



# Rethinking Higher Education: Challenging the Values of Market and Performance Criteria

28 June 2019

NCVO, Society Building, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL

## Roundtable 1: Discussants and Biographies

### ❖ Gargi Bhattacharyya

University education for a dying civilisation.

Overlapping crises unsettle our public institutions. In the process, the purpose of higher education becomes increasingly uncertain and the intensities arising from longstanding exclusionary habits create unexpected eruptions of dissent and affinity. As the old university collapses under the untenable weight of neoliberal imperatives and indefensible unearned privilege, others try to salvage some form of education among the ruins. Should we build in the debris or run to the meadows?

Gargi Bhattacharyya is Professor of Sociology at the University of East London. She has written on issues of racism, sexuality, the war on terror, austerity. Her latest book is *Rethinking Racial Capitalism*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2018.

### ❖ Alison Wilde

I will be speak on my own autoethnographic research as a disabled academic, and also on recent research undertaken with Alison Sheldon, on recruitment practices, policies and initiatives in UK universities.

Alison Wilde is a Senior Lecturer at Leeds Beckett University. Alison has written mainly on topics of screen media, disability, gender and audiences, in addition to researching and publishing on disability and educational inclusion, parenting, gender, social and health care. She teaches mainly on sociology, disability-related topics and research methods, supervising doctoral work on several topics. She co-founded the MeCCSA Disability Studies Network, and the BSA's Disability Studies Group. Her first book on comedy, film and disability was published in 2018.

### ❖ Jessica Gagnon

Now you see me, now you don't

Universities are eager to celebrate diversity – when it suits a particular purpose. Within this discussion, I will explore whose contributions are valued in higher education, under what conditions, and on whose terms. I ask us to consider: Whose voices are heard? Whose experiences are validated? Whose contributions are valued? Whose knowledge is recognised within our curriculums, within our classrooms, within our policies and practices? Framed by research by Ahmed (2012) and Bhopal (2018), I will discuss who is seen as fully part of the university community and who is tokenised and made marketable to maintain the status quo.

Dr Jessica Gagnon is a sociologist of higher education whose research is primarily focused on inequalities in higher education. She is a Senior Research Fellow in the School of Education and Sociology at the University of Portsmouth, where she leads the Office for Students funded Changing Mindsets project. Dr Gagnon has a PhD in Education and an MSc in Social Research Methods from the University of Sussex and an MA in Higher Education from Santa Clara University. She is a first-generation student from a working-class, single mother family.