



MISSING LINKS: THE SOMATECHNICS OF DECOLONISATION

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Keynotes

Sara Ahmed

Supporting Limbs: On Will, Willfulness and the Social Body

This presentation asks how some bodies must become willing to be the supporting limbs of the social body. Bodies that are not willing to provide this support are often diagnosed as willful. With reflections on how willfulness is attributed to objects as well as bodies, this presentation calls to arms as key to the somatechnics of decolonization.

Biographical note:

Sara Ahmed, professor at Media and Communications, Goldsmiths University of London, works at the intersection of feminist, critical race, postcolonial and queer theory. Her work is concerned with how bodies and worlds take shape; and how power is secured and challenged in everyday life worlds, as well as institutional cultures. Publications include: *Difference that Matter: Feminist Theory and Postmodernism* (1998); *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (2000); *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004), *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (2006); *The Promise of Happiness* (2010) and *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (2012). Her next book, *Willful Subjects* is forthcoming with Duke University Press in 2014. She has begun a new research project on “the uses of use,” and is hoping to write a book *Living a Feminist Life*, which will take off from the experience of being a feminist killjoy.

Jasbir Puar

Bodies with New Organs: Becoming Trans, Becoming Disabled

In this paper I historically situate the most current intersectional flavors of the day, “trans” and “disabled,” through their emergence as the latest newcomers to the intersectional fray. I look at how their parallel yet rarely intersecting epistemological constructs—both come into being, or becoming, in the early 90s in the academy as well as in broader political terms and movements—require exceptionalizing both the trans body and the disabled body in order to convert the debility of a non-normative body into a form of social and cultural capacity, whether located in state recognition, identity politic formations, market economies, the medical industrial complex, or subject positioning. I argue that the potential politics of trans disability are seemingly only perceived in terms of the intersectional “trans-disabled subject” or the “disabled trans subject.” Using assemblage theory to advance the relationships between trans and disability beyond an intersectional rubric of subject identification, I elaborate a politics of conviviality through engagements with the medicalization of the body that might de-exceptionalize the transgressive tendencies of trans and disabled in favor of a shared politics.

Biographical note:

Jasbir K. Puar is Associate Professor of Women's & Gender Studies at Rutgers University. She is the author of *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Duke University Press 2007) winner of the Cultural Studies Book Award from the Association for Asian American Studies. The French translated was published in 2012 as *Homonationalisme. Politiques queers après le 11 Septembre*, (Editions Amsterdam).

Her edited volumes include a special issue of *GLQ* ("Queer Tourism: Geographies of Globalization") and co-edited volumes of *Society and Space* ("Sexuality and Space"), *Social Text* ("Interspecies"), and *Women's Studies Quarterly* ("Viral").

She also writes for *The Guardian*, *Huffington Post*, *Art India*, *The Feminist Review*, *Bully Bloggers*, *Jadaliyya*, and *Oh! Industry*. Her writings have been translated into Polish, German, Croatian, Swedish, and Danish. Her publications can be found at jasbirpuar.com.

Puar's major awards include Rockefeller Fellowship, a Ford Foundation grant, and the 2013 Modern Languages Association Gay Lesbian/Queer Caucus Michael Lynch Award in recognition of her years of scholar-activist work. She has also received awards from the Graduate School of Rutgers University and the Northeastern Association of Graduate Schools for her graduate teaching.

Her forthcoming monograph, *Affective Politics: States of Debility and Capacity* (Duke University Press, 2014) takes up questions of disability in the context of theories of bodily assemblages that trouble intersectional identity frames.

Professor Puar is currently the Edward Said Chair of American Studies at the American University of Beirut for 2012-13. She will be a Fellow at the Society for Humanities Institute at Cornell University for 2013-14.

Susan Stryker

Kaming Mga Talyada (We Who Are Sexy)

In this film screening and commentary, historian, filmmaker, and transgender theorist Susan Stryker discusses the operations of transgender and colonial biopolitics that can be seen operating in the 1962 Filipino film *Kaming Mga Talyada (We Who Are Sexy)*. The film features an extended cameo appearance by the 1950s-era US transsexual celebrity Christine Jorgensen, and it can be read, in spite of its comic tone, as a serious account of how modes of embodiment and categories of identity in colonized locations respond to, resist, and transform colonizing pressures to conform to new forms of embodied personhood that circulate with US privilege. The film revolves around seven siblings who are identified as being "talyada," a euphemism for gender-variant/homosexual, who are pressured by their mother to become transsexual entertainers like Jorgensen.

Biographical note:

Susan Stryker is Associate Professor of Gender and Women's Studies, and Director of the Institute for LGBT Studies at the University of Arizona. She is a founding member of the Somatechnics Research Network. She has taken a leading role in the formation of transgender studies as an interdisciplinary academic field, authoring key texts such as "My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix" (1994) and *Transgender History* (2008); organizing the international state-of-the-field conference "Transsomatechnics: Theories and Practices of Transgender Embodiment" (2008); co-directing the Emmy Award-winning film *Screaming Queens* (2005); and co-editing both volumes of *The Transgender Studies Reader* (2006, 2013) as well as the forthcoming journal *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2014). She has several current projects, including experimental media work on 1950s transsexual celebrity Christine Jorgensen, and a more conventional historical study of cross-dressing at an elite 19th-century men's club in San Francisco.

Madina Tlostanova

From bio-politics to body-politics of knowledge: gender, race, corporeality and global decoloniality

One of the devastating consequences of modernity is a cultivation of a *global coloniality* of being, of power, and of knowledge. Throughout the last five hundred years the West/North has determined the single norm of humanity, including gender and corporeal models, while all other people have been classified as deviations, dismissed to alterity or subject to improvement to make them closer to the west. M. Foucault's by now classical "bio-politics" is rethought in decolonial option from the transmodern position of exteriority, to give birth to the idea of *body-politics of knowledge* which stresses locality as not merely a geo-historical location of the knowing subject, but also an epistemological correlation with the sensing body, perceiving the world from a particular locale and specific local history. A crucial role here is played by various forms of feminist discourses aiming at decolonizing gender and body as markers of difference that have been treated through dehumanizing "misanthropic skepticism" (N. Maldonado-Torres) and a square division into "anthropos" and "humanitas" (N. Osamu). Today decolonial feminist activism, art, social movements and theoretical models flourish in various parts of the world including the previously unknown and silent Eurasian borderlands with their specific configuration of bio- and body-politics of knowledge. It is already possible to speak of the decolonial "community of sense" and a global decoloniality of being, gender and corporeality.

Biographical note:

Madina Tlostanova is a professor of Philosophy at Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (Moscow). She has authored 8 scholarly books and over 190 articles on contemporary culture and art, non-Western gender and feminist discourses, social theory, alter-globalism, postcolonial studies and decolonial option, many of which were published in Europe, Latin America and the US. The most recent books are *Gender Epistemologies and Eurasian Borderlands* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) and *Learning to Unlearn: Decolonial Reflection from Eurasia and the Americas* (co-authored with Walter D. Mignolo, Ohio State University Press, 2012). Currently she is working on a book on decolonial aesthetics and contemporary art.

Catherine Waldby

Rentier Reproduction: the surrogacy industry in India and the globalisation of in vivo service labour

Reproductive outsourcing (the purchase of third party fertility) is profoundly entwined with the post-Fordist reorganisation of other kinds of feminised labor, and the rendering of formally domestic, privatised aspects of household reproduction as service labor, itself often transnationalised. It has gained dramatic momentum from multilateral economic developments like the WTO promotion of global trade in human services. The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is a mechanism that facilitates cross-border trade in feminised forms of production, precisely because it creates the conditions for intimate, bodily care and real time exchange to take place between parties formerly separated in space. The ostensible focus of GATS in the medical domain is hospital services and the globalisation of clinical research and expertise. Nevertheless, it opens out the possibility of transnational access to low cost *in vivo* services, and dramatic escalation in the forms and scale of clinical labor as a means of employment for the less educated populations of the developing world. This presentation will examine the gestational surrogacy industry that has developed in India over the last decade, and make some comparisons with the clinical trial sector. It will also consider the ways that the contractualisation of gestational surrogacy constitutes the surrogate's uterus as an asset, a form of property rented into the global fertility market, while also setting up the conditions for the woman to be *dispossessed* of the child.

Biographical note:

Catherine Waldby is Professorial Future Fellow in the Department of Sociology and Social Policy, Sydney University, and Visiting Professor at the Centre for Biomedicine and Society, Brunel University, London. She researches and publishes in social studies of biomedicine and the life sciences. Her books include *AIDS and the Body Politic: Biomedicine and Sexual Difference* (1996 Routledge), *The Visible Human Project: Informatic Bodies and Posthuman Medicine* (2000 Routledge), *Tissue Economies: Blood, Organs and Cell Lines in Late Capitalism* (with Robert Mitchell, Duke University Press 2006) *The Global Politics of Human Embryonic Stem Cell Science: Regenerative Medicine in Transition*, (with Herbert Gottweis and Brian Salter, Palgrave 2009) and *Clinical Labour: Tissue donors and Research Subjects in the Global Bioeconomy* (with Melinda Cooper, Duke University Press, forthcoming). She is the director of the Biopolitics of Science Research Network http://sydney.edu.au/arts/biopolitics_science and a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia. She has received national and international research grants for her work on embryonic stem cells, blood donation and biobanking.

Alexa Wright

Signs of Monstrosity: bodies, images and imaginings

In this presentation, visual artist and writer Alexa Wright will discuss some examples of human monsters from her soon-to-be-released book, 'Monstrosity, the human monster in visual culture'. She will then show a selection of her audio and visual artworks that interrogate the perceived boundaries between self and other. For example, the audio installation, 'Killers' (2002) examines individual and collective perceptions of self and monstrous 'other' via autobiographical monologues spoken by individuals who have committed murder, whilst the more recent photographic series, 'A View From Inside' (2012) represents some personal experiences of people with psychosis. In the first part of the presentation Alexa will show some earlier images of human monsters that demonstrate how all sorts of perceived 'otherness' has historically been manifested in bodily form. But if, as Michel Foucault has argued, modern monstrosity is a monstrosity of behaviour that is no longer visually evident in the body, how can we situate what is monstrous in the place of the 'other'? If monstrous 'others' exist to reinforce the norm, to reassure us about who and what we are by manifesting what we are not, what if the body of the monstrous 'outsider' appears consistent with social 'norms'? What happens when difference has no visible markers to keep it in place?

Biographical note:

Alexa Wright is an artist working with photography, video, sound and interactive digital media. Working across the domains of art and science, she has collaborated with several different medical scientists. Many of her projects also involve working with people with medical conditions or with disabilities.

Alexa's work is exhibited, published and critically acclaimed Internationally. Recent exhibitions include: View From Inside in 'Digital Aesthetic 3', Preston (2012), Cover Story in DaDaFest International, Liverpool (2010); After Image in 'The Definition of Self', 21_21 Design Sight Gallery, Tokyo, Japan (2010); Alter Ego in 'Locate Me', Kunstraum Kreuzberg, Bethanien, Berlin, Germany (2010); Conversation Piece in 'International Symposium of Electronic Art', Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast (2009); Alter Ego in 'El cuerpo (con)sentido', Centro the Historia Zaragoza, Spain; 'Amber 08', BM Suma Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey (2008); 'FILE '07', SESI Art Gallery, Sao Paolo, Brazil (2007) and Opera Interna in the International Women Artists' Biennale, Incheon Arts Centre, Korea (2007).

Alexa teaches at the University of Westminster in London. Her book, ['Monstrosity: The human monster in visual culture'](#) (IB Tauris, 2013) will be launched in June.

Session Papers

Malin Ah-King

Toxic sexes: perverting pollution and queering hormone disruption

Engaging in debates about sex changes in animals as a consequence of environmental endocrine pollution, this essay uses a dynamic model of sex described by Malin Ah-King and Sören Nylin (2010) to show how hormones—a fundamental component of sex expression—and their environmental disruption can be understood as part of an ongoing process of sexing. The deleterious effects of material culture—the objects we encircle ourselves with, the food we eat, the water we drink, the medicines we take, the hygienic products we use—become part of the process, we argue, of sexing. This is to say, sidestepping the now entrenched debates about the socially or biologically constructed nature of sex, sex might be better understood as a dynamic emergence with environment, habitat, and ecosystem, and made toxically so within the context of pollution. Combining feminist and queer studies of sex, gender, and sexuality with a critical but engaged approach to biology, we claim toxicity as one of the current conditions of sex in the contemporary moment. At the same time we remain critical to the ways in which these effects are described in popular and environmentalist discourses as well as to the intensified use of endocrine pollutants. The intent is to broaden our understanding of humans' and animals' shared vulnerability and explore potential sites for coming to terms with the environmental catastrophe that we are already living in.

Erika Alm

Make/ing room: The somatechnics of trans organization in Pakistan*

In current feminist and queer studies prostheses are often conceptualized in terms of prosthetic aspects of human bodies. Can the scholarly and activist literature on prostheses and queer bodies inform the understanding of the organizing of trans* rights and experiences? Understanding organizations as prostheses might be a way of theorizing both the experiences of working with organizations and organizations themselves as integrative and constitutive of trans* communities.

The aim of this paper is to explore organizing as a way to politicize experiences of marginalization and discrimination in trans* communities in Pakistan. The theoretical departure is Ahmed's use of *orientation* as a way of discussing embodied, materialized structures of everyday discrimination and marginalization (Ahmed 2007). Likewise *the room* of political activism and organizing will be central, to explore how trans* organizations formulate the location for political struggle; how they conceive rooms for political antagonism; and who is comfortable in these rooms.

The paper will draw on conversations with members of two regional trans* organizations. Both organizations create political rooms along the lines of national, representational rooms – directed at the parliament, the courts, the political departments – but they also inhabit the room of the extended, reformulated and radicalized civil society – the public room, the intersection of the public and the political sphere, the intimate room of everyday discrimination and marginalization.

The paper will also explore the theoretical and empirical potentials in understanding trans* activism as articulated and enacted in a globalized room with context-specific conditions for political work. If we are to take the changes in civil society – conceptualized as the neo-liberal civil society taking the place of the welfare state – seriously we need to explore the effects of medialization and commercialization on activist work. For example, what does it mean that many small organizations in the South are dependent on financial support from Northern NGOs, or that the funding available is connected to medicalized, interventional programs like HIV/AIDS prevention programs (Spivak 2012)?

Erica Andersson Kanon

Towards a Pussymology

I remember it there and then, on the verge of my first (clitoral) orgasm I had to run off to the toilet to pee -I thought I had to. Orgasm was for me a word, but only a piece of knowledge printed in books and magazines. My whole vagina was shivering, so tensed it felt like the skin was about to burst, just like when I had been a child holding on for too long. It didn't come to me until years later, when orgasms were more explored experiences, how alike the feeling of urgently in need to pee is to the verge of having an orgasm.

This exploratory paper will ask what happens if we take the pussy as a method for academical journeys in search for those missing links. Following Kristin Zeiler's (2010) notion of euappearance that theorizes about pleasure through a phenomenology of the lived body, I aim to seek an epistemology of the pussy, a pussymology. The ambiguity of shivers, as might being pleasurable as well as discomforting or even painful, are guiding me in theoretical and empirical grounds by using my own experiences of embodiment. How can we understand the very core of pleasure, such as an orgasm, if the bodily feeling is not always evidently pleasurable? How can we understand pleasure?

Nkolika Ijeoma Aniekwu

Un-packing the Question(s): Post Colonial Feminism, the Gender Agenda and 'other' Bodies in the Global South

In recent times, there have been emerging issues on the nature of feminist movement(s) across borders in sub Saharan Africa, and the sociolegal, sociological and sexist re-conceptualisations that have arisen in response to rights, gender and identities within the region. The constructions of sexual bodies have added to questions surrounding the whole colonisation experience, and gaps continue to emerge in feminist analysis of sexuality and sex-ed roles in many municipal territories. The occurrence of the 'other' sexual body and the engagement of alternative lifestyles remain fascinating outcomes for feminist strategies and actions in post colonial regions, despite obvious challenges to sexual rights. Recent studies have also shown that unique historical factors have a direct bearing on contemporary definitions and epistemologies of sex, body and the African 'woman', especially in post colonial territories, and that feminist and sexist discourses in the continent are largely influenced by linkages and critical connections of culture, religion and politics, with race and ethnicity in many domiciles. The public/private divide in civil societies and legal systems provide further contexts in which to analyse African responses to gender, queerness and other embodiments. My paper examines cross border perspectives of post colonial feminism as seen from the gendered lens of an African woman. It investigates and attempts to unpack questions and queries surrounding the colonial experience in the global South, the impact of 'Western' knowledge and ideologies in the African region, and the dimensions and consequences of colonisation (and de-colonisation) on sex, gender, identities and roles within contemporary African societies.

David Azul

Unsettling the “human” voice – Reclaiming the “abject” voice. A fictocritical performance in nine movements

Despite decade-long attempts at unsettling the hegemony of a notion of voice that is confined to a natural and authentic representation of those who are awarded the status of “human” or “subject” (the sane, the white, the unambiguously sexed and gendered) its predominance prevails, for instance, in theories of speech and writing and in clinical practice with those who are diagnosed as mentally ill or communication disordered.

“Unsettling the ‘human’ voice – Reclaiming the ‘abject’ voice” is an audio-visual performance with which I revisit this debate by staging a series of fictocritical pieces that blur the boundaries between research method, creative practice and argument. In the first part, the realist promises of the traditional notion of voice (performed by advertisements for the Edison phonograph) are confronted with Derrida’s theory of a general writing (“gram”), which precedes and structures all utterances. As a result, a new theory of voice and practice of phonation (“gramphony”) emerges that casts vocal performances as somatechnical, performative events that are always already rewritten as they move between staging and perception. In the second part, the audience is introduced to “hen”, the protagonist of a part autobiographical, part fictional story, who arrives at a psychosomatic clinic in search of a “home worthy of the name” and “gentle-voiced and -eared” people with whom to share works of art made from “millions of dried-up tears”. The story explores the possibilities and limitations of developing a mode of performance that is capable of withstanding and resignifying the normative forces that imbue clinical and everyday encounters.

Frida Beckman

De-Colonizing Sexuality: An Attempt at a Minor Sexuality

Where disabled bodies and their pleasures tend to be interpreted and evaluated in accordance with the “normal” and the functional, there is also a way in which various anomalies of body and mind open for new ways of using sexuality that are inscribed neither in the cultural imaginary, nor in the genital, reproductive, and oedipalised striations of sexuality. By virtue of being to some extent at odds with social and gendered expectations, disabled bodies can also provide the potential of escaping them. With the help of a radical politics of disability we can develop sexuality to include what Deleuze and Guattari would describe as a trembling or stuttering, a discontinuation of the false unity and continuity of bodies that condition major conceptions of sexuality. Combining a theory of disability with what Deleuze and Guattari theorize as a minor literature, this paper seeks a way of disabling sexuality as a major concept. If a minor literature works to appropriate a major language and put it to use through deterritorializations, a minor sexuality would be one that defamiliarises dominant ways of employing sexuality and opens for alternative sensibilities. Reading sexuality and disability in terms of a minor sexuality shows that recovering a sexuality of smooth rather than striated spaces affirms a strangeness that a major sexuality works to ignore.

Ásta Benediktsdóttir

Disabled and vile bodies: the regulation of gender, class and desire in Elías Mar's fiction

One of the very first Icelandic novels to deal with homo- or bisexuality is *Man eg þig löngum* (1949) by Elías Mar (1924–2007). The novel tells the story of one year in the life of the protagonist, Halldór, a teenage fisherman's son who moves to Reykjavík to study. He makes two (male) friends in Reykjavík and has an intimate relationship with both of them, but nevertheless fails to come to terms with his same-sex desires.

Paying attention to the social context of Iceland in the 1940s, this paper focuses on how the bodies of the queer characters in Elías Mar's novel are affected by the regulatory and disciplinary architectures of normative gender and sexuality within the storyworld. It will be argued that the young men's bodies are central to their queerness, as Halldór and his friend Bóas experience social exclusion and shame because of their dysfunctional, unattractive and/or crippled bodies, while the object of their desire, Ómar, able-bodied and handsome, is able to enjoy and even celebrate his queer desire. Class and its imbrication with tradition and modernity in the mid-century Icelandic context is furthermore a defining factor when it comes to embodiment and queerness as Halldór and Bóas are working class and born in small villages or rural areas, whereas Ómar is middle class and urban. The characters' position within the classed hierarchy of bodies in the novel thus crucially inflects questions of shame in relation to same-sex desire in Mar's novel.

Mons Bissenbakker & Lene Myong

Missing Links of Attachment: Love and Disorder in Danish Debates on Transnational Adoption

In Western societies the idealized love between parent and child is often seen as the most unconditional form of love and the deepest bond/link between human beings. Refusing love or falling outside normative models of love between parent and child often entails precarious subject positions or even different forms of necropolitical death and/or unmournability. This paper will look to the field of transnational adoption to investigate what happens if one does not feel love - or refuses to reciprocate love: In 2012 two scandals involving transnational adoption from Ethiopia caught the eye of the Danish public. The scandals concerned illegal and unethical handling of adoptions in both Denmark and Ethiopia, the lack of rights for birth parents, and the psychic effects of adoption. Significantly, lawmakers, adoptive parents, and professionals working within the adoption system responded to the scandals by calling for better post adoption services and qualified 'help' to adoptive families with young adopted children in order to support attachment within the adoptive family and to heal and improve the adopted child's ability to attach itself to a new set of parents. Drawing on empirical material from the Danish adoption debates, 1990-2012, the paper analyzes how love and pathology configure in these debates vis-à-vis the concept of attachment (disorder). How does a focus on the (in)ability to form attachment configure a new population of potentially pathologized adoptees while simultaneously undermining structural critiques of the adoption industry? What interests us is how the construction of potential pathology renews colonial and biopolitical investments in transnational adoption.

Anna Bredström

The missing links between Culture and Biological Psychiatry: Racialising the 'Neurochemical Self'

The aim of this paper is to investigate how race and ethnicity are conceived in contemporary western discourses on mental health care, focusing in particular on depression and the new generation antidepressants, so-called SSRIs. Through a critical reading of how racial and ethnic differences are articulated in the debate surrounding the present revision of the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-v) (to be launched in May 2013), the paper discusses Nicolas Rose's concept of the 'Neurochemical Self' from a critical race perspective. The Neurochemical Self, Rose argues, is representative of the new style of thought in biological psychiatry where the mind, moods and emotions are understood as primarily reflective of neurochemical processes in our brains. The alleged success of SSRIs and other psycho drugs are thus an indication of the hegemonic status of biological psychiatry. In this paper, I query what happens to social and cultural differences in a time when we are supposed to understand mental health issues predominantly as somatic? Do - and if so how - race and ethnicity get re-inscribed in contemporary discourses on neuroscience? And in what ways does this affect diagnosing procedures and treatment?

S. Pearl Brilmyer

Olive Schreiner's Relational Metaphysics: Feminist and Anti-Racist Critique in From Man to Man

This paper examines Olive Schreiner's critique of biologically racist justifications of British colonial rule launched in her posthumously published novel, *From Man to Man, or Perhaps Only*. Begun as early as 1873, this novel, which Schreiner thought of as her magnum opus, remained unfinished at her death in 1920. Meeting with lukewarm reception when it finally appeared in 1929, Schreiner's inchoate novel struggled to attract an audience. In searching for a well-developed plot, however, as I shall argue, critics have overlooked one of the most significant feminist critiques of biological racism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Within its many philosophical passages, some numbering over 80 pages, *From Man to Man* undercuts colonial discourses of racial superiority grounded in social Darwinism.

Writing at a moment in which Darwinism was being invoked, time and time again, to justify sexism, racism, colonialism, and genocide, Schreiner was aware of the myriad of ways that theories of the natural world could be mobilized for socio-political ends. In opposition to social Darwinism—especially its central tenet of “the survival of the fittest”—*From Man To Man* formulates a philosophy of care and interconnectedness that I describe as Schreiner's “relational metaphysics.” Proposing that “internetting lines of action and relation ... bind together all that we see and are conscious of,” Schreiner engages the most cutting-edge scientific theory of the day in order to formulate a feminist and anti-racist politics based in corporeal interaction.

Monica J. Casper

Lynching the Elephant: On Animality, Trauma, and the Racialized Spectacle

In 1916, an enraged community in Tennessee hung a circus elephant from a derrick car, as punishment for the crime of killing a handler. The hanging occurred after failed attempts to execute “Murderous Mary” with bullets and electrocution, and after a first attempt to hang the 10,000-pound animal resulted in a broken chain and shattered hip when she slammed to the ground. Eventually, however, Mary was successfully executed and justice served for the good people of Tennessee. Her tusks were reportedly kept as souvenirs.

Also in the United States during this same period, lynchings of predominantly African American men continued apace, most often but not exclusively by hanging. Indeed, so common were hangings that the terms “lynching” and “hanging” were (and are) often used interchangeably. Local community affairs, lynchings were frequently undertaken in an atmosphere of amusement, and the body parts of the victims (e.g., genitalia, fingers, toes) were severed, traded, and kept as souvenirs.

Much has been written about lynching as a method of terrorizing African American populations; less has been written about lynching as a techno-pedagogical tool. And yet the spectacle of “black bodies swinging in the southern breeze,” to quote the Billie Holiday song, informs and controls. How is it, I ask, that the racialized technology of lynching was so easily repurposed in the case of Murderous Mary? It was no easy thing to hang an enormous animal from a crane, as Mary’s executioners discovered when she crashed to the ground, and it borders on the absurd that it was ever considered, much less implemented.

In the early twentieth-century U.S., hanging was a quite logical choice, for what better way to publicly punish and kill an errant non-human—one whose behavior, whose very corporeal presence, was both suspect and dangerous—than to lynch it? In this talk, I share my ongoing research on elephant trauma, attending to the ways in which race, species, and spectacle collide in the service of white supremacy, anthropocentrism, and “ingenious” technical achievement. I show that lynching as a racialized technology is also one that inevitably—and necessarily, for the colonialist/white supremacist state—also throws into sharp relief what and who counts as human.

Sarah Cefai

Who Decolonises Whom? Speaking Positions between Postcolonial and Settler Colonial Subjectivities

This paper seeks to understand what kind of speaking position is available, if any, to the non-Aboriginal subject of the desire to decolonise academic discourse. Drawing on the author's experience of research and teaching, two quandaries of colonial power are introduced: 1) the request for Australian cultural studies to decolonise as a request made by a postcolonial subject to the subject of settler colonialism reflects impossible positions that reinscribe the Eurocentrism of the colonial imaginary, and; 2) the settler colonial demand to decolonise academic knowledge invokes the decentring of colonial paradigms through an engagement with subjects of Indigenous knowledge, whose being is historically overdetermined as vulnerable to appropriation.

To understand these quandaries and the way in which they manifest specific emotions, this paper will identify disciplinary practices of representation that both challenge and reinvest colonial subjectivity. Specifically, I examine the validity of understanding Australian cultural studies as a territorialising practice of knowledge and subjectivity that gains epistemic authority through proceeding *as if* settler colonialism is not its *a priori* condition. Such an examination foregrounds relations of power/knowledge through the dual question of denial and accountability.

In Australia, I moved between a humanities scholarly imaginary at the University of Sydney and the public imaginary of policy driven research in the Northern Territory, each of which inscribes colonial subjectivity at an institutional level. In relation to one another, 'critique' is the purview of the academic scholar, whereas 'utility' is that of the policy researcher. This model exemplifies the self-referentiality of a system of representation that accommodates difference through subsumption. I question how the difficulty of speaking about 'decolonisation' relates to the respective silence between critical and utilitarian approaches, each of which, viewed simplistically, seems to disregard the politics of the other.

Olga Cielemecka

Deconstructing the soma/sematechnics

There is an abundant amount of research on the ways in which human bodies – sexed, raced, classed, dis/abled etc. – become colonized by the operating structures of power/knowledge. In this paper I'd like to offer an analysis of what seems to constitute a gap in our understanding of the logics of the bodily colonization, that is the question of how dead –radically inert and vulnerable– bodies become a site of such colonization.

Mobilizing what I am calling *soma/sematechnics* this paper will investigate procedures that treat dead bodies as mute witnesses, informants, or incarnated evidence concealing a certain kind of desired truth regarding past events, causes of death, or the functions and endurance of a human body. An investigation into the treatment of human corpses in pathological, criminological, and museum settings will reveal the ways in which human remains (skeletons, hair, ashes) become a resource, a source of knowledge and facts for human use and control.

By reference to two of G. Agamben's concepts –the remnant and the witness– in conjunction with M. Heidegger's reflections on the relation between truth and the essence of technology, I'd like to investigate the ways in which a dead body might resist regimes of power/knowledge. How can we, the living beings, become attentive listeners to the nondiscursive, ontologically weak speech of the dead? In this paper I will argue for a materialistic hauntology, an ethical stand towards bodies that are in course of dematerializing, but that still matter.

Daniela Crocetti

Queering chromosomes, some Italian patient group tales.

The 2006 medical shift from the 1917 Intersex terminology to DSD (Disorders of Sex Development) came as the first Italian patient groups were stepping onto the biosocial scene. Italian patients groups were initially syndrome based, for the more part representing AIS (Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome) and Klinefelter's syndrome respectively. This presentation looks at how AIS and Klinefelter's syndrome are queered and gendered in the guise of normalization through surgery, HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) and discourse, as portrayed by these patient activists. While these syndromes also reflect expectations regarding gendered genital form and function, they are not subject to the most controversial early childhood surgeries such as external genital manipulation and sensation obliteration. Gender expectations are nonetheless reflected in the medical protocols, as well as patient discourse, generally hidden within rhetoric and therapies regarding hormones and gonads. We will juxtapose dominant Italian medical protocols with the desires expressed by the patient activists, as well as addressing their partial inclusion as experts in the construction of what these syndromes come to mean. This presentation will also pose some questions regarding coercive sterilization and HRT, that reflect new research and growing questions surrounding HRT.

Ulrika Dahl

Bionic Blondes: Notes towards a somatechnics of (white) femininities

The term *Bionic* connotes superhuman qualities, utilizing electronic devices or mechanical parts, or supplementing and duplicating parts of the body, a posthuman corporeality. Tellingly, *Bionic* is the title of peroxide mixed-race superstar Christina Aguilera's bestselling 2010 album, and its cover displays the artist's face framed by blonde hair and cut in half; one of her beautiful whitened (sur)face made up and the other seemingly revealing "the inner workings" of a machine; begging the question if there is anything "human" about (the white supremacy of) blonde femininity at all. With examples from a blonde archive of larger than life pop icons that also include Agneta Fältskog, Madonna, Shakira, Pink and Lady Gaga among others, this paper's blonde ambition is to critically reread the missing links of bloneness as the seemingly quintessential representation of white femininity. Hardly "natural" (Pittman 2003), bloneness is here an intensely fashioned, sculpted, and choreographed form of femmefodiment (Dahl 2011); a soma indiscernible from its technologies (Murray & Sullivan 2009), from make-up to peroxide and curling irons, and whose fashioning movements reflect, enact, rework and contest histories of racial categorization and nationally, culturally and historically specific aesthetics. Sketching the contours and mechanics of a new research project on the figure of the bionic blonde that aims to contribute to a decolonial critical femininity studies (Dahl 2012) and to critical whiteness studies (Ahmed 2011; Mattsson & Pettersson 2007), I propose that engaging bloneness through the somatechnics of racialized femininity (Stryker 2009) also opens up for rethinking the concept of femininity itself.

Lucie Dalibert

Neuromodulation Technologies as Somatechnologies – Remaking Bodies, Enacting Humanness

Neuromodulation technologies have hardly been conceived as instances of somatechnics. Rather, with the hyped deep brain stimulation at their forefront, technologies that electrically stimulate the central nervous system have been construed as directly affecting the brain, seen as the source of the self. There, mind/body dualism abounds. Yet, neuromodulation technologies are somatechnologies.

In this presentation, as I will rely upon the fieldwork I have undertaken in spinal cord stimulation (SCS), I will attend to the ways in which this neuromodulation technology not only transforms but also enacts material bodies and normative conceptions of humanness. First, through ‘tâtonnement’ or groping (Noland 2009), and more generally the playful enactment of gestures, SCS becomes incorporated, made flesh. Furthermore, if a different body is enacted through the performance of new gestures, one’s kinaesthetic experience is also transformed as SCS replaces the sensation of pain by paraesthesia (tingling). In fact, the body multiplies as it intra-acts with the technology: the body-in-pain materialises alongside the body-in-parasesthesia. There, through the body’s renewed agentiality, a re-worlding takes place (Besmer 2012). If the latter is empowering, one’s embeddedness in material-discursive relations and networks of power can however give rise to distressing experiences as one’s (sense of) humanness is being challenged. Indeed, while intra-acting – living – with SCS enacts a relational and multiple body_self, prevailing conceptions of humanness become reinstated – and visible – in one’s interaction with the medical institution or an other’s gaze. As body morphologies are transformed with scars and implanted yet visible and touchable wires and devices, the reconfigured body_self is reminded of his/her exclusion from proper humanness. The latter remains highly intertwined with gender, able-bodiedness and bodily integrity.

Brendan Robert Drew

Unpacking the Thai State: Deconstructing the Thai gendered agenda silencing the sexual and stigmatising non-marital sexuality

Thai youths account for almost half of Thailand's new HIV infections, with their HIV status implying sexual activity. However, this reality is at odds with the modern construction of the Thai state which limits the sexuality of its citizens to within the boundaries of marriage and reproduction. In particular Thai national narratives reiterate explicitly sexist perspectives policing the sexuality of Thai women by aligning their reproductive/sexual/caring capacities with national pride, honour and moral worth. In order to be 'a good' citizen Thai women must limit their sexuality to reproduction and raising 'good' Thai children. Consequently, the current forms of state intervention concerning sexuality targeted at Thai youths, namely school-based sexuality education, have employed narratives that deny and stigmatise non-normative sexuality, in this case non-commercial non-marital sex. Furthermore, in order for the state to uphold an image of a unified and monolithic Thai culture both within Thailand and beyond, youths identified as engaging in this non-normative behaviour are often labelled as being un-Thai. More specifically, women are stigmatised as 'Modern/Western' girls. This has led to a dilemma for Thai sexual education policy makers.

Previous sexual education interventions involved simple technology transfers of Western HIV/AIDS interventions that were largely focussed upon commercial sex practices and in that context employed narratives which discussed these practices (that is, use of condoms in a commercial sex setting) in an open and candid manner. In the case of the Thai youths engaging in non-commercial sex such an approach is strongly at odds with dominant Thai cultural norms. Consequently, such interventions are suppressed, as this paper will demonstrate. Finally, this paper will critically analyse the dynamic link between sexuality and Thai State identity in order to see if it is possible to design and implement a feminist-informed school-based sexuality education programme that can help reduce the vulnerability of youths, and in particular women, to HIV. The aim here is strategic avoidance of conflict with dominant Thai narratives in order to provide the best opportunity for such a programme to be implemented.

Anthony Faramelli

From the cracks in history: the Zapatista mask as a missing link between history and decolonized identity

Nowhere has the analysis of history and culture within colonialism been better tackled than in the work of Frantz Fanon and Edward Said. These writers show how the production of history has always either culminated in, or been cast from the vantage point of Europe. As such, a crucial aspect of Fanon's "radical psychology" as well as the focal point of many postcolonial scholars (most notably the Subaltern Studies Group) has been the redeployment of subaltern history in order to restore them as a classic subject-agent in their own right by reclaiming a history, a mode of consciousness and a practice of their own. However, regardless of how strategic this project might be, it is still criticized for being little more than a new colonization or appropriation of the "mind" by elites who have assumed the right to speak for the subaltern. This locks the subjects into a political framework (including a biopolitical dimension) where identity becomes essentialized and forms a politics of what I want to call fascistic exclusion, largely rendering inoperative the capacity to resist new forms of domination, coercion and exploitation.

This paper will explore the work of Deleuze and Guattari in relation to the writings of Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, with a specific focus on his thoughts on history and the Zapatista's use of the "pasamontaña" (ski mask), as a means of decolonizing by articulating a new radical and fluid identity; an identity that resists the pull of essentialism and opens up a new capacity for resistance.

Zita Farkas

Lost Children: The Haunting Monstrosity of Parents in Mons Kallentoft's Summertime Death and Midwinter Sacrifice

In my presentation I analyze the modes of embodiment and disembodiment that shapes monstrosity in the novels of Mons Kallentoft. The extreme weather conditions such as the cold winter in *Midwinter Sacrifice*, the hot summer in *Summertime Death* and the rainy autumn in *Autumn Killing* create an environment that awakens, nourishes and mirrors the 'evil spirit' infesting the forests and the streets of Linköping. However, the embodiments of these evil spirits, the killers, turn out to be lost souls in search for love. Haunted by memories of abuse suffered in their childhood, their killings are ritual sacrifices to attain the unattainable: the mother's love in case of *Midwinter Sacrifice* or the resurrection of the beloved sister in *Summertime Death*.

By solving the cases, Malin Fors unmasks the true monsters: the Mother and the Father. She also releases the victims' souls caught between two worlds who during the whole investigation haunt the female detective. Fors herself is caught between two worlds. Her affinity to sense the presence of tormented souls and the 'evil of spirit' is a dangerous gift that leads her towards self-destruction.

Kallentoft gives voice to the victims and their killers. In these separate passages in first person singular the victims reflect on their state of disembodiment. They are dead and undead at the same time. They have difficulty understanding their disembodied form, their in-between condition. The killers' voices articulate their torment that leads them to commit their murders. Through a discussion of the novels' plot and a close reading of the victims' and the killers' voices, I will reflect upon the way Kallentoft depicts an invisible monstrosity at the heart of the Swedish society and demonstrate that contemporary monsters are the reincarnations of disturbing anxieties.

Michael Feely

Intellectual Disability and the Sexual Surveillance Assemblage

Less than one hundred years ago eugenic pseudo-scientists understood people with intellectual disabilities to hyper-sexual, ultra-prolific reproducers. This understanding underpinned practices of institutionalisation, segregation and sterilisation in many Western nations. Today, in the Republic of Ireland, the large scale institutions have closed and adults with intellectual disabilities have returned to the “mainstream” community to live and work.

Curiously, however, celibacy has continued as the norm for these adults and reproduction remains extremely rare. In researching this topic it quickly became clear that eugenic practices have not gone away but simply taken new forms. The adults with intellectual disabilities I interviewed were granted the right to a sexual life in private but were simultaneously denied any private space through (almost) ubiquitous surveillance in the disability service, the home, and the “mainstream” community.

In this paper I combine Foucault (1977) and Deleuze's (1992) work on surveillance with the DeleuzoGuattarian concept of the assemblage in order to map what I call a sexual surveillance assemblage. This, in short, is a distributed network of material and semiotic components which both fuels and facilitates a ceaseless flow of sexual surveillance data concerning adults with intellectual disabilities and makes living a “private life” an extremely difficult thing to do.

In the first half of the paper, I explore how sexuality is disciplined, controlled and reterritorialised within (and by) the sexual surveillance assemblage. In the second half of the paper, I turn to a consideration of how sexuality is simultaneously deterritorialised within (and by) the same assemblage. More specifically, I am interested in how compulsory celibacy is resisted by adults with disabilities; how the disciplinary spaces of the psy-complex can be queered and deterritorialised as sexual spaces; how adults with disabilities can, at times, follow lines of flight which allow them escape the sexual surveillance assemblage; and how sexual surveillance carried out to police human sexuality simultaneously serves to queer and expand normative understandings of sexuality.

Jeannine A. Gailey

The Phenomenon of the Hyper(in)visibility and the Fat Female Body

Public discussions of “excess weight” typically imply that fat persons are responsible for their body size. Moreover, research has shown that fat hatred among the public has increased and fat persons tend to find themselves the target of public ridicule, discrimination, and bullying. Fat women are disproportionately impacted, perhaps because women are more frequently judged for their appearance and held to narrower standards of beauty. I conducted in-depth interviews with 74 North American fat women about their health, body image, and relationships with significant others, family, and friends. Analysis revealed that these women tended to describe their lived experiences on a continuum from *hypervisible* to *hyperinvisible*, a phenomenon I call *hyper(in)visibility*. “Hyper(in)visible” means that a person is sometimes paid exceptional attention and is sometimes exceptionally overlooked. Since these women frequently find themselves simultaneously in the social position of hyper(in)visibility, they occupy a seemingly paradoxical space—yet within the dialectical relationship between the two extremes, the paradox evaporates. Hyper(in)visibility exists on a *structural* level from the messages projected by the media, medical establishment, and popular culture, as well as on an *individual* level through social interaction and labeling. Therefore, fat women are both relegated to the social position of “other” and relegate themselves to this marginalized social position through the “performance of fat” that emerges in social situations. I contend that hyper(in)visibility is a mode of “othering” that subjugates fat women’s lived experiences and reinforces the mistreatment and discrimination.

Vasilis Galis

Policing technologies, European borders, dis/abled bodies

Instituting and maintaining borders were always inseparable from the use of technology to control the flow of migrants. A number of scholars have shown that a whole range of policing technologies have been employed to block access to ‘fortress’ Europe. We here focus on an understudied dimension of the clash between migrant flows and policing forces, which concerns the connection between this clash and the production of dis/abilities. As we see it, migration may cause or result to dis/ability. However, dis/abled migrants and their mobility have been essentially absent from the international literature. We do not solely treat dis/ability as a bodily impairment or social construction, but as an effect of somatechnics, that is, clandestine dis/ability is always bound up with a variety of policing technologies, repressive techniques and military technics. Instead however of exclusively deconstructing surveillance technology and military precautions, we aim at how exactly the EU border control apparatus enacts dis/placed and dis/abled bodies. We are interested in the somatechnological battle over border production by focusing on the creation of bodies. Our research aims to show that the battle between border-producing technologies and human migrants also generates a new corporeal subject. Dis/abled-displaced subjects are the other side of enabling border objects. Based on interviews we have conducted with migrants in Greece, we focus on how somatechnological battles over border production have produced clandestine dis/ability.

Libe García Zarranz

"I Am Your Spy Here, Your Terrorist, Find Me" Cross-Border Assemblages in Dionne Brand's Poetry

Racialized populations, more pervasively after 9/11, are systematically delayed, and sometimes upheld, by border patrols that subject their bodies to various surveillance assemblages under the name of security and protection (Hier 2002). This "biopolitics of racism," as social anthropologist Henrietta L. Moore aptly contends, "goes well beneath the skin" (173). Crossing a geopolitical border not only involves a spatial and temporal shift but also, and often most importantly, generates a corporeal and affective response with both political and ethical repercussions. In the long poem *Inventory* (2006), Dionne Brand provides a critical commentary on the permeability of the borders between the human body, technology, and the natural worlds as a strategy to signal the violent impact of structures of power on vulnerable populations. Employing recent interventions in Deleuzian-inflected queer and affect philosophy (Puar 2007; De Landa 2006), this paper looks at the ways in which Brand's poetry discusses how so-called war machines, particularly in their current manifestations as processes of uneven globalization, incarceration, and surveillance technologies, sustain and reify material, biopolitical, and affective borders. By portraying the inextricability of corporeality, technology, and affect, Brand's fierce poetry proposes a cross-border ethic that cuts across epistemological and ontological structures, while simultaneously advocating for alternative ways of knowing and being in the world; a cross-border ethic that interrogates how bodies shape and are shaped by other bodies, while simultaneously being involved, and often complicit, in the circulation of affective economies of oppression and dominance (Ahmed 2004).

Magdalena Górska

Breathing politics: towards material--semiotic rethinking of intersectionality and power

As part of a PhD. project that aims for an anti--anthropocentric rethinking of what it means to be human by engaging with breathing, this paper focuses on the ways how the concept of intersectionality can be rethought as a material--semiotic (Donna Haraway) and onto--epistemological (Karen Barad) feminist analytical practice rather than categorical and descriptive research tool. The paper engages with breathing enacted through phenomenon of coal miner's dusty lungs in order to analyze questions of dynamics of enactments and materializations of social power relations, discrimination and privilege not as effects of intersections of categories but rather as material--discursive and transcorporeal (Stacy Alaimo) configurations of embodiment and power. Through such an engagement, the paper will propose a material--semiotic conceptualization of the notion of intersectionality and will discuss potentiality of understanding resistance in terms of *politics of situated dispersal*.

Malena Gustavson

Matter in your face: pussy art politics

In feminist art the vagina has sometimes been the object as a flaunting comment to both heterosexual porn mass production and to more prudent, conservative and homophobic views on sexuality. Recently, there has been a virtual movement of queer and feminist art activism, in which the derogatory term pussy is appropriated.

Here I want to discuss the politics of pleasure in the art activism, its transnational tendencies and discuss the decolonial politics of the gendered/sexualized/racialized body. I also want to explore the inner tensions between different feminist approaches and what implications the 'returning to the body' has in post political times.

Katie Ann Hasson

Making Sense of Menstrual Suppression: What Does It Mean to Normalize Menstruation (and Its Absence)?

Since 2003, “menstrual suppression” birth control pills specifically designed to allow women to skip or eliminate their periods (e.g. Seasonique, Lybrel) have been available in the United States. Contemporary rationales for menstrual suppression in popular, medical, and advertising discourses draw on two images of the rarely-menstruating woman. In one, the woman suppressing menstruation is represented as quintessentially modern, desiring and able to choose the convenience of controlling her menstruation through hormonal contraception. A second image presents monthly menstruation as an anomalous consequence of modernity, while menstrual suppression returns women to a natural state of infrequent menstruation due to pregnancy, lactation, and malnutrition. This narrative envisions an ancestral past framed through evolutionary narratives that naturalize race, gender, and colonialism. These contradictorily entangled narratives – modern perfection through technological intervention and the return to a natural past – collapse future and past in the body of the rarely-menstruating woman, ultimately serving to normalize menstrual suppression. Faced with these characterizations, how do women understand and “do” menstrual suppression? In interviews, women who practice menstrual suppression described their own embodied negotiations of when it “feels like time” for a period, as well as their understandings of what “natural” and “normal” periods might be. In this talk, I bring together these multiple ways of characterizing and producing “normal” and “natural” periods through menstrual suppression. I use these cases to examine the complex articulations of temporality, biology, nature and gender that connect techno-enhanced, non-menstruating bodies of the present to “naturally” non-menstruating bodies of an imagined ancestral past.

Ingvill Hellstrand

“Almost the same, but not quite”: *Passing and recognition in late modern science fiction*

As a genre, science fiction (SF) explores how the “human” is maintained within a context that condition, qualify or challenge traditional identities and ontologies. In this paper, I am concerned with the ways in which “passing” as human in SF both establishes and negotiates the *politics of recognition*. To get at the interconnections between “passing” and recognition, I draw on postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha’s work on that which is “almost the same, but not quite” (1984: 126). For me, this *not quite-ness* serves as a “missing link”; a starting point for investigating how passing and recognition perpetuates the idea of an original or authentic (human) subject as norm. I am particularly interested in the ways in which the notion of authenticity serves as a marker of power and privilege, whereby ontologies and identities are positioned. What is at stake when the politics of recognition relies on authenticity as a kind of ontology?

Through establishing a genealogy of “passing” as human in late modern SF, I identify a shift in the mode of representing the Other: from ontological difference to embodied and performative similarity. On the one hand, this shift underlines how the notion of authenticity surfaces as an agent in delineating ontologies, identities and collectives. On the other, it indicates an *ontological reorientation*, where traditional ontology shifts towards a more complex understanding of the somatechnical linkages between corporeality, embodied subjectivity and sociality.

Line Henriksen

The Companionship of Monsters: Responding to the curse of the Creepy Pasta

According to internet legend, a cursed JPEG - a picture of a demonic dog-like creature by the name 'Smile.dog' - is lurking in the deepest waters of the World Wide Web. If you happen to see the picture, Smile.dog will come for you at night, haunting you until you 'spread the word' by showing its picture to someone else. Then it will leave you alone. So it promises.

But what if Smile.dog lies?

The story of Smile.dog and the cursed JPEG is a so-called creepypasta; an internet horror story that is meant to be copied, pasted and spread online, infecting its readers with curses and possessions on its way. As with any cursed internet tale, however, readers tend to pull through unscathed; the monster does not cross the boundary between the virtual world of the internet and the material and embodied reality of the internet user. Smile.dog will not come for you tonight.

But then again – perhaps we just do not know where and when to look for such an unlikely companion?

With this paper I would like to discuss cursed creepypastas as hoaxes, that is, cries of *Hocus Pocus!* that are less about actions and reactions than the conjuration (Derrida 2011) of companions - an embodied living with, waiting for and responding to the response of the non-human, spectral other. I would like to argue that the asynchronous space that is created when the promise of the monster (Haraway 1992) is broken may be understood as an ethical 'space of not-knowingness' (Shildrick 2009) between self and other: If the monster is not where it said it would be, where is it then? When will it come? And how should one respond?

Marie-Louise Holm

Public(ations of) private parts: Materialisations and meanings of genitals

For centuries the genitals of humans and other mammals have been conventionally interpreted within Western medicine as the most fundamental marker of their sex. This view has been persistent simultaneously with suggestions of other biological structures (e.g. sex hormones, chromosomes, and genes) being “the real” or “fundamental” sex. Interestingly, however, genitals have generally continued to be perceived as the most important basis for the formation of normal and abnormal gender identities and sexualities. Thus specific genital morphologies have been considered to be crucial for the formation of a normal self.

In this paper I explore examples of the relation between the materialisations and meanings of genitals and idea(l)s about how a normal gendered _sexed body _self should materialise taken from different Danish medical contexts in the 20th century. These include narratives about various technologies for materialising genitals as well as different subjects’ experiences of the materialisation of genitals such as sex reassignment surgery, sex hormone treatment, prostheses, phantom genitals, and the choice not to have genital modifications. I consider in which ways these technologies and practices and the experiential narratives have contributed to normalising and queering of genitals, and how they have reinstalled and displaced them as the center and sign of gender _sex and selfhood. In order to imagine and formulate an ethics of dealing with genital differences that might lead to (more) liveable lives for individuals with diverse body morphologies, I raise the question: Which potentials and dangers might these forms of knowledge have for thinking gender _sex and selfhood differently?

Ericka Johnson

Technologies of pathologising the normal LUTS/BPHs prostate

Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms secondary to Benign Prostate Hyperplasia (LUTS/BPH) is a normal enlargement of the prostate that is simultaneously pathological. Using this condition, I explore how a gland, a disease, diagnostic techniques and treatment practices are all implicated in constructing multiple versions of each other. Drawing theoretical inspiration from Barad (intra-action within knowledge phenomena), this work explores how boundaries between normal and pathological bodies are both delineated and blurred, and the agentiality of the material bodies and technologies which are used to create these normal-pathological bodies. The analysis shows the construction of a plethora of prostates and LUTS/BPHs (diseases). This way of understanding the multiplicity of bodies, diseases, diagnostic techniques and treatments articulates how distinctions are generated between bodies, diseases, technologies of knowing, and treatments, distinctions which are presented as arbitrary cuts.

Edyta Just

Landscapes of the Body-Brain: On the Human-Post-Human Crossroads

In various scientific departments and labs, neuroscience and computing including, the human has already become a nonhuman, posthuman or inhuman. Furthermore, the agency of matter has been confirmed and matter, body, together with brain, and subjectivity have all been approached as becoming, open-ended and self-transcending. Still, however, the idea of the “modern human” apparently fuels the scientific theories and practices which smoothly merge with, and further strengthen, various social policies, power relations and popular common understanding of what the “human” should mean and indicate. Even though the focus on the brain’s materiality opens up the possibility of undermining the customarily manners of thinking human, corporeality and subjectivity, it seems that the neuroscientific and intrinsic to the field of computing methods, interpretations and applied vocabulary ceaselessly bring the “modern human” back to the fore. Moreover, it appears that the affinities created with the brain matter do not allow formation of new understanding of concepts such as affect, thought and behavior. On the contrary, these concepts seem to belong to the “major/molar language” and work as opinions and habits of thinking human/corporeality/subjectivity and as such seem to silence and frame the novelty and conceptual *potentia* of the vital matter. In order to carefully measure the practices of decolonization and colonization with regard to the understanding of the “human” corporeality and subjectivity initiated and conducted by neuroscience and computing, this paper attempts to draw a critical cartography of the concepts of affect and emotion proposed by those two scientific fields from the critically-creative feminist perspective. The intended cartography, apart from problematizing the scientific de/colonization undertakings, also aims to advance daring connections between matter and definitions of the “human” corporeality/subjectivity on the one hand, and experimental translations of the vital matter into new, courageous conceptualizations of a “human” on the other.

Ulrike Klöppel

Biopolitics of gender change in socialism – the example of the German Democratic Republic

In 1976 the Minister of Public Health of the German Democratic Republic issued the "Ordinance on the Conversion of Transsexualists". In international comparison the East German State opted for a legalization of gender change – including gender reassignment surgery – quite early. How did the Ordinance of Transsexualists come to exist? The efforts of persons who wanted an official change of their registered gender and often also a gender reassignment surgery were of high relevance for this process. They approached doctors as well as the highest state authorities with their wish, addressing the latter via petitions, which was a practice supported by the leadership of the GDR. To push their cause, they provided highly emotionalized descriptions of their lives, threatened with suicide, and employed the rhetoric of the 'dedicated socialist citizen'. I read these activities as a kind of micropolitics of affect. In my presentation, I want to show how these micropolitics of affect became integrated within governmental biopolitical strategies, building a dispositif that set out for normalizing gender change and appeasing the transsexual stubbornness. Instead of forcing people to live in the gender assigned at birth, even under the dictatorial power structures of the GDR there were strategies of flexible normalization at work that included somatechnical customization and legal recognition. The regulation of transsexuality was embedded in strategies of optimizing the life of the population, forming the "better German state" and the "socialist nation". That said, in my presentation I read the historical sources double way: They are not only significant for the normalizing powertechniques at work but also for their failures, for multiple resistances and unexpected events.

Redi Koobak

Touching across time: decolonizing postsocialist feminist imaginaries

Art is an important starting point for the decolonization of knowledge and imagination (Tlostanova 2010). It is a powerful means through which to negotiate feminist ideas and to voice critique in a context where feminist concepts and theories cannot readily be found. In this paper, I discuss a series of self-portrait photographs by Anna-Stina Treumund, a feminist and lesbian-identified artist from postsocialist Estonia, and see if and how her work helps to reconfigure the lag discourse often associated with the former Eastern Europe within feminist theorizing. I zoom in on the artwork entitled *Woman in the Corner of Mutsu's Drawings* (2010), an homage to Estonian graphic artist Marju Mutsu's three ink drawings from 1972, and its connections with the recent turn towards history and reconceptualizing normative models of time in queer theory. Through Elizabeth Freeman's concept of "erotohistoriography", I will argue that Treumund's impulse to start "making connections across time" (Dinshaw 1999, 1) reveals a resistance to "chrononormative" models of history (Freeman 2005; Freeman 2010). Through my analysis of Treumund's remake, I want to argue that the present of feminist thought and queer art in Eastern Europe cannot be viewed as somehow always already one step behind the West. I thus attempt to complicate the meanings of the lag discourse in productive ways that do not reproduce the contemporary mainstream framing of Western feminist histories, which lacks concepts and perspectives that would be attuned to the geo-temporal realities of the former Eastern Europe.

Erika Kvistad

Critical Bodies: Reading Through Desire in Brontë

Although sex-positive feminism has become well-established as a productive way of examining intersections of sex, gender and culture, there is still lots to do for sex-positive perspectives within literary criticism. This is especially the case when it comes to the way we read texts that deal with sexual power dynamics – depictions of taking pleasure in being hurt by or hurting someone, wanting to control someone sexually or to be controlled, and enjoying power struggles and negotiations of roles.

This paper explores what a sex-positive engagement with sexual power dynamics in literature might look like, and why feminist sex activism needs such readings now more than ever. In present-day culture, literary texts are increasingly a primary way for people to engage with sexual power dynamics (rather than a secondary phenomenon, as pornography might reductively be described as a secondary phenomenon to sex). But literary criticism often seems ill-equipped to think about sexual power dynamics, tending to cast these patterns of desire as either pathological, or (particularly in the case of submissive or masochistic female characters) as responses created wholly by societal strictures on female power and sexuality. This paper deploys a more vulnerable, reparative, desire-focused form of reading in examining some suggestive instances of power dynamics in Charlotte Brontë's novels, considering their problematic aspects, but also their possibilities for readers' imaginative explorations of such dynamics. It starts to delineate a kind of reading that joins up the missing links between critic and text – one that, instead of leaving critical readers guiltily disembodied, makes their sexual investments part of its project.

Katariina Kyrölä & Hannele Harjunen

Phantom/Liminal Fat and Feminist Theories of the Body

In this paper, we compare the central theoretical figures in our doctoral dissertations: the phantom of fat and fat as liminal state. We outline challenges that these figures, as well as critical feminist Fat Studies more broadly, pose for feminist research on embodiment that has largely focused on normatively sized and shaped bodies and can in many instances even be described as implicitly or explicitly fat-phobic.

Kyrölä argues in her research on how contemporary media images of fat bodies address their viewers affectively and viscerally, that images of fat are never only about fat. They play a key part in managing our relation to corporeality overall, in particular through the incorporation of a “phantom of fat” that haunts all Western body images across sizes and shapes. Similarly, Harjunen's study on Finnish women's experiences of fatness shows that the experience of living in a fat body is often understood in terms of liminality. The normative body size is seen as one's “real” body, and the fat body becomes defined as temporary, a liminal phase, thus effectively denying any possibility of fatness as an acceptable and identifiable base for subjectivity.

The question can be asked whether fat constitutes a kind of a “phantom” or “liminality” also to feminist theorization of the body: always there but never fully fleshed out. Although feminist research in its criticism of gendered, classed, racialized and sexual structures of power has usually started from the position of the marginalized, with size norms this is not the case. In the presentation, we explore further the implications of this claim.

Katrin Köppert

Queer Ornaments of Pain in Albrecht Becker's Amateur Photography

Do you know Albrecht Becker? I did not when I got occupied by his visual universe, that I found in the archive of Schwules Museum, Berlin. Though I had read a lot about what might be called queer photography I was excited, shocked, astonished, disgusted, amused, confused by his amateur photography. I just thought: wow, these destabilizing feelings must be what *queer* should provoke. Feeling so ambivalently about his imagery still is the impulse to wonder what is going on in his visual archive. What is the distinctiveness to the public imagery of gay photographers like Fred Holland-Day, Wilhelm von Gloeden, Herbert List, Herbert Tobias, Duane Michals, Robert Mapplethorpe? Is it because of different purposes and senses of mission? Does his status of being a passionate amateur, taking pictures for the purpose of experimenting with the medium photography as the definition of media amateurs claims (Daniels 2002), explain his obsession producing masses of prints? But does this illuminate why pain is so desperately performed? Though desire cannot be excluded from practices of photographing obsessively in the discourse of amateur photography, one might say that pain and suffer cannot be separated from the construction of homosexuality in the 19th century. Not coincidentally Saint Sebastian is one of the most popular motives in gay visual culture. However, pain in the photography of Albrecht Becker speaks another visual language. Various media techniques of self-injury and body modification, Becker used in his photographic scenery and image processing, raise the question whether sexual identity to be articulated is at stake. Are they *queer* in terms of not propagating a proper gay subject on the one hand side and of not incorporating homophobic hate via sublime representations of pain on the other? In order to investigate his photography I do not just want to refer to the image in its dimensions of visible or invisible symbols and contexts of production, reception and visual migration. Furthermore I would like to handle his pictures as objects and sensual perceptible bodies. The corporality of his edited pictures, photo albums and assembled scrapbooks are entangled with his body. The wounds he inflicted upon his photos are the ones of his body. That is why his photos as objects are my point of departure to investigate how media instruments as well as societal instruments of power treated his body. In line with this media practices of the amateur become political in two manifestations of queer epistemology:

- 1) challenge of normative visualizations of gender, sexuality, corporality, dis_ability
- 2) offer of alternatives, utopias, avenues of thought.

The second line ties in with questions of queer political affects: amateur media techniques of pain might be understood as the basis of temporal bonding beyond deterministic concepts of gender, sexual identity, body, race. Hence, affirming pain might mean to open up and offer interfaces to temporally connect heterogeneous subject positions that will never be the same afterwards. For this purpose I am interested in the lines of visual migration that Becker developed with acquaintances all over the world.

Pia Laskar

Deconstructing the soma technics of sexual rights

My paper takes as its theoretical point of departure somatechnics – a concept that considers how techniques, such as discourses and structures, are not separate from the ‘dynamic means in and through which bodies are crafted in relations to others and to a world’ (Sullivan & Murray 2006).

Expanding on Bruno Latour's theory on matter as something that makes societal organization possible (Latour 2005) my paper will focus on transnational sexual rights discourses, as materializations of common demands that affect bodies, social relations and organization structures.

The materializations of right discourses into demands for transnational sexual rights and soft laws are here dealt with as having a central function in producing and disseminating corporeal norms and standards on sexual organization. Those norms and standards working both on an individual level, as markers and references for subjectivity and identification processes, and on an organizational level, connecting locally developed demands and ideas on sexualities, bodies, and rights, transnationally – throughout glocal networks.

Transnational demands can help to transform individual corporealities into aggregate bodies politic aiming to expand the space for embodied expressions. However, done without a postcolonial sensitivity it can turn into homonationalistic universalism – or, as I will stress in the presentation, into homotransnationalism.

Homonationalism means – according to Jasbir Puar – a historical temporality's local production of norms re same sex sexual conduct. These norms links the perpetrators conducts and identities to nationally recognizable values, such as a nationally developed family model, which at the same time contains and reproduces heteronormativity (Puar 2007).

Homotransnationalism is a concept I use to point out that the exportation of locally or nationally developed demands for sexual rights – that pay no attention to differences and the particular – risks enforcing homonationalist norms and standards on sexual relations instead of supporting and expanding the space for local gender identities, embodiments and sexualities.

In the paper I will deconstruct some of the sexual rights rhetoric that has been used by the Swedish LGBT-organization RFSL when engaging in transnational rights politics.

Lisa Lindén

Distributing health responsibilities – Enacting HPV vaccination in practice

In a pink trailer with the phrase “I love me” written on it, girls can get vaccinated against HPV in Sweden. By downloading an HPV app, both girls and parents can do a quiz to learn about HPV vaccination. How can one approach these different materialities and their target group as a feminist technoscience studies scholar? This paper draws upon interviews and ethnographic fieldwork to grapple with this. It focuses on how girl bodies, parenting, techniques and materialities are entangled in Swedish HPV vaccination practice.

I assert that the focus on parenting and childhoods in population health practice is an important contribution to feminist technoscience research on materialities and politics. It is often argued that in vaccination practice there is an increasing tension between collective and individual health responsibility (Rose and Blume 2005; Leach and Fairhead 2007). Taking this as a starting point I ask how distributions of responsibilities are done in material practices and how this includes multiple enactments of techniques and normativities related to embodiments, state governing, (future) health, and sexual politics. By understanding the pink trailer and the app as translations of HPV vaccination policy, I discuss the material-semiotics of girls, parents and HPV vaccination in relation to enactments of responsibilities. Importantly, this approach makes it possible to discuss the ontological politics of the responsibilities and agencies distributed to states, institutions, parents, and children as well as to technologies and other materialities (cf. Mol 1999).

Desireé Ljungcrantz

Composition No. HIV – a reading-listening-writing (text) performance

Through a polyphony of narratives, voices, bits and pieces and quotes the cultural imaginaries of HIV are not captured but assembled, creating ever changing and becoming stories. Inspired by the novel *Composition No. 1* (1962) by Marc Saporta this presentation is a reading-listening-writing experiment that will build a narrative where theories, novels, music, policies and experiences are knitted together with live-act narratives as well as bodily a/effects. The audience will be involved. The fractures will be obvious, as will the overlapping and links in this multiple narrative about HIV, vulnerability, subjects-objects, relations, associations...

Ann-Sofie Lönngren

Is that material agency in the text? On literary interpretation and transdisciplinarity

At the beginning of the 19th century, Wilhelm Dilthey made the influential claim that there is a fundamental difference between science and the arts, and that each of these fields thus require their own methodology. As much as this claim has contributed to the development of the humanities, it has been increasingly challenged over the past decades, within e.g. posthumanism, feminist materialism and animal studies. In this talk, I would like to address the question of what a transdisciplinary approach between science and arts might contribute on the level of literary interpretation. Indeed, Donna Haraway has suggested that the literary genre of science fiction makes up examples of “otherworlding”; of connections between science and arts, ontology and epistemology. But what if processes of otherworlding are (potentially) under way in all sorts of literature, not just science fiction? And what if concepts and tools developed outside the humanities can help us see this? Having recently submitted an article on this, I will discuss what the concept ‘material agency’ might contribute to the understanding of modernist master-piece and notorious novel *A Madman’s Manifesto* (1887-88) by Swedish author August Strindberg. Are there any aspects of the text that might be understood as depictions of material agency? If so, how have these been conceptualized in previous research? What would such an understanding entail for the understanding of the text, and for the practice of literary interpretation?

Karla Mason

(Bio)Securing Life: Animal Disease and the Linguistic Framing of Risk, Biosecurity and Blame

Contemporary analyses of the body – technology interface typically emphasise a disappearance or effacement of the corporeal as it becomes increasingly enmeshed in, and reconfigured by, the joint application of computerised technologies and bio-technical innovation to phenomena such as disease, infertility and genetics. In such accounts disembodiment is posited as the inevitable outcome of such (e)mergings of the technical/non-organic and the corporeal. Whilst bio-technical and bio-medical innovations undoubtedly interrupt the integrity, autonomy and bounded-ness of the body through such interventions as xenotransplantation, genetic modification, IVF and virtual reality (VR) technologies, such breachings of corporeal integrity do not automatically entail the disappearance of the body. In fact, as will be argued, the application of such biotechnical innovations often leads to a kind of corporeal excess. Those processes associated with the matter of the body, the interactions between a pathogen and its host, for example, do not occur merely in the spaces of the body but also take place beyond it in the spaces of the pathology lab and the virtual spaces of the computer simulation. Despite Haraway's insistence that such fusions of the organic and non-organic have implications for both human and non-human animals, the latter have received considerably less attention. This paper focuses on the extra-corporeal culturing of bacteria from the bodies of diseased animal patients and 'biosocial innovations' (Lee and Motzkau, 2012) such as the Virtual Physiology Rat (VPR) to explore how such somatechnical practices both reconfigure and extend (animal) corporeal boundaries across and between 'real' and virtual spaces.

Victoria Mateos de Manuel

Philosophy of gesture: a queer feminist perspective

In my conference I want to introduce a critical analysis of the classical iconological field in order to think how a queer methodology in the iconological analysis could look like. For this purpose I am going to make firstly an introduction about the importance of gesture in the analysis of images in the philosophy of the end of the 19th and during the 20th century. My hypothesis is that the problem of gesture has to do with the epistemological problem of what truth means and for this reason it has become a central matter in the argumentation of many philosophers: Nietzsche, Warburg, Valéry, Didi-Huberman and Alain Badiou for example. After that I am going to make a critical analysis of these authors through the works of Judith Butler, Beatriz Preciado, Linda Williams, Lynda Nead and Helen McDonald.

Finally I am going to apply this argumentation to the analysis of a monument: the Victory column in Berlin. From an architectonical point of view this place is very relevant for a queer feminist analysis of images. The allegory of the victory is in the center and was first recognized as a Nike Goddess and then understood as a Victory Angel. The figures of military heroes and key political figures of the unification of Germany and proclamation of the German Empire stay around the Victory column: Otto von Bismarck, Albrecht von Roon and Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke. Furthermore, there are near the Victory column some sculptures that represent the situation of the soldiers in the war and their return to their families. This architecture works as a theological justification of the concepts of home and heteronormative family and is used to connect the concepts of family, homeland and god.

Dylan McCarthy Blackston

Biopoliticized Apes and LGB(T) Rights: Animating the Arcus Foundation's Political Goals

The Arcus Foundation, founded and led by Jon Stryker, has a dual purpose: to establish and propagate LGBT human rights, and to protect great apes by establishing more sanctuaries and preventing the deleterious effects of land encroachment. In my paper, this dual platform enables me to navigate the oft-overlooked connections between human/non-human animality and rights, specifically as these rights claims require simultaneous pro-active and reactive posturing depending upon who/what is allotted agency. I work through a somatechnical lens to explore the question of 'missing links,' asking, what deployments of biopower are made visible through the Arcus Foundation's political foci?

Primarily engaging work by Foucault, Agamben, Chen, and Mbembe, I analyze the connections between the racially inflected deployments of protection discourses circulating around great apes, and LGBT rights discourses, which extend colonial notions of a universalized community to make claims about who counts under a biopolitical frame. I focus on trans- bodies to assert the intervening potential of the non-included body, particularly in its assumed singularity as the only 'truly' technologized body. By honing in on the trans- body, I explore the slippages between LGB(T) rights and animal rights (both as presented by the Arcus Foundation) to ask, what colonial and medical 'missing links' are animated by the Arcus Foundation's two-fold purpose?

Donna McCormack

Hopeful Monsters: Decolonising Evolutionary Theories in Contemporary Fiction

In contemporary culture, there is a proliferation of the representation of characters with exceptional abilities. *X-Men*, *Heroes* and many more TV shows and films portray difference as embodied and as that which must be feared. The desire to be normal, to fit in and to manage this uncontrollable difference permeates the exceptionally able genre. These shows are loosely based on an alternative theory of evolution called Hopeful Monsters.

This paper explores the decolonising potentiality of hopeful monsters, examining the ways in which Hiromi Goto and Ann-Marie MacDonald portray monstrous embodiment as a form of remembering unarticulated violence. Where visual representations portray an overwhelming need to be normal and to manage exceptional abilities because of their potential danger, the two texts on which this paper focuses portray monstrous embodiment as a decolonisation of normativity and of normative theories of evolution. Rather than mimicking a colonial evolutionary trajectory of animality through to civilisation, the selected texts explore the interrelatedness of human and animal embodiment. These hybrid humans – some with tails and others with dog ears – are a missing link in history insofar as they connect these families to unspoken histories of violence. Evolution is thus not a progressive narrative towards an imagined superior state; rather this missing link is a queer form of embodiment. Queerly embodying the missing link opens up evolutionary theory to a hybridisation that is not exceptional but rather integral to how normative narratives and embodiments are formed. These animal humans tell another story and embody other histories, theories and modes of belonging.

Astrida Neimanis

No Representation without Colonization? Notes Towards a Transcorporeal Method

Non-human nature is lively and agential, but can such a nature “speak” (for itself)? Who can, or should, speak for this nature? Gayatri Spivak (1988) famously asked whether the subaltern could speak (for itself) as a way of highlighting the fraught nature of representing colonized peoples, and insists that such representation is “(im)possible.” This parenthetical ambiguity signals both the “must” and the “can’t” inherent in this endeavour. Stacy Alaimo (2010) makes the resonating claim that we must speak for nature, not only in spite of but *because* of the impossibility of the task. While Donna Haraway (1988) and Andrea Smith (2005) both insist that facile analogies between colonized peoples and non-human nature are risky, in epistemological terms, both must grapple with similar questions of representation and the concomitant drive to mastery. In other words, the “missing link” between a colonizing account of non-human nature, and an ignorant refusal to acknowledge its liveliness and agency, must somehow be bridged. I take up these epistemological challenges to ask specifically about the methods one might use to bridge this gap. I present the writing-body as a somatechnic – or a *somatechnique* – itself. Here, the writing body is also non-human nature, amplified: body as sensing, body as sensor, body as thick with prehistoric and queer time, body as distributed through bodies and spaces far beyond one’s skin, body as also unknowable and unassimilable. Drawing on phenomenology, *écriture féminine*, postcolonial theory, and science studies, what I propose is the somatechnique of *writing (as) the transcorporeal body*.

Grace Nyamongo

African Sexualities: A Study of the Challenges Experienced by the LGBT People

Sexuality is fundamental component of gender equality and social justice. Yet, it continues to be a contested issue across the globe. In the recent past, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Queer (LGBTQ) people have experienced a lot of hostility and aggression in many parts of the African continent. The proliferation of homophobia against queer people is based on the widespread belief that homosexuality is a deviant act. Therefore, heterosexuality is not only encouraged but also considered to be the norm among African ethnic communities. The existence of homophobia against homosexuals and lesbians a cross Africa is often considered a therapeutic measure against 'un-African' sexual practices and deviation from heteronormativity. The degree of violence meted against the queer people and the manner in which they are treated in the community raises questions about African perception of 'innovative' sexuality. Nonetheless, studies have shown that homosexual practices have always existed in the pre-independent Sub-Saharan African states and among indigenous people of Africa. Consequently, these disapproves the assertion that homosexuality did not exist in Africa before the advent of colonialism. Following the contemporary African perspectives on the existence of LGBTQ people it is important to highlight critical insight their situation in order to enhance knowledge and understanding on sexual rights, and to build a comprehensive discourse on African sexuality. This paper attempts to underline the issue of African sexuality in the pre-colonial and post-colonial periods. It also underscores the challenges experienced by the queer people in society that highly practices heterosexuality, and points out the strategies employed in order to endure such aggressions.

Sara Orning

Freakery Embodied: Upsetting Victorian Norms in Katherine Dunn's Geek Love

This paper examines an instance of literary embodiment of the powerful categories of the 'normal' and 'abnormal,' which emerged in the nineteenth century and that we still struggle with today. In the Victorian Anglo-American world, two discursive spheres were particularly popular when it came to the constitution and experience of 'normal' and 'abnormal' bodies: the circus sideshow and medical anatomy. While the former was based on the performance, exhibition, and consumption of bodies that in different ways were perceived to tow the line of normativity, the latter provided a scientific explanation and stratification of what was considered within and outside the bodily norm. The resonances and dissonances between the two fields show several ways that the 'freak' and the 'normal' body were constituted through a larger social context of statistics, biopower, and eugenics.

Against my investigation of Victorian anatomy and the medical framing of normality and abnormality, I position the treatment of the freaky body in *Geek Love* by Katherine Dunn (1983). We recognize nineteenth-century concerns about the normal and abnormal in Dunn's novel, but *Geek Love* does not merely thematize these tensions and concerns; it also, crucially, stages a twentieth-century rupture with them. Dunn addresses the constitution of the abnormal individual by subverting the very core of Victorian medical theories concerning the normal and abnormal, namely the question of normal life forms as 'successfully reproductive.' In this paper, I argue that the embodied perspective of a female 'freak' and mother in Dunn's novel challenges such categories since it unmasks normality and abnormality as external assignments rather than lived possibilities.

Goldie Osuri

Sovereignty as a Missing Link: Rape, Occupation & the Value of Decolonisation

The December 2012 Delhi gang rape case of Nirbhaya/Braveheart (as named by the media) prompted widespread protests in India, and has received global international media coverage. Legal, police and media attitude to rape, as various strands of the Indian feminist movement, have asserted, remain within a patriarchal complex of colonial and postcolonial discursive entanglements. As Ratna Kapur has argued in *Erotic Justice: Law and the New Politics of Postcolonialism* (2005), the discourse of the protection of women, women's morality, and public/private distinctions continue to shape how rape is perceived or how legal judgements regarding rape are enacted.

Since the event of the Delhi rape and the widespread protests against it, the direction of feminist, queer, Hindu nationalist, and legal discourses regarding rape point to a way to think through how state sovereignty and its investments--in occupation, gendered and sexual violence in Kashmir or the North East, in policing gendered urban spaces--need to be urgently addressed. Postcolonial nationalist sovereignty regarding bodies, aggregated by territory, religion, sexuality and gender therefore, may be mapped as a somatechnical missing link, one which makes visible the place of the gendered/queer body within an emergent and assertive Indian imperialism. The effect of mapping this somatechnical link also enables a rethinking of meaning and value of decolonisation. It may be best, I speculate, that decolonisation is not linked to postcolonial or anticolonial nationalisms in the wake of colonialism as a potentiality; its value may lie in its critical use, as a way of thinking through the ways in which sovereignty operates.

Bettina Papenburg

In the Eye of Technology: Language as Prosthesis

'Third culture' theorists seek to redraw the boundaries between human-animal and organic-machine. Specifically, the discourse of human enhancement in the context of the techno-euphorical transhumanist project imagines, creates and celebrates artificially 'augmented' bodies. In the field of popular culture these phantasies and creations are played out as imaginations about prosthetically 'enhanced' bodies, which could otherwise and simplistically be termed 'disabled'. One such example is *Deus Ex: The Eyeborg Documentary* (2011) by the filmmaker Rob Spence, who has attracted attention for inserting a camera in his head in the place of a missing eye. The documentary, which accompanied the release of the blockbuster video game *Deus Ex: Human Evolution*, features individuals and scientists using elaborate prosthetic technologies.

Taking *Deus Ex* as my case study, in this paper I will focus on 'the prosthetic' as a specific form of confusion of boundaries both of individual bodies and of social organisms. My aim is to unsettle notions of prosthesis both as a form of replacement of a body part (including implants) and as technologically mediated extension of the body's sensory capacities (such as vision and touch). Taking my cue from Jacques Derrida and his idea of "the prosthesis of origin", I will argue for an understanding of language as prosthesis, emphasizing interconnectedness and close entanglements between various bodies, texts and contexts. In conclusion, I will assess how this take on the concept of prosthesis can initiate a more ethical engagement with the prosthesis trope, i. e. by conceiving of the body as always already incomplete and co-constituted, and in need for co-poiesis with other bodies.

Michael Nebeling Petersen

To change in order to maintain - reconfigurations of the homosexual in Denmark

By analysing the Danish reality show *Hva' Bruden Ikke Ved* (Don't Tell the Bride) and the parliamentary proceedings regarding same sex marriages in Denmark in 2010 the paper examines the reconfiguration of the homosexual from a figuration associated with death (Butler 1992; Nunokawa 1991; Heede 2003) to a figuration enrolled in biopower through family, kinship and reproduction (Puar 2007). Following the line of thought in David Eng's reading of John D'Emilio (Eng 2010; D'Emilio 1983), I show how this biopolitical inclusion is made possible by letting the homosexual couple enter a recognizable heteronormative kinship. This heteronormative reconfiguration of the homosexual figure makes a narrative of emancipation and modernity possible. A narrative that establishes the homosexual figure as a central marker of both temporal and geographical modernity. Thus the heteronormative inclusion of the homosexual figure becomes a proof of the liberal story of progress and Denmark as especially modern. I conclude that the homosexual today is a part of the normative biopolitical mandate governing life and death (Mbembe 2003; Foucault 2003), no longer heteronormativity's Other but it's partner in crime.

Magdalena Petersson McIntyre

All aboard: Looking for the missing link between women and boats

This paper presents a study of an innovation process managed by the Swedish leisure boating industry in collaboration with governmental funding agencies and a consultancy firm for gender diversity and growth. This innovation process, named *All aboard*, aimed at generating economic growth in the Swedish leisure boat industry by creating a boat which would better accommodate for the needs of women on board.

Building on theories of somatechnics and queering of objects (Sullivan and Murrey 2009) this paper seeks to analyze the relationship between bodies, technologies, design and gender which directed this innovation process. The female body was given three distinct roles in *All aboard*. First, it was approached as lacking many of the physical qualities which are inscribed in boat design in terms of strength, size, abilities for movement and body care. Second, it was approached as lacking knowledge regarding technology, engines, manuals and rescue operations. Third, boats were approached as lacking in the social values which women were seen as treasuring; safety and security, social spaces, convenient cooking facilities, easy access toilet, and a pleasant and homely environment.

While the first two understandings resulted in strategies aimed to facilitate women's boating life by adding designs which would compensate for physical and cognitive discrepancies, the third aimed at changing boats into better accommodating for women's social interests and expectations. The paper will discuss and analyze these methods of dealing with gender, design, technology and marketing, as well as the difficult navigation around these issues in an innovation process which was far from smooth.

Lin Pettersson

*The (Neo)Victorian Fascination with the Disabled Body: Renegotiation Freak Status in Essie Fox's *Elijah's Mermaid**

The public display of divergent bodies in nineteenth-century freak shows aroused wonder, fear and fascination among the Victorians. The ambiguous and anomalous status of human exhibits situated them within the middle ground between the human and the animal, which sometimes categorized them as missing links. This biopolitical account of embodiment was rooted in the social consciousness of standardization that can be traced back to the industrialization and modernisation of Western society. Whether being born freaks, made freaks or novelty acts, these human oddities were all publically displayed for profit. Consequently, the spectacle of deformity relied heavily on a stylized representation which enhanced corporeal deviance. The Victorian world of spectacle with its representative spaces – the music hall, circus and freak show, just to name a few – provided scenarios where different social identities could be reproduced, subverted and negotiated. Contemporary authors turn to the nineteenth century to rescue the voices of silenced minorities and in doing so they offer an alternative account of history; a historical subgenre today known as neo-Victorianism. This paper seeks to demonstrate how neo-Victorian literature incorporates the voices of human oddities into the narrative, and by doing so, express a concern of attributing the disabled body with a human value. Consequently, they interrogate both past and present discourses of normality. This paper focuses on representations and interpretations of human oddities in neo-Victorian literature by taking a closer look at the mermaid Pearl in Essie Fox's novel *Elijah's Mermaid* (2012).

Marietta Radomska

The Twitching of Life: Somatechnics of the Non/Living

This paper takes its departure in an account of a hands-on engagement with bio-materials and somatechnico-ethical procedures at BiofiliA, the laboratory for biological arts at Aalto University (Helsinki, Finland). More specifically, the paper builds on the current bioartistic research conducted by dr. Ionat Zurr (Tissue Culture & Art Project; SymbioticA, University of Western Australia), the part of which consists in growing mouse muscle tissue cultures. The latter (as it is observed by the means of microscopic magnification) express themselves by ‘twitching’. This particular performance of cells opens up the space for multiple questions: what is the relation between life and movement? How to understand the concept of the non/living? What ontological premises does the latter rely upon? What kind of thresholds (if any) does this concept encompass? How do scientifico-artistic practices effectuated in the biological arts laboratory affect the understanding of life and its entanglement with movement? Finally, what are the ethical implications of the engagement with the non/living biomaterials enclosed in a laboratory dish (including care and the procedures of killing)? While drawing on delezoguattarian passive vitalism, Karen Barad’s concept of agential realism and ethics of entanglement as well as Derrida’s concept of hospitality I hope to explore the above-mentioned inquiries.

Stefan Reinsch

Happy Heads: distributed and tacit knowledge in the treatment of skull deformities

In modern medicine, a number of conditions are known where children can be surgically shaped. One of these conditions is craniosynostosis, the premature fusion of cranial sutures that lead to abnormal head shapes. Craniosynostosis can be corrected for aesthetic reasons, yet without it being clear what a normal skull in children should look like. This lack of standards in craniosynostosis correction has led to innovations in operative techniques as well as a proliferation of classifications. The surgical procedure is under unusual pressure for justification, because while it needs to be aesthetically pleasing in the future, the risks that need to be accounted for if they are to be accepted in the medical community as well as by parents are immediate.

I will outline how parents and surgeons deal with such a decision that bears on the life of children fifteen years in the future. Anthropologists have underlined the distributedness over people, places and time of such risky medical decision. I extend this perspective to study the practice of shaping the skull in the operating room. I show how human and material agencies reciprocally constitute and need to be tuned to each other during the operation. I conclude by a discussion of parents that are granting surgeons “artistic freedom”, and surgeons who are drawing on arts to guide their practice. The material for this talk comes from participant observation in a German university clinic and survey data of 40 craniofacial surgeons from all over the world.

Lotta Samelius and Christa Binswanger

'I did what one shouldn't do, I met a new man shortly afterwards': Violence and the Somatechnics of Silencing and Oppression

Our paper will analyse the somatechnics of oppression through three interrelated discourses of violence: blame and responsibility, pedagogy of regret, and silencing. We will examine these discourses by drawing on empirical data and a fictional narrative. First, there is a dialectical relationship between societal and medical discourse whereby abused women are projected as being vulnerable and in need of protection, together with the medical disciplining of those perceived to be 'psychologically weak'. Surveillance, tranquilization and disciplining of the female body work as somatechnical control which perverts the idea of protection, turning it into conformism to regulate behaviours. Second, the pedagogy of regret (Brown & Gregg, 2012) exposes how certain activities are depicted in terms of risk, and how policy discourses, particularly those targeted at women, work towards generating a sense of regret in order to promote 'responsible' behaviour. Thus, any bad consequences of 'hedonistically indulgent behaviour' will fall back on women themselves. Jelinek in "The Piano Teacher" confronts her protagonist after she is raped by one of her pupils with the motherly pedagogy of regret, as she had tried to escape surveillance and is consequently 'punished' for her irresponsible behaviour. Third, silence calls for speech, yet speech because it is always particular, vanquishes other possible speech, thus cancelling the promise of full representation heralded by silence (Brown, 1998, Sontag 2000). Silence can be an effect of discourse; it can also function as resistance to regulatory discourse, such as the medicalised moralising discourses. In Jelinek, the hidden and silent somatechnics of self-harm by the daughter are embedded in a never ending domestic discourse about a contagious and dangerous outside world. Thus, as a consequence of these interrelated discourses, the 'responsible woman' is normalised and the 'non-responsible' queered, abnormal, and corporeally disciplined.

Johanna Schorn

Pleasure in the Face of Guilt and Shame: Sex-Education for Teens at Scarleteen.com

Since 1998, Heather Corinna and her international team of volunteers and contributors have been providing inclusive, sex-positive, feminist sexuality education for teens and young adults at Scarleteen.com. In the current cultural climate, many teens and young adults feel frustrated and alone when it comes to discovering, developing and enjoying their own sexuality. Entertainment media often leads them to believe that their peers are engaging in sex frequently and with various partners, often starting at a young age. This is in conflict with the sex education that they receive, which is either encouraging them to have sex “safely” with only minimal explanation to what that may mean, or encouraging them to have no sex at all, with warnings of dire (and often fictional) consequences of sexual activity. To add to this confusing mix of messages, there is little to no consideration of those growing up queer, those with disabilities that may impact sex, those dealing with a history of sexual abuse, or those dealing with poor body image or self-esteem.

Part of the work that we do at Scarleteen is to focus on unpacking and unlearning cultural shame, and on helping users individually to figure out where they are at and what they need to live happy and fulfilled sexual lives. We help them understand that there are no pat answers or easy solutions, but that sexuality can be a healthy and rewarding part of their life, and that there is no need for shame.

In my presentation, I would like to show some of the ways in which we at Scarleteen work with teens and young adults to give them the tools they need to safely explore and own their sexualities and bodies.

Karin Sellberg

The Medico-Colonisation of Self in Contemporary Literature

This paper will trace a 'missing link', or fissure between the contemporary subject and an emerging medical discourse of the self. I will argue that the recent novels and short stories of A. L. Kennedy and Iain Banks express a colonising cultural hypochondria, which theorists of health and medicine like Michel Foucault, Roy Porter, Rita Charon and Ann Jurecic acknowledge to be endemic in contemporary Western societies. With a veritable media onslaught of medically focused TV, film and radio and online access to medical literature and guides, the Western subject is becoming increasingly aware of the body's anatomy and physiology, as well as the various health issues that may threaten it. Modern subjects need no longer rely on a separate class of medically informed professionals for technical knowledge, but can readily receive any amount of information through various physiological and symptom-focused 'apps' and search engines on the internet. However, without the prerequisite medical experience, this knowledge becomes an unwieldy tool, that leads to self-doubt, personal crisis and severe hypochondriac anxiety.

Interestingly, writers such as A. L. Kennedy and Iain Banks often use overtly technical medical discourses to describe subjective breakdowns. Physiological processes feature not merely metaphorically, but become the points of division between mind/body and self/other. I will argue that the contemporary subject in these novels have thus taken on a hypochondriac Cartesian divide. There is an overt split between the characters' psychological narratives and the colonising medical contextualisation they infer on these. This paper will thus establish that contemporary fiction generates an overtly 'medicalised' subjective split, which highlights a burgeoning critical recognition of the tension between medical scientific objectification and subjective cultural experience in contemporary Western societies.

Leslie Sherlock

'... we have sex education in schools, but it's not much about sex': examining discourses and technologies of embodiment within sexuality education in Sweden and Ireland

One of Western society's most institutionalised technologies for young people to make meaning of their bodies is sexuality education. Sexuality education technologies work to produce a form of embodiment which is culturally and contextually specific, and always already essentialised through overt and covert mechanisms. In order to reclaim the body from these imperatives, a critical and intersectional analysis of the ways in which educational structures co-create corporealities is vital. This research uses queer and feminist methodologies and interpretive paradigms to analyse qualitative empirical data from interviews with sexuality education professionals in Ireland (n=17) and Sweden (n=17), and comprises part of a larger PhD study.

This paper examines boundaries around the inclusion of 'sex', sex acts and sexual pleasure within sexuality education. I scrutinise participant discourses regarding whether education can be 'personal' given societal, cultural and legal constraints. I explore perceived parameters around pedagogical discussions of sexualised biological functions. Finally, I unpack unique and specific narratives on non-normative sexual orientations and the ways in which these corporealities are or are not dealt with in classrooms.

Empirical data is deconstructed for the ways in which societal, legal and educational technologies set the parameters within which participants operate in their work. I examine why some view boundaries as static, while others see them as permeable. I discuss participant experiences of utilising feminist reflexivity or queer disruptiveness as activism, and success stories in subverting norms. I theorise how feminist and queer pedagogy might resist the oppressive powers that traditional sexuality education technologies can inflict upon the corporealities of young people.

William Paul Simmons

Decolonizing the Ascription of Corporeal Joy

Joy is often ascribed to Others as a colonizing technique of creating and maintaining good conscience. It is a way of deeming someone to be “happy enough”; that they are experiencing all the happiness they need. Thus, we can rest easy believing we have done enough for the Other. Nowhere is this logic more apparent than in various discourses that justify lesser or ill-treatment of those perceived to be further down the humanity scale; the so-called “missing links.” Here, I examine several manifestations of the colonial ascription of joy including ascribing “quality of life” to people with disabilities, and anti-abolitionist and colonial discourses of “the happy slave” and “the happy native.” I provide a postcolonial reading of the display of the Mbuti “pygmy” Ota Benga at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis and the Brooklyn Zoo.

Corporeal joy could also serve as a unique register that might resist such colonization and hold some potential for further decolonization. Joy appears, at least at first blush, to be “less weighty,” more transitory, more open-ended, and perhaps more connected to increased capacities to act, than happiness (see Ahmed 2010). Joy, especially when theorized as Lacanian *jouissance*, is inherently transcendent to the symbolic realm. If we can theorize joy of the Other as affecting the ego and the hegemonic system in a radical way, we can imagine an ascription of corporeal joy that is not satisfied with itself and thus, at least partially, resists the construction of a good conscience.

Jörgen Skågeby

Forgetting in the future: design fiction and the (evil) link between perfect and failing memory

This paper theorizes how memory-augmenting technologies can operate as the missing link between perfect and failing memory. Notably, forgetting is an important strategy for queer human-computer interaction (Light, 2011) and for the study of “queer failure” (Halberstam, 2011). In short, queer failure shows how errors, when occurring under the tyranny of success, can become important and empowering errata.

By combining the theoretical perspective of queer failure with the notion of “evil media” (Fuller & Goffey, 2012), this paper makes fruitful conceptual connections between queer theory, media materialism and interaction criticism.

“Mediation facilitates and amplifies the creation of troubling, ambiguous social processes, fragile networks of susceptible activity, opaque zones of nonknowledge – the evils of media.” (ibid. p.3)

Empirically, the paper engages with two episodes of the futuristic British TV show *Black Mirror*: one emphasizing the liberating capacity of forgetting; the other emphasizing how forgetting, or rather, revoking remembering, becomes a systemic tool for instrumental power. This tension between forgetting as resistance and forgetting as punishment is addressed through design fiction, which makes use of the imagined futures of science fiction narratives to inform our thinking about how (memory) technologies operate once they have matured and become ubiquitous in society (Tanenbaum, Tanenbaum & Wakkary, 2012). As such, the paper aims to discuss what memory technologies do. Generally speaking, they turn brains into harddrives and memories into databases – subject to search, storage, manipulation and sharing as any digital-virtual object (van Doorn, 2011). They create somatechnical gray zones inbetween good and evil, success and failure

Tove Solander

Dolldonics

This paper will explore dolls and other prosthetic objects in the work of Shelley Jackson, specifically as part of queer sexual experimentation. “Dolldonics” is a modification of “dildonics” inspired by an example of a Barbie doll used as a dildo in lesbian pornography cited by Erica Rand in *Barbie’s Queer Accessories*. Similarly, in *The Doll Games* Jackson describes the unsexed doll body as the “sexless baton” at the core of sex and compares penises to dolls played with in the doll games of sex. Dolldonics considers such objects used to prosthetically extend and connect bodies in terms of Deleuzian desiring connections, not as fetishes in the psychoanalytic sense, inevitably pointing back to the phallus. I propose that the doll games played in *The Doll Games* are an exercise not in heterosexual family making but rather in what I term “polymorphous prosthetics”. There is a tradition of surrealist artists such as Hans Bellmer taking an interest in the recombinant possibilities of doll bodies. However, in the work of male artists, the queer potential of such polymorphous prosthetics has often been restricted by an erotisation of the doll as stand-in for the little girl, with whom it is so closely associated. In doll work by female artists with experience of being girls and playing with dolls, such erotisation of the girl-as-doll and doll-as-girl is less likely to occur, or at least occurs in different and more complex ways. The erotisation of doll bodies is based less on it standing in for the forbidden sexual object of the little girl, and more of the tactility of holding, manipulating, dismembering, dressing and undressing them. In doll games, the conventional distinction between desire and identification is undone, which confuses categorizations such as gender and sexual identity, and further subject/object, animate/inanimate and human/nonhuman.

Whitney Stark

Red Planet/Dark Continent

This paper troubles the goal to colonize the planet Mars. Through feminist, postcolonial and science studies, this paper compares the rhetorical/ideological arguments of this colonization with previous colonizations, re-cognizing intersections entrenched in racialized/gendered discourses and material/biopolitical prioritizations implemented with a neoliberal twist (this colonization is acceptable because there are no humans inhabiting the to-be-colonized space/discard of postcolonial economic inequalities of who-humans-will-be-deemed worthy of life on mars). This paper aims to question the vitalism, cartesian separation, and biopolitical underpinnings to such an economically invested upon scripture. Thinking beyond and with humanly bodies, this paper explores how through life/nonlife human/nonhuman divides with a universalizing discourse of land acquisition for 'all' humanity, terraforming of the planet so as to be habitable for humanized (and bio based) 'life' forms is a tropical-medicine, industrialized, domesticating discourse assigning blankness and hierarchies of value. The planet becomes a 'missing link' for imperial powers, a bare life to be 'uplifted' to understood-as-human-bodily needs; in a false vacuum devoid of agential relations or connections to scientific-morality and biopolitical outcomes of previous colonizations. And reifying the same old bogus hierarchical self-valorization necessary for imperial land/thingified-as-resource acquisition. This paper is a call to work against all colonizing practices, to question how this manifests and works in an effort toward transformative decolonization of differing kinds of bodies in simultaneity as bodies of people.

Eliza Steinbock

Tranimacies: On the Cuteness of Animated Deer, Birds, and Transgender Bodies

Mel Chen's book *Animacies* (2010) departs from the linguistic debate around "animacy", which refers to the investment of certain objects with animatedness, or liveness. She notes that the line of in/animate is often drawn through the split between human/non-human. The book investigates the racialized bio-/necro-politics of our everyday animacies, focusing on the circulation of intimate objects like words, animals, metals. The composite term *tranimacies* refers in my paper to how intimacy and animals link up with transgender and animation. I want to examine the how the art form of animation is being used as a technology crucial to "re-animating" trans bodies. My cases are short films from North America in which stop-animation is used to demonstrate the morphing qualities of bodies, which transform in defiance of human or animal, from breast to bird or deer to boy. Much like the celebrated animated drawings of William Kentridge, these images are both fantastical and narrative. To better understand the *tranimacies* at work in *The Hawker* (Coco Riot & Elisha Lim 2012 CA), *Revise/Disguise* (Madsen Minx 2011 US), and *Love is a Hunter* (Jess McCormack 2012 CA), I enter into dialogue each short animation with a theorist. Namely, I call upon Jack Halberstam's work on the queerness of 'revolting' animation, Vivian Sobchack's concern with animation being simply another form of automation, and Sianne Ngai's call for examining the minor aesthetic category of cute and the racial history of animatedness that it can include. My paper will contribute to making new linkages between the somatechnics of animation and transgender practices.

Wibke Straube

Magical Realism in Trans Cinema and the Cinematic Technologies of Utopia

In this presentation I would like to investigate the transfeminist and queerfeminist potential of transgender feature films. These films, partly mainstream (e.g., *The Crying Game* (1992), *Transamerica* (2005)) but also independent productions (e.g. *By Hook or By Crook* (2001), *Open* (2010)), often include normalising, exploitative and limiting dimensions in their representations of trans embodiment and trans positionality.

Trans films nevertheless provide identificatory pleasures for transfeminist and queerfeminist audiences. I would like to draw in this paper on these pleasures in the films. I call these moments in the films exit scapes and I intend to articulate them in the context of this conference as technologies of utopia. This approach resonates in the concept of *somatechnics* developed by Susan Stryker and Nikki Sullivan as well as in José Muñoz's concept of *queer futurities* and Sara Ahmed's *politics of the hap*.

I would like to present this paper especially in relation to scenes of magical realism in the South-Korean film *Cheonhajangsa Madonna* (engl. *Like a Virgin*, Hae-jun Lee/ Hae-yeong Lee, 2006) as well as the recent Franco-Canadian production *Laurence Anyways* (Xavier Dolan, 2012). In these films the trans characters envision events others cannot see - the sighting of a fairy, or a strange 'rain' of objects falling from the sky.

I would like to elaborate in this paper on how these scenes of magical realism in trans cinema revise and rework the colonialist gestures of the scopophilic medium cinema. I further would like to inquire in which way these magic moments becomes a multisensorially embodied technology of refusal as well as utopian possibility.

Jenny Sundén

“Neo-Victorian Somatechnics: Time, Femininity, and Race Out of Joint”

For a feminist scholar of technology, contemporary steampunk cultures incorporate several interesting elements. They embrace playful ways of relating to technology. They contain thrifty Do-It-Yourself strategies and ethics of recycling, linking the crafting of sexually specific bodies to imaginative time-play. They involve an intermingling of technological extensions with modes of embodiment and costuming. Steampunk has quite fittingly been described as an aesthetic technological movement, centrally concerned with re-imagining a particular past – the Victorian England interlaced with the Industrial Revolution.

The corset is an emblematic Victorian, industrial technology in steampunk costuming, altering bodies and affects as well as aesthetics and politics. This paper uses Elizabeth Freeman’s (2010) notion of ‘temporal drag’ as embodied enactments of anachronism as a way of drawing attention to the tangible, physical, tactile dimensions of temporal play. The corset in steampunk appears to generate a desire for history as it were, pressed up against the body, providing a feeling of femininity out of joint through a syncopated interplay between bodies and temporal orders.

Then again, this understanding begs the question: what does it mean to be pressed against the history of white, Victorian, middle-class, imperialist femininity? To whom is this a pleasurable experience? And how would it feel to be out of joint with such history in terms of race, or class? With an evocation of Victorian aesthetics come violent stories of the British Empire and colonialism. How far may the Victorian era be ‘punked’, twisted, or modified by a contemporary movement that takes as its inspiration this very time period?

Marianna Szczygielska

Transpecies Encounters and the Traffic in Animals

In search for the “missing links” of queer posthumanist discourses some nonhuman animals play a crucial role in setting up new possible ontologies of sexual diversity. In my paper I focus on media representations of “wild and weird” nonhumans that became rich semiotic-material referents of human sexuality and gender diversity: maned lionesses, spotted hyena, and sea slug *Chromodoris reticulata* known for its “disposable penis”. I analyze recent media articles that come on the crossroads of popular and scientific explanations of these cases. I want to trace the trajectory of discourses on animal sex which transgress the borders of naturalized taxonomic divisions and their geopolitical settings – I see it as two-way traffic. Paraphrasing Gayle Rubin, I argue that talking about ‘*the traffic in animals*’ could reveal new tropes, particularly useful for posthumanist thought, in what she calls ‘the sex/gender system’ – “the set of arrangement by which a society transfers biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied.” Following Foucault’s remark on the emergence of the homosexual as a species, I argue that the term *species* as a classificatory category becomes crucial in analyzing this porous movement along with its material consequences in social and political life. Inspired by recent scholarship on “animal transsex”, “animacies” and “interspecies” relationships I suggest exploring the *transpecies intimacies* that critically engage the erotics of human attention to nonhuman animal sex, and go beyond the romanticizing or celebratory approach to “queer animals”.

Renita Sörensdotter

Vulvar Pain and Pussy Power

Heteronormativity permeate our culture, which also goes for sexual practice. How heteronormative scripts affects sexual practice becomes clear when the body cannot conform to expected performances of sexual practice. In my study about women suffering from vulvar pain, mainly from vulvar vestibulitis (a painful genital condition located at the vaginal opening) it is clear that the relation to ones genitals and to sexual practice changes by the pain and its effects. In order to avoid pain and get pleasure out of the sexual encounter these women need to redefine their sexual practice and have to connect to their genitals in a new way. In another study I've done about staff at youth clinics and how they handle women with vulvar pain, the results show that part of the treatment consists of helping the patients to get to know their genitals and the pain, and also learn to differentiate between pleasure and pain. Part of getting better from the pain or be able to live with it comes, in other words, by getting to know ones genitals and rethink sexual practice. During this process norms for gender and sexuality are both challenged and reinforced. The purpose of this paper is to explore how norms for gender and sexuality affect the lived experience of genitals, the body, sexual practices and how knowledge about the genitals and trying other forms of sexual practice can change pain, life and sexuality.

Peeter Tammeveski

When various somatechnics meet: sex, race, nation, and science in postcolonial Estonia in the 1920s.

In the first half of the 1920s, Alexander Lipschütz was a leading scholar of ‘sex hormones’ and intersexuality. His work routinely trafficked between humans and animals, normalcy and monstrosity, and his scholarship was closely followed in Europe and the U.S. Born in Riga, Lipschütz was Jewish, and he received his professional training in Germany and Switzerland. I analyze Lipschütz’s research program, 1919-1926, when he worked at the University of Tartu in postcolonial Estonia. I am particularly interested in the presence and absence of linkages between his research and the various somatechnics of the Estonian Republic that was established in 1918, breaking off from the Russian Empire. As many other postcolonial nations, Estonians developed their own versions of national somatechnics of ethnicity, race, sex, sexuality, and health, aimed at decolonizing and modernizing their bodies and souls. What linked Estonian elite nationalist discourses and practices of human bodies and Lipschütz’s work were at least two shared assumptions: (a) bodies contained truths which could be studied scientifically by men, and (b) sexual dimorphism and heterosexuality were normal, and remedies had to be found against transgressive and monstrous bodies. There were also disconnects. For instance, only a small number of people in Estonia could understand Lipschütz’s complex scientific work, and the results of his work could not be easily coopted by nationalist discourses. Also, Lipschütz wasn’t an ethnic Estonian and questions were raised about how well he fit into the Estonian national academic system that was supposed to serve the ethnoracially defined nation.

Ashley Tellis

Rebuilding a Feminist Critique of Rape

On December 16, 2012, a young woman was brutally gangraped, assaulted and abused (later leading to her death) in Delhi. The event raised a storm of protest that brought to the fore the glaring absence of a feminist movement in contemporary India, what seemed like a frightening amnesia about the history of the Indian feminist engagement with rape and the staggeringly reactionary popular consciousness around rape. Engaging with some of the manifestations of that moment, I hope to bring a sexual minority, feminist critique of them and try and build a framework within which to articulate a critique of the pervasive culture of rape in India/South Asia which is also a campaign against it.

Maria Temmes

"Finnish mice" and the Question of the Unnatural

The aim of my paper is to examine the division between natural and unnatural in relation to disease studies and reproduction. My paper focuses on the genetically modified mice models used in the research on the "Finnish Disease Heritage" (FDH). In Finland, there are 36 diseases, all caused by a single gene, which are categorized as being part of FDH. These diseases are connected with the idea of Finnishness because they appear almost exclusively among the people with Finnish ancestors. The current studies of these diseases rely strongly on genetically modified mice models that offer possibilities to examine different treatment possibilities. The aim of my paper is to offer a comparative reading about the ways in which the notion of unnaturalness is differently connected to the "Finnish disease" (which is seen as a result of cultural, political and geographical isolation that is expected to cease with freer population movement) and the mouse model (which is manipulated by the scientists to model the "Finnish disease"). Although these two concepts have different relation to the notion of unnatural, which can be seen in relation to human/animal differentiation in biomedical research, I suggest that examining this comparison via the notion of unnatural can offer a possibility to ask how the vision of "normal reproduction" is interlinked both to the notion of the Finnish disease and the mouse model.

Patricia Treusch

Robots & Us: Discussing Anthropomorphism and Prostheses in Loops.

Contemporary robotics focuses on the figure of the humanoid, the anthropomorphic robot, becoming 'our' companion and co-worker. Making everyday life more comfortable also includes to 'enhance us' through a set of humanoid technologies: the possible anthropomorphic prostheses for everyone, or the spare body parts for some. The humanoid is a "model organism" (Suchman 2011), operating as disclosing agent for 'our' knowing and being of the world. How to engage with this figure of human optimization? I propose to dis-entangle the links between labor and "compulsory able-bodiedness" (McRuer 2006) within anthropomorphic robotics. With my socio-ethnography, I intend to analyze humanoids through processes of co-shaping between work and en-/disabling (human) embodiments implied in the field.

The "reverse feedback loops" (Hayles 2003) between machine and organism, in which the one becomes the model for the other and vice versa, can be re-framed as reverse feedback loops along the doubling, modeling, enabling and disabling of bodies through capabilities in the performative enactment of humanoid/human relations.

With discussing anthropomorphism and prostheses in loops, I would like to contribute to debates about robotic prostheses by not only tracing the humanoid as disclosing, but also as re-opening for disclosed assumptions about what a body is or could become capable of. The unfixing of categorical closings through embodied humanoid-human-assemblages of capabilities could then become the point of departure to explore human/humanoid relations of prostheses differently, following a queer desire for playful, but responsible linkages between machine and organism.

Alyosxa Tudor

dis_possessing embodied be_longing, postcolonializing migration: analyses of genderism_racism_migratism

There is a tendency in European and esp. German research on migration to decontextualize migration and to disconnect the term from colonialism. In contrast I suggest, from a perspective discriminated by migratism and genderism but privileged by racism (understood as colonialist racism), to critically differentiate between racism and migratism in the analyses of Europeanized power relations. I argue that the equalization of racism and migratism and the homogenizing use of 'culture' and 'nation' in the field of Critical Migration/Feminist Studies (in the German/Western European context) renders Black Germans or Europeans of Color unthinkable, the abject positions of migration discourses – even in knowledge productions on 'migration' with critical intentions. Therefore I call for the postcolonialization of analyzing 'migration'.

In order to analyze the connections between power relations, embodiments, and de_abjectifications I propose the conceptualization of 'critical positionings' which differentiates between the analytical dimension of social (embodied) localizations and the activist dimension of politics of positioning. Based on anti-/contra_racist, anti-genderist and anti-/contra_migratist knowledge productions, my approach reformulates politics of location as politics of positioning.

I carve out my arguments by analyzing examples of the uses of notions as 'Black', 'white' and 'migrant' in Feminist and Critical Migration Studies in the European context. My investigation focuses on the un_intelligibilization of embodied localizations. Politics of positioning is the politicization of these embodied localizations constructed by interdependent power relations like genderism, racism and migratism. The conceptualization intervenes in the effects of power relations and reformulates counterhegemonic understandings of be_longing.

Elina Vaahtera & Emmi Vähäpassi

The desire for disability as a cultural problem

We ask how do the medical and popular accounts concerning transableism, i.e., desire to become disabled, circulate public feelings and judgements over which feelings towards disabled bodies count as (in)sane.

We analyze medical texts concerning desire for disability, together with popular representations, such as a Youtube video depicting Jerry Springer –show with a trans woman who has amputated her legs. We regard both psychiatric articles and popular representations as articulations of the same cultural context, a context in which disability, able-bodiedness, and the cultural politics of enticing and legitimizing certain feelings - and not others - towards disabled bodies are all constructed as the articulation of social and cultural relations.

Transableism has been culturally associated with transgender. This association has been seen by some as shaming transgender people. However, this wish to untangle transgender from transableism has been unpacked by Susan Stryker and Nikki Sullivan, who have reminded us of the forgotten historical links between transgender, the concept of amputation and mayhem statutes, as well as the complicated and contradictory work that the concept of bodily integrity has been put to (Stryker & Sullivan 2009; Meyerowitz 2002).

We analyze transableid.org and biid.info, places where transableism is represented as a movement, and where its relationship to disability activism is negotiated. The relations between what sort of body modification can a person sensibly want, or conduct, and what sort of feelings towards modified bodies are pathologized or enticed, also have to do with the category of madness, which is ambivalently situated within the umbrella of disability activism and disability studies (Mollow 2006).

Our aim is to critically engage the politics of feelings, such as compassion, pity, disgust and desire, which are circulated and enticed or stigmatized around transableism and disabled bodies more widely, and to think how this politics of emotions is entangled with the “contours of ableism” (Campbell 2009).

Anthony Clair Wagner

Be(com)ing Other: Rereading the Alien Quadrilogy Films

In my rereading of the *Alien Quadrilogy* films (1979, 1986, 1992, 1997) in my dissertation, I analyze how these movies challenge stereotypes of „animate hierarchies of possible acts“ (Chen). Although based on the classical themes of science fiction film, such as the exploitation and colonialization of space by a white, male hero fighting aliens, the *Quadrilogy* repeatedly defies viewer expectations. Starting with *Alien* (1979) critics have focused on the remarkable innovation of casting a woman, Sigourney Weaver as Lt. Ripley, the hero-survivor, and on an alien impregnating a man. A flood of outstanding feminist readings followed, focussing on the „monstrous feminine“ and the „mother destroyer“ (Creed). However, many of the films’ other, more audacious, boundary transgressions have been overlooked.

My rereading approaches the *Quadrilogy* from the perspective of a transgender person who has appropriated the figure of the monstrous Other. My analysis follows Ripley from her first encounter with the Other all the way through to her final transformation. I will show how the boundaries between animate-inanimate, active-passive, alive-dead, male-female, human-monster, and so on are violated throughout the movies. Most interestingly, as the movies progress, we see the „proper“ order of things not only threatened but actually replaced by the chaos associated with the monstrous Others, until finally, in *Alien Resurrection*, Ripley has not only become the „missing link“ between humans and aliens, but has actually rejected both in favour of the possibility of an absolutely transgressive and transformative „queer“ future.

Caroline Walters

Expanding Boundaries: Queering Fat Sexuality and BDSM Pornography

Mainstream media perpetuates the norm that sexuality - and being sexually desirable - predominantly involves being white, able bodied, thin and cis-gendered what Butler describes as the 'heterosexual matrix' (Gender Trouble, 1991, p. 151, note 6). In Western society putting the terms 'fat' and 'sex' together is transgressive because it is unexpected (Braziel, 2001) and contravenes hegemonic notions of sexual practice. It challenges the dominance of the 'Obesity Epidemic', where fat is a failure that must be altered (White, 2012). Fat sex is left in the margins of the media, often absent, occurring as a joke (*Drop Dead Diva*, 2009), or the focus of body image anxieties (*Girls*, 2012-13). When a representation challenges one norm, it can be easier to transgress others simultaneously (Rubin, 1984). Owing to this I will consider fat sexuality and BDSM (Bondage, Domination, Submission, Sadism, Masochism) pornography together. Using the anti-social turn in Queer Theory (Edelman, 2004 and Halberstam, 2008) I examine ways that BDSM subverts mainstream sexual norms through the eroticisation of the whole body and challenging heteronormative genital sexuality. While BDSM can be subversive, dominant pornographic representations (e.g. kink.com) reify mainstream norms (white, able bodied, thin and cis-gendered people), leaving fat people in the margins. In this paper I will offer a way to expand BDSM's boundaries to include fat bodies, through an examination of the pornographic site paddedkink.com and extracts from interviews with its owner Kelly Shibari.

Marja Vehviläinen

Eating selves, naturecultures, and hierarchies of species

In the paper, I examine how embodied eating selves are produced in the everyday practices of eating and food production. In the analysis I use feminist material-discursive approaches and especially Donna Haraway's (2008) notion of companion species. Eating selves are shaped, become with, in situated naturecultures, linked to bio-socio-technical apparatuses across the globe, similarly to their relations among companion species. The politics of companion species pays attention to respect in the practices of producing and eating other species. The paper is based on a qualitative empirical research in Finland in 2010-2011: 1) memory work on ecological concerns in one's everyday life among seven researchers, including the author; 2) interviews of ten participants of a communal urban agriculture movement; and 3) an institutional ethnography of a large women's home economics organisation (NGO) that focuses on everyday wellbeing, and especially the practices of food, and has integrated ecological concerns in its activity for decades. Eating selves in the empirical material are defined through identifications in vegetarian, mixed food and meat eating. Simultaneously they use and reproduce situated versions of the hierarchy between species that the feminist animal ethics tradition has pointed to. Eating selves are made in everyday eating practices organized in the webs of consuming transcorporeal bodies, local communities and their knowledge, institutions, media, understandings of eating and biology, food production dominated by international companies, and local food production, including practices of growing and gathering food, in local naturecultures.

Abraham Weil

Transgender Revolution

We do not grow absolutely. Chronologically. We grow partially. We are relative. We are mature in one realm. Childish in another. The Past. Present. And future mingle and pull us backward. Forward. Or fix us in the present. We are made up of layers. Cells. Constellations. - Anais Nin.

This paper will examine trans*ition as a constant cultural vibration. Considering trans-embodiment as an act of revolution I will suggest that through various layers of transition, somatechnical bodies form assemblages that are always already revolutionary and technologized. Section I will examine two seemingly disparate scenes—“natural” disaster and transgender embodiment—to analyze how power flows through and upon different bodies and spaces, constructing political, carceral, and medical subjects in the process.

Section II will continue this discussion by using Foucault’s concepts of governmentality and biopower to observe animated lines between human/non-human, and the ways in which these both are managed by the State and subvert State categorization. The goal of this section is two-fold: First, considering the marked absence of gender analysis in Foucault’s work I will ask what Foucault offers the idea of transgender revolution. Second, I ask how trans- bodies operate within and outside of biopolitical management. Section III will examine Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizome and New Materialism literature (Clough 2007; Coole and Frost 2010; Puar and Clough 2012; Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012). I use this to shore up questions concerning the ways geographic locations move *through* trans* subjects making them legible (or not) and the ways in which political movements (read: revolution) are possible in these contexts and what somatechic inquires offer when forming politics.

Sigrid Vertommen

Colonizing the politics of reproduction in Israel-Palestine

According to Meira Weiss (2002) Israeli society is obsessed with fertility, in a way that not only focuses on “quality” and the so called quest for the perfect baby, but also on “quantity”. Israel’s reproductive policies are considered to be highly pronatalist. It has more fertility clinics per capita than any other country in the world. Assisted reproductive technologies as in vitro fertilisation, intracytoplasmic sperm injection, donor insemination, surrogacy, egg donation and cryopreservation are not only widely accepted and extremely popular in Israel, but they are also quasi fully state sponsored. However, as Rhoda Kanaaneh (2002) has rightly pointed out, this state-sponsored pronatalism should be viewed as a selective pronatalism since it is mostly the Jewish part and not the Arab “residual” part of the nation that is being encouraged to 'multiply and be fruitful'. There is a national preoccupation over too many Palestinian/Arab bodies and too few Jewish bodies, and even fewer Jewish bodies of the right Ashkenazi type. The urge to “reproduce Jews” has often been explained in a culturalist way, focusing on the centrality of reproduction in Judaism and the Jewish culture. I will argue that instead of strictly focusing on cultural narratives of Jewishness to explain Israel’s pronatalist stance, one should also take into consideration the centrality of reproduction within the Zionist settler colonial project. I will present a case study on the stolen Yemenite children in Israel, comparing it to the early 20th century policies of indigenous child removal in settler colonial Australia and America. I will argue that in order to decolonize the Israeli reproductive health policies, we first need to “colonize” it. This implies coming to terms with the fact that the Israeli reproductive policies were produced and are reproduced within a settler-colonial logic of elimination of the Oriental Other (Wolfe, 2007).

Polina Vlasenko

From Vulnerability to The Ethics of Care: Meeting the Body in the practice of IVF in Ukraine

In my research I am exploring how women's bodies come to matter both globally and locally in the context of the implementation of assisted reproductive technologies in Ukraine. I argue that the examination of the politics of assisted reproduction in Ukraine is particularly important since it reveals the emergence of the new procreative imagery, new rationalities of government and new reproductive markets, which generate transnational reproductive travel. In order to expose the active role both technology and the women's bodies play in these processes, I chose to rely on the theoretical synthesis of the account of biopower with ANT and agential realism. In particular, I am asking 1) how the discourse-matter intra-action in the field of IVF produces and shapes women's embodiment and subjectivation, how it transforms the lived experience of women and the assumptions they make about reproduction, motherhood and kinship; and, 2) what are the power relations that structure the discourse and use of assisted reproductive technologies and how they can be spatially and temporally situated on the global scale. In order to answer these questions I have examined the public and parliamentary debate about assisted reproduction and have conducted a number of interviews in Kharkiv and Kyiv with feminists, who analyze the subject in question, medical practitioners in infertility clinics and women, who experienced IVF treatment. I also focused on material-discursive practices of obstetricians and gynecologists in managing infertility, conception and pregnancy through doing a participant observation in infertility clinic "Implant" in Kharkiv.

Andrea Zittlau

Becoming White: Skin diseases and the black body in the nineteenth century

My paper is concerned with nineteenth-century American medical narratives that helped to create and justify an understanding of the black body as the diseased and other. While comparative anatomy produced several concepts of human races and constructed the black body as the “animal other” or the “missing link,” other branches of the medical profession relied on an understanding of the black body as the diseased white body (instead of the radical other). This discourse enabled extreme experimentation on black bodies in order to cure and understand diseases of privileged Euro-Americans. My analysis will be based on medical textbooks of skin diseases that concerned themselves with issues of pigmentation (as pathology) in particular. The black skin is here pathologized to confirm narratives of normal bodies (that were/are usually white and male). And yet, cases in which black skin becomes white (e.g. Vitiligo or Albinism) do not fit into medical and biological narratives of white supremacy. The medical struggle to make sense of these skin changes will be at the heart of my investigation and reveal processes of medical myth-making that have not lost their attraction in present times. Concerning my theoretical framework, I depart from Karla Holloway’s recent book *Private Bodies, Public Texts* (2011), in which she develops the concept of a “cultural bioethics” to approach medical perceptions of African American bodies. However, discourses of the normal and pathological also always rely on George Canguilhem and Michel Foucault as well as Judith Butler’s thoughts on normativization.

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