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**2015
CONFERENCE
LESBIAN FEMINISM/S
NOW!**

2015 LESBIAN LIVES | ABSTRACTS
FRIDAY 20 & SATURDAY 21 FEBRUARY



@lesbianlives #lesbianlives2015



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ABOUT THE JOURNAL

The *Journal of Lesbian Studies* examines the cultural, historical, and interpersonal impact of the lesbian experience on society, keeping all readers – professional, academic, or general – informed and up-to-date on current findings, resources, and community concerns. The journal is interdisciplinary in scope and is essential reading for independent scholars, lay people, professors, and students.

The *Journal of Lesbian Studies* fosters new scholarship without cutting ties to grassroots activism. The journal gives the lesbian experience an international and multicultural voice, presenting book reviews, poetry, letters to the editor, debates, and commentaries.

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2015 CONFERENCE LESBIAN FEMINISM/S NOW!

Welcome to the 2015 Lesbian Lives Conference!

Welcome to the 2015 Lesbian Lives conference. Once again we have a jam packed programme, which offers an exciting mix of papers, workshops, films and performances. The parallel sessions will spoil you for choice, with presenters hailing from all over the world. We are excited to have you all here and can't wait to see what will happen over the next two days.

Some important information:

1. Most of the sessions are in the Grand Parade building. The main keynotes will happen in the Sallis Benny theatre.
2. The Grand Parade café will be open during the conference and lunches and refreshments will be served here or in one of the conference rooms.
3. Due to the amount of people who wish to present, we have scheduled a number of sessions in a nearby building, the Pavilion Parade. To find Pavilion Parade, please exit the Grand Parade building onto the main road, take a left and follow the path towards the sea. Cross over the pedestrian cross still heading for the sea and then take the next left. Pavilion Parade is the first door on the left (right across from the Pavilion itself!). Please note that there are steps to Pavilion Parade and so it is not wheelchair accessible. We apologise for this but they were the only rooms available.
4. Some sessions are also in the Marlborough Theatre (upstairs in the Marlborough Pub). This is beside Pavilion Parade. It also has stepped access at the front and wheelchair access to the side of the venue.
5. The Marlborough Pub is the official Lesbian Lives Pub and will be offering Happy Hour prices to all delegates. This is a local community pub that offers an open and welcoming atmosphere to all genders.
6. The Lesbian Lives After Party is run by Femrock, at Envy. Tickets are £5 in advance (£7 on the night) and will be sold on Friday during the lunch break.



Please do tweet to the @lesbianlives account and use the #lesbianlives2015

We hope that you enjoy Lesbian Lives 2015.

The Lesbian Lives organising team

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**LESBIAN LIVES CONFERENCE 2015: LESBIAN FEMINISMS NOW!
20TH AND 21ST FEBRUARY 2015**

UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON

ABSTRACTS - FRIDAY

1A QUEER SPATIALITIES AND LESBIAN INTERSECTIONS

[IN SALLIS BENNEY]

**SHEILA PARDOE: BORDERS AND BETROTHALS: QUEER TOURISM AND TORONTO'S
GRAND PRIDE WEDDING**

Toronto – June 26, 2014: 110 queer couples married at the largest ever queer wedding held in North America. The Grand Pride Wedding was an affiliated WorldPride Toronto event featuring a gothic mansion venue, red carpet entrance and twelve officiants from diverse faiths. The wedding's intentions were threefold: 1) showcase Toronto as an equal marriage rights leader during WorldPride; 2) confirm Toronto's identity globally as a queer leisure destination and; 3) create a WorldPride legacy while strengthening a global queer community. Queer couples from around the world were invited to participate in a right/rite not necessarily available to queers 'back home'. However, not all who applied could take part in the wedding. National borders, visas and financial restrictions prevented many queer couples from getting married.

Expanding upon Jasbir Puar's discussions of queer postcolonial tourism and homonationalism, and Sara Ahmed's queer phenomenology that charts who is mobile and seen, this paper uses the Grand Pride Wedding as a means of problematizing two key concerns: the implications of utilizing a minority group to promote tourism and commerce, and the notion that a global queer community is unconditionally mobile and united. Applying queer and feminist methodologies, this work provides the author's own observations as a lesbian-

identified organizer and spectator of the event. Concurrently, the study examines touristic ephemera, social and news media and interviews conducted by the author with couples who were excluded from the wedding to reflect on the concerns identified above. Through a critical lesbian feminist approach, the paper argues that although the city welcomed and promoted a global queer community, a variety of queer 'others' – lesbians, working-lower class queers, and queers of colour for example – were left out. While Toronto's economy, tourism and image improved, those traditionally on the fringe of capital and mobility remained excluded from leisure, rights/rites and mobility.

Bio

Sheila Pardoe received her Masters in Immigration and Settlement Studies in 2011 from Ryerson University, Toronto. During her Masters, she analyzed the challenges racialized lesbian immigrants experience finding home in Toronto. Alongside Dr. Doreen Fumia, Pardoe's current work focuses on ethnographic accounts of ageing cisgender and transgender lesbians in Toronto and in Brighton, United Kingdom. In her present employment as Constituency Liaison with Toronto's municipal government, Pardoe project managed a renewal of Toronto's queer Village, overseeing 13 open-air murals painted across the queer neighbourhood. She was also the City of Toronto's lead organizer of the Grand Pride Wedding, the latest site of scholarly work for Pardoe. Recently, she presented her work at: *Lesbian Lives: The Modern Lesbian* (Brighton, 2013); *Simone de Beauvoir: Rethinking Race and Sexuality* (Montreal, 2013); and Ryerson's

LAINÉ ZISMAN NEWMAN: (UN)HAPPY HAUNTED HOUSES: QUEERING MAJORITARIAN SPACE THROUGH PROTEST AND PERFORMANCE

Allyson Mitchell's *Kill Joy's Kastle: A Lesbian Feminist Haunted House* drew over 700 people to its grand opening in Toronto, Ontario. The eager line-up of queers and allies gathering outside of Mitchell's long awaited installation demonstrated a need and desire for lesbian art and space. As primarily nomadic artists, the venues in which queer women perform have a significant impact on their artistic practice and how their work is received. Using Sara Ahmed's concepts of space and the feminist killjoy alongside José Muñoz's theorizations on queer negotiations of an oppressive majoritarian sphere, this research reflects on a subjective experience attending Mitchell's Toronto opening. While multiple ethnographic and theoretical studies have already been conducted on the noteworthy performances at the haunted house, rather than focusing this analysis on what occurred inside Mitchell's installation, this paper examines the line which formed outside the building, as a performance and unofficial protest for lesbian and queer women.

On October 16, 2013, while hundreds of spectators awaited entry into the haunted house, residents from the Toronto neighborhood called police to remove them from the streets. The residents' reaction and attempt to erase the queer presence from their space demonstrates how *Kill Joy's Kastle* did not merely satirically perform stereotypes attributed to Ahmed's feminist killjoy, but was itself a killjoy within the public sphere; The very presence of the house killing the joy of the "happy" family-friendly neighborhood in Toronto's west end. By taking up space for theatrical performance within a predominantly straight neighborhood, Mitchell's project not only created a physical space for queer women, but also challenged the assumed neutrality of heterosexual space. Through an examination of the intersections of queerness, feminism, performance and space, this work questions what happens when queer women take up majoritarian spaces, even if this spatial queering is only momentary.

Laine Zisman Newman received her MA in Drama in 2010 and her MFA in Documentary Media in 2013. She is currently a PhD student in Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies and Sexual Diversity Studies at the University of Toronto. Her practical and academic work focuses on creating and promoting equitable theatre practices for diverse creators and performers, particularly those who identify as queer women. She is presently co-organizing, *Equity in Theatre*, a new multi-pronged Canadian initiative aimed at addressing inequities in the performance industry. Zisman Newman is the founder and chair of the *Queer Theory Working Group* at the University of Toronto's Jackman Humanities Institute. Her creative and scholarly work has been published in

Canadian Theatre. Review; The Rusty Toque; Able Muse; Studies in Documentary Film; and Journal of Dance, Movement and Spiritualities.

MEGAN CHAWANSKY: THE NEXT ABBY WAMBACH: LESBIAN SPORTING CELEBRITY WITHIN SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE (SDP) PROJECTS

In 2012, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) announced that US Olympic soccer star, Abby Wambach, would serve as a 'Development Champion' and would assist the organisation in its efforts to empower girls and women around the world through the use of sport for development. The use and recent inclusion of celebrities in the realm of international development efforts has been explored by scholars from various disciplines (eg Chouliaraki, 2013; Clarke, 2009). Though a common practice within the SDP sector, it has received little attention within the SDP literature (Darnell, 2012) and to date there has been no exploration of how lesbian sporting celebrity might operate in the SDP context (Chawansky & Francombe, 2011, 2013). This paper explores the possibilities of lesbian sporting celebrity within the SDP sector via a case study of Abby Wambach. By critically exploring the presentation and representations of Wambach's celebrity and sexuality, this paper offers important insights on the politics of sexuality, race, nation, celebrity, colonialism, sporting feminism and offers new insights into how sport operates in international development contexts. Further, it continues to expand understandings of how heteronormativity operates in SDP spaces (Carney & Chawansky, 2014).

Bio

Dr. Megan Chawansky is currently a senior lecturer at the University of Brighton. She was awarded her PhD in Sport and Exercise Humanities from Ohio State University (USA) in 2008 and was a postdoctoral research officer at The University of Bath from 2009-2011. At present, Megan's research focuses on the transnational sport for development and peace (SDP) movement, and her research outputs have been both theoretical and applied.

ILANA ELOIT: FEMINIST TROUBLE: THE LESBIAN POLITICAL SUBJECT AND THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF AN ANTI-RACIST LESBIAN THOUGHT IN FRANCE (1970-1985)

Lesbian identity politics constitute a forgotten history of feminism in France. However, a deep look into that history not only reveals how the emergence of lesbian identities in the late seventies challenged second-wave definitions of the feminist subject, but it also highlights how such an emergence questioned in an unprecedented way the relationship between feminism and race politics. In the early seventies in France, and in the name of "sisterhood", being a woman was the only prerequisite to be a feminist, and differences among women were politically considered unimportant. "We, women" was the key to overthrow patriarchy. Such a definition of the feminist political subject stood in opposition with US "lesbian-feminism" where being a lesbian was a prerequisite in order to be a feminist. As such, if the American black feminist thought – known as Black feminism –, and later on the Chicana feminist thought, challenged, as early as the mid 1970s, the unity of the lesbian-feminist separatism by bringing up the issue of internal diversity among women, it is only in the very late 1970s that an autonomous lesbian subject appeared in France with the epistemological rupture brought by Monique Wittig. Interestingly, almost simultaneously with the emergence of such French autonomous lesbian groups, "minoritarian" lesbians – black lesbians, arabic lesbians or jewish lesbians – started interrogating the limits of a barred political subject – whether it is "We, women", or "We, lesbians".

This paper intends to insist on the particular emergence of these minoritarian lesbian subjectivities in the early and mid-eighties in France. It will reveal the existence of a prehistory of an anti-racist lesbian thought in France which has completely been forgotten. My paper will address three major points. First, it will show – in opposition to what is usually said about the supposed absence of Black feminism in France – that there has been an introduction of Black feminist thought in France in the eighties. Second, it will suggest the idea that Black feminism thought was introduced in France through lesbian groups and networks. Eventually, it will explore the political construction of such an historical oblivion in the French universalist context.

Ilana Eloit is a first-year PhD student at the Gender Institute of the London School of Economics and Political Science, under the supervision of Clare Hemmings. Her research work is focused on the construction of lesbian identities in France and the United States in the 1970's and 1980's. She holds a master degree from Sciences Po Paris, a master degree with Distinction from the University Paris 8 in Gender Studies where she studied under the supervision of Elsa Dorlin, and a degree in Art History from the Sorbonne. She is an associate researcher to the French research program "GEDI – Genre et Discriminations sexistes et homophobes" (Gender, and sexist and homophobic discriminations) coordinated by the University of Angers. She presented papers on the theme of French lesbian identities at the University of Warwick (UK), the University of Lausanne (Switzerland), the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Lyon (France), etc. In 2011, she co-curated a show at the Leslie/Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art in New York dealing with lesbian photography in the seventies and contemporary lesbian photography. She also worked at the MoMA in the Media and Performance Art Department, the Centre Pompidou Metz, and as a production assistant at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris.

1B British lesbian history

[in M2]

ELLEN RICKETTS: THE SAINT IN THE SHADOWS: CHRISTOPHER ST JOHN AND THE PROBLEM OF LESBIAN HISTORY

This paper offers a reflection on lesbian feminist and recent queer methodologies in placing lesbian lives in the early twentieth century. As a case-study, I discuss the unorthodox lives of three women who lived in a *menage à trois* in Smallhythe, Kent: the theatre director, Edith Craig (1869-1947), the writer and historian, Christopher St John (1971-1960), and the artist, Clare Atwood (1866-1962). The numerous problems of framing and defining lives which were lived beyond the norm of dyadic heterosexuality will be discussed in the context of evolving critical narratives which have been brought to bear on this remarkable trio. The role of artistic and literary production is instrumental for understanding their life together and the narratives they themselves constructed for representing it within the historical conditions of the early twentieth century, a time when lesbian identity was still under the process of being constituted. The focus of this paper then shifts primarily onto Christopher St John (born Christabel Marshall), whose melodramatic self-fashioning, combined with her conversion to Catholicism, make her an ambiguous figure who has frequently been either misinterpreted by biographers of the more famous Edith Craig or completely overshadowed by those around her. However, reading through the various layers of rumours and contradictions yields an interpretation of St John which places her within a productive dialogue with both conventional and unorthodox discourses and cultural representations which were in circulation during her lifetime. Discussing her life alongside her obscure literary output enables a far more nuanced understanding of this unjustly forgotten woman and the ways in which she encoded her sexuality within her writing as she simultaneously lived and loved as a self-defined congenital lesbian.

Ellen Ricketts, University of Hull

BILLY GOODFELLOW: THE REBEL DYKES OF LONDON

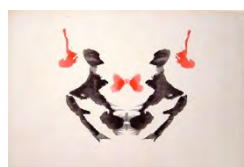
Before there were queer activists, before there were Riot Grrls there were the Rebel Dykes of London. We were young, we were feminists, we were anarchists, we were punks. We lived together in squats in Hackney and Brixton and at Greenham Camp (Green and Blue gates in particular). We went to political demo's every Saturday, we created squatted creches and bookshops and Wild Women Weekends (a fore runner of Ladyfests), feminist newspapers and magazines, like Quim, Feminaxe and Shocking Pink. We had bands like Poison Girls and Well Oiled Sisters. We ran sex positive Lesbian S/M clubs such as Chain Reaction, we were trans friendly, we worked in the sex industry. We talked politics. We fought, we made up, we created and we loved.

This is one of those Rebel dykes stories the fight for the London Lesbian & Gay Centre using original flyers, notes picture and tapes, the S/M debate revisited..

Billy Goodfellow

Clawdd Dewi | aberaeroncymru

KATHERINE HUBBARD: 'HER RORSCHACH RESPONSES TO CARD III ARE...': A LESBIAN FEMINIST HISTORY OF THE WOMEN IN THE BRITISH PROJECTIVE TEST MOVEMENT



1. An old Victorian oil lamp. The shape of the lamp.
2. Two girls - at each side going to kiss each other. Big breasts, very slim, high heads, only one leg.
3. Red lipstick.¹

The present paper will delve into the history of lesbian women and the Rorschach. Very little is known about the projective test movement in Britain and even less is known about the feminist and potentially lesbian women involved within the movement. In this paper I will explore the lives of six such women. My paper will primarily focus on the life and work of June Hopkins, the first person to publish an affirmative feminist paper on lesbian women using the Rorschach in Britain (Hopkins; 1969; 1970). Hopkins later came out as a lesbian and I adopt her research and biographical data to frame five other women's lives: Ann Kaldegg, Eva Bene, Effie Lillian Hutton, Margaret Lowenfeld and Theodora Alcock. In order to construct the lesbian feminist history of these women I draw upon a range of archival data, their publications and biographical information. In doing so, I contend with issues of 'presentism' and the *projection* of present understandings of feminism and sexuality onto the past. The mid-20th century period is especially contentious due to the attitudes of many Psychologists regarding 'homosexuality' at the time and the emerging equal rights movement. Therefore, I pay particular attention to intersections of psychological knowledge, lesbian identity, historical homophobia and feminist approaches. Overall this paper will provide an insight into the lives of these women and begin to reveal the compelling 'hidden history' of lesbian women and the Rorschach.

¹The above Rorschach responses were provided by a young woman 'who was deeply involved in a homosexual relationship' while at her stay in Toting Bec psychiatric hospital (Barker, 1970)

References:

Barker, G. B. (1970). The Female Homosexual in Hospital. *British Journal of Projective Psychology and Personality Study*, 14(2).

Hopkins, J. H. (1969). The Lesbian Personality. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 115(529), 1433–1436.
doi:10.1192/bjp.115.529.1433

Hopkins, J. H. (1970). Lesbian Signs on the Rorschach. *British Journal of Projective Psychology and Personality Study*, 14(2).

Bio

I am Katherine Hubbard a PhD student at the University of Surrey. Having conducted experimental sexuality research previously I am now primarily interested in the history of psychology with particular emphasis on queer and feminist narratives. My PhD concentrates on the history of the Rorschach ink blot test in Britain and the adoption of the Rorschach in popular culture (for example, its use in graphic novels). I am especially interested in questions about the interactions between science and society; the philosophy of science; questions of scientific truth and power and the histories of oppressed groups within psychological literature. I adopt a distinctly queer feminist perspective in my attempt to uncover such 'hidden histories'.

VAL BROWN: HACKETT-LOWTHER AND AN ALL-WOMEN AMBULANCE UNIT

The role of women in WW1 can be problematic, controversial, or underestimated. *"We have a great deal to offer beyond knitting and sales of work"*

I use the all women Hackett Lowther Unit to take a closer look at women ambulance drivers and there are photographs for demonstration. I describe the work of an ambulance driver and present a profile of the unit founder Miss May "Toupie" Lowther: I explain how the unit became attached to the French rather than the British Army, and consider whether women in wartime should – or should not - become actively belligerent. I explain that unlike others, this Unit, was caught up in the German Spring Offensive and retreat of 1918, experienced serving under shell fire and gas attacks, and was then invited to travel to defeated Germany with the victorious French occupying army. I show photos of the ambulances, quote two of the women who wrote afterwards of their experiences, and compare the fictional description of an All Women Unit described in Radscllyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* – the Breakspear Unit – with the reality of The Hackett Lowther Unit and consider the outcome.

I close with a return to the problematic interface between women who decline to practice anti war feminist pacifism and the traditional role of nurturing and caring. Should national wartime give licence to women to offer their own lives ? Is there an intruding aspect of *class* which should be examined ? Is there a balance ?

I end with photo of a Hackett Lowther driver who *has* been awarded the Croix de Guerre – see it on the left breast – attached with 2 others of interest.

1C FEMINIST AND LESBIAN COLLECTIVES AND COMMUNITY POLITICS

[IN PAVILION PARADE 103]

BURCU SENEL: TO BE VISIBLE OR INVISIBLE? AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY ON LESBIAN COMMUNITY IN ANKARA

Daily life is a sphere where different kinds of pressure and discipline and also practices upon these take place on one hand, but on the other hand *ordinary* people who are exposed to all wear down the requests of the powerful by interpreting them and with the tactics they produce. In the same way, as the interviews I made for about half a year in lesbian community in Ankara-Turkey show, lesbians are often the subjects of different kinds of discrimination, harassment and violence in their daily lives, also in LGBTI community; nevertheless they are not passive receivers of the pressure and discrimination they are surrounded, in contrast they are *subjects* who have the potential to use the resistance possibilities daily life harbors inside and to create space for themselves to move free. In relation, this study, which is based on a qualitative research and feminist methodology, has its basis on the stories of eleven lesbians as they identify themselves. It will explore their experiences of stigma from all aspects together with a large spectrum of coping practices ranging from individual tactics to collective resistance. As a research which does not have the purpose of making generalizations and covers individual experiences, it at the same time aims at taking attention to the intersecting processes of the experiences, questioning their roots and opening new paths for asking new questions.

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SIAN BRIDE: LESBIAN FEMINISMS AND ROLLER DERBY

“We’re creating this space where people who were ‘the other’ in sports could finally be the ‘the’”

-Sour Applebottom

The first form of roller derby was conceived in 1935, and took the form of an endurance race.¹ Men and women skated by the same rules and were paid equally in what was considered a decent job during the depression. Since then it has fallen into obscurity, been rekindled several times and taken many forms. Contemporary roller derby was revived in the early 2000’s by a group of women from the rock bars of Austen, Texas.²

Roller derby in itself has been thought of as challenging heteronormativity and subverting gender roles.³ A quick survey around my own league found that among the thirty or so women I joined with, only three identify as ‘straight.’ This is not always the case, and some queer women felt that they were the minority within not only their leagues, but where they lived. Vagine Regime is a queer roller derby collective, made up of queer skaters from all over the world.⁴ They claim that their ‘mission’ is:

¹ Catherine Mabe, *Roller Derby: The History and All-Girl Revival of the Greatest Sport on Wheels* (Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2007), 23.

² Michael Brick, (2008-12-17). "Pushing the Limit: The Dude of Roller Derby and His Vision". *New York Times*, [Accessed 16/10/14].

³ Chris Bobel and Samantha Kwan, *Embodied Resistance: Challenging the Norms, Breaking the Rules* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2011).

⁴ Injure Rodgers, “The Vagine Regime- interview with Injure Rodgers aka Matron of Muff,” by Switchblade Siouxie, <http://www.fracturemag.com/derby/features/vagine-regime,06/12/2008>, [Accessed 17/10/2014].

To build an international community of queer derby folk. Through a commitment to inclusive solidarity we hope to create networking opportunities, cultivate acceptance, and foster derby love matches. We endeavour to dominate challenge scrimmages with our traveling Team Vagine, inspire awesome cheerleaders, and throw brilliant parties for all to attend.⁵

Though first and foremost roller derby players and supporters, the Vagine Regime are also activists; they skate pride marches, organise protests and recently changed the life of a ten year old transgender girl named Crystal. The documentary *In the Turn* follows Crystal and her relationship with the league. The makers state:

Tormented at school by teachers and peers alike, [Crystal] faces daily assaults in the form of insults and physical altercations. The pain she endures at school takes a toll on not only her self-esteem, but also on the emotional stability of her family...After being denied the right to join local athletics teams due to her gender, Crystal and her mom serendipitously discover the Vagine Regime, an international queer collective of roller derby players comprised of people of all shapes, sizes, backgrounds and identities. The Vagine Regime not only accepts Crystal, but actively supports her journey. Crystal emerges from exclusion into empowerment: she steps out of the shadows and onto the track...[the documentary] weaves Crystal's story into the broader narrative of the evolution of roller derby from a niche sport into a social movement with strong roots in the LGBTQ community.⁶

This paper will examine sexuality, embodiment and feminism in roller derby with particular reference to *In the Turn*, the Vagine Regime, and post-modern continental philosophy. I shall go on to argue that roller derby is an enactment through which lesbian feminisms can be athletic, fun, supportive and inclusive.

CLAIRE CARTER: QUEER PHYSICAL CULTURE: EMBRACING COMPLEXITIES OF GENDER IDENTITIES AND COMMUNITY POLITICS

For many queer women and individuals, physical culture - and sports teams in particular- are a means find and become part of community. Community is often imagined as a space of common beliefs, shared values and/or common purpose. Based upon interviews with over thirty queer women and individuals from three Canadian cities (Toronto, Vancouver and Regina), community dynamics with respect to the recognition of diverse embodiments - from femme invisibility, racism and trans acceptance, to a preference for androgyny, and fat phobia - ignite uncertainties about the idealism of community. This paper examines the complexities of queer physical culture and offers ways to re-imagine community that contribute to lesbian and queer feminisms now.

n.b. I use queer women and individuals to reflect the diverse gender and sexual identities of people who participated in the research.

Claire Carter -Assistant Professor | Women's and Gender Studies, University of Regina

AIDA BARDACHE, BELÉN ZER, CRISTINA GOZALO MARTÍNEZ: MUJERES, BOLLERAS Y TRANS. EXPERIENCES FROM THE DISSIDENCE: THE SPANISH AUTONOMOUS TRANSFEMINIST MOVEMENT

With this work, we aim to portray the debates that are taking place within the new autonomous lesbian feminist movements that are flourishing in Spain, focusing on Madrid and Barcelona. We will show how these seem to be influenced by the current socio-political moment in which the country is immersed and how they articulate to fight against the conservative political advance. We will delve into the characteristics of these new lesbian collectives, their action dynamics and self-developed language, drawn from the experiences of lesbian feminist groups of the 90's. From our position as activists who work within queer/trans/dykes circles, we would like to show how the self-nominated transfeminist movement in Spain works as a transfrontier space. This is

⁵ Vagine Regime Mission Statement, https://www.facebook.com/Vagtastic/info?ref=page_internal, [Accessed 17/10/2014].

because it works creating alliances and networks, not only on an international level, but also with other community groups such as sex workers, immigrants, people with functional diversity and non-normative sexualities and gender identities. This seems important, as it has led to a turning point within the bigger feminist movement because of the criticism that it makes of the “subject/subjects” central to feminism, and the practices that a more institutional type of feminism develops.

Additionally, we will address issues that are important for the *kuir-dyke* feminist debates. For example, one such issue involves "non-mixed" spaces in which the division is not based on gender but on other categories such as sexuality. Another important theme central to this debate are the discussions that put the body as a focal point, where we can see how questions around desire or practices such as post-porn or fat activism have their own space. Finally, new constructions around the uses of Spanish language to make visible realities that otherwise would not be mentioned, are emerging, such as the need to differentiate between “mujeres, bolleras y trans”.

Bios

Aida Bardache

Autonomous transfeminist activist and participant in autonomous action groups aimed to develop transfeminist culture and its didactic and training activities such as workshops. Aida has been involved in the social movement for the civil rights of Trans* and intersex people, and has played a role in anti-oppression, anti-capitalist and environmental groups. Currently working within collectives that fight against the end of violence between-genders (inter-gender) and within-genders (intra-gender).

Belén Zer

Documentalist in mass media, archived researcher and DJ. Activist in the 90's of the student Spanish movement and the LGBT collective, Rosa que te quiero Rosa (RQTR). Currently a member of the transfeminist collective of bike mechanics Cicliátrico.

Cristina Gozalo Martínez

Philosophy graduate (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid), MA in Gender Studies (University of Sussex) and MA in Secondary School Teaching (UNED). Recently involved in different activist feminist groups in Madrid. Interests in sexuality, gender and education and trans/feminist politics.

11.15-12.45PM PARALLEL SESSIONS 2

2A SEX, LESBIAN FEMINISM AND ACADEMIC BED-DEATH: TOWARDS A LUBRICATION OF THE “ISMS”

[IN SALLIS BENNEY]

Chair: Jane Czyzelska (Diva Magazine and Middlesex University)

Speakers:

CAMPBELLX :‘INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS’: HOW TO DE-COLONIZE / RECLAIM LESBIAN DESIRE

Abstract: Lesbian desire has fallen off the feminist agenda and into the hands of patriarchal profiteers. Is it possible to reclaim it as ours? How can we do that in an economic climate when our sexuality and sex is used to sell music, bolster careers, and physically attack lesbians in order to cure them? Quoting Audre Lorde – ‘Women are maintained at a distant/inferior position to be psychically milked, much the same way ants maintain colonies of aphids to provide a life-giving substance for their masters’ – Campbell’s paper reminds us

of how a truly intersectional and inclusive lesbian feminism can give power back to all women irrespective of gender and sexual orientation.

Bio:

CampbellX is an award-winning filmmaker (Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame, Screen Nation, Independent Spirit Awards) and writer director of the award-winning queer urban romcom feature film *Stud Life*. Campbell programmed the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival (now BFI Flare) for two years and was a juror for Outfest LGBT film festival in Los Angeles in 2013. Campbell gives seminars on the representation of people othered by mainstream media. They recently gave a talk at Tate Modern on "How to Love Being the Outsider" and at LFEST on "A Radical Manifesto for Loving Women". Campbell also presented a section on Masculine Fashion at Lesbian Lives 2012. Campbell is also a digital consultant for creative industries through poWWow.
Contact: blackmanvision@gmail.com **Links:** @Campbellx | www.blackmanvision.com

JANET JONES: 'HEY LESBIAN FEMINISM! DON'T TELL ME HOW TO HAVE SEX!' RADICAL FEMINIST SILENCING AND WHAT DISABLED LESBIANS DO IN BED

We don't talk about lesbians with disabilities and sex. This paper looks at feminist inclusion of lesbians with disabilities, their sexual identity and practice. It explores the experience of lesbians with disabilities in lesbian feminist discourse and their exclusion through the structural embedding of ableism in lesbian feminism. These issues need to be addressed if feminism today is to support agency for lesbians with disabilities:

- Sexual identities and practices of lesbians with disabilities, invisible and unsupported.
- Information and training for health professionals to support lesbians with disabilities to have sex.
- Negative lesbian feminist judgement on sexual practices, such as BDSM and sex work, which lesbians with impairments may experience as a reassertion of personal power
- How do we talk about lesbians and sex?

Bio:

Janet is a self-identified Butch Lesbian in her 50s who was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in her early 30s. Living with a deteriorating condition, she navigates losses of a changing body whilst relearning the expression of sexual identity in an ableist, heteronormative world. Her creative work is focused on explorations of inclusion, access and the stories of LGBT people, both with impairments and able bodied, especially navigations of health, social care and the built and cultural environment. Previous work includes the short film *Butch Losses*, (screened at Lesbian Lives in 2011 and 2012); collaborative writing with Joan Nestle in *Sinister Wisdom*, 2014, Fall issue 'Lesbian Exile'; talks and presentations for (among others) Gender and Sexuality (public talks series), London, May 2014, and the *Diva* panel debate on Queer female desire at LFest 2014. Janet is currently studying for an MA in Creative Media.

Contact: jonesyj08@gmail.com

JANE TRAIAS: INVISIBLE INTIMACIES: SEX AND THE OLDER LESBIAN

There are still huge cultural barriers to the contemplation of geriatric sex; in the case of older lesbians, the mechanisms of sexism, ageism and hetero-normativity combine to erase completely their agency as erotic subjects. This paper draws on a study of the lives of 400 self-identified lesbians over 60, to discuss the joys of older lesbian sex. In describing the intimate lives of her participants, Jane's paper aims to steer a new discursive path between the over-sexualised identity 'lesbian' and the asexual stereotype of the older woman, and to challenge the cultural assumptions which inhibit the discussion of older people's sexuality.

Bio:

Jane returned to academic study after a career in public education, gaining her PhD from the University of

Sussex in 2014. She speaks and publishes on LGBT ageing and in particular the lives of older lesbians; she has contributed to several books including *Queering Health: Critical Challenges to Normative Health and Healthcare* (PCCS Books, 2014). Her latest article, 'Old Lesbians: Community and Friendship' is currently in press with the *Journal of Lesbian Studies*. Jane is a Research Associate in the Sussex Centre for Cultural Studies.

Contact: jane.traies@gmail.com

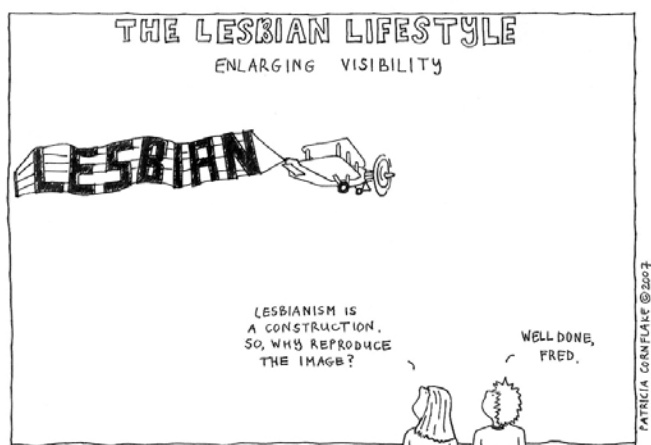
2B LESBIAN LOOKS: REGARDING THE LESBIAN GAZE

[IN M2]

SUZANNE VAN ROSSENBERG: AT THE INTERSECTION OF FEMINIST ART, LGBTI

ACTIVISM AND RESEARCH

In 2004 I graduated with a body of work called 'A Room with a Lesbian View', consisting of 93 drawings and paintings of a Gothic church in Leiden, the view from my window. I wanted to research whether the serial repetition of 'lesbian' art could be capable of subverting the coming into existence of art criteria that I thought to be hetero-normative. The series was both celebrated and disputed. It was called brilliant and renewing by some; a 'red herring', an old-fashioned masculinist gesture or not art at all by others. In the ten years that



followed I continued drawing, painting and photographing the lesbian view, but I also pursued a parallel career as a project manager within LGBTI activism in order to pay the bills. For my current PhD project I exactly deploy my transdisciplinary practice for analysing the economic and political structures of feminist art practices, LGBTI activism and feminist (art) theory, and how those structures correspond with the (re)production of 'gender' and other social inequality in those fields. It's an epistemological, transformative research approach in an attempt to contribute to improving the position of 'women' in the arts

and increase the constituency for queer and feminist art spaces by consistently stepping in and out of artistic, theoretical and activist structures. The presentation contains slides of my drawings, paintings and cartoons (Patricia Cornflake is my pseudonym) and can be experienced as a performative lecture — the feminist art work as the production of knowledge.

Bio:

Suzanne van Rossenberg is a PhD/MPhil candidate at the School of Art and Design of Middlesex University, London. Previously I worked as the managing director of Transgender Network Netherlands (2010-2012) and a project manager at COC Netherlands (2012-2013), the Dutch LGBT organisation. In 2004 I received my MA Fine Art (Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam/Plymouth University) with honours for a research project called 'A Room with a Lesbian View', consisting of drawings and paintings and short fictive stories. My work consists of drawings, water colours, cartoons, short stories, performative lectures, curating, art reviews and research. In 2009 I participated in the feminist exhibition 'Rebelle' in the MMKA in Arnhem (NL) (curator Mirjam Westen). It included the call 'What could a feminist art currency look like?', a collaborative initiative together with Francesco Ventrella, Carla Cruz, Nina Höchtl within the European Feminist Forum (2006-2009). In 2012 I was shortlisted for the Dutch Price for Young Art Critics, category Internet Critique. In February 2014 my report about LGBTI children's rights in The Netherlands was offered to the State Secretary of Health, Welfare and

Sport and the shadow report has recently been submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.
s.vanrossenberg@mdx.ac.uk

KARIN SELLBERG AND JOANNA BENECKE: FEMME IS A FEMINIST ISSUE

In a comment on the Dove Campaign for Real Women Susie Orbach argues that it's the responsibility of producers of contemporary media to show and represent the bodies of women as they "really are", not just the perfectly skinny, blonde, beautiful, and expressly feminine bodies of celebrity culture. In accordance with Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth*, Orbach thus states that we should reject the images of feminine beauty imposed on us by the Patriarchy, and dare to be ourselves. This feminist approach to embodiment is often adopted by lesbian film makers and by lesbian culture and politics in general – we want to be ourselves, and show our bodies as they really are. What about those lesbians who actually *are* feminine, skinny and blonde, however? In this paper on contemporary lesbian film, we want to take a closer look at a type of lesbian identity that has arguably become marginalised in LGBT culture, because it's seen as too mainstream – the femme and straight-looking lesbian.

Because of its dedication to represent 'real lesbians', one criticism often volleyed at lesbian film is that the actors are too femme, too straight-looking, or too pretty to be representative of the lesbian community. We want to question this position. It's possible to turn it around and say that, interestingly, this is one case where lesbian film succeeds in minority representation, because femmes are the most marginalised and mistrusted members of the lesbian community. Despite its attempt to represent the entire spectrum of queer women, lesbian film tends to show a very narrow range of lesbian identities – a character list of stereodykes – and this list seldom includes a strong and confidently lesbian femme woman.

We will argue that Netflix's 2013's TV success *Orange Is the New Black* breaks this pattern. Women of all sexualities, races and appearances are realistically and convincingly portrayed. The protagonist, Piper, might initially fit the trope of the straight white femme with a bisexual past who relies on her looks and education to get ahead in prison. However, by the final episode, it is she who commits the most violent and arguably 'masculine' act of the series. Her trajectory is a seldom-seen subversion of the butch-revealing-a-feminine-softer-side trope witnessed in, for instance, *The L Word* (Tasha, Max, Shane). This TV series shows that femme identities are complex and multi-faceted and that the 'true' representation of middle-class, beautiful and blonde lesbians is as important as the representation of other lesbian identities.

Joanna Benecke is a writer and journalist. Film editor of *DIVA Magazine* and contributor to the *Guardian* on LGBT film, she is on the 2014 International Jury for the Iris Prize. She has BA in English from Cambridge and an MA in creative Writing from Royal Holloway, University of London. She is the author of the books *100 Reason to Love Ryan Gosling* and *Being Benedict Cumberbatch*.

Karin Sellberg is a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Queensland, Australia. She specialises in contemporary literature, gender studies and medical humanities. Her forthcoming book *Positioning Trans: Gendered Pasts and Possible Presents* (Ashgate) traces the use of transgender imagery and gender stereotypes in contemporary queer theory.

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SNEHA KAR CHAUDHURI: CLOSET LESBIAN LOVE AND THE TRADITION OF SAKHIYANI: REPRESENTING QUEERNESS IN BOLLYWOOD NOW

This paper aims to explore the multivalent representation of lesbian women in the recently released Bollywood movie *Dedh Ishqiya* (released in January 2014). It is an apt example of the reality of lesbian lives now in India for being director Abhishek Chaubey's intrepid exploration of a very problematic and complicated same-sex love between a Muslim widowed Begum called Para (played by Madhuri Dixit) and her much younger *sakhi*, friend/confidante/partner, Munira (played by Huma Querishi).

In a strongly homoerotic country, lesbianism has strictly remained a taboo subject with no particular importance and freedom attached to it. But this film shows that lesbianism in India has existed in the popular imagination as either a pervert's attraction for the same sex or as a carefully hidden closet experiences much beyond the scrutiny of the domineering male world. By looking at this national language film *Dedh Ishqiya*, (translated meaning is One and a Half Love), this paper will highlight upon the issues of commodification of lesbian love experiences of Indian women by the film industry, synonymous with heteronormative exertion of power, self and glamour. *Dedh Ishqiya* cleverly manipulates the language and representation of closet same sex love between women and brings to wider relief the concept of *sakhiyani* (female friendship) among closeted Muslim women. By masking the narrative as a heterosexual one, the director further complexifies the nuances of his representation of lesbian love and its survival in a male-dominated world. Tied with the context of the re-enforcement of a legal ban against homosexuality via Indian Penal Code Section No. 377 in 2013, these film problematises the continuous and discursive presence of lesbianism in the Indian screen in particular and society in general.

Bio

Dr Sneha Kar Chaudhuri is Assistant Professor, Department of English, West Bengal State University, Kolkata, India. A UGC-Senior Research Fellow with the Centre of Advanced Study in English, Jadavpur University (2004-2008), her doctoral thesis was on the various thematic dimensions of postmodern neo-Victorian fiction. She is also the former Assistant Editor and current Editorial Board member of the international peer-reviewed journal, *Neo-Victorian Studies*, published by Swansea University, Wales, UK. She has published reviews and articles in various peer-reviewed national and international journals and has made seminar presentations in several national and international conferences in India and abroad. Her co-edited volume on the role of gender discourses and the representation of Rabindranath Tagore's women in nineteenth-century India entitled *Tagore and Woman* is forthcoming from Stree-Samya, Kolkata. She is also editing another collection of essays called *Feminisms and Beyond* by the same publisher

GAIL NEILL: 'A DIFFERENT KIND OF GIRL': YOUNG WOMEN'S UNDERSTANDING AND NEGOTIATION OF SEXUAL IDENTITIES

Based on the preliminary analysis of research with young women in Northern Ireland, this paper explores the management and negotiation of gender and sexual identities in a morally and religiously conservative society. In the narratives of 24 young women who identified as other than heterosexual the discourse of 'difference' was central to discussions of growing up and making sense of self. As such, the paper discusses the young women's understanding of 'difference' from an early age noting how these feelings were initially grounded in perceptions of 'gender failure'. It outlines the various strategies young women employed to manage, disguise or resolve their 'difference'. The implications of feeling 'different' and having to manage 'difference' for young women's sense of self are also considered. The paper concludes by considering the implications of these findings for work with young women who identify as other than heterosexual.

Bio

Gail Neill is a programme coordinator within the Equality Work with Young Women team in YouthAction Northern Ireland. She is a qualified youth worker who has been working with young women who identify as other than heterosexual for over 10 years. Gail is undertaking a Doctorate in Childhood Studies at Queen's University, Belfast with the aim of her research informing practice. In addition to her work with young people she designs and delivers inclusion and diversity training for trainees, practitioners and policy makers.

2C HISTORICAL FICTION

[IN PAVILION PARADE 204]

MARIA OLIVE ALEXOPOULOS: WINNING THE WAR, LOSING THE PEACE: THE QUEER

TEMPORALITY OF WARTIME IN FALL ON YOUR KNEES AND THE NIGHT WATCH

In the past decades a considerable body of work has been produced by scholars working to recuperate lost or omitted gay and lesbian histories. World Wars I and II have been particularly fertile sites for this investigation. In her book *Disturbing Practices: History, Sexuality, and Women's Experience of Modern War* Laura Doan writes: "Life in Britain between 1914 and 1918 'was not a normal time.' New forms of meaningful employment tested these women's physical, mental, and moral strength, expanded the configurations and expressions of gender, and allowed greater independence and mobility, even adventurous travel. Above all, for the historian with interests in sexuality, war work threw these women together with others of their sex".¹ This paper diverges from historical sources and finds use instead in the imaginative work related to these projects of recovery, specifically Ann-Marie MacDonald's 1997 novel *Fall on Your Knees* and Sarah Water's 2006 novel *The Night Watch*. It explores the way that contemporary lesbian-feminist narrative fiction exploits moments of uncertainty – ruptures in the teleological flow of history – to conceive of alternate possibilities and invite us to imagine utopias in these liminal spaces. Of particular interest is how MacDonald and Waters use language, narrative structure, genre (in this case the historical novel), and temporality to produce these spaces of lesbian-feminist possibility only to violently disrupt and disturb them.

1 Doan, Laura. *Disturbing Practices: History, Sexuality, and Women's Experience of Modern War*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. 2013.

Bio

I am a third year Ph.D. candidate at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin and am currently a visiting research student at the Gender Institute of the London School of Economics. I have a B.A. in English Literatures from the University of Saskatchewan, Canada in English Literatures and an M.A. in Gender and Diversity Studies from the Freie Universität Berlin. My dissertation focuses on queer and lesbian-feminist narrative fiction, particularly contemporary English and German-language literature. I'm interested in how the fictionalized lesbian and more particularly, a kind of ambiguous and alluded-to lesbian existence has been positioned as being in opposition to experiences of structural inequality or oppression.?

HILARY MCCOLLUM: WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? WHY LESBIAN (FEMINIST) HISTORICAL FICTION MATTERS

The growth of genealogy and the success of programmes like *Who do you think you are?* demonstrates people's interest in finding out about their ancestors. But for lesbians and lesbian feminists, our ancestors are not just biological. They are the women who have loved women in the past and the women who have fought for women's rights and for freedom from patriarchy historically.

The lives of these women have been silenced, censored and suppressed. From Lillian Faderman's *Surpassing the Love of Men* (1981) to Rebecca Jennings's *A Lesbian History of Britain* (2007), feminist scholarship has sought to uncover and reclaim the hidden lives of women who have loved women in the past.

Lesbian historical fiction has also played a role in writing lesbians back into history. Initially self-published, Isabel Miller's classic *Patience and Sarah* went on to influence generations of lesbians. Writers like Emma Donoghue and Sarah Waters, among others, continue to imagine the worlds of our lesbian ancestors.

Why do such fictional accounts of lesbian lives matter? What do we as lesbians, and lesbian feminists, seek from such stories?

Drawing on her own work, Hilary McCollum will explore the challenges of writing historical fiction as a lesbian feminist. Her forthcoming novel, *Golddigger*, is set between famine Ireland and the California gold rush and there is almost a complete absence of information about lesbian lives in either setting. What does it mean to write as a lesbian feminist about women in settings when neither the word lesbian nor feminist had been coined?

Through this paper, Hilary hopes to demonstrate the importance of lesbian (feminist) historical fiction in understanding not just our past but ourselves, our lives and the world around us. The paper will conclude with a reading from *Golddigger*.

Bio

Hilary McCollum is a lesbian feminist writer. Her childhood memoir, *Funny Peculiar*, was published in 2008 under the name Constance McCullagh. Her play, *Life and Love: Lesbian Style* won the best female performance award at the 2014 International Dublin Gay Theatre Award and Hilary was nominated for best writer. Her first novel, *Golddigger*, will be published by Bella Books in May. She is currently working on a novel set within the suffragette movement.

KATH BOECKENHOFF: SAPPHIC OR QUEER MODERNISM? LITERARY NARRATIVES AND SEXUAL DESIRES BETWEEN THE WARS

Since the 1980s, feminist scholars have submitted the canon of modernist literature to a critical re-evaluation with the aim to unravel the role of gender and sexuality in its formation. Formerly ignored, erased or trivialised homoerotic subtexts and lesbian themes in novels have been retrieved leading to the emergence of the subgenre of Sapphic modernism. This paper considers female-authored novels, which do not feature what might be viewed as the paradigmatic lesbian figure – an identity category still nascent and little known between the wars – but which nevertheless offer a fictional narrative resistant to the heterosexual paradigm. It argues that by shifting the focus from the homo/heterosexual opposition to that of normative/non-normative behaviour other ways in which sexuality was conceived of in the literary imagination of women writers in the 1920s and 1930s surface. At the beginning of the twentieth century sexological and psychoanalytic discourse began to spread creating new sexual subjects and taxonomies. This heightened interest in sexuality and sexual perversions coincided with the emergence of modernism as a literary movement fascinated with transgressions of traditional form and sexual morals. Against this background, this paper draws on two novels, Olive Moore's *Spleen* (1930) and Natalie Barney's *The One Who Is Legion* (1930), in order to illustrate how these texts resist the hegemonic discourse of gender and sexual identities by questioning more generally distinctions made between natural/unnatural, material/immaterial, real/fictional. Insofar as these novels expose heterosexuality as an artifice, but also a structuring principle, they can hardly be reduced to a lesbian literary subgenre. Rather, I argue, they should be understood as integral to the modernist project, which is more akin to the notion of queering than often acknowledged.

Bio

Kath Boeckenhoff completed her MA in Philosophy and Literature at the University of Warwick. She is currently studying for her PhD in English and American Studies at the University of Manchester. In her thesis she examines the nexus between sexuality and border crossings in the literary fiction of women writers whose works linger on the margins of the modernist canon. Other research interests include the politics of knowledge production, feminist epistemology and experimental literature.

KEYNOTE 1

1.30PM -2.30PM

KEYNOTE 1 - PROF. SARA AHMED:
LIVING A LESBIAN LIFE*[IN SALLIS BENNEY]*

Prof. Sara Ahmed Professor (Professor in Race and Cultural Studies, Goldsmith University, Director of the Centre for Feminist Research)

Sara Ahmed 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); *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (2012) and *Willful Subjects* (forthcoming, 2014). She is currently writing a book *Living a Feminist Life* has begun a new research project on "Utility: The Uses of Use."

2.30-4.00PM

PARALLEL SESSIONS 3

3A SEX, SEXUAL RIGHTS AND ACTIVISM

[IN SALLIS BENNEY]

CLARE HAMMERTON: MAINSTREAMING SEXUAL RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This paper discusses the challenging context to mainstream sexual rights throughout international development. It references the process of channelling organisational norms and values, raising knowledge about sexual rights within a disagreed international context, across cultural, political and sovereign boundaries, in life threatening environments.

It is based on the premise that heteronormative thinking runs through international development marginalising those who live outside of the boundaries of 'institutionalised, normative heterosexuality'ⁱ. This thinking leads development projects to fixate on 'presumably heterosexual' mothers to eradicate poor health, control population growth, improve access to education and economic standards among poor familiesⁱⁱ whilst leaving people who transgress dominant and normative gender and sexual norms, who often face exclusion, harassment, and discrimination, out of development projects and policiesⁱⁱⁱ. Such thinking reinforces dominant gender and sexual norms, creating and sustaining relationships of power, deepening rather than eradicating poverty for both those who 'fit' into a heteronormative (gendered) lifestyle or families (such as women and mothers) and those who do not 'fit'.

Sexual rights has become a point of fierce ethical and political international discussion and division embroiling political tensions between traditionalists and liberals; defenders of male privilege and challengers; and the West and Muslim worlds^{iv}. United Nations debates about sexual rights reveals strong motivations of states to either recognise the rights of people who transgress gender and sexual norms (predominantly 'donor's states) and strong resistance to their recognition by other states (predominately 'participating' states). It also operates across sovereign boundaries historically steeped in accusations of colonial and western imposition creating a

uniquely challenging environment in which to influence dominant gender and sexual norms and mainstream sexual rights.

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University of Essex (PhD Candidate, Human Rights Centre)

¹ Armas, 2007

¹ Hartmann 1995; Adams and Pigg 2005 cited in Lind 2009:36

¹ A working class lesbian 'remains outside the project of development' by not fulfilling a culturally and institutionally prescribed role, not contributing to reproduction, and not being linked to the family Lind 2009:34

ALESSANDRA MONDIN: FEMINIST DESIRES: FEMINIST PORN'S QUEER AND LESBIAN AUDIENCES IN FOCUS

In the early 1980s the feminist porn genre emerged with the scope of subverting mainstream pornographies' limited representations of and discourses around gender, sexuality, desire, and pleasure. Especially from the early 2000s the productions of feminist porn have been more and more diverse, and it is said to be shaping the field through the challenge of 'dominant representations of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, ability, age, body type, and other identity markers' (Taormino 2013, p. 9). The paper aims at participating in the discussions around feminism and porn, more specifically in the area that considers porn as a rich and diverse cultural practice (e.g. Smith 2007; Williams 1989) and that investigates the 'experience of pornography' (Attwood 2005, p. 65). Thus, the project will assess the results of the research conducted around the phenomenological experience of viewers of feminist pornographies via a web-based questionnaire (www.feministdesires.com), which featured both quantitative and qualitative questions and gathered more than 200 completed responses. The main aim of the research project is to explore how the audiovisual material connoted as feminist porn by the participants is in relation to, interpret, and construct feminist desires and how the aesthetics, ethics and politics of feminist desires are performed and how they are interconnected. The responses will be examined to trace patterns and understandings of the politics, ethics, aesthetics, and importance of audiovisual pornography produced with queer and feminist endeavours. In particular, the paper will tackle these issues by addressing especially queer and lesbian audiences' understandings, viewing practices, desires, likes/dislikes, affective resonances, expectations, disappointments and how they deal with the productive tensions of feminist porn.

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Lesbian Lives Conference 2015: Lesbian Feminism/s Now

Bio

Alessandra Mondin has completed a BA in Visual Arts (Bologna University) and an Erasmus Mundus MA in Women's and Gender Studies (University of Hull and Utrecht University). She is a second-year PhD student and academic tutor at the University of Sunderland's Centre for Research in Media and Cultural Studies. Her project aims to explore the interrelations and mutual influences of the aesthetical, ethical and political dimensions of feminist re-visions of porn. The research uses mixed-methods and interdisciplinary approaches in order to give a more organic account of feminist pornographies, their production, and consumption. Her research interests also include critical disability studies; gender, sexuality, and the arts; affect; phenomenology; theories of the body and embodiment.

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AISLING GALLAGHER: RADICAL LESBIAN FEMINISM AND SEX WORKER AND TRANS RIGHTS – FEMINIST ACTIVISM IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

In recent years, demand for the implementation of the Nordic Model of prostitution, first introduced in Sweden, has dramatically increased. Radical feminists have worked alongside right-wing anti-choice, anti-LGBTQ fundamentalists in pushing for this legislation across the UK, Ireland, and mainland Europe. Additionally, we have seen a rise in 'TERF' (trans exclusionary radical feminism) activism and demands for 'women-born-women' only spaces, particularly on social media platforms like Twitter.

Is radical lesbian feminism inherently anti-sex work, and anti-sex worker? Is radical lesbian feminism inherently trans-exclusionary and transmisogynistic? Is the current wave of 'radical feminism', which fights for the criminalisation of sex workers' clients and against the inclusion of trans women in women's spaces, *really* radical feminism?

This paper explores radical feminism today, and asks if it is a suitable model of feminist activism for the twenty-first century, particularly in terms of advancing and protecting the rights of trans people and sex workers. It interrogates the theoretical basis on which current radical feminism claims to take its authority from, and asks if radical feminists today are truly helping vulnerable women, or if they are merely contributing to further marginalisation.

PATRICIA MACLEOD: EXPLICITLY SPEAKING: A RHYMING INTERVENTION IN QUEER-FEMINIST PORN RESEARCH

The intent of this piece is foremost to traverse
Some key issues in Porn Studies, by means of verse

With a focus on online pornography texts
Representing 'queer' bodies and 'feminist' sex

Grossing millions of pounds, porn's a contested site
Oft evoking "familiar stereotypes"⁷
That relate to the content and agents involved
In performance, production, and viewing it all

Transcending discussions of good versus bad
May generate fruitful debates to be had⁸
And help shed some light on the diverse array
Of texts, meanings, viewers and new shades of grey

This paper will highlight just some of those tensions
By means of a subgenre scarcely e'er mentioned
This subject in question is porn 'queer and feminist'
Fighting the white-male hetero-matrix

With censorship climbing political agendas
The insights from this type of porn could be major
Like claims to eschew the perceived harmful tendencies
Often ascribed to more mainstream pornographies⁹

Presenting this paper in spoken word form
Will help me to make certain points about porn
Like how the performative body elicits
Reactions more visceral, feelings more vivid
Moreover, researchers are never objective

¹ Attwood, F., 'What do people do with porn? Qualitative research into the consumption, use, and experience of pornography and other sexually explicit media', *Sexuality and culture*, 9 (2005), p. 5

¹ Albury, K., 'Reading Porn Reparatively', *Sexualities*, 12 (2009), pp. 647–653

¹ Penley, C., Shimizu, C. P., M., Miller-Young, M., and Taormino, T., *The Feminist Porn Book: The Politics of Producing Pleasure* (New York: Feminist Press, 2013), pp. 9-20

SURAT SHAAN: TRANS GUYS NOT WELCOME? BEING TRANSMAN, TRANSMASCULINE, BOI, INTERSEX, GENDERQUEER (AND WELL, JUST NON-CISFEMALE) IN THE LESBIAN WORLD

Trans Guys Not Welcome? Being transman, transmasculine, boi, intersex, genderqueer (and well, just non-cisfemale) in the Lesbian World

Surat Shaan will open this discussion by sharing their journey from a tomboy, lesbian, genderqueer to a transmasculine person. Can a transguy be still part of the lesbian world? What do lesbian, bisexual and trans women think about non-female identified trans people? Is it ok to go to a women-only clubnight? Can transguys call themselves feminists? Which boxes to tick on a lesbian dating site?

3B OLDER LESBIANS

[IN M2]

SUE O'SULLIVAN: OLDER LESBIANS AND SEX AND SEXUALITY: ASSUME NOTHING

Or, The Perils, Pitfalls and Pleasures of Exploring Ageing Lesbians' Experiences and Feelings about Sex

I am a member of the voluntary editorial team which produces Q, the quarterly newsletter/journal for Age UK's LGBT project, Opening Doors London. Earlier this year we decided to devise a separate 'sex questionnaire' for ODL members. We wanted to address the subject's contexts, fluxes and flows, desires, contractions, the social, the psychic, and so on, keeping firmly in mind the differences between us.

In an early Internet search it was clear that there are virtually no resources for older lesbians looking for information or discussions around sex unless it's about sexual *health*.

We devised an open-ended questionnaire. I won't give the plot away except to say the project was suddenly stopped and put on a back shelf somewhere 'upstairs' at Age UK's headquarters. Our latest enquiries have met with stonewalling - and an obvious fear of losing funders.

I want to look at the questionnaire - its weaknesses - none of us were academically trained to devise them; its strengths given that the lesbians on the team brought to the task lesbian feminism's insights, experience and theorizing around sex and sexuality. I'd give examples of questions grappling with the one-or-the-other directives of most questionnaires as well as showing how we tried to explode assumptions about what sex means.

Finally, what about the unease still in existing in organisations dealing with older lesbians, sex and sexuality? I have spent over 35 years writing and talking about lesbians and sex at Spare Rib, Feminist Review, Sheba Feminist Publishers and in the field of HIV/AIDS. My aim has always been to open up discussions about both 'pleasure and danger' in negotiating personal and political sexual paths and the intersections between these. Can this space be opened up again? Should it be? And where might that take place?

JANE TRAIES: FEMINISTS, FLUFF-BUCKETS AND DIESEL DYKES: OLD LESBIANS TALK

BUTCH/FEMME

The *Lesbian Lives* conference traditionally takes place in LGBT History Month; appropriately, this paper offers an exploration of one way in which lesbian history still resonates in the lesbian present. Drawing on a collection of life-history interviews and on a lifestyle/attitudes survey of around 400 lesbians over 60, the paper examines the continuing legacy of the struggle between feminism and butch/femme, half a century on. It uncovers the feminist (and non-feminist) politics, attitudes to gender variance and personal life-choices of a variety of women between 60 and 90, many of whom began to identify as lesbian during the Women's Movement of the 1960s and 70s.

Heterosexist role-play or the gender-expression of an essential selfhood? Feelings on the subject still run high, and are far from simple: for older butches, femmes and feminists alike, the personal very clearly remains political.

Bio

Jane completed her PhD at Sussex in 2015. Her doctoral thesis, 'The lives and Experiences of Lesbians over 60 in the UK', was the first large-scale study of this 'invisible' population.

Institutional affiliation

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JILL WILKENS: SEVENTIES SISTERS? OLD(ER) LESBIANS AND BISEXUAL WOMEN TALK

ABOUT FEMINISM

Tensions and accusations of lesbians' (and others') exclusion from the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1970s are well documented (Kitzinger, 1996; Segal, 1999; hooks, 2000; Monro, 2005). But has the passage of time, alongside increasing legal and social acceptance of diverse sexualities, changed the way that these lesbian and bisexual women - many of whom are now approaching seventy - identify as feminists and relate to feminism in the twenty first century?

My research into the significance of groups and networks in the lives of older lesbians in London and Yorkshire has facilitated a dialogue that encompasses diverse topics: the participants' views on ageing, work, education, queer migration, friendship and feminism being just a few. The use of semi-structured interviews often conducted in the participants' homes has created an intimate setting for women to talk freely about their lives and relationships with other women, including their feelings about feminism and the feminist groups and communities they have been part of. The interviews revealed that the women's relationships with feminism are just as diverse and complex as the lives they have led and resulted in a rich narrative exposing their frustrations, disappointments and joys with the 'sisterhood' over four decades. Feminism meant different things to different women with some of them experiencing it as yet another restriction on their lives, imposing rules about what they could and couldn't do, say or wear. For a few, it meant little or nothing at all, hardly seeming to touch their lives, whereas for other women it has been a mainstay, shaping friendships, politics and sexual identity itself.

My paper explores the intersections of ageing, gender, sexual identity and class with feminism, friendship and groups using extracts from the interviews to reveal these life stories often overlooked in a body of LGB research which privileges younger, male voices.

Bio

Jill Wilkens is a PhD student at the Weeks Centre for Social & Policy Research at London South Bank University where she has a scholarship. Her research explores the significance of groups and networks for older lesbians and bisexual women.

3C BRIGHTON FEMINIST COLLECTIVE: RECLAIM THE NIGHT: ACTIVISM, PRAXIS AND INCLUSION

[IN M56/57]

Brighton Feminist Collective is proposing a workshop on activism, praxis and inclusion. For the last three years, the collective has organised a Reclaim the Night march which has attracted thousands of protestors each year. The organisers differ each year, with the exception of some core members remaining.

The collective wants to share case studies of the 2013 & 2014 march and use the expertise of the workshop attendees to ask questions about the nature of feminist organising, inclusivity, praxis and activism. The organisation of the march poses new challenges each year, with significant time spent on finding an accessible and affordable venue. The consensus decision-making process, combined with the fact that all members are volunteers, slows down the organisation of the march. There have also been difficulties in upholding the safer spaces policy, community fractures and making the organisational meetings accessible.

The questions the collective would like to ask are: what is the relevance of Reclaim the Night marches in 2014? How has feminist thought and methods of organising moved on since the inception of the march? What does inclusion of the most marginalised communities look like in practical terms? What democratic forms of organising ensure that members are fully able to participate? The collective invites attendees, particularly those with an interest in translating theory to reality, to start a discussion in answering those questions.

3D CATHY PLOURDE: OUT & ALLIED PROJECT: RESILIENCE. STRENGTH. CELEBRATION

[IN PAVILION PARADE 101]

Out & Allied Project: Resilience. Strength. Celebration. LGBTQ*, allies, actors and activists have been working on this US-based project since 2007, using the power of theatre to set the stage for youth leadership and new conversations in families, schools, organisations, and faith-based communities accentuating the positive. In this session participants will use readings of scenes, monologues and poetry to frame a discussion of using theatre with a feminist lens to address cultivating allies for LGBTQ* communities.

The project is highly replicable and adaptable for use in many different settings and the performance works, written primarily by youth as well as ensembles engaged in queer youth theatre and ally activism. The project has been captured in two volumes of materials with a combined 80 performance pieces and specific tools for performance/writing for activism, LGBTQ* advocacy, youth leadership, true dialogue strategies, and resource lists. The performance pieces are royalty free and it's encouraged to change texts to suit localised circumstances. This workshop will explore pedagogical as well as community-building strategies. It builds on the works of many US-based queer youth theatre programs, members of the Pride Youth Theatre Alliance.

Bio

Cathy Plourde is an activist and playwright uses theatre to provoke social change, and has presented her works in multiple international forums. She founded Add Verb, which has stood as an independent charity as well as a university-based program and now works to make two decades of theatre and social change materials available for use. Formerly from the US, Cathy now resides in Birmingham with her wife.

<http://www.addverbproductions.org/outallied/>

Cathy Plourde, Arts//Creativity//Social Innovation | plourde.cathy@gmail.com | Twitter: @AddVerbArts and @cathylourde

3E MADDIE ZAYEET AND CAROLINE HALLIDAY: PUTTING THE LESBIAN IN FEMINIST ART, A PRACTICAL/HANDS ON WORKSHOP [NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED]

[IN THE MARLBOROUGH THEATRE]

As feminist lesbian artists we ask where is the lesbian consciousness in feminist art? Using some lesbian artists past and present we will collaboratively create some multi-media artworks based on a variety of lesbian feminist art theories and practice. While feminist art has become flavour of the moment recently, the lesbian contribution needs to be more widely acknowledged and promoted. In this workshop we aim to spread the practice and explore the ideas behind our creative ways of being, making and expression "Putting the lesbian in feminist art" is playful, disruptive, revolutionary, imaginative, supportive and open to serendipity.

Caroline Halliday: Feminist poet and writer from the late 70's onwards. Fine Art MA at Cass focused on political feminist art. Initiated *feministartcass* to connect with other feminist artists, followed by FANS OF FEMINISM which has set up several art shows and events in London. Film made as part of fine art BA asked the question 'what are older lesbian feminists most passionate about?' In last few years connecting to the Camden LGBTQI forum's Loudest Whispers events has brought up a second question, 'Why dont I make more 'lesbian feminist art'?"

Maddie Zayeet was among the founders in the 1990's of Hove and Brighton's very own The Dyke Modern, a collective of lesbians enjoying creating art together. She's an experiential film-maker and collagist, organises

Purple Laver feminist art circle in Swansea and invents and investigates artistic political actions. Her focus is on using art to energise feminist lesbians' power to extinguish the patriarchy.

4.15-5.45PM

PARALLEL SESSIONS 4

4A REPRESENTATIONS OF THE LESBIAN FROM EARLY MODERN TO THE 21ST C

[IN SALLIS BENNEY]

CAROLINE GONDA: 'DOES IT MATTER IF THEY DID IT?' ROMANTIC FRIENDSHIP, LESBIAN HISTORY AND THE QUESTION OF SEX

In *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (1981), Lillian Faderman argued that women's intimate relationships with each other in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were, and were perceived as, chaste and non-sexual. Faderman's work emerged from the context of 1970s lesbian feminism, the same context that produced Adrienne Rich's idea of the lesbian continuum. Both Faderman and Rich can be seen as reacting against the prurient and hostile view of intimate relations between women that reduces everything to sex: the mindset that wants to know (but also very much doesn't want to know) what lesbians do in bed.

Faderman's theory of romantic friendship has often been attacked, most memorably by Terry Castle, who dismissed it as the "no sex before 1900" or "no lesbians before 1900 school" (*The Apparitional Lesbian*, 1993). The title of Sheila Jeffreys' essay on Faderman, "Does it matter if they did it?" (Lesbian History Group, *Not A Passing Phase: Reclaiming Lesbians in History* (1989)), which I've borrowed for this paper, also implied that there was something absurd about romantic friendship, though for different reasons. More recently, Susan Lanser has argued that "romantic" was itself a term of mockery and dismissal in the long eighteenth century, and has urged historians to abandon the category of romantic friendship, which she sees as "fuzzy" and "lesbian-obscuring" (*The Sexuality of History*, forthcoming).

This paper will ask whether the idea of romantic friendship still has any value for lesbian historians and critics in the twenty-first century. It will also treat Jeffreys' question as a real one: *does* it matter if they did it? Does it matter if they didn't? And what is at stake in these arguments about lesbian sex in history?

Bio

Caroline Gonda is a Fellow and Director of Studies in English at St. Catharine's College, Cambridge. Her publications on literature, gender and sexuality include *Reading Daughters' Fictions, 1709-1834: Novels and Society from Manley to Edgeworth* and two co-edited books, *Queer People: Negotiations and Expressions of Homosexuality 1700-1800* (with Chris Mounsey) and *Lesbian Dames: Sapphism in the Long Eighteenth Century* (with John C. Beynon), as well as essays on lesbian literature, theory and criticism.

Caroline Gonda: E-mail: cjg29@cam.ac.uk

KATE AUGHTERSON: BETWEEN WOMEN: EARLY MODERN WOMEN WRITERS' REMODELLING OF PATRIARCHAL CREATIVITY

Terry Castle has argued (*The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* 1993) that lesbian fiction works "against... the plot of male homosociality [which] decanonizes... the canonical structures of desire itself. ... it documents a world in which men are "between women" rather than vice-versa [and]... is an insult to the conventional geometries of fictional eros".

This paper will argue that early modern women writers take up writing and publishing almost simultaneously with the emergent cultural ethos of an explicit male homosociality which typically characterises masculine creativity through the child-birth trope. This aesthetic and philosophical trope encapsulates the patriarchal economic, aesthetic and genealogical erasure of female agency and identity. Women writers use their writing and publication to challenge the nature of the aesthetic AND figure that transgression as a set of relationships between women. The archaeology of one particular metaphor – that of child-birth and its provenances and connotations of and in maternity - will show that women writers self-consciously dismantle and deconstruct the masculine use of this metaphor as a trope for male creativity from Plato onwards (through Sidney and Donne to Dryden and Pope). Women writers such as Mary Wroth, Amelia Lanyer, Katherine Philips, the anonymous author of *Eliza's Babes*, Margaret Cavendish, Anne Wentworth, Anne Bradstreet and Aphra Behn, lay bare the impossibilities of the original terms of the metaphor (creation/procreation) and rather than masculine births, establish new models of female-to-female creativity on the back of the same trope imagined instead “between women”. It is of course an anachronism to label these women as lesbians: but their discursive and aesthetic theories and practice very self-consciously model Castle's perception of what a late modern lesbian aesthetic should practice. In that sense, these early modern women writers are part of a lesbian continuum from which we can draw our own herstories.

Kate Aughterson – University of Brighton

TUULA JUVONEN: LESBIANS WITHOUT FEMINISM? THE ROLE OF FEMINISM IN LESBIAN COMMUNITY BUILDING IN TAMPERE, FINLAND, FROM THE 1970s TO 1990s

In my ongoing Academy of Finland funded research project “Queer Narratives: Intimate and Social Lives of Women with Same-Sex Sexual Attractions in Tampere 1971–2011” (grant number 249652) I seek to understand the various features that affected the emerging of a local lesbian community in the years after the decriminalization of lesbian deeds in 1971. Yet was lesbian feminism one of those?

In international research, mainly coming from the U.S. or UK, the existence of radical lesbian feminism of the 1970s and 1980s with its diverse social and cultural offsprings and effects on lesbian communities is taken for granted (see also the call for this conference). However, when going through the few existing textual materials about the local lesbian community building in Tampere from the 1970s to 1990s, a very different story emerges. Instead of separatism, Bondi, the publication of the local lesbian and gay organization shows intensive collaboration between women and men within its ranks throughout the 1980s. In the mid-1990s the local lesbian bar Nice Place even has a gay man behind its counter, while its young patrons found feminism ideologically even somewhat suspect and already outdated.

How can we explain the very different picture of the role of feminism for lesbians in Tampere, the second largest city of Finland, to that what we might have expected to find? Or is this just a skewed picture given so far by a limited and biased textual material available for the study? I look forward to answer these questions by analysing the set of oral history interviews I am currently conducting with women who have had same-sex sexual attractions while living in Tampere between 1971 and 1999. What is the story they have to offer about the role of feminism to their lesbianism?

ISABELLE COY DIBLEY: THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF LESBIANISM AS AN ADOLESCENT STAGE OF BECOMING A WOMAN: THE POWER DYNAMICS OF AGE WITHIN SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OF THE GRAPHIC NOVEL, SKIM

What is it about English and Drama Professors in lesbian fiction? Within the fictional legacy of lesbianism, many stories revolve around the notion of becoming, often within an educational, institutionalised setting. Why is this? Although I do not wish to generalise, these settings have curiously become a lesbian space for various cultural, literary representations of lesbian relationships. These same-sex relationships have been represented within American colleges of lesbian pulp fiction novels, the highschool/University settings of Ariel Schrag's

graphic novels and Alison Bechdel's *Dykes to Watch Out For*, and within the "S relationships" of Japan's 1900s "school girl culture" that heavily influenced the initial Japanese Yuri Mangas. By containing the relationships within an institution and "phase" of adolescence, whereby the age difference signifies a mentoring relationship suggestively similar to that of pederasty, does this nullify the threat of female sexualities outside of heterosexuality?

Through the exploration of Mariko and Jillian Tamaki's *Skim* in comparison to Oyuki Konno's *Maria-sama Ga Miteru*, I will question why the representation of same-sex relationships based on teacher/student or older/younger dynamics have become a prominent theme in lesbian fiction. Is age an alternative differentiation to gender within same-sex relationships, where lesbianism is associated with an older woman assisting a younger female in "becoming a woman," which arguably desexualises and delegitimises the lesbian relationship into a virginal experience that prepares a woman for heterosexual society? Or, on the other hand, does it create a purely female experience and potentially feminist approach whereby women assist women in becoming themselves and understanding their bodies and female sexualities? Consequently, I intend to explore whether *Skim* and *Maria-sama Ga Miteru*'s representations highlight the strenuous relationship between lesbians' sexualities and feminism, or depict an integration of lesbianism and feminism that supports the notion of a female culture and "woman-identified experiences", similar to the notions put forth by Adrienne Rich's *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence*.

4B EXPERIENCE AND IDENTITY FORMATION FOR LBT WOMEN

[IN M2]

SALLY O'DRISCOLL: WHAT MAKES A WOMAN? THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPERIENCE

In August 2014, the *New Yorker* magazine ran an article entitled "What Is a Woman? The Dispute Between Radical Feminism and Transgenderism" (<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/08/04/woman-2>), discussing an argument between radical feminists and transgender activists (which is usually framed about entrance to the Michigan Women's Music Festival). This article, however, was more sympathetic to the radical feminist position, and interrogative of the ways that trans activists have attacked feminists (trans activists pressured some locations to cancel a radical feminist conference). Interestingly, biology was nowhere part of the discussion: radical feminists were not portrayed as biological essentialists, and the debate focused on experience: the radical feminist position was presented as one in which, as Simone de Beauvoir put it, one is not born a woman, one is made one.

The pressing question, for me, however, which wasn't answered here, was why discussing the role of experience in creating identity has become unacceptable. If we accept that gender identity can be radically separated from anatomy, then what is the nature of the adult female self? If femininity is a socially constructed identity, involving a series of experiences that teach us how to be acceptably female, then how do we deal with that experience in a trans world – a world in which that experience is apparently deemed non-essential?

My paper is not propaganda for either position: rather, it explores how our discussion of experience as part of the construction of gender identity has been curtailed. There have been advantages to this, and also losses. What do we lose when we do not talk about what it means to grow up female, when our experience no longer defines us?

We are at an interesting theoretical juncture here, and this clash between two activisms is the perfect place to explore it. My paper will make that conversation possible.

Sally O'Driscoll Associate Professor, English and Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies
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CATHERINE DONOVAN: STILL 'UPSETTING THE APPLE CART'? A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF HOW NOTIONS OF SAMENESS AND DIFFERENCE SHAPE LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND/OR TRANSGENDER WOMEN'S RELATIONSHIP EXPECTATIONS AND PRACTICES

Almost twenty years ago, Ardill and O'Sullivan wrote an article in the *Feminist Review* titled 'Upsetting the apple cart', reflecting on the polarisation of lesbian feminism and lesbian sadomasochists and their allies. The clashes which took place between these groups epitomised lesbian feminists' conviction in the distinctiveness of lesbian relationships by virtue of their independence from hetero-patriarchy and their commitment to egalitarianism, democracy and socially and sexually ethical ways of relating. Skipping forward twenty years, the political message about LGBT relationships has arguably shifted from one of a celebration of distinctiveness and, for some, separateness, to currently dominant arguments of sameness underpinning demands for equal treatment, as typified by equal marriage campaigns. With this context in mind, this paper draws on data gathered through a recent ESRC-funded study examining relationship expectations, practices and abusive behaviours in same-sex, bisexual and/or trans relationships. Quantitative and qualitative data about women's relationship expectations, negotiations of power and control, and understandings of sexual and relationship ethics are analysed to explore how notions of sameness and difference shape perceptions of woman-to-woman relationships, and whether the legacy of lesbian feminist ethics and values continues to live on in women's contemporary lesbian, bisexual and/or trans women's relationships.

Bio

Catherine Donovan is Professor of Social Relations at the University of Sunderland. Catherine's research interests are broadly in the fields of sexuality, the family and intimacy, particularly around domestic violence and 'families of choice'. With Prof Marianne Hester, Catherine conducted the first comprehensive study nationally and internationally comparing love and violence in same-sex and heterosexual relationships. Their book, *Domestic Violence and Sexuality: What's Love Got to Do With it?* came out in 2014. Catherine has recently completed an ESRC-funded study (2012-2014) with Dr Rebecca Barnes, exploring the abusive behaviours of partners in same-sex, bisexual and/or trans relationships. Previously, Catherine worked with Prof Jeffrey Weeks and Prof Brian Heaphy on the Families of Choice project. She has also recently been involved in developing an Agenda For Change about Sexual Exploitation and young LGBTQ people; and has been part of two project making films about domestic violence and abuse in LGB and/or T relationships and LGBT child sexual exploitation.

MAGDALENA MIJAS, MARTA DORA, SALVATORE D'AMORE AND ROBERT JAY GREEN: LESBIAN, WIFE, MOTHER. HOW DO POLISH STUDENTS PERCEIVE LESBIAN MARRIAGE AND PARENTING?

Passionate friendships, feminist thought and practice of femininity in XIX-century Poland. Analysis of correspondence between Narcyza Źmichowska and Wanda Źeleńska.

Magdalena Mijas

Narcyza Źmichowska (1819-1876) was pioneer of polish women's movement, founder and member of The Enthusiasts [first known feminist group in Poland that came into being during 1830s], above all outstanding teacher, great writer, patriot and propagator of sisterhood, independency and self-realization ideals among XIX-century polish middle class women.

Narcyza has never got married forming her most emotionally intense and intellectually inspiring relationships with women. Founded on exchange of ideas, shared passions, joys and sorrows of everyday life reveal their emotional depth and romantic nature in private correspondence.

I would like to analyse in my paper correspondence between Narcyza Źmichowska and her former student Wanda Źeleńska (Grabowska) taking into consideration three emerging areas:

- Meanings and practice of female, passionate friendships between XIX-century middle class well educated women in Poland.
- New gender and sex-role definitions emerging from exchanged letters, shared thoughts and intimacies between those women.
- Main themes and postulates of early feminist thought in Poland.

ZIGGANNI BOOTH: NEGOTIATING SEXUAL IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY NORTHERN IRELAND

For this paper I intend to present from my current PhD research. This piece of research proposes to investigate the construction of sexual identities based on the subjective meaning of behaviours and actions to the individual. According to Marx, individuals create their own identities; however the freedom to this creation is limited. Identities enable individuals to become acting subjects who define who they are in society (Parkin 1979). Rose (1996a) further argues that “The human being is understood as that agent which constructs itself through giving life the coherence of a narrative. Evidently “the self”, simply by virtue of being capable of narrating “himself or herself” in a variety of ways is implicitly re-invoked as an inherently unified outside to these communications” (P.77). The primary focus will be placed on the ways in which female LGBTQ identities are formed in relationship to experiences of “coming out”, the public and political sphere, capitalism and the media, as well as engagement with ideas of religion and national identity which form the “traditional” foundations of identities within Northern Irish society; Whilst focusing on the intersectional and interrelated nature of identity formation. Symbolic interactionism has been used as this research if focused on how sexuality is negotiated within everyday social interaction (Plummer 2002b). The notion of the ‘everyday’ is fundamental within this research as it understands sexuality as being ‘embedded in the daily practises and strategies of everyday life’ (Plummer 1995:15). The use of symbolic interactionism is also empirically important as interactionism focuses on an ‘obdurate empirical world’ (Plummer 2003b:520) which provides a way of investigating sexuality as it is both understood and experiences by individuals in their everyday interactions. Qualitative interviews are to be used in this research to allow knowledge to be cultivated “inter” the “views” of myself and the respondent, and facilitate an interchange “between the knower and the known, constructors of knowledge and the knowledge constructed”(Kvale 1996). This will allow for an exploration and focus on the self-perceived sexual identity of the respondent, and will empower the respondents by enabling them to articulate their own identities.

Bio

I am currently undertaking PhD research which explores the way that women negotiate sexual identity in the cultural context of Northern Ireland at the Queen's University of Belfast under the supervision of Dr Nicola Carr and Dr Lisa Smyth. This research is funded through the Department of Education and Learning (DEL) through the School of Sociology, Social Work and Social Policy. Prior to commencing my PhD, I achieved a Masters degree in Sociology (Distinction) and an Undergraduate degree in Sociology (First Class Honours). My Undergraduate research focused on the negotiation of intimate relationships in same sex female partnerships; my research at Masters Level examined the ways that women aged 18- 25 negotiated and articulated their sexual identities and formed much of the basis for my PhD research.

4C IMAGINED COMMUNITIES: RELIGION AND QUEER IDENTITIES

[IN M56/57]

RABBI ELLI TIKVAH SARAH: CONFOUNDING PATRIARCHY: FROM LESBIAN NATION TO THE WILDERNESS WHERE OTHERS MEET

This paper will fall into 3 parts.

Part 1 (Introduction): ‘Lesbian Separatism and the Retreat from Patriarchy’, will reflect on Lesbian Feminism in the late 1970s through the 1980s, in terms of my own experience, including the emergence of plural feminisms, as Lesbian feminists and other feminists began to explore their other ethnic/cultural/religious allegiances.

Part 2: ‘Setting Up Tents in the Wilderness: Living on the Edge and Encountering Others’, will examine contemporary LGBTQ existence, which began to emerge in the 1990s, in a context of diversity best represented by the rainbow flag, with reflections from my experience of being a gender queer Lesbian rabbi, within the Jewish community and within Jewish Christian Muslim encounter. Drawing from Jewish sacred narratives concerning setting up and inhabiting tents in the wilderness, I will explore the significance of ‘tents’ and ‘wilderness’ for mapping the nature and terrain of inclusive and pluralist engagement.

Part 3 (Conclusion): ‘Living Diversity and Shattering the Patriarchal Monolith’, will consider the future that we are making and reflect on the paradox that the best chance of challenging patriarchy is a multi-dimensional/multifocal approach involving the alliances of ‘others’ with ‘others’.

While acknowledging the complexity of post-modernity and the impossibility of meta-analyses, my paper makes no apology for being framed by a Jewish consciousness, in which, ‘memory’ is a given sense, along with the other five senses, and present reality continually challenges us to make a better job of it, and urges us on to do what we can do to repair the world for the sake of the future – while bearing in mind the rabbinic dictum, c. 200 CE, (*Mishnah Avot 2:16*): ‘It is not for you to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.’

Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah | Brighton & Hove Progressive Synagogue

BONNIE J. MORRIS: IMAGINING THE TRIBE: JEWISH LESBIAN ACTIVISM

This essay examines Jewish women’s leadership roles in lesbian-feminist activism, starting in the 1970s. It’s hard to avoid noticing that a very large percentage of lesbian writers, performing artists, conference organizers, lesbian festival producers and academic feminist scholars hail from a Jewish background: Alix Dobkin, Lillian Faderman, Maxine Feldman, Sue Fink, Karla Jay, Adrienne Rich, Robin Tyler, Bonnie Zimmerman. Beginning in the 1970s, daring to reclaim that Jewish identity—and daring to name concerns about anti-Semitism in the larger feminist movement—drew lesbian activists together in a new spiritual direction. An explosion of Jewish lesbian publications, poetry readings, retreats, workshops, and support groups emerged over the next thirty years. But despite the importance of this subculture, many of these earlier groups eventually faded into obscurity. The Jewish lesbian movement is yet another chapter of dynamic activism vanishing from what we remember, or inscribe, about recent LGBT history. I’m offering an overview of key highlights, and can bring some of the archives, objects and writings from past events as a nice display along with my paper presentation.

The centerpiece of my paper is the story of how Jewish women demanded “a tent of our own” at the large-scale Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival, after many years of having no place to meet and organize at lesbian events and other festivals. With the producers’ blessing, I spent fifteen years (1990-2005) organizing and facilitating this Jewish women’s program, which grew to involve thousands of lesbian participants from all over the world. We offered workshops, erotica readings, stage performances, a Friday night Shabbat ceremony, a

book exchange and rituals for every life stage of the radical women attending, from weddings to mid-life bat mitzvah celebrations. Nothing like this had ever been attempted, and while it lasted, it was a jewel in the crown of lesbian diversity.

Bio

I am a women's studies professor at George Washington University and the author of ten books, including three Lambda Literary Award finalists (*Eden Built By Eves*, *Girl Reel*, *Revenge of the Women's Studies Professor*.) I'm best known for my research and publications on the subject of women's music festivals, and at the 2006 Lesbian Lives/ WERRC Conference in Dublin, I presented my paper on the mainstreaming of the lesbian music movement. (It was subsequently published in the 2009 volume *Sapphists and Sexologists*, ed. Sonja Tiernan and Mary McAuliffe.) Most recently, I was featured on national television for my book *Women's History for Beginners*, and am now teaching the first lesbian history course at George Washington University. I also work as a guest history lecturer aboard Olivia Cruises.

Bonnie J. Morris, Ph.D. Women's Studies Program, George Washington University, 837 22nd St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20052 USA | drbon@gwu.edu

ANNA CHARCZUN: CATHOLIC, NATIONAL, AND LESBIAN IDENTITIES IN IRELAND

Lesbian women in Ireland are led to believe that their sexuality cannot find a rightful place within the institution of the Church and to some extent, within the borders of their country, therefore disrupting their sense of national belonging and forcing them to emigrate. My paper may appear iconoclastic, however, as a born Catholic, converted lesbian and the researcher of Irish lesbian literature, I cannot help but notice the still-existing stigma.

Recently, Irish lesbians started to speak up; but that does not change their sense of exclusion from their communities, churches, and, often, the country. We live in the modern, globalised world, however, countries such as Ireland still resemble the Europe from centuries ago, especially in comparison to the tolerant rest of our continent¹. Lesbian sexuality has been demonised by the Church, lesbians were outcasts of Irish heteropatriarchal society, and in the eyes of fellow believers their only chance of redeeming their souls was to cure themselves of same-sex (but how natural to them) desire. Concomitantly, lesbophobic incidents still take place – this is more frequently found in rural areas of Ireland.

¹ Until 1997, sexual deviants were placed in institutions such as the Magdalene's Laundries.

My paper will outline shifts in Irish lesbian literature since the 1993 decriminalisation of homosexual acts when society's attitudes towards lesbianism, especially in urban areas, started to change. Ireland at last stands a chance of overcoming its insularity and religiousness. With the third wave of feminism, lesbian issues appeared on its agenda and lesbian feminism grew in power. The questions such as 'how [am] I to conceive of myself as a practising Catholic and a furious lesbian' or 'how is a woman who loves women to live an Irishwoman' (Donoghue, *Lesbian and Gay Visions of Ireland* 159-60) started to fade away.

SURAT SHAAN: THE RAINBOW JEWS PROJECT: RECORDING JEWISH LGBT ORAL HISTORY

Rainbow Jews is a pioneering Lottery Heritage-funded oral history and archive project that captures for the first time in British history the voices and experiences of Jewish LGBT* people.

This history has a strong focus on the early Lesbian-Feminist movement from a Jewish perspective (e.g. Linda Bellos), and we meet a wide spectrum of women - trans, bi, intersex and among them the first openly lesbian Rabbis in the UK. Founder and project manager Surat Shaan Knan will present 'women's highlights' of the project, play audio extracts and show A/V interview and documentary clips. Q&A.

info: www.rainbowjews.com

4D LESBIANS IN 20TH C FICTION

[IN PAVILION PARADE 101]

LINDSEY KURZ: "THE HEROINE OF A 'QUEER' EPISODE": GERTY FARISH'S LESBIAN MARTYRDOM IN THE HOUSE OF MIRTH

The paper I would like to present at the 2015 Lesbian Lives Conference is situated as part of a larger movement by scholars of queer relationships to read texts through a lens that allows for the discovery of characters lost in predominately heterosexual scholarship because "[l]iterature is usually understood through heteronormative concepts of gender and sexuality, which means that different-sex desires become a taken-for-granted entity" (Longrenn 205). In this essay I pay particular attention to Gerty Farish, an often overlooked character in Edith Wharton's 1905 novel *The House of Mirth*, specifically the way she is constructed as a New Woman, proto-feminist, and lesbian. Drawing on Eve Sedgwick's conception of the erotic triangle, I argue that Gerty is aligned with the trope of the "martyr" lesbian (most famously connected with Stephen Gordon in *The Well of Loneliness*). The erotic triangle is usually associated with heterosexual or male homosexual/homosocial characters, but by exploring the female homoerotic relationships in *The House of Mirth* I hope to bring attention to the possibility of lesbian existence within this structure.

Bio:

Lindsey Kurz is a third-year PhD student of literature at the University of Cincinnati. Her focus is on twentieth-century American literature and feminist/queer theory, with specific interests in queer texts and Modern expatriate writers. She earned her Master of Arts degree with highest honors from the University of Manchester (Manchester, UK) in 2009. In addition to composition courses, she has taught an undergraduate LGBTQ literature course. Prior to pursuing the PhD, Lindsey worked for non-profit youth organizations in San Francisco.

Institutional Affiliation: University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati Ohio.

STEVEN AMBROSE: REPRESENTATION OF LESBIANS IN VIOLETTE LEDUC'S THÉRÈSE ET ISABELLE

When approaching Violette Leduc's slim novel, *Thérèse et Isabelle*, one cannot ignore its rather scandalous publication history: forcibly removed from its original place as the beginning of *Ravages* in 1954 by publisher Gallimard, published as a(n intensely censored) separate volume in 1966, and finally released as Leduc originally intended in 2000 (though readers of English would have to wait an additional twelve years for its translation). With graphic, intense, and often violent sex scenes between two young *élèves* comprising almost half of the *texte intégral*, *Thérèse et Isabelle* depicts adolescent love and at its most acute and obsessive. Leduc's use of metaphorical language and a style that eschews realism often leaves the reader confused and unsettled. And yet, few have gone beyond merely raising their eyebrows at its history to open the book and address what the (now intact) novel says about *l'amour entre deux femmes*. My paper posits that Leduc's use of space (the cell, the box, the staircase) reveals female same-sex desire as something unsustainable, something that will always be contained and, eventually, eliminated.

Steven Ambrose -PhD Student, Department of English, Michigan State University

NATASHA ALDEN: 'ACCOMPANIED BY GHOSTS': THE CHANGING USES OF THE PAST IN SARAH WATERS' LESBIAN FICTION

Much of the critical work on Sarah Waters has focussed on the way in which her novels, as a playful reworking of history, offer a way "back" to an occluded lesbian past which is otherwise hard to access, mired in ontological confusion and practical confusion. This paper explores the evolution of Waters' use of the historical novel, particularly in relation to the way she uses historical material in her writing. It tracks a demonstrable shift from a queer, radical and playful mode in the early work, through to a more sombre, more traditionally feminist approach to testifying to lesbian existence in *The Night Watch* (2006). Tracing the evolution of Waters' engagement with the past through her use of narrative techniques and of historical research reveals a consistent desire to create a form of affective history, but one worked out in strikingly different ways as performativity becomes less a matter of play and more a matter of remembrance.

Bio:

Dr Natasha Alden (chair) is Lecturer in Contemporary British Fiction at Aberystwyth University. Her current research explores the ways in which LGBTQ authors of historical fiction use the past, and the kinds of affective, genealogical connections that historical fiction negotiates between the present and the past. She is currently organising a conference on Sarah Waters, and has runs with Memory Studies research cluster at Aberystwyth. Her monograph on postmemory and the British experience of World War Two, *Reading Behind the Lines*, came out this year. She has also published on Sarah Waters, Emma Donoghue, Pat Barker, Adam Thorpe and Ian McEwan.

4E VALÉRIE SIMON: WHAT DO LESBIANS DO IN BED? A WORKSHOP ON LESBIAN SEXUALITIES AND SAFE(R) SEX DISCOURSES [WORKSHOP]

[IN PAVILION PARADE 103]

When it comes to lesbian sexualities and safe(r) sex there are no nuanced position. Between the "no glove no love" slogans, the "barriers between women are not necessary" claims and the "dental what?" (here referring to dental dams) interrogations, little space is left to talk about lesbian sex, safe(r) sex and STIs among lesbians.

Safe(r) sex discourses are, with media, an important way through which lesbian sexuality is conceptualized and understood both by mainstream society and in lesbian communities. Heavily influenced by the fight to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the concepts of risk group, condom use and risk assessments are fundamental to safe(r) sex discourses. However, as lesbian sex doesn't fit into those categories it is reduced to oral sex and viewed as low risk for STIs both by lesbians and the mainstream.

In this workshop, lesbian is understood as being based on self-identification, and refers to any cis, trans or intersex woman who identifies as a lesbian, dyke, bisexual, two-spirit or queer as well as non-binary identified people who identify as lesbian, dyke, bisexual, two-spirit or queer. This definition thus assumes a great diversity in what "lesbian sex" can and do refer to.

By assuming a holistic view of lesbian sexualities, which encompass the emotional lives of lesbians, the different oppressions they face as well as the limited safe(r) spaces lesbian have to talk about their sexuality, this workshop aims at examining two questions. First, how can we name and celebrate the diversity of what constitute lesbian sexuality in a variety of spaces such as safe(r) sex brochures, health institutions, community events as well as in our politics and relationships? Second, how can we make safe(r) sex discourses more inclusive of this diversity as well as intelligible to lesbian-identified people?

Bio

Valérie Simon is a racialized queer and lesbian activist of Montreal and is working on a Double Major in Women's Studies and Philosophy at Concordia University.

Through initiatives such as Head & Hands' *Sense Project* which provides queer-inclusive and non-judgmental sex education to youth and the workshop *Fuck The Script* which aim to create a 2 space in lesbian and queer communities to talk about sex, Valerie's activism focuses on addressing issues of safe(r) space, sexuality, sexual health and heterosexism in activist spaces.

As one of the founding members of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence convent in Montreal and ex-member of the Montreal Dyke March Collective, Valerie's activism and work seeks to take a new take on lesbian activism and sexuality as well as honoring and engaging a well-established lesbian and lesbian feminist tradition and history.

Institutional Affiliation: Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada

4F JULIE GOO: FEMINISM, CATHOLICISM, SEXISM, CYNICISM & ORGASMS, THROUGH THE EYES OF AN IRISH SLAM POETRY CHAMPION [PERFORMANCE]

[IN THE MARLBOROUGH THEATRE]

Being a lesbian in Ireland is interesting to say the least. Attending an all-girl convent school, where the word 'lesbian' is the most derogatory label one could be tagged with, can be somewhat terrifying to the teenage girl who secretly fantasizes about her female friends' finger tips, lips and nipples. It is incredible how one can suppress one's own identity, even to oneself, and it is inevitable that this self rejection will manifest through self destructive behaviour.

My own journey has lead me here. At the age of thirty four, I am now a proud feminist, non-Catholic, sexy, cynical lesbian. In 2012, I completed an MPhil at the Department of Modern Irish in UCC, where I explored the pathetic portayal of women throughout the literature of the modern Irish language writer Pádraig Ó Cíobháin. I dare say he does not like me very much.

I am currently one of the few openly gay primary school teachers in the country. But that is just my day job, where everyone knows me as Julie Field. My evening antics are far more colourful, as I take on the persona of Julie Goo, and engage in the therapeutic act of performance/slam poetry. Oh yes, I get on stage and slam my socks off. I propose to do just this at Lesbian Lives 2015. I can perform for anything up to an hour. All I need is my voice, a mic, and a room full of live lesbians.

I have won numerous slam competitions, and performed in all over Ireland and the U.K.

ABSTRACTS - SATURDAY

5A FILM SCREENING

[IN SALLIS BENNEY]

THE WILD ONES [2012, DIRECTED BY LISA BELFRAGE & MARIANNE GUSTAVSSON] WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY OLU JENZEN



At 18, right after the Second World War, Birgitta Stenberg bought a one-way ticket to Europe. Far from Sweden, she plunged into a wild life with bohemians from around the world. She fell in love, got exploited, took drugs, and exploited others. Her life is forever shaped by these years and these people. A life on the fringe. In *The Wild Ones* she travels to places like New York, Paris and Rome, returning to former lovers of both sexes. They face their choices and the consequences. Was it truly free to live like that? Was it worth it?

5B IN/EXCLUSION: LESBIANS MAKING FEMINIST COMMUNITIES

[IN M2]

FINN MACKAY: LESBIAN FEMINISTS – MYTH AND MYTHOLOGY

I shall draw on research with over one hundred feminist activists across the UK, conducted for my PhD in 2012. While the majority identified as heterosexual, thirty six respondents identified as lesbian; ages ranged from late teens to late sixties. I shall address the issue of lesbian invisibility in UK feminist activism and the perception that sexual identity is no longer a relevant category within feminist communities. While younger feminists in particular felt that homophobia and heterosexism were not live issues in contemporary feminism, older feminists bemoaned the demise of lesbian feminist autonomous spaces within feminist communities. Participants were aware of common stereotypes of feminists as hairy-legged, man-hating lesbians. I shall discuss the homophobia inherent in such stereotyping; frequently sustained and promoted in academic and activist texts. The stereotype of the feminist appears almost universal (Scharff, 2010; Baker, 2008; Rich, 2005; Budgeon, 2001) and is regularly used as shorthand, invoked as received wisdom. The shorthand presupposes that readers will immediately know what is meant by references to stereotypical feminists; such as this statement from Walby (2011): “[feminism] is a signifier of something very particular and comes with additional meanings attached, which many seek to avoid”... “It has acquired connotations of separatism, extremism, men-avoiding lesbianism” (ibid) (2011:3). Awaiting for the disclaimer, I was disappointed. There is no following sentence challenging the assumption that separatism or lesbianism are inherently undesirable, instead the use of such labels as an insult is left unquestioned and the sexual, and political, identity of a new generation is

policed as a result. Indeed, what often seems missing in debate on such stereotypes is the possibility that some feminists may indeed be lesbians, may indeed choose to pursue largely separatist lives; and the possibility that these are personal and political feminist positions with merit and purpose, is completely ignored.

Dr Finn Mackay, Honorary Researcher, Centre for Gender & Violence Research, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol

REBECCA JENNINGS: 'A PLACE TO COME TO': AUSTRALIAN LESBIAN FEMINIST HOUSES IN 1970s AUSTRALIA

This paper will explore the place of collective houses in Australian lesbian feminist culture in the 1970s. The women's movement sparked a flowering of lesbian culture in Australia in the early 1970s and, for many women, their engagement with feminist politics and culture was mediated through their domestic lives as residents in lesbian feminist collective houses. In Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and other cities across Australia, women established houseshares along feminist principles, aiming to share responsibility for household chores; pool financial resources; take decisions collectively; and build a woman-centred community. These houses provided their residents with a unique social space, where the women ate and socialised together, hosted house parties, and which acted as a base from which the household participated in the wider lesbian feminist community. Networks linked feminist houseshares across the country, so that households typically comprised both permanent residents and a number of visitors from interstate, who used the household as an entry point into lesbian feminist communities in other cities. Political ideology and activity were often debated and enacted in this shared space, with women passing feminist literature and pamphlets amongst themselves, planning demonstrations or fund-raising activities, and embarking on night-time zaps to spray-paint nearby buildings with slogans such as 'Lesbians are Everywhere'.

Drawing on oral history interviews, feminist journals and the housebooks kept by some lesbian feminist households, this paper will consider the ways in which this domestic space structured lesbian feminist politics and culture in 1970s Australia, providing a crucial entry point for some, particularly young, single, white lesbians, while potentially excluding other women along lines of race, age and family status.

Bio:

Rebecca Jennings is a Research Fellow in the Department of Modern History at Macquarie University, Sydney. Her work focuses on twentieth-century British and Australian lesbian history, and she is the author of *Tomboys and Bachelor Girls: A Lesbian History of Post-war Britain, 1945-71* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007) and *A Lesbian History of Britain: Love and Sex Between Women since 1500* (Oxford: Greenwood World Publishing, 2007). She has published a number of articles on lesbian feminist culture in Australia and her most recent book, on lesbian culture and identity in mid-twentieth-century Sydney, is forthcoming with Monash University Publishing in 2015. She is currently researching lesbian practices of intimacy in Britain and Australia since 1945.

ZARA HOOLEY: THE SISTERHOOD OF MOTHERING: LESBIAN LED FAMILIES AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

This paper is presented as a working summary of the literature review and research strategy of a doctoral student from the University of Leicester. It will examine the construction of social support in the lives of lesbian parents.

Changes in UK social policy over the last ten years have made family creation more accessible to the lesbian community, (Stonewall, 2014). The number of same sex couples creating families appears to be increasing; however lesbian parents are still a minority both within society, and also amongst their childless peers in the LGBT community (DeMino, Appleby, & Fisk, 2007, p. 166).

Literature on mothering discusses the positive effects of social support in relation to mothers well-being (Brown, 1986; Oakley, 1992). This study will utilise the lens of social connection to critically examine the

heteronormative institutions of parenting, and to investigate the view that lesbian parents experience the social spaces and social support of parenting differently from their heterosexual counterparts.

Weeks, Heaphy, & Donovan, (2002) heralded the non-heterosexual family as pioneers of “experiments in living” (2012, p.vii), who have impacted on traditional notions of family, and pushed the boundaries of acceptable formulations of kinship and intimacy. 13 years on from Weeks et al, questions can now be asked about how transformative those changes in social policy have been for society’s construction of social norms concerning family creation, and the lived experience of ‘doing’ parenthood. Drawing together previous work on managed identities, selective disclosure and families of choice, this work aims to understand if, and how, distinctions in social support are operating.

JANET JONES: 'HEY FEMINISM! WHERE'S THE ACCESSIBLE TOILET?' - INCLUSION AND ACCESS IN THE MATERIALIST-FEMINIST WORLD

This presentation looks at how lived experience for lesbians with disabilities is viewed, within materialist feminist discourse.

From a slow history, over recent decades, feminist authors, academics, artists and activists have begun to write, speak, produce art and protest, about the complex ways materiality shapes experience of impairment and disability.

- the built environment
 - economic realities
 - cultural norms / how bodies are expected to behave
- these and other aspects of the lived experience, impact agency, limit choice and affect personal management of impairment and disabling structures.

As visibility of these issues begins to have a small, albeit marginalised presence in academic discourse, what are the issues for Feminism today?

- Disabled women are more affected by poverty and compromised employment prospects.
- Greater numbers of women are affected by long term disabling health conditions.
- Ways people relate to lesbians with visible and non- visible impairments and in terms of equality, power and inclusion.
- How lesbians with disabilities experience of individual impairment, impacts power and congruency of personal identity.
- How care, dependency and the “Mothering” response in non-disabled people is generative of potential power imbalances in social relationships.

Can working against ‘Othering’ by mainstreaming disability and impairment in feminist discourse, result from a recognition of the ways inclusion affects us all?

Recognition that lack of choice caused by disabling social and environmental structures is an inequality and human rights issue fundamental to feminism today.

For individuals, how the impact on self-esteem and capacity for congruent experience, limits expression and experience of personal identity.

The ethical and moral reality of white able-bodied lesbians with normative bodies, and in terms of class and resources, have greater power in shaping socio-political norms.

This paper looks at how this self sustaining dynamic functions and the requirements to dislodge it.

Can the ways lesbians with disabilities are resourceful and find alternative forms of identity and sexual expression, support how will this can be actioned? and *where are the accessible toilets?*

Bio

Janet is a Self-identified Butch Lesbian in her 50's who was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in her early 30's.

Living with a deteriorating condition, she navigates losses of a changing body, whilst relearning the expression of sexual identity in an ableist, heteronormative world.

Before medical retirement she did practical and community jobs and local authority policy development and management, she writes creatively, has done LGBT theatre and is currently studying for an MA in Creative Media.

Her creative work is focused on explorations of inclusion, access and the stories of LGBT people, both with impairments and able bodied, especially navigations of health, social care and the built and cultural environment.

Previous work includes:

Publication of collaborative work with Joan Nestle in Sinister Wisdom Lesbian Literary Journal, Fall issue 'Lesbian Exile' 2015

Short film screening Lesbian Lives conference 2011, 2012

Panel Contribution to Gender and Sexuality talks public event series London May 2014

Speaker for Diva magazine panel debate on Queer female desire LFest 2014

5C NAZMIA JAMAL: BLACK CAUCUS [WORKSHOP]

[IN G4]

A DISCUSSION SPACE FOR SELF IDENTIFYING LESBIAN WOMEN OF COLOUR ONLY.

5D LESBIAN (IN)VISIBILITY: INSIDE NATIONAL BORDERS

[IN M56/57]

MARTA OLASIK: QUEER LESBIAN ETHICS: COUNTERING THE DYSTOPIA OF POLAND

While current social moods and political tendencies in Poland continue to deaden non-heterosexual possibilities more than ever, a gap in discourse on women could be filled productively. Lesbian feminisms seem a dream that the Polish lesbian community could certainly live and relive. While some geo-temporalities announced the beginning of post-feminist era in the late 1990s, for others the discourse of lesbian studies or feminisms is yet to emerge. Such temporal inconsistency does have advantages, though, and provides examples to follow or/and to adjust. This paper draws from the experience and potentialities of the lesbian feminism of the 1980s, and as such it offers a reinvestigation of ethics as a tool for dealing with lesbian nonexistence in contemporary Poland. In doing this, queer scholarship must be applied. While the social circumstances may not allow for a utopia, a certain version of 'care of the self' should be taken into consideration on both activist and academic levels. Coalitional politics is needed more than firm leaders, and the legacy of lesbian feminism and separatism, though imperfect, seems to offer a valuable framework of social

lesbian ethics, particularly when it comes to spatialities foreign to the mainstream 'Western' discourses and experiences. The paper is a re-examination of the lesbian question with regard to ethics as a multi-faceted concept. It is also an encouragement to reflexivity, use and reuse of a variety of lesbian feminisms in contemporary battles for equity. Rooted in sociology of sexuality, this interdisciplinary conceptualisation reclaims lesbian subjectivity, and as such it looks into social and institutional possibilities of subverting the current dysfunctional reality of Polish non-heterosexual women.

Bio:

Marta Olasik—PhD candidate and a queer lesbian scholar in the Centre for Social Studies on Sexuality at the University of Warsaw. Queer sociology is my theoretical background, and the roots and cultural mechanisms of social oppressions—a point of departure. I am academically concerned with social and individual lesbian performativities and ways of (non)existence. My PhD dissertation is to be a subversive conceptualisation of lesbian (non)identities, sexualities, and affects. My major inspiration, source, and eventually an objective, is lesbian feminism and separatism of the 1980s in the US. My queer perspective and project on non-heterosexual women is intersectional and interdisciplinary. Significantly, my work and experience is based in the Polish spatiality and geo-temporality. It is here that I aim at increasing lesbian visibility and introducing an adequate institutional discourse.

FRANCESCA STELLA: SEXUALITY, NATIONALISM AND (FEMINIST) COALITION POLITICS IN RUSSIA

The relationship between identity, lived experience, sexual practices and the language through which these are conveyed has been widely debated in sexuality literature (Plummer 1995; Cameron and Kulick 2006). However, an explicit focus on language remains marginal to literature on sexualities (Kulick 2000), while issue of language use and translation are seldom explicitly addressed in the growing literature on intersectionality. Yet intersectional perspectives 'reject the separability of analytical and identity categories' (McCall 2005:1771), and therefore have an implicit stake in the 'vernacular' language of the researched, in the 'scientific' language of the researcher and in the relationship of continuity between the two.

This paper attempts to bring into conversation debates on language and intersectionality within sexualities studies through a discussion of the methodology and findings of an ethnographic study on 'lesbian' identity in urban Russia, conducted in 2004-05 in Moscow and Ul'ianovsk. I argue that an explicit research focus on language can be a productive way to explore the intersections between the global, the national and the local in cross-cultural research on sexuality, while also addressing issues of positionality and accountability to the communities researched. I reflect on the intended and unintended implications of the labeling exercise involved in naming research participants as 'queer' or 'lesbian' in the context of cross-cultural research, and draw on my findings to show how linguistic analysis can be productively used to forward a research agenda sensitive to cultural difference and able to foreground intersectional complexity.

Dr Francesca Stella - School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow | francesca.stella@glasgow.ac.uk

AGGELIKI SIFAKI: 'THE SEXUAL OTHER' WITHIN THE GREEK EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

"To some, sexuality may seem to be an unimportant topic, a frivolous diversion from the more critical problems of poverty, war, disease, racism...But it is precisely at times such as these, when we live with the possibility of unthinkable destruction, that people are likely to become dangerously crazy about sexuality" (Rubin, 1993: 3-4). Following Gayle Rubin's thesis about the centrality of sexuality to politics in times of crisis, the proposed paper aims to shed light on the current challenging political and financial turmoil in Greece, especially after the increase of attacks against homosexual people. In Greece, homosexuality is still inscribed as a "conscious choice", as deviance, if not a transmissible disease.

In this presentation I will investigate how lesbian educators are considered a challenge to the regulatory social principles, by both their presence in the public sphere and their contact with future generations. Within a

profession that perceives heterosexuality as norm, “the sexual other” is rendered intelligible only as a special event, never the everyday (Sykes, 2001: 24). However I will make an attempt to overcome the discourse of victimization that surrounds lesbian identity. Analyzing a part of the material gathered from interviews with lesbian teachers and drawing on the literature that engages with the resisting character of the so-called “minoritarian” subject positions, I will try to fill the gap “between how we live and how we represent to ourselves this lived existence in theoretical terms and discourses” (Braidotti, 2011).

Aggeliki Sifaki, PhD Candidate in Gender Studies, ICON, Utrecht University, Muntstraat 2A, 3512 EV Utrecht, The Netherlands | E-mail address: A.S.Sifaki@uu.nl

SERENA BASSI: NEW SPELLINGS OF HER NAME: TRANSLATING AUDRE LORDE IN A QUEER TIME

In 2014, the work of American feminist activist and poet Audre Lorde, whose name had long circulated in Italian feminist circles, was finally published in Italian translation. Il Dito e la Luna, an independent publisher which specialises on lesbian fiction and theory from a lesbian feminist standpoint, published the translation of the collection of essays *Sister Outsider* with the title *Sorella Outsider: gli scritti politici* in May 2014. In the same month, àltera, an imprint of ETS Edizioni that is committed to furthering the circulation of Queer Theory in the Italian context, released *Zami. Così riscrivo il mio nome*, the translation of Lorde’s fictionalised autobiography *Zami: a new spelling of my name*.

One of the central figures of black lesbian feminism, Lorde has been seen as transgressing neat divisions between feminist “waves” and generations, as well as between lesbian feminism and its theoretical arch enemy, Queer Theory. A series of productive tensions can be said to lie at the core of Lorde’s work. In *Sister Outsider*, these are particularly evident: whilst in essays such as ‘Uses of the Erotic: the Erotic as Power’, she imagines a feminist politic that is grounded on the “assertion of the life force of women” (1984, 55), in ‘Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference’ the author strives to move beyond an essentialist understanding of the power of women, to focus rather on “difference” as a signifier that is at its most politically productive when it remains fluid and undefined.

In interrogating the translated texts, I will ask what intertextual relations are created between Lorde’s thought in translation and existing Italian language feminist analyses. By employing the notion of a “postmodern translation practice” (Venuti 2013, 147), I will analyse the two translated texts as sites in which the tensions between strands, waves and schools of feminist and queer thought are rewritten, unsettled and reconciled.

Bio

Serena Bassi is Leverhulme Early Career Fellow in the School of Modern Languages at the University of Cardiff. She received her PhD in Italian Studies at the University of Warwick. Her thesis examined the circulation of images of Italy through translation in the contemporary British publishing markets. Her current work is on cultural exchange between Italy and the Anglophone world in the second half of the 20th century, with particular reference to questions of gender and sexuality. She published an article entitled “Tick as Appropriate: (A) Gay, (B) Queer, or (C) None of the Above: Translation and Sexual Politics in Lawrence Venuti’s *A Hundred Strokes of the Brush Before Bed*” in the journal *Comparative Literature Studies* in a special issue dedicated to “The Gender and Sexual Politics of Translation”.

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5E A USABLE HISTORY: HOW HAS LESBIAN FEMINISM SHAPED OUR CONTEMPORARY NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE LESBIAN PAST?

[IN 202]

JENNY INGEMARSDOTTER, CLAIRE HAYWARD, JANA FUNKE, AMY TOOTH MURPHY,
BEATRICE HITCHMAN, CHURNJEET MAHN

Participants:

Jenny Ingemarsdotter received her PhD in History of Ideas from Uppsala University in 2011. She is currently holding a three-year postdoctoral fellowship, shared between the Centre for Gender Research, Uppsala University, Sweden, and the Centre for the Study of Sexuality and Culture, University of Manchester, UK. Her project, funded by the Swedish Research Council, investigates interwar cultural representations and performances of female masculinities in a Swedish context. She is broadly interested in the cultural processes of knowledge production in relation to gender and sexuality.

Claire Hayward is a final year PhD candidate at Kingston University. Her thesis explores the way in which the history of same-sex love is represented in public history, and the way in which the public and LGBT Community engage with and understand the past. Her research challenges the differences of representation between male and female same-sex love in different formats of public history, questioning the influence of historiography and academic research in lesbian and gay history. Claire's previous research has focused on women's and gender history of the eighteenth-century, particularly female prostitution.

Jana Funke is an Advanced Research Fellow at Exeter University, based at Centre for Medical History. Her research interests include Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Literature and Culture, History of Sexuality, Medical Humanities, Uses of the Past, Reception and Historiography and Queer Theory and Sexuality Studies. She is currently writing her first monograph, entitled *Temporal Mobility: Modernism, Sexuality and Female Development*. Female characters who travel in time populate the pages of modernist-era literature. Jana's book introduces the concept of temporal mobility to demonstrate that such movement across time was at the heart of influential debates about female development and female sexuality. She has previously published on the uses of the past, especially the Classical world, in 19th and 20th century sexology.

Amy Tooth Murphy is Project Manager at the Bethnal Green Memorial Project, and Co-Editor of the blog Notches: (re)marks on the History of Sexuality (<http://notchesblog.com>). She is based in the School of Arts & Digital Industries at the University of East London, where she moved after finishing her PhD at the University of Glasgow. Her thesis was an interdisciplinary project in History and English Literature entitled, 'Reading the Lives between the Lines: Lesbian Oral History and Literature in Post-War Britain'. She recently undertook a short research fellowship at the University of Edinburgh on LGBT life and identity in Edinburgh, conducting oral history interviews with city residents past and present. She previously worked at LGBT Youth Scotland and in this role was responsible for organising LGBT History Month across Scotland as well as managing a European LGBT History Month cascade project.

Beatrice Hitchman's debut novel *Petite Mort* was published in 2013. It was longlisted for the Desmond Elliott Prize and Authors' Club Best First Novel Prize, shortlisted for the Historical Writers' Association Debut Fiction Prize and the Festival du Premier Roman, and serialised as a ten-part Woman's Hour Drama on Radio 4. Her short stories have appeared in Chroma Literary Journal and Stylist Magazine, and she has also written and directed short films which have appeared at festivals worldwide. She is a PhD student in Creative Writing at Bath Spa/Aberystwyth University, where her research centres on unhappy endings in LGBTQ fiction.

Churnjeet Mahn is Lecturer in English Literature and Director of Postgraduate Research in the School of English and Languages at the University of Surrey.

An AHRC/British Council UnMap Fellow 2013, her research to date has focussed on travel writing, especially in its relation to ethnography, anthropology and the classics. Her first book, *British Women's Travel to Greece, 1840-1914* (Ashgate, 2012) offers a discussion of how representations of Greece in British women's writing moved from emphasising the orient and Islam to emphasising Christianity and the classics. By discussing the work of anthropologists, ethnographers, journalists, archaeologists and tourists, this study considers how this shift reflected an emerging group of professional women writers and scholars who used their mastery of Greece as a shorthand for mastering the academy. She is currently working on two areas which continue her interest in various types of border crossings, and has begun a series of case studies to map the way the prefix 'trans' is used in contemporary literary culture. From transnational diasporas to narratives of transgendered experience, her research considers the extent to which 'trans' has coherency or critical traction in discussions of contemporary border crossings.

Dr Natasha Alden (chair) is Lecturer in Contemporary British Fiction at Aberystwyth University. Her current research explores the ways in which LGBTQ authors of historical fiction use the past, and the kinds of affective, genealogical connections that historical fiction negotiates between the present and the past. She is currently organising a conference on Sarah Waters, and has runs with Memory Studies research cluster at Aberystwyth. Her monograph on postmemory and the British experience of World War Two, *Reading Behind the Lines*, came out this year. She has also published on Sarah Waters, Emma Donoghue, Pat Barker, Adam Thorpe and Ian McEwan.

5F 'DIDN'T SAPPHO SAY HER GUTS CLUTCHED UP LIKE THIS?': ADDRESSING LESBIAN POETRY AS FEMINIST ACTIVISM

[IN 204]

PRUDENCE CHAMBERLAIN: RENT GIRL: SISTER SPIT AND THE QUEER FEMINIST POETICS OF MICHELLE TEA

This paper will investigate the lesbian poetics of Michelle Tea, looking to her memoirs and poetry to suggest the ways in which the use of the personal enables a strong feminist commitment. Including Tea's numerous collaborations, including her 'Sister Spit' tours and recently released 'Valencia' film, in which 20 different queer directors represented a chapter of the original novel, the paper will also consider arts practice as a means by which to create lesbian communities. Drawing on theories of collectives and identity politics in order to extrapolate a political poetics from Tea's representation of self, the paper will explore how organisation can consolidate lesbian feminist writing practices that generate dialogue and promote solidarity.

Bio

Prudence Chamberlain is a Research Fellow in Creative Writing and Poetry at Royal Holloway University of London. Her practice-based PhD develops a poetics of flippancy to document fourth wave feminism, with specific focus on Frank O'Hara, Mina Loy and Eileen Myles. Addressing the contemporary, affect and community, she addresses the wave narrative as a 'feeling moment,' that creates a space in which poetry can work as subjective documentation. She is an associate of POLYply, an avant-garde event series based in London, and a co-organiser of Amid the Ruins, poetry readings hosted from Daniel Blau Gallery. Her poetry work can be found on 3:AM and Poems in Which.

ELEY WILLIAMS: 'CF. CYPRINE (N.)': QUEER DICTIONARIES AS TENDER ACTIVISM IN WITTIG AND ZEIG'S LESBIAN PEOPLES: MATERIAL FOR A DICTIONARY (1979)

Kramerae and Treichler's *A Feminist Dictionary*; Tuttle's *The Encyclopedia of Feminism*; Daly and Caputi's *Webster's First New Intergalactic Wickedary of the English Language*: throughout the 1980s, the standard dictionary done got queered. This paper examines the ways by which theorist and writer Monique Wittig and her partner Sande Zeig first confronted pervasive patriarchal strictures and structures in their *Lesbian Peoples: Material For A Dictionary* through a blend of fantasy, poetic extension and lexicographical othering. It will address how this 'rough draft' of a lexicon envisaged and indexed a utopian, post-phallic world, and also explore the work as a site of literary subversion and lexicographic anarchy.

Bio

Eley Williams is a visiting lecturer at Royal Holloway University of London, currently investigating interstices between dictionaries and 'the fictive' for her doctorate; she has a particular interest in occurrences of queered and queering language within lexicographical writing and outré dictionary forms. Her first chapbook *Sketch* was published by Annexe press and has had work awarded the Christopher Power poetry prize and shortlisted for *The White Review* Short Story prize. Former deputy editor of *The Litterateur* literary magazine, she founded the *purpureus* writers' workshop and has hosted events with authors Ali Smith and Liza Klausmann. She is currently co-editing an anthology of contemporary prose-poetry.

ISABEL WAIDNER: RE-INVENTING EXPERIMENTAL WRITING; QUEER IMAGINARIES, HYBRID AGENCIES, AND THE INTERDISCIPLINARY CO-PRODUCTION OF THE NOVELLA 'GAUDY BAUBLE'

I am a lesbian experimental novelist, and this paper presents a novel that takes experimentation itself as its subject matter. *Gaudy Bauble* stages a range of exploratory, non-normative, feminist, lesbian, camp, transdisciplinary and undisciplined experimental entanglements so as to explore the question of how, through what experimental practices and in what situated contexts, boundaries between fact and fiction, material and immaterial, human and nonhuman, self and other, subject and object, as well between the disciplines become stabilised. This is part of a practice-led Phd in Creative Writing that I am currently undertaking and that draws on transdisciplinary feminist experimentalisms from within Science and Technology Studies and related perspectives (Sarah Franklin, Lisa Blackman, Donna Haraway, for example) so as to explore and extend what it could mean to experiment with fiction when disciplinary modes of enacting phenomena are displaced and all experimental practices are performative in different ways. Working beyond fact and fiction distinctions, *Gaudy Bauble* is an experiment that engenders a whole range of very unusual, non-normative subjects, objects and hybrid characters that challenge the discreet, voluntarist and heteronormative human subjects that are often reproduced within contemporary literary and scientific experiments. These include a host of see-through fibreglass sculptures of hooped animals, a series of budgerigar figurines (Fig.1), the lesbian investigator Belahg and the lesbian scientist Farquhar, for example. Recently, I presented at the Feminist Writing Conference at Goldsmiths' Centre for Feminist Research (June 2014), and I would appreciate the opportunity to situate this project and my long-term experimental writing practice centrally within Lesbian Feminisms at the Lesbian Lives Conference 2015.2

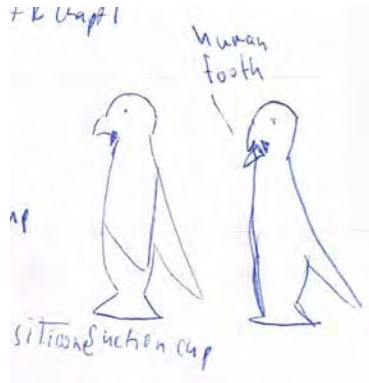
Bio

Isabel Waidner (b.1974) is an experimental novelist. Published works include the novels *Bravo, Parrot* (8fold, 2014) and *Frantisek Flounders* (8fold, 2012), both funded by the Arts Council England. Waidner co-edits a new *Journal for Experimentation: The Arrow Maker*, Vol.1 due out in Autumn 2014. In 2012, Waidner was awarded a Vice Chancellor's scholarship to undertake a fully funded practice-led Phd in Creative Writing at Roehampton University, in which she produces an experimental novella that explores what experimentation with fiction could mean if disciplinary distinctions between enacting phenomena are questioned and displaced. Waidner is Managing Editor of the peer-reviewed journal *Subjectivity* (Palgrave), co-edited by Valerie Walkerdine and Lisa

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Blackman. She has an early background as a musician, touring internationally and releasing several records, lastly with the band Klang on ground-breaking UK indie labels Blast First (2004) and Rough Trade (2003).

Isabel Waidner, University of Roehampton | contact: waidneri@roehampton.ac.uk



http://www.8fold.org/frantisek_flounders.html

<http://www.8fold.org/bubka.html>

<http://www.blastfirstpetite.com/klangnosoundisheard.html>

Fig.1 Detail from *Gaudy Bauble*

KEYNOTE 2

11.30-12.30 KEYNOTE 2

**PROF. SASHA ROSENEIL: THE PSYCHIC SEDIMENTS OF INTIMATE CITIZENSHIP:
THE QUEERNESS OF BIOGRAPHICAL TIME AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

*[IN SALLIS BENNEY]***Prof. Sasha Roseneil** (Birkbeck)

As a sociologist Sasha Roseneil is interested in how gender, sexuality and intimate life are changing, and in the role that social movements and feminist and queer politics play in bringing about social and cultural change. As a group analyst, psychoanalytic psychotherapist and psychosocial theorist, she is also preoccupied with how and why gender, sexuality and intimate life don't change - with individual and collective resistance to change, and how we so often unconsciously sabotage what might be good and fruitful in our lives. Sasha has carried out research on Greenham Common, on women's movements, feminism and lesbian and gay politics, and on the experiences of those living outside conventional families and couples. She is Professor of Sociology and Social Theory and Director of the Birkbeck Institute for Social Research at Birkbeck, University of London.

1.15PM-2.45PM

PARALLEL SESSIONS 6

6A ANGLO-FRENCH PROTO-QUEER FEMINISMS

[IN SALLIS BENNEY]

This panel explores some previously unsung resonances between the works of Monique Wittig, a key figure in both lesbian feminism and queer theory, who wrote in both French and English, and prominent Anglophone and Francophone writers Shulamith Firestone, Julia Kristeva, and Virginia Woolf. While Wittig's work explicitly and deliberately straddled material feminism and (proto-)queer theory, this panel explores the extent to which other feminist writers from both linguistic contexts may be said either to have complementary (proto-)queer agendas or to respond to and problematize Wittig's queer agenda. In particular, in the cases of Kristeva and Firestone, their strategic negativity, abjection, and nihilism are considered alongside Wittig's work to suggest the extent to which the emergent voice is one of antisocial feminist queer, and to ask what this may mean in different national and linguistic contexts. Similarly, looking at Wittig's proto-queer thought in conjunction with the writing of Virginia Woolf provokes consideration of the way in which violence is intertwined with a more subtle reconceptualization of queer embodiment.

**LARA COX: SISTERHOOD IN SELF-DESTRUCTION? A COMPARISON OF MONIQUE WITTIG AND
JULIA KRISTEVA**

This paper investigates feminine self-destruction as a unifying concept in the French context, with reference to two prominent figures in late twentieth century French feminist theory who have been interpreted in radically divergent ways: post-Lacanian Julia Kristeva and the considerably more materialist, proto-queer Monique Wittig. Despite conceptual differences, the theme of self-destruction as a potential source of liberation for women is common to both oeuvres. Kristevan abjection (1980) sits alongside Monique Wittig's *Le Corps lesbien* (1973) in rough historical terms. First of all, this paper leverages the common motif of self-destruction to determine the differences, if indeed there are any, between Kristeva's and Wittig's thought on the subject. Second, it considers, if there is philosophical common ground, whether the splitting of "French feminism" into psychoanalytic deconstructionist and materialist camps has been overstated. Could there, in fact, be a French "sisterhood of self-destructivity"? Finally, the paper reflects on the Anglophone reception of these French

feminists, asking: does feminine self-destructivity amount to a clichéd “French” nihilism when exported abroad? Alternatively, is the concept a transformative one in the Anglophone setting?

Bio

Lara Cox teaches English at the University of Paris VII and gained her PhD from the University of Exeter in 2012. She is a specialist in contemporary French performance cultures (theatre, film, standup comedy), gender studies, and psychoanalytic (especially Lacanian) theory. She has published, or is in the process of publishing, on the topics of Theatre of the Absurd, French feminism’s inflection in Gallic cinema-star culture, and the rape joke in contemporary standup comedy.

LISA DOWNING: ‘SHADOW SISTERS’: MONIQUE WITTIG, SHULAMITH FIRESTONE AND PROTO-ANTISOCIAL QUEER

Critical interest in Monique Wittig (1935-2003) and Shulamith Firestone (1945-2012) in the years since their deaths has been relatively minimal. While some attention has been paid to Wittig in both English and French, only one major collection of essays, published just prior to her death, signals any response to Firestone’s legacy. This paper compares two works by these women. Firestone’s *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (1970) constitutes a constructionist rejection of women’s innate maternal instinct and predisposition to the ethic of care. Wittig’s experimental novel *Les Guérillères* (1969) is similarly uncompromising in the violence it strategically depicts in the service of a lesbian-feminist revolution. I will argue that Wittig’s novel, to some degree, thematizes avant la lettre Firestone’s manifesto. The ideas in both authors’ works regarding the normative and oppressive functions of maternity, the nuclear family, and the institution of childhood, prefigure the so-called antisocial turn in 21st-century queer theory, associated with names such as Judith Jack Halberstam and Lee Edelman. Halberstam has recently written of the concept of “shadow feminism” to describe those dissident, negative voices that are excluded from the dominant narrative of the movement(s), and that queer our understanding of the feminist subject. I will mobilize this helpful concept in apprehending the particular flavour of queer-feminist writing that characterizes both Firestone’s and Wittig’s texts.

Bio

Lisa Downing is Professor of French Discourses of Sexuality at the University of Birmingham. Her research specialisms include the critical history of sexology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis; queer theory and feminist philosophy; and the history of crime. She is the author or co-author of 6 books and over 30 academic journal articles and chapters, and the editor of 9 books and special journal issues. Her monograph *The Subject of Murder: Gender, Exceptionality, and the Modern Killer* appeared last year with the University of Chicago Press. Her next book, *Fuckology: Critical Essays on John Money’s Diagnostic Concepts* (co-authored with Iain Morland and Nikki Sullivan), is due out later this year, also with Chicago.

KAYTE STOKOE: F*CKING THE BODY, REWRITING THE TEXT: PROTO-QUEER GENDER EXPRESSION THROUGH TEXTUAL DRAG IN WITTIG’S LE CORPS LESBIEN AND WOOLF’S ORLANDO

This paper aims to demonstrate how Wittig’s *Le Corps lesbien* (1973) and Woolf’s *Orlando* (1928) create and provoke proto-queer conceptualizations of gender, the body, and society. This paper’s titular “f*cking with” mirrors the workings of the texts discussed: both *Le Corps lesbien* and *Orlando* deliberately unsettle familiar, heteronormative ontologies and epistemologies, and deconstruct the “female” body and “female” sexuality as a central part of this strategy. Three focal points structure this paper. First, the paper examines how both texts reframe hegemonic violence with a proto-queer lens, thereby untangling femininity and womanhood from their association with peace and frailty. Further, in both *Le Corps lesbien* and *Orlando*, this bold appropriation of violence intertwines subtly with the texts’ reconceptualization of gender, the body and society. This reconceptualization operates through a number of diverse techniques, notably that which I term “textual drag”. Here, “textual drag” refers to the way in which both texts entwine familiar styles and techniques with

deconstructive concepts, thereby unsettling the reader's typical mode of reading and thinking. Having introduced textual drag, I concentrate on both texts' use of drag to challenge and rewrite the figure of the "hero" in Orlando and Le Corps lesbien. By analysing the images created with Marie-Hélène Bourcier's conceptualization of drag as "pratiques transgenres", this paper demonstrates the extent to which both texts create and foreshadow modes of living outside binary gendered models. Finally, the paper concludes by outlining the cultural and temporal differences between these texts, questioning the extent to which their creation of proto-queer identities and genders can transcend these boundaries.

Bio

Kayte Stokoe is a doctoral candidate in French Studies at the University of Warwick. Her thesis, entitled "A Reappraisal of Drag Performance: Subverting or Upholding the Status Quo", is supervised by Oliver Davis. Kayte holds an AHRC studentship as part of the project "Queer Theory in France". Kayte's research interests include gender identity and embodiment, intersections between queerness and disability, and performance art. Kayte's forthcoming piece "Are Drag Kings Too Queer for London?" will appear in a collected volume on Queer London later this year.

6B BLACK IS THE NEW BLACK

[IN M2]

CAMPBELLX AND CHERYL DUNYE

CampbellX (see 2A)

Cheryl Dunye

Cheryl Dunye a native of Liberia received her BA from Temple University and her MFA from Rutgers University's Mason Gross School of the Arts.

Dunye has received numerous national and international honors for her work in the media arts. Her fourth feature film THE OWLS, was celebrated at national and international film festivals in 2010. Her third feature film, Miramax's, MY BABY'S DADDY, was a box office success and played at theaters nationwide. Dunye's second feature, the acclaimed HBO Films, STRANGER INSIDE, garnered Dunye an Independent Spirit award nomination for best director in 2002. Dunye wrote, directed and starred in her first film which was the first African American lesbian feature film, THE WATERMELON WOMAN. It was awarded the Teddy Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival and best feature in L.A.'s OutFest, Italy's Torino, and France's Creteil Film Festivals. Dunye's other works have been included in the Whitney Biennial and screened at festivals in New York, London, Tokyo, Cape Town, Amsterdam and Sydney.

Dunye has served on the Directors Guild of America's Independent Council and on the advisory board for New York's Independent Film Project's Gordon Parks Award. She was also a mentor for IFP/ West Project Involve and a board member of Los Angeles OUTFEST. Presently she is Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Queer Cultural Center, sits on the board of Radar Productions, and is on the advisory board of Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project.

In addition Dunye has received grants from the Astraea Foundation and Frameline; a recipient of a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts; a fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation; and graced with the prestigious Anonymous was a Woman Award as well as a lifetime achievement award from Girlfriend's Magazine.

Based in San Francisco and Los Angeles, Dunye is at work on several new projects.

6C LESBIAN FASHION AND IDENTITY

[IN G4]

ELIZABETH WILSON – LESBIAN STYLES FROM THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY TO TODAY

Elizabeth Wilson is a writer and researcher. She is the author of a number of non fiction works including *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, *The Sphinx in the City*, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts* and *Love Game: A History of Tennis from Victorian Pastime to Global Phenomenon*. She has also published three period crime novels, with a fourth due out later this year.

JENNA ALLSOPP: NEGOTIATING FEMALE MASCULINITY IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY: THE CASE OF VERA ‘JACK’ HOLME (1881-1969)

This paper is adapted from my BA Fashion and Dress History dissertation, 2014

Described by cultural anthropologists, Victor and Edith Turner, as ‘social limbo,’ a ‘liminal’ space is a blurred boundary in which normal rules do not apply. Liminal spaces allow people in them to question traditional notions of morality and experiment with new limits of acceptability.

Turner suggests liminality occurs during transitional periods of history ‘when the past has lost its grip and the future has not yet taken definite shape.’ It can be argued that the immediate post-First World War period leading up to the Great Depression can be interpreted as a liminal space in itself. This was a period of conflict between tradition and innovation, between old attitudes towards femininity and morality and new theories of female sexuality and the likelihood of universal enfranchisement. This period of social uncertainty allowed for the uncertainty of gender, represented through the emerging masculinised styles and the greater freedom afforded women.

This paper will explore the negotiation of female masculinity in the early twentieth century, specifically that demonstrated by masculine lesbians whose visible cultural presence increased following the First World War. By focusing on Vera ‘Jack’ Holme (1881-1969) as a case study, it has been possible to understand the considerations which are taken when constructing a masculine identity for someone immersed in conservative society. In applying the concepts of Turner through the consideration of liminality, it has been possible to establish that Holme used the liminal spaces of the stage, foreign travel and the private sphere, and involved herself in occupations and environments requiring a uniform, in order to enact her masculine identities in legitimate and safe spaces, while remaining feminine in contexts which required it. This demonstrates a negotiation of her own ideals and those of society resulting in a split in Holme’s identities; feminine Vera, the Suffragette, and masculine Jack, the male impersonator.

It will be argued the less privileged economic position of Holme, and therefore her need to conform to societal expectation to some degree, compared to her more wealthy contemporaries such as Radclyffe Hall, contributed to this need to split her identities. Holme’s less-privileged economic status is also considered in illuminating an area of lesbian research which to date remains under-studied.

Student: MA History of Design and Material Culture, University of Brighton 2014-2016

JANE HATTRICK: CONSUMING THE ‘LESBIAN LOOK’: FASHION, DRESS AND IDENTITY IN EVERYDAY LIFE, 2005-2015

Niessen and Brydon write that: ‘Dressing enacts one of the most complicated acts of daily existence. Dressing negotiates between the intensely personal and constructed layers of the social.’ (Niessen and Brydon, 1998). A decade ago I conducted an investigation into the everyday self-fashioning of lesbians through qualitative research that focused on a group of women aged between 30-45 living in Brighton. Non of the the directives

that make up the National Lesbian and Gay Survey held as part of Mass Observation specifically dealt with lesbian dress and identity, so I composed my own. In 2005 the use of social networking had not yet 'taken off', and it was difficult to find women who were happy to take part in my study outside of my personal friendship group, hence the similarity in age, occupation and education and of these women.

The complex relationship between lesbian sexuality and style has been theorized in recent publications (Wilson, 2013, Karaminas, 2013), with Wilson asking the same question that Blackman and Perry posed in their 1990 article in *Feminist Review*, 'what does a lesbian look like?' As NL&G correspondent 504 stated in the early 1990s: 'All our styles, all our differences would challenge a lot of the 'pictures'. Not all dykes are short-haired plump girls. Not all lesbians are actively feminist and vegetarian.' In 2005, the majority of my respondents wore the androgynous or 'natural' lesbian feminist look, and most shopped at GAP. Several of my respondents were engaged in wearing the surfing and skating labels that were considered younger, lesbian fashion at the time. Mainstream normative fashion was considered 'too feminine' and was avoided by all but one respondent.

My paper will revisit the questions of whether a stereotypical 'lesbian look' exists, or whether the burgeoning multiple 'looks' or ambiguous subcultural styles identified then co-exist today. Issues of fashionability will be discussed within the context of feminism, class, occupation and age. Also, geographical location has identified as being a key issue, and my research will continue to focus on Brighton, revisiting some of my respondents ten years on to hear their clothing stories. I have also widened the participation in 2015 to include younger women in order to make useful comparisons in terms of style and personal politics.

6D COMPULSORY HETEROSEXUALITY AND LESBIAN FEMINISM: CHALLENGING HETEROSEXISM WITHIN CURRENT FEMINIST POLITICS [ROUNDTABLE]

[IN M56/57]

JESSICA FLEETHAM, ANGELA GBEMISOLA, LYNNE HARNE, ELAINE HUTTON, JULIA LONG AND
JODIE WOODWARD

6E FILM SCREENING

[IN 202]



YOU'RE NOT MY TARGET AUDIENCE [DIRECTED BY LAINE ZISMAN NEWMAN]

A documentary film following three professional performers as they navigate their careers as queer women artists in Toronto. The documentary uses interviews, spoken word, and performance pieces to address issues of access, invisibility, and oppression. Theatre creator Moynan King, hip-hop artist Nari (formerly MC Jazz), and performance artist Jess Dobkin discuss their artistic works and the mandates and uses of various performance spaces in Toronto, Canada. In conversation with these women, the film negotiates the obstacles and celebrates the achievements of queer women performers in Toronto.



A SIBLING FOR MOLLY [DIRECTED BY GEORGIA ROONEY]

A documentary about a Brighton-based lesbian couple who have one baby and want another. It took them four years and £17,000 to conceive their first daughter, Molly. Biological mum, Kate, suffered from extreme hyperemesis and other illnesses during her first pregnancy and the documentary meets the couple as they are forced to reconsider their plan for Kate to carry their second child. Non-biological mum, Ali, never had the desire to carry a child herself and the couple are faced with big decisions about how to grow their family. A core aim of *A Sibling for Molly* is to challenge traditional ideas about what makes a family. In addition, the documentary is intended to offer an insight into the fertility process and associated implications for lesbian couples. *A Sibling for Molly* offers a rare intimate glimpse into the experience of two women creating a family together and the unique joys and challenges that it brings.

6F MAGGIE SCOTT: 'ARE YOU QUEER ENOUGH TO BE HERE?': EXPLORING EXCLUSION IN THE LESBIAN FEMINIST MOVEMENT AND RECLAIMING FEMININITY THROUGH DOCUMENTARY PERFORMANCE.

[PERFORMANCE]

[IN 204]

AN IMMERSIVE ONE WOMAN SHOW ABOUT GENDER POLICING IN QUEER COMMUNITIES/THE LESBIAN/FEMINIST MOVEMENT OF THE 1970s/1980s

The documentary theater performance "Are You Queer Enough to Be Here?" takes primary sources from the 1970s/early 1980s to explore gender expression/roles, sexuality, relationships, and political correctness/political agency within the lesbian feminist movement. The primary sources used to compile the script include excerpts from articles found in *Lesbian Tide* magazines, Audre Lorde's speech "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," a conversation between Amber Hollibaugh and Cherrie Moraga, and a quote from Alice Walker.

This performance was conceived, developed and performed by Maggie Scott, a recent graduate from Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. Maggie studied Theater and Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London for a semester as an undergraduate. A bisexual femme, Maggie is interested in understanding the history of biphobia and femmephobia within queer communities, specifically within communities of lesbian identified women. The performance juxtaposes several points of view, calling audience members to engage with the complexity of these provocative narratives. The intention behind performing these sources in 2014 is to show that this history of policing identity within queer women's communities remains relevant and we are not so distant from our lesbian feminist past. Maggie developed the script during the Fall of 2013 and performed it in April of 2014.

Maggie Scott is a recent graduate from Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts.

KEYNOTE 3

2.45-3.45PM KEYNOTE 3

PROF. ANGELIA R. WILSON: THE POLITICS OF HATE AND OUR NEED FOR INSPIRATION

[IN SALLIS BENNEY]

Prof. Angelia R. Wilson - (University of Manchester)

I plan to touch on some of my own research about the political right in America but then relate that to 'our' need to be inspired to political engagement beyond recent policy 'successes' such as same-sex marriage etc. I hope that is the kind of topic/direction you both find appropriate for the audience.

Prof. Angelia R. Wilson is currently working on "The Politics of Hate" which focuses on the construction social values as a political strategy, particularly by the US Christian Right. Her findings are based upon interviews with Tea Party members, discourse analysis of over 15,000 emails and participant observation in over a dozen 'grassroots' gatherings such as the Values Voters Washington Briefing, the National Religious Broadcasters Convention, Exodus International and the Conservative Political Action Committee. Wilson has published five books, most recently a survey of welfare capitalism in *Why Europe is lesbian and gay friendly (and Why America never will be)* (SUNY) and an edited volume *Situating Intersectionality* (Palgrave). Her research also appears in *New Political Science*, *Politics & Religion*, *Politics & Gender*, *Contemporary Politics*, *Culture Health & Sexuality*, *Critical Social Policy*, *Sexualities* and the *American Review of Politics*. She is an experienced political commentator appearing on BBC World Service, BBC One News, BBC Breakfast Show, The Big Question, CBBC Newsround and various BBC Radio programmes. She served on the American Political Science Association Executive Committee (2011-13), founded the APSA Sexuality & Politics Section, is the co-editor of *Politics & Religion* (Cambridge) and serves on the editorial board of *Research & Politics* (SAGE).

4.00-5.00PM 'SLAM' CONTRIBUTIONS OF VERY SHORT READINGS AND WRITINGS THAT SUMMARISE WHAT LESBIAN FEMINISM/S MEAN TO THE PARTICIPANTS

[IN SALLIS BENNEY]

CAROLINE GONDA, LISA DOWNING, HELEN GREGORY AND CAMPBELL X

ⁱ Armas, 2007

ⁱⁱ Hartmann 1995; Adams and Pigg 2005 cited in Lind 2009:36

ⁱⁱⁱ A working class lesbian 'remains outside the project of development' by not fulfilling a culturally and institutionally prescribed role, not contributing to reproduction, and not being linked to the family Lind 2009:34

^{iv} Jolly 2007, Mottier 2008

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£5 ADVANCE/£7 OTD

ADVANCE TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM



ALL PROCEEDS WILL BE DONATED TO CHARITY

VENUE IS WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE

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University of Brighton



UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON
LGBT QUEER LIFE RESEARCH HUB

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