
CRITICAL LEGAL CONFERENCE 2020: CALL FOR PAPERS

The Critical Legal Conference (CLC) is an annual meeting dedicated to critical legal theory. It brings together a community of critical legal enthusiasts, both theoreticians and activists. The CLC has assisted in the development of critical legal theory as a movement and field, paralleling the efforts also of the Conference on Critical Legal Studies in north America and France's *Critique du Droit*. The CLC is based in the UK, but annual meetings have also been held in India, Finland and Ireland. It contributes to the critical legal studies (CLS) movement and is associated with the journal *Law and Critique*, established in 1990. The next meeting (2020) is to be held this coming September at the University of Dundee.

The CLC sees itself as an intellectual movement with important political dimensions and constitutions. The CLC started in 1984, with Alan Hunt as the founding chair, and has been held annually without interruption ever since. Throughout, Conference was and remains a momentary meeting and an umbrella name. There is no organization, and so no officers nor posts, chairs, secretaries, committees or delegates have been created. It is 'a community always to come', a transient broad church that exists only for the three days of its annual meeting. Every September the place for the next conference is decided and people bid farewell for another year, leaving it to the next organizer to put together the programme on an issue or issues regarding the role of law in society or the implications for law with respect to current critical questions in related disciplines (such as philosophy, politics, or cultural studies). Western Marxism, postmodernism and deconstruction were early concerns, but issues in race, gender, queer and post-colonial theory came to be central in later years. The CLC has encouraged mainstream academic life to adopt these innovations.

The next meeting is entitled ...

Winter 2020

Frankenlaw: Community, Division, Modernity

Critical Legal Conference 2020 University of Dundee

3-5 September 2020

I lived principally in the country as a girl, and passed a considerable time in Scotland. I made occasional visits to the more picturesque parts; but my habitual residence was on the blank and dreary northern shores of the Tay, near Dundee. Blank and dreary on retrospection I call them; they were not so to me then. They were the eyry of freedom, and the pleasant region where unheeded I could commune with the creatures of my fancy.

Mary Shelley, preface to the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*

Dundee had an embryonic role in the creation of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*. Approaching the northern fringes of the UK, Dundee's 'eyry of freedom' helped shape the imaginary that would result in Shelley's famous text, and the infamous and unnatural conglomeration that it unleashed upon the world. Shelley's reconstituted monster, created by Victor Frankenstein in his experimentations with the fringes of life, has become a cultural icon from page to stage to screen, and beyond. In taking it as inspiration for the theme of the CLC 2020, *Frankenstein's* monster is reformulated as a rich and productive concept that encounters many of the multiple and profound tensions of modern law.

Frankenstein's monster is typically characterized by the joining together of dead parts to constitute a reanimated whole, brought (back) to life by the power of modern science. As a conceptual figure, it thus becomes a notion of both unity and separation, of life and death, and of the power of reason to structure and animate otherwise individual and decaying parts. Rendered as a form of law—as a Frankenlaw—it conjures questions of detachment and community, of touching and separation, of independence and being bound, of unity and corporation, of the rational resolution of multiplicity—and of the modern social order: a divided whole, a community of atomistic modern subjects under a single, sovereign hierarchy.

Partaking in CLS at Dundee, in the temporal shadow of Mary Shelley's nascent imagination, it seems appropriate to let the theme of Frankenlaw permeate our reflections. To think with Frankenlaw is to encounter questions of corporate personhood, of the relationship between life and science, of bodies and their parts, of post-state or post-sovereign modes of power, of law as dead things (texts, buildings, victims) compiled and

brought to life in different ways, of the possibility of unifying plurality, of community and modern subjecthood. It is an invitation and an opportunity to construct new concepts and modes of legal thought out of dead and useless ones, to animate our encounters with law in controversial and provocative ways, to seek to go beyond the boundaries of reason and modernity and see what we find.

Huddled around the thought of law, the dark of the uncritical creeping in, we shall make ghost stories of our own—we shall conjure for one another our own terrifying and inspiring visions ... of Frankenlaw!

Call Details

Below is a further information for CLC 2020 which, as noted above, will be hosted by the University of Dundee, from 3-5 September 2020. The call for papers for this conference will be released later in the year, sometime in March 2020. Please visit www.clc2020.org for more information, or contact CLC2020@dundee.ac.uk. However, below you will find some indicative themes or topics around which the call for papers might revolve.

- ◇ Law as a separated whole
- ◇ Community and division
- ◇ Ethics of critique and/or of going beyond
- ◇ Law and science fiction
- ◇ Law and corporeality
- ◇ Politics, law, and technology
- ◇ Law and literature perspectives on Shelley's *Frankenstein*
- ◇ The power and limits of reason
- ◇ Law at boundaries of life/death/human
- ◇ The idea of localizing law and theory

Please note that the final streams included may differ from the above list.