins, or, at worst, rendering them entirely void. Nonetheless, as editors in search of that 'community feeling', we admit to some delight in taking the time to catalogue our articles into overarching themes, placing certain discussions in closer, productive proximity to each other. The textual equivalent, perhaps, of shifting from one exciting break-out conversation to the next in a buzzing classroom, much missed. To that end...

The first section of this issue investigates exclusion through grammars of 'the gaze'. James Lewis Stevens's article focuses on Leopold Bloom's critique of modernity from his position as an eagle-eyed outsider in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Laura Scott then goes on to illustrate the tension caused by binary understandings of gender in Jackie Kay's *Trumpet*, spotlighting the cisgendered, racialised gazes that structure Black trans\* experience in the novel. In the last article of this section, Chengxi Li brings to light the cinematic exclusions (and inclusions) of Algerian migrants in France through an analysis of the documentary *Ali au Pays des Merveilles*.

The second section revolves around the concept of 'the voice'. Elena Liapopoulou Adamidou studies the formal re-emergence of the silenced voices of contemporary Caribbean poets; Maria Schiza analyses the role of the recorded voice in Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Rockaby*; Priyanjana Das considers rather delicious techniques of postcolonial feminist self-narration in Sara Suleri's *Meatless Days*; Jason Emmett Collins investigates Charlotte Brontë's 'ventriloquism' of an Indian widow in her negotiations with Hinduism, Christianity, and early discourses on human rights.

The four articles of the final section deal with questions of 'the category', paying special attention to the exclusionary border logics of specific identity categories. Aakanksha Singh focuses on the issues that arise from using the category of nationality in conjunction with that of queerness. Tia Byer interrogates the various expulsions required of and by 'American' identity in Edith Wharton's tale of transatlantic differentiation, *The Age of Innocence*. Huzan Bharucha investigates the ways in which exclusionary imperialist ideologies have defined 'New Woman' literature. Finally, Hannah Louise Twinberrow sheds light on how moving beyond the narratological might evolve the discipline of narrative medicine, and the medical

humanities more broadly, into a more inclusive space – one that is, quoting Stephen Pattison, “vibrant, pluralistic, experimental, risky” (2003: 34).

As our contributions collectively suggest, the political and aesthetic project of inclusion could very well be described in this same way. We must seek to be vibrant, pluralistic, experimental, and risky, not least because our ‘inclusion’ cannot afford to concede to the sleek agenda of corporate DEI projects. Building forms of inclusion that matter – because there are many, often contradictory kinds – is hard work. It is ongoing work. It is aspirational work. It is forever work. It is, or, at least, it must be, a radical and critical act of collective, artistic imagination; of dreaming non-exclusionary, emancipatory futures.

It is in this spirit that we want to end our introduction, offering the beginning of a surely endless list of essays on ‘exclusion’ that do not technically exist. Some of them do, in some way – or they will, some day...

- Banter! in the Men’s Bathroom: Exclusion, Whiteness, and Public Infrastructure
- Self-isolation and cultural exchange during Covid-19
- “Naam? Nahin, poora naam?”: Notes on Dalit Trans\* Feminist Survival
- Silent, Visible: A Rhetorical Critique of Disability Metaphors in Literary Criticism
- The Case Against Visibility: Anti-Surveillance in Contemporary Nigerian Cinema
- Public/Domestic: The Division and Exclusion of Women’s Social Spheres in 17th Century Chinese Poetry
- The Past, Present, and Future of HIV/AIDS in 90s German Drama
- Henry James and the Art of Ghosting
- Chronic Pain, Chronic Time: Theorizing Abjection in Queer of Colour Performance (2002–12)
- Interrupted Isolations in Umberto Eco’s *The Island of the Day Before*
- “I would very much like to be excluded from this narrative”: Taylor Swift, Herman Melville, and the American Dream