

Regulating Bodies Colloquium Report  
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March 9, 2008

## Organizing the Colloquium

The Women's Studies Department organized an interdisciplinary colloquium on the topic of "Regulating Bodies," that took place January 18, 2008. Women's Studies invited faculty and graduate students from across Simon Fraser University to participate. Recognizing that there were several faculty and students within the Women's Studies department involved in research that incorporated issues of embodiment, the organizers hoped that a university-wide colloquium on theme of "regulating bodies" would draw together an interesting range of speakers and perhaps lead to future research collaboration across disciplines.

After several ad hoc meetings with Women's Studies faculty members laying the groundwork, a general planning meeting was announced for October 2007 and a university-wide call was put out to interested faculty and students. Eighteen participants took part in the planning meeting, from departments like Women's Studies, English, Geography, Sociology and Anthropology, French, and History. Others who were not in attendance but wanted to be involved with the event included faculty and graduate students from Communications, Education, Philosophy and Health Sciences. The Women's Studies department proposed 4 panel sessions (Fashioning Bodies; Contested/Contesting Bodies; Bodies in Institutions and Policies; and Bodies in Visual Media and Popular Culture), and a roundtable discussion to begin the day, as an overview of the state of, or approach to, "regulating bodies" in difference disciplines and fields (see Appendix A for planning meeting minutes).

The planning meeting developed the format for the colloquium, which was structured with the desire to encourage discussion through panels made up of brief "think pieces" with ample time for questions and comments between participants and attendees. The goal was to focus on innovative approaches and to encourage interactive brainstorming sessions, that could spill out from the panel sessions into break-out rooms adjacent to the main presentation room.

The group also discussed possible outcomes of the colloquium, including:

- a) follow-on presentations at the Congress in 2008 (either by individuals in their respective associations, or as a specific report/forum);
- b) a larger, possibly international, conference for the fall of 2008, along the main topic lines established during the Colloquium;
- c) an application for Community Endowment funding, as the proposed approach could meet at least three of the five strategic areas of research (SFU plan), and has all of the requirements for funding (this could provide for max. 5 year, \$500,000, with possible renewal, and include hiring a coordinator);
- d) an application for funding from one of more of the granting councils;
- e) a book.

A follow-up meeting to the colloquium has not yet occurred, but after the distribution of the final report to colloquium participants and interested faculty, we intend to invite people to meet to gauge interest in future collaborative research, and possibly the organization of a future event.

## Regulating Bodies Colloquium

The final program for the colloquium included 4 panels, entitled "Contesting Bodies," "Contested Bodies," "Fashioning Bodies" and "Bodies in Visual Media and Popular Culture" (see Appendix B for the final program and full abstracts of each panel). The colloquium presenters represented faculty in Geography, Health Sciences, Anthropology, History, Sociology, Women's Studies, Contemporary Arts, English, French and Communications. Overall, the event was successful in creating discussion and making connections between a variety of diverse research sites. Key themes and concepts that repeatedly cropped up throughout the day included: embodiment, pain, recovery, transformation, transmutation, identity, appearances, (in)visible bodies, gender expectations and embodiment, sexuality, morality and abjection, mind/body relationships and bodily practices, public and privately experienced embodiment, violence, normative practices, discipline and power, consumption and capital, and borders and framing. Some of the ways these themes and concepts emerged will be traced below.

The (re)presentation of the body in pain or discomfort was an important theme, as well as its relation to definitions of (dis)ability, developed through analyses of Fibromyalgia Syndrome as a "contested illness" where the body becomes a contested site and "disability" is verbally employed depending on institutional requirements, despite conflicted understandings and applications of the term by patients to describe themselves (Valorie Crooks). Crooks' research shared thematic similarities with Trish Garner's discussion of transgendered bodies and theories of transgender, which frequently employ metaphors of (dis)ability to describe the challenges of living transgendered. In transgender discourse, Garner argues the suffering body only appears as something to distance oneself from, and in doing so, normative gender is linked with able-bodiedness.

Likewise, Jackie Levitin's discussion of images of drug-addicted and missing women of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside raised questions regarding the consequences of erasing the pain or 'discomfort' etched onto addicted women's bodies through photographs and drawings that represent the women as smiling, healthy, or in poses commonly associated with fashion modeling (despite the fact that many were addicted to drugs and/or involved in prostitution). Still related to the notion of the visible representation of embodied pain was Bettina Matzkuhn's artwork "Constellation," which was used on the event posters and program (see Appendix C for poster and event program, with an explanation of the work by the author). In this instance, pain is mapped out in an artistic rendering of rheumatoid arthritis, creating a paradox of sorts. This paradox also emerged in the discussion following Meredith Kimball's presentation on quilting and the body. The paradox of pain, artistically rendered, gets at what was one of the repeated concerns raised in discussion throughout the colloquium: how do we theorize 'the body' while taking into consideration the assumptions that often underlie theories of the body as healthy and fully-abled, and how do we avoid repeating this assumption? How do we contend with the replication and reproduction of the body as a site of power within our own research and work?

Marina Morrow's discussion of mental illness within the context of psychiatric (institutionalized, neoliberal, disciplinary) action on the body through biomedical or forced containment, suggested that biomedical treatment conforms to popular beliefs about the body, and avoids progressive goals of recovery that might include the active involvement of patients in their treatment. Her argument that we must improve the systems of response to mentally ill people (particularly in light of the concerns raised by intense media coverage of high profile deaths of Robert Jokansky and Paul Boyd in Vancouver in 2007), attempts to translate theory into practice, with the understanding that the body is not a substance but a process.

The underlying concerns of citizenship practices and embodiment raised in Morrow's discussion emerged in other presentations as well, notably in Ann Travers' discussion of the professional sports 'nexus,' which reinforces a two-sex system, homophobia, and transphobia through segregation, and which engenders citizenship by conferring unequal benefits on athletes based on sex and race. Notions of citizenship and embodiment were also central to Lara Campbell's presentation on Vietnam draft-dodgers, and the interrelation of morality, sexuality, and masculinity in language used to describe draft-dodgers in the US and Canada. Gendered citizenship and borders also emerged in Jie Yang's Foucauldian analysis of gender, consumption and body politics in urban China.

Helen Loshny and Susan Stryker both presented papers with the intent to seek out new ways of thinking about relationships between embodiment and identity, and the role of disciplinary and normalizing forces. Loshny's call for kindness and compassion stemmed from her understanding of "core identity" as transitory and impermanent, based in part from the work of philosopher Merleau-Ponty. Stryker's description of "TransSomatechics," building from the new field of somatechnics, attempts to highlight the inextricability of soma (body) and techne (techniques and technologies), such that the means in and through which bodies are constituted, positioned and lived is examined from a post-structuralist framework that gets at the spaces of power operating between biopower and anatamopolitical power (Foucault).

Considering violence, transformation, and spectatorship in relation to embodiment included comparisons between cinematic "body genres" such as kung fu films, the Body Worlds exhibit of human plastinates and the "new body regime" it engenders, and the representation of transsexual bodies in contemporary film. These topics also dealt in part with questions of morality, which ties in the work of Sonja Luehrmann and her observations of the Russian Orthodox Church's construction of the penitent body, where forgiveness for women's past abortions is attained through embodied practices. Morality and embodied practices also emerged in the interview data gathered by Mary Shearman from senior female fans of *All My Children*, a soap opera known for its inclusion of the first transgender character in daytime soap opera.

These and other themes and concepts traced throughout the colloquium provide ample opportunities for future collaborative research.

## APPENDIX A

### **Regulating Bodies Planning Meeting, Minutes October 17, 2007 3:30-4:30 Halpern Lounge**

#### **Absent:**

Christine Joffries (Health) -  
Derryl MacLean (History) -  
Lorraine Malcoe (Health) -  
Jen Marchbank (Explorations/WS) -  
Marina Morrow (Health) -  
Rebecca Scott (Communications) -  
Lisa Shapiro (Philosophy) -  
Rochelle Tucker (Health) -  
Alison Beale (Communications) (cultural policy and body regulation)  
Celeste Snowber (Education) (bodily discourse in the academy)  
Mary Lynn Stewart (WS) (reporting on women of colour in France, 1920s-1950s)  
Mary Shearman (WS) (media portrayal and queer identity)

#### **In attendance:**

Clint Burnham (English)(male panic/fasion)  
Sonja Luehrmann (Anth./History)(penitent bodies: anti-abortion discourse in the Russian Orthodox Church)  
Valorie Crooks (Geog./Health)(chronic illness and disability)  
Jorge Calderon (French)(gay male/trans body in French film)  
Cindy Patton (WS/Soc/Anth) no topic  
Helen Leung (WS)(body genres' and Chinese cinema- martial arts films)  
Meredith Kimball (WS/Psych) (quilting and the aging body)

Sonja Boon (WS)(corporeal autobiography/religious bodies in Calvinism)  
Ranbir Banwait (English) (genetic mutations/violence/oppression/agency in literature)  
Carole Gerson (English)(gendering the book/body representation)  
Jie Yang (Soc/Anth)(gender and consumption in China- regulating bodies)  
Lara Campbell (WS)(Vietnam draft dodgers/contested masculinity and cowardice in male body, and 'sexual service' of female bodies)  
Susan Stryker (WS)(somatechnics or trans)  
Habiba Zaman (WS)(representation of immigrant women's bodies, historically and contemporary)  
Ann Travers (Soc/Anth) (sex segregated sport leading to gender injustice)  
Trish Garner (WS)(key debates in trans theory and selective 'materializing'of bodies)  
Marilyn MacDonald (WS)(ecological/evolutionary bodies- epistemic distance and academization of social movements) (Acting Chair)  
Beth Pentney (WS) (vaginal rejuvenation) (Conference Coordinator)

### **Suggestions for Colloquium:**

#### 1. Proposed title/summary description:

It was suggested that some description of the breadth of usage for "regulating" and "bodies" be provided in any further advertising of the colloquium (reflecting the current participants' and any areas not currently represented. It was noted that the Colloquium is focussed on SFU, as a preliminary gathering of academics working on "Regulating the Body";

#### 2. Round Table Opening Colloquium:

##### (a) Possible presenters:

Valorie Crooks, Mary Lynn Stewart, Clint Burnham, and Marina Morrow;

##### (b) Topic/time:

to give an overview (10 minutes)of the state of, or approach to, "regulating bodies" in their discipline/field, and leaving 30 mins. for discussion (total length, 1 1/2 hours);

##### (c) Discussant:

find someone from a different discipline than those represented, who can summarize the presentations as an introduction to the sessions. In consideration of future connections, it might be best to have the Discussant come from outside SFU (e.g., BC Centre of Excellence in Women's Health);

#### 3. Sessions:

##### (a) Number,proposed titles, length of session:

The four titles proposed for sessions (i.e., "Fashioning Bodies"; "Contested/Contest Bodies"; Bodies in Institutions and Policies"; and "Bodies in Visual Media and Popular Culture") were accepted, with no suggested revisions. Each session should have a maximum of five presenters, and last an hour and a half;

##### (b) Length and focus of presentations:

In order to provide more time for discussion, each presentation is to be about 5 mins. long, and focus on innovative approaches, new directions or ideas for linking with other approaches. For a 90 minute session,this should leave about an hour for a discussion;

##### (c) Chair:

find someone for each session who will keep on schedule and facilitate discussion [note: we might also add note-taking to their function, if we want summaries of the sessions];

##### (d) Presenters in areas not currently represented:

Kinesiology, Criminology (Karlene Faith, Anne Stone), and interdisciplinarity/

disciplinarity [perhaps on the Restructuring Task Force, or presented at the Charette?]

### 3. location and related issues:

- (a) planned to be held January 18th, 2008, in Halpern in the larger room (123?), to allow for the anticipated number of attendees [should we ask about AV requirements, provide for powerpoint summaries etc.? the room can be equipped for such audiovisual, if needed], with the chairs arranged to promote discussion (e.g., circle, no podium);
- (b) colloquium to be open to participants as well as presenters [this should require some form of preregistration, to plan for numbers likely to attend];
- (c) agreed that a break\* in the morning (after the RoundTable and the first session), a catered lunch (possibly a "working" one, with either a summary or discussion), and a break in the afternoon (between the third and fourth sessions) would be best (\*coffee/tea/juice/water). Anyone with food allergies or dietary requirements is to contact Beth well in advance of the colloquium;
- (d) suggested advertising included making and distributing a poster, putting the info. on the WS website [getting an article into the SFU News in December? if so, should be suggested this month]. Any advertising should probably be concentrated in mid to late November;
- (e) formation of a Program Committee (or subcommittee), to take on the planning and other work involved (e.g., alternative title for the colloquium, getting funding for the catering, locating and contacting potential Chairs and Discussant). Nobody volunteered but there was interest in the concept;
- (f) suggested developing and circulating a reading list of texts on "regulating the Body" [should this be subdivided, as Introductory (selected Readers on...), by academic field etc.?]. This could be open for suggestions up to the date of the Colloquium.

### 4. Proposed outcomes:

This colloquium could lead to a series of possible initiatives, including:

- (i) follow-on presentations at the Congress in 2008 (either by individuals in their respective associations, or as a specific report/forum);
- (ii) a larger, possibly international, conference for the fall of 2008, along the main topic lines established during the Colloquium;
- (iii) an application for Community Endowment funding, as the proposed approach could meet at least three of the five strategic areas of research (SFU plan), and has all of the requirements for funding (this could provide for max. 5 year, \$500,000, with possible renewal, and include hiring a coordinator);
- (iv) an application for funding from one or more of the granting councils;
- (v) a book.

### 5. Next steps:

- (a) Request abstracts;
- (b) Put together a preliminary program and distribute it university-wide in mid-November (e-mail, SFU News, other..), and requiring confirmation by early Jan. (first week?) from potential attendees;
- (c) Request money for advertising, catering from the Dean, VP Research (and possibly using the FASS individual research initiative grants);
- (d) Find discussant, chairs, and additional presenters (noting that we have about 20 right now, and seem to be aiming at about 24, including the RoundTable and 4 sessions of 5 presenters at each).

## APPENDIX B

**Regulating Bodies Colloquium**  
**January 18, 2008 9:00am -5:00pm**  
**SFU Halpern Centre**  
**Final Extended Program**  
**Chair Dr. Mary Lynn Stewart**

9:00-10:30

### Panel 1: Contested Bodies

- 1) 'Understanding, Embracing, Rejecting: Women's negotiations of disability constructions and categorizations after the onset and embodiment of chronic illness'  
Dr. Valorie Crooks

#### ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this presentation is to elucidate the various responses women have to being, or not being, categorized as disabled within specific spheres (e.g. medical, state) or places (e.g. doctor's office, work) after the onset of chronic illness. Drawing on interviews conducted with 55 women living with fibromyalgia syndrome in Ontario, Canada, I examine how these women come to understand various constructions of disability and whether or not they reflect their sense of self, and how and why they either embrace or reject external categorizations of themselves as disabled by the state or medical professionals. In doing so I contribute to the limited geographic literature which stresses the importance of spatiality and ways of being in place to ill and impaired persons' negotiations of the embodied self and relationships with others. It is found that negotiating disability was, for many, an emotionally charged and complex process, drawing on one or more strategies: reluctantly employing some meanings associated with 'being disabled to achieve material ends, creating one's own understanding of disability that is most in keeping with one's sense of self, embracing other meanings to the extent that they offered a legitimate basis for identity, and/or rejecting disability in the interests of sustaining an existing identity. For those women in need of forms of state assistance such as income support, health care and state institutions exert powerful pressures to come to terms with what disability means in one's life—particularly as medical and state authorities classify people as 'disabled enough' or 'not disabled enough' for entitlement to state resources.

- 2) 'Disciplining the Body to Save the Mind'  
Marina Morrow (Health Sciences)

#### ABSTRACT:

Recent high profile deaths in Vancouver where individuals experiencing distress leading to mind confusion and aggressive behaviours have been responded to with brutal state intervention when other conflict de-escalation tactics might have saved lives. Using these examples as a starting point this presentation will examine the ways in which the bodies of people with psychiatric diagnoses are disciplined through pharmaceutical interventions and force and containment. Specifically, the continued bio-medical and clinical focus of mental health care interventions will be explored in the context of attendant neo-liberal policy discourses of reform and self-management.

- 3) 'Constructing Penitent Bodies: The Russian Orthodox Church's adaptation of western anti-abortion discourse'  
Sonja Luehrmann

#### ABSTRACT:

Many Christian churches active in contemporary Russia take a stance against abortion as part of their agenda for a moral transformation of society. Compared to their western counterparts, they face the special problem that many of the middle-aged women who make up a large part of their active membership have had multiple abortions during their reproductive years, since abortion was among the most widely available methods of birth control in the Soviet Union. Churches thus face a problem of retrospective penitence as well as one of didactically influencing current behavior. This paper looks at the way the Russian Orthodox Church deals with this dilemma in adapting didactic materials from the North American anti-abortion movement. I suggest that while western anti-abortionists (as well as western academics) often construct the issue of abortion as a matter of moral choice and debate, this focus sits uneasily with the Orthodox Church's perceived need to retroactively transform women's ways of engaging with memories of abortion. Materials produced in Russia thus tend to be liturgical texts offering practices of penitence, rather than argumentative interventions. By investigating the tensions between didactic persuasion and constructions of embodied memory, I ask how the Russian case challenges widespread scholarly understandings of the issues at stake in abortion activism.

- 4) "The Drugged Body: Women, drug use, and the DTES"  
Dr. Jackie Levitin

ABSTRACT:

In 2002 Lincoln Clarkes, formerly a fashion photographer and now a resident of the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, published a book of photographs titled *Heroines*. The title is a play on words - the feminine of hero and the word 'heroin,' similarly feminized. The women depicted are all drug addicts. Lincoln never photographed male addicts.

Because of their poses and their ultra slim bodies, the women of Clarkes' photos resemble fashion models. Indeed, as I've learned from interviewing Clarkes, he did pose them and the women typically dressed up to be posed. Many present undeniable 'style' in their mode of dress. I came to know some of these women during the three year period prior to 2003 when I worked on a research project on women's health and housing issues in the DTES. I came to understand a little bit about what happens to the body of a woman who is addicted to drugs. Their slimness, it is clear, is not achieved through a model's diet. Skin, fat and muscle tissue break down in heroin addiction, especially where injections are used. Addicts neglect feeding themselves, and, because of the addiction, the body is unable to assimilate the food that is taken in. Typically, the drug addicted woman's skin is marked by sores. Teeth loosen and fall out. One need to know this fact to understand why in the photographs the women keep their mouths closed as they stare back at the camera.

My interest is to understand the meaning of this book of photographs. and the thoughts that go through the mind of the woman who is photographed. What is it saying to the reader about the body of the drug-addicted woman, and how does she regard her own body? What does the photo mean to her? Does the way we, the reader, see her change as a result of the photography process? As a result of this book, do we view her and her body differently from the way we would have viewed her before - caught in our glance on the streets of the DTES?

- 5) "Distance from the Suffering Body: Exploring the Intersections of Transgender Theory and Disability Studies"  
Trish Garner

ABSTRACT:

This paper explores the intersectionality of disability studies and transgender theory through the figure of the body and the ways in which it operates within these fields. In particular, I am concerned with transgender discourse attempting to achieve normativity for the transgender body by evoking the disabled and/or suffering body only to distance itself from it. I argue that transgender discourse operates in a similar way to both feminism and the gay and lesbian movement in relation to the disavowal of disease (articulated respectively in Susan Wendell's *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability* (1996) and Robert McRuer's *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (2006)). I will elaborate my position through close readings of transgender theory and autobiography.

10:45-12:15

Panel 2: Contesting Bodies

- 1) 'Sex Segregated Sports and Gender Injustice'  
Ann Travers (Sociology and Anthropology)

ABSTRACT:

Using Nancy Fraser's (2007) concept of 'participatory parity' as a measure of gender justice, I make the case that the male dominated sex segregated "sport nexus" in North America contributes to gender injustice and therefore makes western societies undemocratic. Fraser defines participatory parity in both material and cultural terms and argues for a feminist politic that advocates for economic redistribution and cultural recognition. As Burstyn (1999) observes, key sports constitute a "public space" for a nation and confer differential attributes of and entitlement to citizenship. I argue that sport increasingly complements or even supplants the traditional role of the military in gendering citizenship and legitimating gender injustice. My use of Fraser's concept of 'participatory parity' as the basis of analysis and comparison of feminist strategies for the reformation of sport and the reformation of the military reveal the extent to which both these institutions are grounded in and serve to ground masculine economic and cultural privilege.

- 2) 'Draft Resistance and Embodied Activism'  
Lara Campbell (Women's Studies)

ABSTRACT:

This presentation focuses on the gender politics of Vietnam draft resistance in Canada, and is part of a larger study that looks at how antiwar activism in Canada was a gendered social movement. In particular, I will look at how both men's and women's bodies were at the centre of antiwar activism and the politics of draft resistance. Women's bodies and women's sexuality were understood as 'rewards' of activism for male radicals. Whether it was the duty of women to "screw" their male counterparts, as some women complained, or whether the bodies of heterosexual women were expected to assume a supportive position by marrying dodgers or deserters as an act of loyalty to progressive politics, if they refused such obligations, they risked being labeled 'prudish feminists.'

The bodies of men were also at the centre of antiwar activism, for the category of masculinity itself was called into question by draft evasion. The body of the draft dodger occupied a liminal space, a position of both masculinity and cowardice, which created a seemingly unsolvable paradox for antiwar activists. Could a real man retain his masculinity by fleeing the country? Or was immigration a heroic sacrifice of home, family, and nation for a larger cause? Conservative rhetoric marked draft dodging as passive and apathetic, and the men who engaged in it as emasculated.

- 3) "Agency without an agent: self-transformation through disciplinary body practices"  
Helen Loshny (Women's Studies)

ABSTRACT:

This would look at feminist/poststructuralist approaches that theorize/analyze the possibilities for (self)transformation through bodily practices. I would point to the emergent body of feminist work that uses the later Foucault in this way and also articulate some very preliminary thoughts on the connections between Bourdieu's and feminist theorists use of Merleau-Ponty in this area.

- 4) 'Desiring Bodies in Larissa Lai's Salt Fish Girl'  
Ranbir Banwait (Department of English)

ABSTRACT:

The concerns addressed by Larissa Lai reveal the body as a signifier of transition, transformation, and liminality. Indeed, it is in the relationship between the mythic, the historical, and the female body as the site of a key signature experience that the underlying porousness of the human body is explored. While the genetic mutations of the body signal new conceptions of "the human" (and the post-human), the body simultaneously becomes a force of disruption that invades and comes into being out of social spaces of historical violence, alienation, and otherness. Lai's cyclical fusion of Nu Wa, Miranda, and reproduction in *Salt Fish Girl* suggests the significance of creative acts in giving voice to the body in its forms of power and powerlessness. And while the mythic imagination becomes a transforming force, it also acts upon and enacts the female body, creating spaces that suggest the body as liminal. By positioning the body in relation to globalizing processes, Lai portray the human form as a site that disrupts and re-envisions human interaction. In my paper, I intend to demonstrate how the body in transformation in these works reflects not only an underlying preoccupation with the nature of "the human," but also how the body of post-modernity reconfigures social space.

12:15-1:45 LUNCH

1:45-3:15

### Panel 3: Fashioning Bodies

- 1) 'Consuming or Consumed: Gender, Consumption and Body Politics in Urban China'  
Jie Yang (Sociology and Anthropology)

#### ABSTRACT:

This paper analyzes a recent discourse on nenu "tender women" and shunu "ripe women" in Chinese beauty salons and popular in order to examine the relationship between gender, consumption and body politics. This discourse, based on women's cosmetics and dressing styles, categorizes women into young, tender women and older, mature women. In this discourse, tender women not only represent sexually desirable subjects, but also symbolize ideal active consumership that celebrates individuality, beauty and desire. Older, mature women could "become" tender women by consuming new fashions or new technologies for cosmetic surgery. Women's bodies thus become testing grounds for both new consumption patterns and innovative technologies. Informed by Williams' (1976) notion of keyword, this paper argues that the two key words nenu and shunu constitute two key sites at which women's bodies, identities and social experiences are negotiated and contested and at which an ideal gendered consuming subject is discursively constructed in order to be better consumed by both men and the rapidly growing, masculine consumer society. And, this discourse on nenu and shunu also constitutes an anatomic (biotic) mode of control to regulate women and their bodies and remold them into subjects that are entirely identified with the state's interests in developing consumer capitalism.

- 2) 'Commodification, Gender Anxiety, and Men's Fashion'  
Clint Burnham (Department of English)

#### ABSTRACT:

This is a paper on men's bodies & commodification & fashion & gender anxiety & homosexual panic - essentially I look at recent discourses (journalism, on-line blogs etc, literary texts) on so-called "skinny jeans" for men & such tropes as manorexia" in the context of post 9/11 commodity critique (Michael Kimmel has suggested, e.g., that the new male body is a reaction against the "bulked up" US soldier in Iraq), bringing in both cultural studies figures like Umberto Eco & John Fiske (who've both written specifically on jeans) & such critics as Marjorie Garber & Eve Sedgwick & Judith Butler & Zizek.

- 3) 'Transsomatechnics'  
Susan Stryker (Women's Studies)

ABSTRACT:

My presentation will situate the critical study of transgender phenomena within "somatechnics," a newly coined term that calls attention to the inextricability of bodies and technologies. It suggests that the intelligibility of any material body (soma) is inseparable from the techniques and technologies (technics) in and through which bodies in general are formed and transformed, and by means of which they are positioned and lived. I will suggest that transgender phenomena render visible the operations through which bodies incarnate and materialize historically and culturally specific discourses and practices.

3:30-5:00

Panel 5: Bodies in/and Visual media/ Popular Culture

Chair: Jen Marchbank

- 1) "The Quilting Body"  
Meredith Kimball (Women's Studies)

ABSTRACT:

Making quilts requires bodily skills and quilts are used to comfort, warm, and please bodies. Vision, touch, and manual skills among other physical processes are involved in making and using quilts. I plan to keep a journal about the physical experiences of making quilts, read what other women have written, and invite other quilters to join in this discussion. Possible topics include: how quilting links with different life stages, e.g., working life, parenting; how the physical changes of age influence the way we make quilts; what parts of the process are most sensual; how preferences for design, piecing, hand quilting, machine quilting, etc. develop and change over time; and how quilts connect us with others. Using quilters' experiences, a fabric construction or constructions will be the main result of the project. Depending on who is involved and their interests, this might be a quilt with individual blocks made by each participant representing some aspect of the body and quilting. Alternatively, it might be a series of smaller individual fabric projects. Each participant would also write a short description of their contribution. I might also write a longer paper exploring links between the quilters' experiences and theories of embodiment.

- 2) "Granny and Zoe: How watching All My Children has influenced my Grandmother's perception of queer identity"  
Mary Shearman (Women's Studies)

ABSTRACT:

I've been watching All My Children for twenty years, since sneaking into the TV room behind a large chair as a four year old during naptime. My grandmother has been watching it since its inception in 1970. Never did I anticipate this daytime soap opera would influence my grandmother's view on my life, community and friends. I've identified with some form of queer identity for ten years. Thus, the community I find myself in generally includes gay men, lesbian/dyke women, people into BDSM, trans and others who I would not try (nor would they appreciate) categorization. My grandmother, very set in her ways, whom I have a very close relationship with always refers to my friends by their sexual preferences, or has until recently. I can't remember how many times I've heard "Is he normal or gay?" and then in future conversations "Is that the gay?" I cringe.

When Bianca Montgomery came out as a lesbian on All My Children, I found that the sideshow spectacle was more prevalent in the media as opposed to any progressive aspects "First Same Sex Daytime Kiss!" The introduction of Zoe, a transgendered lesbian (who has since disappeared from the program), however, received much less mainstream broadcasting media coverage; although media specifically catered to soap consumers has featured headlines such as "Tranny takes over All My Children" and speculation that the writers are trying to boost ratings by trying to switch up the action of illicit affairs and baby snatching. All My Children has been a history of tackling subject matter that is considered controversial for daytime television since the when a character with AIDS was introduced. So why has Zoe been abandoned?

Since this character has appeared on the scene, my grandmother has a lot less difficulties with the preferred pronouns of my friends and shows some recognition of the challenges trans individuals face. The positive implications of this in my life are extraordinary not only in terms of her acceptance and understanding of my community, but also because my long-term partner identifies as trans. I speculate that Zoe has left the program because the executive team at All My Children decided the daytime world was not ready for a trans character and has decided to return to baby snatching. My analysis consists of a close study of media relating to the character and interviews with fans of the show including my grandmother. No matter what the reaction was to another openly queer character on the show, consciousness was raised broadly due to Zoe's creation.

- 3) 'Interrupted Transsexual Bodies in Contemporary Films'  
Jorge Calderon (French)

ABSTRACT:

I propose an analysis of the representation of transsexual transformations from a male to a female body in contemporary films. My main focus is the understanding of the signification of the interruption of the bodily transformation in the «Bad Education» (Spain) directed by Pedro Almodóvar, «Tiresia» (France) directed by Bertrand Borello, and «Hedwig and the Angry Inch» (USA) directed by John Cameron Mitchell.

- 4) 'Body Genres and the Poetics of Violence'  
Helen Leung (Women's Studies)

ABSTRACT:

Violence against (sexual, gender, and racial) minorities on screen has often been studied in relation to victimization and the ethical responsibility for the Other. More recently, studies of violence in film and literature have also explored ways in which representations of violence render marginalized experiences visible/legible. Through a study of "body genres" (a term Linda Williams first used for pornography and horror, and subsequently taken up by others to approach genres such as martial arts, kung fu, and gangster films), I would like to first examine the poetics of violence on screen in bodily terms: i.e. How are bodies made to appear bruised, damaged, and violated on screen? At the same time, how does cinema stage and capture bodies in motion and in intimate, even permeable, proximity with other bodies? From there I would like to explore when and how innovations in the poetics of violence on screen allow transgressive/queer, if you will, bodily experiences to be perceptible, and what significance this may have for any ethical consideration of screen violence. Examples studied may span the works of David Cronenberg and Michael Haneke to John Woo and Chang Che.

- 5) '*Body Worlds* and a New Body Regime'  
Rebecca Scott (Communications)

ABSTRACT:

Normal and expected reactions and objections to viewing dead, dissected and posed human bodies do not normally figure in the viewing of the plastinates. I call this process closure. I will show that *Body Worlds* selectively deploys multiple discourses and histories, uses strategies of visual display, and chemically and physically alters bodies in order to achieve this closure. I will then argue that *Body Worlds* constitutes a new body regime, and suggest a critique of it.

Regulating Bodies Colloquium Notes  
January 18, 2008

Lisa Weeks and Raquel Park

## **Panel 1 - Contested Bodies**

### **“Understanding, Embracing, Rejecting: Women’s negotiations of disability constructions and categorizations after the onset and embodiment of chronic illness’**

**Valerie Crooks (Geography)**

- Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS)—medically unexplained, and so a contested illness, no cures, no consensus regarding causes and treatments, little legitimacy in medical community. Contested disease, where the body becomes a contested site. Primarily effects women.
- -What does it mean to be regarded as disabled?—Some rationalized and rejected it, others embrace it. Four strategies emerged as the idea of what it means to be “disabled were altered:
  1. Reluctantly employing some means of being disabled to gain ends—i.e.: agree with way disability is defined in order to gain income assistance
  2. Creating ones own understanding of disability to keep with own definition of self
  3. Embrace other meanings as a legitimate basis of identity
  4. Rejecting disability in interest of maintaining sustained identity
- Strategies when “disability” clashes with a conception of self as non-disabled:
  - o Embracing in relation to some place, i.e. work, but not in others
  - o Finding ways to rationalize and reject by assigning extreme meanings to what disabled means
- It becomes a process of negotiating powerful institutional pressures to find where one fits.

### **“Disciplining the Body to Save the Mind”**

**Marina Morrow (Health Sciences)**

- Inspired by recent events—high profile deaths of people experiencing mental distress: e.g. Robert Jokansky, Paul Boyd
- Bodies not “properly disciplined” through biomedical, forcing containment seen as only option (brutal state intervention)
- Neo-liberal discourse focuses on de-institutionalization, recovery, self-management
- Re-institutionalization through psychopharmaceuticals, burgeoning neo-liberal discourse of self-management, yet, must comply with pharmaceutical routine
- Cultural studies of psychiatry do have the potential to push at borders of biomedical paradigm to inform service → how to translate theoretical to practice?
  - o improving system responses
- Self management discourses and recovery:
  - o radical idea that people can recover
  - o actively involves person, strengths focuses on access to “elements of citizenship
- Yet biomedical priority:
  - o a tool to contain and control unruly minds and bodies of mentally ill non-compliant subject is the greatest risk
  - o focus not on progressive goals of recovery, but conform to institutional environment, rehabilitation gets reduced to living (making beds, etc.)
  - o life made biological, focus on life and sciences on processes that make self-regulation possible.
- A call for supports that would help reduce or go off medication safely, depathologize some experiences with social or state support, actively determine own relationship to illness, CHOICE
- Need to see body as process rather than substance

### **“Constructing Penitent Bodies: The Russian Orthodox Church's adaptation of western anti-abortion discourse”**

## **Sonja Luehrmann (Anthropology and History, University of Michigan)**

- Abortion was most common method of birth control in the Soviet Union—many of the middle-aged, Russian Orthodox Church's lay-women have had up to 7 or 8 abortions
- Didactic problem and retrospective problem of re-shaping memories → abortion has "corrupted" the body → cured in a process that involves bodily healing: series of prostrations—penitence exercise, 40 days consecutively—half an hour
- Assigning moral significance to past physical act
- Academic shift to see abortion not as matter of opinion and debate, but something that happens in the body (of woman and foetus)
- Beyond right or wrong, choice or no choice
- Concept of the body to see abortion practices rather than abortion debates
- Q—what is/should be the relations of scholarly process to concepts already at play in our material reality regarding the body

## **“The Drugged Body’: Women, drug use, and the DTES’ Jackie Levitin (Women’s Studies/Contemporary Arts)**

- An inquiry into how we've been (forced) to think about depicting the (female) drug addict and the sex trade worker
- How do we “look at” the women of the DTES - female drug addict and the sex trade worker
- Forced to now because of disappearances of women that have been long ignored, feelings of guilt, effort to rectify failure to LOOK
- In the forward by Barbara Hodgson to Lincoln Clarke's book *Heroines* she says 'his portraits give them something lost along the way—identity'
  - o “from out of their photographs, the women look us in the eye”
  - o “uncompromising and equal scrutiny”
  - o “in process of being photographed they find dignity”
- Problem for paying for an interview—did he actually have “trust”
- Most photos gaze at us—but not smiling
- Name of woman not included in the credits for the photo, her identity has been erased perhaps in his book
  - o not necessarily him—safety reasons for not giving names etc.
  - o what's most important in book seems to be the Downtown Eastside location
- Clarke says 'I've given a visual record to what these women look like'—relates to the Pickton killings/disappearances
- Newer discourse: attempt to humanize the women and make them “one of us” e.g. Mona Lee Wilson—“the mother” - not street worker but now a woman with an active verb “loved the colour pink”
- Effort to give women back their history-
  - o blog: “Suzie's Sacred Space”—portraits of the women being painted
  - o also done by forensic artists, ex. Todd Matthews—Project Edan: age-regression, taking out toll of drugs, etc., try to imagine how photo would look if she were smiling
- What does it mean to show these women as smiling?
- ‘Clarke shocks us with our own assumptions, not with the lives that the women lead.
- If we can show them smiling, then they are just like us—but their lives are not necessarily “like everybody's”

## **“Distance from the Suffering Body: Exploring the Intersections of Transgender Theory and Disability Studies”**

### **Trish Garner (Women’s Studies)**

- Concerned about the ways that bodily discomfort framed in trans theories—enacts a disavowal of disease
- Ways that bodies figure in these fields, but also across, structured on more than one axis of identity

- Susan Wendell: theories of embodiment ignore suffering but focus on powerful and healthy body, disavowal maintains association between ability and health, and devalues disabled bodies and subjectivities
- Robert McRuer Crip Theory: compulsory sexuality contingent on compulsory able-bodiedness and vice versa
- in transgender discourse, Suffering body only appears as something to distance oneself from
- Bodily belonging and comfort, subjective experience that this body is mine, is valued in Prosser's transsexual theory of embodiment
- he situates the post-operative transsexual comfortably at home in his/her body
- Not saying should live with bodily discomfort, nor that pain makes us stronger etc., but that we need to emphasize and explore the relationship between normative gender and able-bodiedness
  - o able-bodiedness is always only temporary
  - o instead of distancing from bodily suffering, explore what it can tell us

## **Discussion: Panel 1**

### **Question:**

Hymn/prayer—does it really offer forgiveness? Who has the power to forgive? How do you know if you're going to be forgiven?

### **Response:**

Penitence is performed in relationship to priest—confess → priests says do these things as penitence → at the end whether the woman is readmitted to communion depends on whether the priest perceives she has repented—a transformation that the woman achieves through bodily practices—overcome through bodily practices

### **Question:**

Is the culture of guilt retroactively bringing people back to the church?

### **Response:**

Related to a racist class of civilizations surrounding current concern over birth rate

-Women are being asked to take on moral burden

Comment relating pain/self abnegation with the process of doing the prayer/hymn—the nobility of suffering —it is through suffering that transformation occurs—abjection—connection made to Trish's paper and embracing pain/incorporating it into theories of the body

Comment on Lincoln Clarke's self-fulfilling prophesy of Heroin sheik—fetishizes according to Western body sizes (a trope)

-he's wrong in what women on the DTES look like

-pornographic way of portraying women for our gaze!

-In his agency as a photographer what is he doing, posing himself above looking down etc.

### **Response:**

Need to respect women being proud to be in his book, not easy to just take a position of condemning him for exploitation

-One cannot escape accusations of exploitation, relationship is very unequal

Comment about homogenizing experiences (e.g.: re-drawing missing women from the DTES) → ignores/erases the differences/real suffering/real peoples' lives—link made to Trish's paper → erasing the pain/discomfort from the “disabled/suffering” body to achieve normativity

**Question:**

How do we incorporate people embracing pain into the theory of the body?

**Question:**

How can we draw links between papers—the possible dialogue between theory and policy responses when it is a not normative/comfortable body being responded to?

**Response:**

More credence to other, non-normative perspectives -

## **Panel 2 – Contesting Bodies**

### **“Sex Segregated Sports and Gender Injustice”**

#### **Ann Travers (Sociology and Anthropology)**

- Includes analysis of race—most celebrated athletes = black men - sport nexus plays an important role in engendering citizenship—but the same benefits are not conferred on men of colour—confers unequal benefit for men and women → only a certain strata of men
- Sport nexus reinforces the two sex system and racist assumptions in important ways—promotes normalizes sexism, homophobia and transphobia
- Hopeful that increased pressure from trans activists will call into question sport boundaries—uncover overlap between pink and blue (tells about poster of basketball bests by height)

### **“Draft Resistance and Embodied Activism”**

#### **Lara Campbell (Women’s Studies)**

- Language of sexuality prominent - morality, sexuality, and masculinity interrelated
- Category of masculinity called into question by draft evasion: can a “real man” maintain his masculinity by fleeing his country. Was immigration to Canada a heroic sacrifice of home/nation etc. for a greater cause? Who is being left (the most marginalized) in the U.S. to fight and die in their place?
- Oral history so far—men = ambivalent—feelings of shame = accepted some of the rhetoric but at the same time the choice they made was the most ethical one they could have made at the time: ‘Really I just didn’t want to die’

### **“Self-transformation through disciplinary body practices”**

## **Helen Loshny (Women's Studies)**

- Thinking about theorists and indirect or direct connections to ancient traditional philosophical practices
- Relationships between body, subjects, cultures, and societies
- Our bodies and identities = products of disciplinary and normalizing regimes
- Question—subjugating and productive force as means of acting against normalizing forces? = Always already caught in the grip of disciplinary power
- How can we use this work for different affect?
- Interested in alternative conceptualizations of bodies and embodiment = differential and fluid construct—site of potential rather than fixed given
- Care of the self—how we might use disciplinary techniques to undo/dissolve notion of separate solid self
- Suggests transformative potential at the level of the body underpinned by ethos of kindness, compassion → embody alternative ways we perceive and act in the world → change our interconnectedness with the world and each other
- Core identity as transitory and impermanent—from this perspective—is it possible to recognize and undo the effects of disciplinary power and the suffering it has brought?

## **“Desiring Bodies in Larissa Lai’s Salt Fish Girl”**

### **Ranbir Banwait (Department of English)**

- Wanted to look at the emergence of desire for racialized subject
- Body functions as site of desire, function, meaning and wounding - shape shifter—scenes of creation—character undergoes transformation when she first begins to encounter desire
- Draws on Butler, Freud and Lacan, and argues linear relationship to individuated object of desire excludes minority subjectivity
- Re-reads Nu-Wa character to have agency—her desire is a productive force of agency a source from which the subject actually materializes—not a lack at the center—counters negativity of desire and draws on thinkers who theorize desire as productive force
- Emphasizes process over lack
- Resistance to normative understandings of subjectivity—ethics of desire creatively displaces Freudian reading of desire as lack

## **Discussion: Panel 2**

Comment for Lara:

- Have you thought about comparing the representations of draft dodgers as emasculated to radical separatist feminists of the same time? Centred on gender as well—an active stepping away from gendered citizenship = similar bodily border crossing

Comment linking Lara and Ann’s work—address military and sport relationship to citizenship—is it imaginable that men refusing to participate in sport would elicit the same response as draft dodging?

- Important parallel refusal to play sport = queer for men, want to play sport = queer for women—also hyper masculine links between wanting to die in war and play through pain—stoicism and fearlessness in the face of bodily injury or death

**Question:** What possibilities can also come out of sex-segregation–queer consequences, spaces for change in the history of sport

**Response:** Not really, no open opportunities. Liberal feminist perspective on sport–eliminate sex segregation in sport entirely

- Male only sporting spaces should be eliminated–Ralls theory of justice: exclusivity only when it serves to increase the inclusivity of marginalized groups

**Question** to Helen Loshny–is calm attentive awareness a way to overcome totalizing power? Do you ever really get outside of those totalizing structures of power? Is mindfulness a way of getting out of those structures?

**Response:** the difference in terms of what bodily discipline yields in respect to disciplinary power is the intention that the practices are undertaken with - contest violence and suffering through kindness and compassion and acceptance of our embodied natures - links to Trish's paper–how to live out a fact of life without rejecting/condoning/promoting pain and suffering

What if there is no point–what if the point is there is no point? Do you have to transform it into something else or can you just leave it and say it's just suffering?

- Not a question of transforming the suffering itself but how we respond to it–mindfulness and awareness of it without needing to shift it or change it

Avoid opposing the opposite of suffering as health or normality–try to talk about pain/suffering without being drawn into dualistic thinking

### **Identifying key words or concepts from the morning sessions:**

- Embodiment–not always used in the same way
- Categorizing and relationship of this term to entitlement
- Recovery
- Transformation
- Transmutation
- Identity
- Looks/Appearances–the body is presented to us and we respond to it
- Missing bodies/Ignored bodies - whose bodies do we not look at?–Bodies that don't Matter'
- Looking at how the body is related to more than one axis of identity–complicating the conceptions of how the body is connected to notions of identity
- Relationship between masculinity/military/sports
- Gender and expectations for what the body does and performs
- Sexuality/morality–terms of abjection toward bodies
- Individual relationship to the body and how we conceive of the body–isolated self or complicated interactionary self
- Relationship between mind/body–bodily practices
- Bodies and public–some of the things that are public and not by choice–what about our own bodies do we not make public–withhold
- Animal studies = new body of work–e.g.: Donna Haraway–companion species

- Beth—vaginal reconstructive surgery—connected to/ marketed through discourse of self-esteem, increased sexual pleasure—sense of recuperating the pre-maternal body—link to Sonja’s paper—both about morality and pleasure and sense of responsibility to atone for previous actions—recuperate through the spirit vs. through cosmetic surgery
- The sense in which we have a fascist relationship to our own bodies to adhere to some broader norm—the violence that we do to our bodies in the name of fitness—link to cosmetic surgery—about pleasure too - can it not also be an anti-disciplinary form of discipline? When does something become disciplinary and when is it simply resisting a certain kind of normative power? And who draws that line? The line between a “fascist” relationship and simply a subjective form of self-transformation?
- Transformation as a concept—for example, the life sciences of humanities - how the body’s transformability would be different from that perspective—bio-medical model dealing with mental illness is that also a model of transformation or is it more about stagnation there?

### **Panel 3 - Fashioning Bodies**

#### **“Commodification, Gender Anxiety, and Men's Fashion” Clint Burnham (Department of English)**

- A look at recent discourses on “skinny jeans” esp. in blogs
- Connected to virulent homophobia—post9/11 commodity critique—very Lacanian—inner most ideas actualized externally
- Interactivity is still pathological (i.e.: sleeping around, but still passive)
- Jeans as a signifier of classlessness
- Tearing of holes as critique of capital, and then the marketing of ripped jeans: is tearing holes in ones own jeans really an act of resistance?
- Tight jeans a bridging of the mind/body gap—live toward the exterior world.
- Subject-supposed-to-wear-skinny jeans recent trope
- post 9/11 appellation—anthropomorphizes—quality we want for ourselves: queer Other has access to some other category that is enjoyable
- sexuality raising class axis- gay men signified by skinny jeans, white character..
- commodity critique—online forum that discusses where to find, how to wear etc.
  - o online homophobia and misogyny

#### **“Consuming or Consumed: Gender, Consumption and Body Politics in Urban China” Jie Yang (Sociology and Anthropology)**

- The discourse of feminine youth (nenu=tender women) and feminine maturity (shun= mature women)
- In a family—based on what is assumed to need—sexual innuendo is embedded in this discourse.
- This discourse is diagnostic and prescriptive; pedagogical: to fashion, exercise, operate on, nourish, beautify the body
- Based on dressing style, cosmetic style appearance—two categories of women
- Tender women—trendy, more sexually desirable and mature women—transition to the market economy ---how they should dress fashion exercise operate on their body—related to the transition to the market economy
- Why is gender so central to China’s recent development to consumer capitalism? women’s body at the foreground ,highlight, launch rampant consumerism, transnational capitalism pulled out in this process.
- Absorbing the shockwaves of neoliberalism: privatization—the emergence of beauty salon as a gendered and embodied space serves to absorb the shockwaves of massive gendered

unemployment as a way to create job opportunities for those laid-off women workers and at the same time create a space to entertain those women

- Gender, consumption and body politics in China: Foucault - focus of body as the site of disciplines of power not only is a more authentically materialist position than Marxist approaches, but also renders passé the Marxian conception of ideological critique
- Coincides with shift—focus on public to private individual
- Focus on body part of China's governance shift from Mao's emphasis on the public and politics to post-Maoist emphasis on private individual and body to show world overcome Maoist to a place in the global capitalist market
- Women embody active consumerism that celebrates individuality freedom and desire

### **“Transsomatechnics”**

#### **Susan Stryker (Women's Studies)**

- “Transsomatechnics” situates field of transgender studies in broader framework of body technology relationships
- To see transgender studies as not only pertinent to a tiny minority of people but representative of wider issues of concern to soc science
- Highlight inseparability of soma and technics of which the body is formed and transformed - human embodiment was always already modified
- Means in and through which bodies are constituted, positioned and lived—contemporary poststructuralist - constitutive of bodily being
- Individual experiences of powers operations—not sites of conscription but practices of re-writing and re-patterning
- To bring transgender studies into this—concrete analysis of manifold ways individual gendered embodiments—material transformation of gendered embodiment—how sex gender power operations.

### **Discussion: Panel 3**

**Question:** How does race play a role in the new consumerization of the body in China?—the esthetics of whiteness: the model of the consumer is “woman”—especially American (read: white) women used in advertising in China

**Question** directed Susan Stryker—if we see it as a neo-liberal exercise in bio-power how can we use somatechnics to analyze this (referring to Jie's presentation).

**Response:** how to understand in a Foucauldian kind of way how these overarching strategies work the body of any one subject—there's a way that the practice of understanding critically how somatechnical linkages between the anatomopolitical and biopolitical work at the site of your own body (relies on a mindful reflection) - how power operates in concrete detail through you/through one = an opportunity to divert/circulate/re-direct operations of power

**Question:** What is neo-liberal about bio-power? Is it the focus of the body itself? In socialist China was there a focus on the body? What is specific about neo-liberal China?

**Response:** it is about the self—individual regulate/manage, take care of the self (links to Marina Morrow's neo-liberal discourse of self-management).

- Shift from socialism to market = masculine woman—what a man can do woman can do too - now woman has own needs, maximize use of women's bodies—now women have to go back home and leave jobs for men and now naturalize gender difference between man and woman

Comment reflecting anxiety about how much of Foucault's own argument has incited a whole field of discourse—body as a site of power so central = we are implicated in producing all this body talk and how do we live with that?

**Response:** opportunities arise to do certain kinds of work—as long as it's a critical awareness of how you're positioning yourself with that = not worried

**Response:** concerned with the things that fall away when we focus on another thing

- What critical language might forestall the above anxiety—is there critical silence?
- To some extent our focus is neo-liberal—the body focuses more on the individual and less on community = one thing that falls away
- Flows of affect—that which moves us—happens communally, crosses over subjects and other boundaries

Choice –what do we mean when we say choice?

- Materialist/feminist concern—what about some of the actual social structures that are restricting—how is my physical body treated/responded—empowered/disabled by some social practice that goes beyond individual choice
- Part of left critique = see choice as false that you have a menu of options and you don't get to pick anything that's not on the menu—think in terms of Bourdieu's relation between habitus and field—sense of social structure that overwhelms the subject—queer re-readings of habitus think about how individual actions can subversively use personal location to deform the social field and create new speaking position—habitus can restructure field—in that sense the idea you can have choice/agency while choosing from the menu

## **Panel 4 - Bodies in/and Visual Media/ Popular Culture**

### **“The Quilting Body”**

#### **Meredith Kimball (Women's Studies)**

- Importance of hands (discussion of pain greater in hand that holds the material and in hand that sews), eyes (in marking quilts for quilting understanding that all tools are partial with advantages and disadvantages; similar to partial nature of all theories), and borders (for both bodies and quilts borders serve similar functions: give strength and definition and provide space for ornamentation)
- Constructing patterns that approximate an inner vision, similar processes in quilting and writing

**“Granny and Zoe: How watching All My Children has influenced my Grandmother's perception of queer identity”**

### **Mary Shearman (Women's Studies)**

- The results of a focus-group with ten 80+ women in Montreal in November
- Told about why All My Children = the "more gritty" show in the soap opera world—all the women have watched the show since its 1970 inception
- Asked, "Do you think your perceptions of the world have been transformed by watching these anomalies" on TV—they chose AMC because it was representative of "the real world"—identify as AMC connoisseurs, felt it was their "civic duty" to be enlightened by this soap opera
- Interesting language switching to English when talking about "transgender"
- Consulted Foucault's work on genealogies and language when concerned of ageism in this research

### **"Interrupted Transsexual Bodies in Contemporary Films"**

#### **Jorge Calderon (French)**

- Questions about what is transgender what is transsexual and what cannot fit in these categories - went back to the basics—relation between identity and otherness in cultural studies
- Importance of feminism—also construction of the body in Gay and Lesbian Studies—Linking biological body to sexual practices and the body—Later on- work of others leads to queering of gender identity—spectrum of sexual identity becomes more important—queer theory separates biological sexual body from sexual practice and gender identity
- Now challenge of trans studies = to challenge work of feminism, gay and lesbian studies and queer studies
- representations of transgender and transsexual characters in film as a metaphor and not representation of a reality - not really a transgender or transsexual = a metaphor for something else—e.g.: represents social oppression
- More important for him = central function of trans character as a metaphor in cultural and social and literary productions today.

### **"Body Genres and the Poetics of Violence"**

#### **Helen Leung (Women's Studies)**

- Bodily Cinema, from Linda Williams' "bodily genres" and Jeffrey Pence's "spiritual cinema": can cinema's corporeality (the jolt a viewer experiences) be aligned with its spirituality?
- Violence and intimacy closely bound in cinematic representations
- Queer poetics and trans poetics

### **'Body Worlds and a New Body Regime'**

#### **Rebecca Scott (Communications)**

- Body World exhibitions—has been viewed by nearly 25 million people since 1995
- Body Worlds is discursively constituted through multiple discourses—science, anatomy, education, art, and entertainment
- Body Worlds constitutes a new body regime that has implications for the way bodies are viewed - a reduction and alienation of the body—advances a body regime where body conceived of as a resource to be mastered, benefited by, and used and such a regime may permit many kinds of violence on the body—Body Worlds has implications outside itself that we should think through

## Discussion: Panel 4

Links drawn between violence and ethics in Body Worlds presentation and Helen Leung's work

Also comment on how mass spectatorships all function in a productive way to teach us how we're supposed to identify, what we're supposed to see—big complicated system

**Question:** Can there be corporeal identifications as well? Spectatorship study centres on identification doesn't take into account intercorporeal accounts - not just consuming representations = not just about seeing but actively producing from a disembodied location

**Question:** What methodology would move us closer to understanding this?

**Response:** that you have to the body depends on the situation that you're in when you're viewing the body—location

- When transgender becomes just a metaphor does it erase the actual transgender body?

**Question:** What are the effects/ethics of allegorizing?

**Response:** body becomes a spectrum of possibility so the social commitment becomes more difficult—believes that feminism/gay/lesbian/gender queer/transgender don't have same definition of the body as trans studies = can't proceed from same place—also the distinctions between construction and reception are different

- Relationship between quilting, embodiment and pain—the experience of embodiment always occurs within a context—different contexts of pain and suffering invite different responses—importance of acknowledging class differences, need contexts to the pain
- Link between studying “what's on the edge of the knowable” and spirituality and the suggestion that maybe we need to think more spiritually
- Other suggestion = to find the commonality in the shared practices that we do—being conscious of our shared practices with other people—the practices themselves

## Wrap-Up: Identifying Key Words or Concepts

### Led by Mary Lynn Stewart, and Colloquium participants

- Audience
- Consumer
- Capitalism
- Personal connections to consumer capitalism—not isolating the body or the individual
- Violence
- Intimacy
- Analyzing not the individual only—connecting personal with community
- Body fascism
- Parts of the body
- Borders and framing
- Different ways of framing the body without talking about whether issues of framing themselves should be thought about more
- Visuals

- Process
- Fluidity