philoSOPHIA

2019 Conference Program

Memorial University, Signal Hill Campus, St. John’s, Newfoundland, May 9-11

Thursday, May 9

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM Registration

7:00 PM – 8:30 PM Plenary Session: Lee Maracle, University of Toronto

“Decolonization, Continental Feminism, and Indigeneity”

8:30 PM – 10:00 PM Reception

Friday, May 10

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM Coffee and Registration

9:30 AM – 11:30 AM Session I

Workshop A: Foucault and Wynter: A Philosophical Encounter With and Against the Human

Workshop Coordinators: Lynne Huffer and Taryn Jordan

Participants: Haylee Harrell, Ege Selin Islekel, Rebecca Longtin, Elaine Miller, Mukasa Mubirumusoke, Elisabeth Paquette

Workshop B: Feminist Solidarities

Florentien Verhage, “Surging from the Wreckage of Colonialism”

Whitney Ronshagen, “Eating Together as ‘World’-Travelling”

Maliheh Deyhim, Graduate Student Essay Prize Winner, “But a Piece of Clothing: On Removing the Hijab”

Tabor Fisher, “Space-Time and Social Location: Re-placing Intersectionality”

Panel 1: Feminism and Consent

Lucinda Vandervort, “Conceptions of Individual and Group Consent in the 21st Century”

Caleb Ward, “Locating Responsibility to a Partner within Structural Critiques of Sexual Consent”

Abby Kluchin, “Feeling Willing: Toward an Intersubjective Theory of Consent”

Panel 2: Trans Subjectivity

Fanny Söderbäck, “Fantastic Antigones: Queer Deaths, Trans Lives, and the Right to Grieve”

Jill Drouillard, “The King Was Pregnant: Reproductive Ethics and Transgender Pregnancy”

Daze Jefferies, “Drowned Knowing: Fragments toward Island Trans Fishy Subjectivities”

11:45 AM – 1:15 PM Plenary Session: Kelly Oliver, Vanderbilt University

“The Special Plight of Women Refugees”

1:15 PM – 3:30 PM Lunch, provided. Guided walk up Signal Hill.

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM Session II

Workshop C: Affect and Interpersonal Relations

Kym Maclaren, “Criminalization and the Self-Constituting Dynamics of Distrust”

Lisa Madura, “Anti-Social Habit and Critical Disruption”

Ali Beheler, “What is a Mother? The Interimplication of Agency and Maternity”

Workshop D: Nature and Health

Alice Everly, “Constructing Anew: Looping Effects, Sociogeny, and Systems of Social Value”

Tristana Martin Rubio, “Age, Time, and the Politics of the ‘Biological Clock’”

Marjolein Oele, “The Dissolution of the Pregnant City: A Phenomenological Account of Early Pregnancy Loss”

Panel 3: Decolonization and Indigeneity

Carol-Lynne D‘Arcangelis, “Reading Resistance in the Works of Lugones and Betasamosake Simpson”

Sonja Boon and Kate Lahey, “The Impossibility of a Future in the Absence of a Past: Drifting in the In-Between”

Vicki Hallett, “Floating in Settler-Colonial Context: Meanings and Implications”

Panel 4: The Proper and the Improper: Affect, Health, and Speech

Shiloh Whitney, “Decolonizing the Authenticity Critique of Affective Labor”

Jane Dryden, “Gut Microbiome and Care of the Self”

Patricia Dold, “Discourse on Female Body, Speech, and Identity in Hindu Narratives”

5:15 PM – 6:45 PM Plenary Session: María Lugones, Binghamton University

6:45 PM Dinner, on your own

Saturday, May 11

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM Coffee and Registration

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM Session III, 9:00 and 9:30 start times

Workshop A: Foucault and Wynter: A Philosophical Encounter With and Against the Human

Workshop Coordinators: Lynne Huffer and Taryn Jordan

Participants: Haylee Harrell, Ege Selin Islekel, Rebecca Longtin, Elaine Miller, Mukasa Mubirumusoke, Elisabeth Paquette

9:30 – 11:00 AM

Workshop B: Feminist Solidarities

Lorna Quiroga, “Different Ways of Weaving Gender, for a Pluriverse Proposal”

Maura Roberts, “Relating in Place: Engaging with Strawberries and Indigenous Feminisms”

Emerson Bodde, “Is Spinoza a Decolonial Feminist?”

Panel 5: Race in Ecology, Sexuality, and Demographics

Romy Opperman, “Thinking the Afterlife of Slavery Ecologically: Saidiya Hartman’s Natural History”

Sabrina L. Hom, “Rape Fantasies: Interracial Sexuality and the Construction of ‘Pure’ White Desire”

Andrea J. Pitts, “A Death-Dealing Displacement of Difference: Crip Theory, Crimmigration, and Penal Abolitionism”

Panel 6: Ecological Ethics and the Unhuman Ground of Identity

Suzanne McCullagh, “Becoming-Woman and/or the Disappearance of Woman in Ecological Ethics”

Casey Ford, “Bodies, Vile and Virile: Bare Life in Lispector, Cixous, and Agamben”

Daniel Griffin, “A New Flesh: David Cronenberg, Flesh-Images, and Queering the Male Body

11:15 AM – 12:45 PM Plenary Discussion: Feminism’s Future(s)

Moderator: Shannon Hoff

12:45 PM – 2:30 PM Business Meeting, open to all

Lunch, on your own

2:30 PM – 4:30 PM Session IV

Workshop C: Affect and Interpersonal Relations

Anna E. Mudde, “Crafting Presence in the World”

Celia Edell, “Theorizing the Persistence of Oppression: Epistemology of Ignorance”

Kathy Kiloh, “On Eva Hesse’s Contingent: An Aesthetic Investigation of Julia Kristeva’s Herethics”

Elden Yungblut, “A Transfeminist Mobilization of Luce Irigaray’s Strategy of Mimesis”

Workshop D: Nature and Health

Talia Welsh, “ A Feminist Critical Phenomenology of Health Promotion”

Emily R. Douglas, “Materializations of Illness and Somatic Capacitations”

Shannon Boss, “A Phenomenology of Orthorexia: Health and Gender in Experiences of Dys-appearance”

Victoria Smith, “Women Embedded in Nature: A Critique of Mellor’s Ecofeminism

Panel 7: Working toward Solidarity in the Colonial Context

Elisabeth Paquette, “Indigeneity and Solidarity in Decolonial Theory: On Wynter and Byrd”

Sarah M. Kizuk, “Settler Shame: A Critique of the Role of Shame in Settler Identity in Canada”

Roxana Akhbari: “Settler Colonial Lands in the Age of Apology”

Panel 8: Queer Normativity

Steph Butera, “The Hope of Humanism: Queering Phenomenological Posthumanism”

Tyler Carson, “Engendering the Anti-Social Thesis: The Queerness of Pregnancy in Maggie Nelson’s The Argonauts”

Shawn Huberdeau, “Feminism-On-Trial: Abjection as a Theory of Liberation”

4:45 PM – 6:15 PM Plenary Session: Uma Narayan, Vassar University

“How ‘Sisterhood’ Becomes ‘Doing Good’: Asymmetries of Positionality, Privilege and Political Concern between Western Subjects and their Nonwestern Others”

6:15 PM Reception

7:00 PM Banquet

philoSOPHIA would like to thank the following people and groups for their support:

Our host: The Department of Philosophy at Memorial University; the Staff and Facilities of Signal Hill Campus

Our local organizers: Carol-Lynne D‘Arcangelis, Shannon Hoff, and Victoria Smith (Memorial University)

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Abstracts

Roxana Akhbari, York University, “Settler Colonial Lands in the Age of Apology: Segregation of Indigeneity and (Im)migration by the Canadian State.” In the past few decades, there has been a global increase in nation state apologies to racialized communities, leading to the designation of the “age of apology” for describing our time. In Canada, apologies are made to various immigrant and Indigenous populations, but they ironically function to create a climate of political segregation among them. Here, I analyze an instance of the state’s segregationist approach to redress movements by problematizing the dichotomous construction of the “Aboriginal”/“non-Aboriginal” categories in its 1998 apology to Indigenous peoples. Drawing upon “epistemologies of ignorance,” I suggest that these kinds of segregation serve to put constraints on alliance-building potentials across different Indigenous self-determination and other ethnocultural anti-racist movements. Finally, using Day’s account of the triangular logic of settler colonial capitalism, I argue that segregationist apologies allow the state to side-step full accountability to racialized communities by hiding the white supremacist aspect of Canadian settler colonialism.

Ali Beheler, Hastings College, “What is a Mother? The Interimplication of Agency and Maternity.” Nietzsche’s texts are known to critique traditional Western notions of agency and responsibility. Christa Davis Acampora has suggested that the mother-child relation in Thus Spake Zarathustra could be part of this critique’s arsenal, given its potential for refiguring our conception of agents (mothers) and their relation to their actions (children). This paper wonders whether dominant heteronormative conceptions of maternity are themselves already shaped by and hence reproductive of the very traditional notions of agency and responsibility that Nietzsche’s texts aim to critique. Turning to a few self-identified queer accounts of maternity, namely those in the work of Maggie Nelson and Shelley M. Park, I ask how depictions of motherhood and agency are interimplicated, and whether the project of reconceiving motherhood is inseparable from that of reconceiving agency and responsibility.

Emerson Bodde, Vanderbilt University, “Is Spinoza a Decolonial Feminist?” The following truncated version of a longer paper proceeds in roughly three parts. First, I outline Spinoza’s ontology with regards to his materialism of bodies and ideas, the relationship of adequacy to reality, and his overall criticism of Cartesian dualism, one of the chief objects of critique by contemporary decolonial feminist discourses. Next, I propose a series of decolonial “resonances” among Spinoza’s concepts of the multitude, unwitting criticism of universal notions like “woman,” and re-naturalization of the human subject. Finally, I close by examining the resonance between Spinoza’s conception of affective-relational power and Audre Lorde’s conception of the “erotic,” with Lorde bringing out a theory of critical-consciousness-raising in Spinoza and Spinoza possibly correcting Lorde’s slippage back into a Cartesian mode of thought in her language of depth, rather than surface.

Sonja Boon, Memorial University, and Kate Lahey, University of Toronto, “The Impossibility of a Future in the Absence of a Past: Drifting in the In-Between.” In this collaborative paper, we consider what it might mean to drift, exploring literary gestures that complicate maps, unmake colonial scripts, and contaminate borders. As we meander through texts, meandering through themes of intimacy, love, origins, dirt, and accountings, we suggest that drifting is not aimless or passive; rather, as a form of refusal (Tuck & Yang 2014a, 2014b), it can be understood as an agential mode of kinning, making, and thinking together. We offer drift as a way to understand the impossibility of a future in the absence of a past, the unruliness of a geography that will not be fixed, a wounded world that cannot be mapped. Drift is a body as an assemblage of stories (Belcourt 2017, Philip 2008), a site of refusal (Tuck & Wang 2014a, 2014b), an impossible map (Brand 2001), an “island of decolonial love” (Simpson 2015), the troubled intimacy of contested space always already (re)mapping itself in the in-between.

Shannon Boss, University of Guelph, “A Phenomenology of Orthorexia: Health and Gender in Experiences of Dys-appearance.” Christina Van Dyke argues that orthorexia, most often characterized as an obsession with pursuing “ideal diet” in order to achieve optimal health, is a manifestation of age-old anxieties about human finitude and mortality. In this paper, I first flesh out such a manifestation by arguing that what Drew Leder calls “social dys-appearance” characterizes experiences of orthorexia. I use the combined ideas about a body that both projects outward and recedes inwards to show how our very embodiment in a world that deeply values health lends itself to experiences of orthorexia. More than this though, I argue that because the “healthy body” is gendered in various ways, how one responds to the depths and disappearances of the visceral body will vary. (It will no doubt also depend on other things like race, class, ability/disability, etc., but for the sake of space I focus explicitly on its gendered dimensions).

Steph Butera, University of Memphis, “The Hope of Humanism: Queering Phenomenological Posthumanism.” This essay considers the dangers of abandoning the notion of a common understanding of “the human” for the enactment of effective liberatory praxis. I argue that even those posthumanist proposals that are inspired by the phenomenological tradition fall short of sufficiently synthesizing the humanist side of the opposition between humanism and anti-humanism. I thus attempt to resuscitate the hope that humanist appeals can be anything but oppressive by proposing an open-ended criterion for the consideration of beings by queering the humanist normativity inherent to our inheritance of the method of phenomenological reflection. I call for a broader thinking about things that acknowledges their radical openness to becoming otherwise—even to the point of becoming capable of something akin to what we call phenomenological reflection—and I propose that this capacity could be a viable alternative to traditional humanisms for motivating anti-oppressive thinking and acting.

Tyler Carson, Rutgers University-New Brunswick, “Engendering the Anti-Social Thesis: The Queerness of Pregnancy in Maggie Nelson’s The Argonauts.” Drawing on Freudian and Lacanian understandings of the death drive and the symbolic order, queer theory has fortified an anti-reproductive stance in what has been termed “the anti-social thesis.” This paper will first trace the trajectory of this critique and then highlight how Maggie Nelson’s autobiographic memoir, The Argonauts, seeks to disrupt some of its foundational assumptions. It argues that in foregrounding the queerness of pregnancy as well as the violence inherent in the act of giving birth, Nelson pushes back against the masculinist logic of the anti-social thesis. Offering a bodily account of what it feels like to be a part of something where the lines between inside and outside, yours and mine, and queer and straight begin to blur, Nelson offers fresh insights into the conundrum facing queers today: the impossible imperative to choose the right (read: left) side of politics so as to properly perform as the “queerest of the queer[s]” (104).

Carol-Lynne D’Arcangelis, Memorial University, “Latin American Decolonial Feminism Meets Indigenous Feminist Thought in North America: Reading Resistance in the Works of María Lugones and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson.” This presentation’s broad aim is to bring into conversation two bodies of scholarship that have been conflated, subsumed one by the other, or thought of as disconnected: Indigenous feminist thought in North America (Arvin, Tuck & Morrill 2013; Green 2017) and Latin American decolonial feminist scholarship (Espinosa Miñoso, Gómez Correal & Ochoa Muñoz 2014; Mignolo & Walsh 2018). María Lugones (2008), in fact, has paved the way for this conversation by drawing on the work of Indigenous feminist scholar Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna, Sioux) (1992) to theorize the coloniality of gender. In this presentation, I build on Lugones’ appreciation of Indigenous feminist theorizations of gender by reading the work of Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2011, 2017) in light of Lugones’ understanding of resistance and resistant subjectivities (2008, 2010).

Maliheh Deyhim, Winner of the Graduate Student Essay Prize, Memorial University, “But a Piece of Clothing: On Removing the Hijab.” In this paper, I analyze the complicated experience of those Muslim women who choose to stop wearing the hijab at some point in their lives. I begin by explaining the background of the hijab in Muslim cultures. Then, using Merleau-Ponty’s account of the bodily space, I show that the hijab is not a mere object separable from a woman’s bodily sense of herself; rather, it is integrated into a woman’s body schema. Thus, to remove the hijab requires a reconstruction of a woman’s body schema. Finally, I argue that the hijab, as a symbol of Muslim identity in general, functions as a sort of “border” in the war between the West and Islam. As a result, the woman who chooses to take off the hijab may experience herself inadvertently failing the whole Muslim community by being perceived as confirming the West’s negative and colonially motivated representations of Islam.

Patricia Dold, Memorial University, “Discourse on Female Body, Speech, and Identity in Hindu Narratives.” Drawing upon the theoretical perspectives of Judith Butler and Rajeshwari Sunder Rajan, Loriliai Biernacki (in Renowned Goddess of Desire) examines representations of women and goddesses in a number of 15th to 18th century tantric texts from northeast India. I will apply Biernacki’s hermeneutic framework to goddess-centered puranic narratives of similar provenance. Like the Tantras Biernacki examines, both the Kalika Purana and the Mahabhagavata Purana present “alternative” goddess images, images that differ significantly from many others offered in Hindu traditions. Following Biernacki’s lead, I examine these puranic narratives’ goddess images within parameters of speech and representation: what these images say about connections between female speech, body, subjectivity, authority, violence, and sexuality. Since talk about females helps shape women’s identities, such Hindu texts’ alternative images not only diversify the scholarly understanding of Tantra and Hinduism, they also offer tools for reexamining modern images, discourses, and identities of women.

Emily R. Douglas, “Materializations of Illness and Somatic Capacitations.” Johanna Hedva asserts that “most modes of political protest are internalized, lived, embodied, suffering, and no doubt invisible” (Sick Woman Theory). In this paper, I examine Elizabeth A. Wilson’s accounts of materialization of illness within Psychosomatic and Gut Feminism, asking what political capacities are produced or enabled through materialization. I am concerned with “what it is the body comes to know in states of extreme psychological [and physical] distress,” which forms conditions of possibility for the kinds of resistance we see from feminine agents deemed “disabled” or “sick” (GF 51). I ask: what new capacities are enabled in the body when it suffers, and how are these capacities disruptive of political norms? I argue, however, that any account of the capacities a body develops through materialization cannot be thought purely somatically. Indeed, I use Jasbir Puar’s critique of the “inherent resistance of disability” in The Right to Maim to probe whether materialization can be thought without capacitation, both prior to and following the onset of illness.

Jill Drouillard, Richland College, “The King Was Pregnant: Reproductive Ethics and Transgender Pregnancy.” “The king was pregnant” is a notable quote from science fiction writer Ursula Le Guin’s The Left Hand of Darkness, a novel whose story unfolds on a planet without gender. Le Guin muses on the fondness of this statement in her text “Is Gender Necessary?,” as its indication of male pregnancy “contradicts our assumptions,” an assumption being that only women become pregnant. And yet, men do become pregnant, as in the case of transgender man Thomas Beatie. This paper tries to think about what an inclusive reproductive ethics would look like. For example, is upholding a category of “reproductive sex” necessary for bioethics legislation that respects the rights of transgender individuals? I offer a critique of current theories and laws that set up a society where transgender individuals are assumed to be infertile.

Jane Dryden, Mount Allison University, “Gut Microbiome and Care of the Self.” Recent research into the role of gut bacteria in shaping health outcomes has created a significant industry in monitoring and cultivating our gut microbiomes. The current health paradigm imposes a framework of individual responsibility that portrays our choices as subject to the dictates of health imperatives. This is reflected in the popular and academic discourse around our gut microbiomes, which often employs rhetorics of reclaiming control over unruly bodies. While research on the microbiome is highly promising, insistence on individual responsibility risks blaming people for their own health outcomes, and turning attention solely to individual bodies rather than to social barriers and attitudes. The paper will make use of Foucault’s later work to examine the relationship between coming to know oneself (through measurement and monitoring) and technologies of caring for the self as it applies to making sense of our relationship to our gut bacteria.

Celia Edell, McGill University, “Theorizing the Persistence of Oppression: Epistemology of Ignorance.” I am interested in the strongest potential methodology for explaining the persistence of oppression of racialized/ colonized people historically and in the present. In short, when it comes to theorizing the persistence of oppression, little consideration has been paid to which theoretical framework is most apt for the job. I argue that the epistemology of ignorance is most helpful for theorizing the maintenance of oppression for three reasons: (1) ignorance is not understood as an intrinsically interpersonal dynamic, but rather as an effect or tool of an oppressive system; and (2) it seeks to promote (epistemic) justice precisely by examining the relationship between systemic power, identity, and knowledge. Finally, (3) the epistemology of ignorance has the added benefit of offering a way to understand indifference to past and present oppression which is extremely important for theorizing the persistence of oppression.

Alice Everly, McGill University, “Constructing Anew: Looping Effects, Sociogeny, and Systems of Social Value.” In this paper, I bring Ian Hacking’s concepts of “looping effects” and “interactive kinds” into conversation with Sylvia Wynter’s work on sociogeny and biofeedback. Wynter and Hacking approach the broader issue of “social construction” from very different perspectives, but both draw out the ways in which the codification of human kinds can interact with the instantiation of individual kind members. I suggest the further elaboration of what Hacking calls “biolooping” through Wynter’s extended meditations on the interaction between identity and systems of social value, which she argues are mediated through internal, biological reward systems. Wynter thus helps to demonstrate that “biolooping” is not a minor subtype of what Hacking calls “classificatory looping.” Rather, biolooping is at the center of this interaction. This stands as both a critique of purely discursive approaches to “social construction,” and as a call for further elaboration of the role of biology in construction.

Tabor Fisher, Le Moyne College, “Space-Time and Social Location: Re-placing Intersectionality.” While the concept of social location has been liberatory, people often feel stuck in their socially defined locations, unable to move in resistant ways. In this essay, I analyze the spatial underpinnings of social location. What becomes clear is that our understanding of location can easily be limited by placement in a modernist conception of space as abstract, instrumental, Cartesian coordinates. However, by re-placing the concept of intersectionality in a four-dimensional space-time, as articulated by feminist geographer Doreen Massey, we can develop an understanding of social location that is dynamic and relational and from which feminist movement is possible.

Casey Ford, University of Guelph, “Bodies, Vile and Virile: Bare Life in Lispector, Cixous, and Agamben.” This paper examines the crisis of the feminine in Clarice Lispector’s novel The Passion of G.H. to raise a set of philosophical questions about the nature of identity. Our aim is to isolate the experience of “bare life” as a point where determinate identities are dissolved and in which generative becomings are effectuated that surpass distinctions in gender or species. Bare life marks a limit or “zone of indistinction” between identities which, by virtue of its bareness, is also a condition for transforming our capacities for relating to and through the realities of others. Focusing on the existential experience of the killing of a cockroach in Lispector’s novel, we aim to show how feminine functions in Lispector’s work as a possible threshold onto a domain of differences that exceed the human itself. For G.H., in short, the “worst discovery was that the world is not human, and that we are not human.”

Daniel Griffin, University of Guelph, “A New Flesh: David Cronenberg, Flesh-Images, and Queering the Male Body.” Drawing on the works of Gilles Deleuze, Rebecca Coleman, and Donna Haraway, I sketch the concept of a flesh-image by examining David Cronenberg's films Videodrome (1983), The Fly (1986), Crash (1996), and eXistenz (1999). This concept allows us to grasp how technologies in these films, including cinematographic images themselves, link, deform, and reform bodies and their qualities: sexualities, habits, organized “forms” of body and behavior. Particular attention is given to how male bodies are queered by their bodily and psychic interconnection through technologies that, in linking bodies externally, become internally fleshy. These technological interfaces not only queer the norm-laden body of the human, they release desires from their imprisonment in the organism to make possible a new politics of the flesh. I conclude by noting the limits of Cronenberg's flesh-images, particularly the narrow focus on queering male bodies and the ultimate failure of the new politics he envisions.

Vicki Hallett, Memorial University, “Floating in Settler-Colonial Context: Meanings and Implications.” This paper will be an inquiry into how to be a settler Newfoundlander, also an academic, in Newfoundland and Labrador’s only university, at a time when relations between governments, federal, provincial, municipal, are fraught with the continuing colonial legacies of large scale resource developments, residential schools, gendered violence, land use and mis-use, religious institutional abuse, and more, without reproducing the colonizing conditions under which we live. My paternal grandparents were a fishing family. My grandfather, his father and brothers ran a schooner to the Labrador fishery, but did not go ashore to set up temporary premises as did many Newfoundlanders. Instead they were part of what was known as the “floater fishery,” in which schooners sailed to the coastal waters off Labrador’s east coast and proceeded to “float” there for the summer/fall while fishing from small boats. Once their hold was full of cod, they returned to their families where their wives had been doing everything from farming to raising kids, all without running water and electricity. The only stories I ever heard about Labrador or living Indigenous peoples were told by my grandfather. This paper will float some ideas: Can the legacy of floaters be one that holds a cautionary tale for the modern academic? Can my own work, as it attempts to engage respectfully with Indigenous and non-Indigenous stories in Labrador and Newfoundland be considered a kind of floating? What are the implications of this?

Haylee Harrell, Emory University, “Monstrosity, Tragedy, and the Human.” In 1858, Alexina Morrison, a young girl with “fair complexion” and “blue eyes,” takes her slaver, a man by the name of James White, to court for unlawfully purchasing her as a slave—claiming that she is of “white parentage” and therefore free. Through a reading of this court case, this paper investigates the tension between a historical narrativization of multiracial figures versus a utilization of Foucauldian genealogy to track the conditions of emergence of multiracial figures in the archives. Ultimately, this paper explores how Morrison is historically materialized as an exceptional, and desirable, multiracial figure through an erasure, or rather a covering up, of the ruptures in the archival document. Re-reading these ruptures in the archive this paper, through the lens of Sylvia Wynter, analyzes Morrison as a figure of black humanism that historians claim unsettles the overrepresentation of “man.”

Sabrina L. Hom, Georgia College, “Rape Fantasies: Interracial Sexuality and the Construction of ‘Pure’ White Desire.” In this project, I will look at how white intraracial relationships are eroticized and fetishized in the American south through its notorious “rape complex,” the pervasive fear of black men raping white women. Textual analysis demonstrates that white women’s desirability as a token of purity and value for white men is cemented by the imputed desire of black men. At the same time, the pure and vulnerable Southern white lady is defined against hypersexualized black women. Rather like the Oedipal triangle as the engine of heterosexual desire, Southern white desire depends on a racial quadrilateral—one in which a white man’s desire for a white woman reflects imagined black male desire, as well as the denigration and exploitation of black women. This is part of a larger project to analytically center interracial and mixed-race experiences and explore the racialized roots of postcolonial sexualities.

Shawn Huberdeau, Concordia University, “Feminism-On-Trial: Abjection as a Theory of Liberation.” The utility of Kristeva’s work for political feminism has frequently come under dispute. Critics contend her theory of abjection precludes the possibility of women’s emancipation and rationalizes the endemic violence targeted toward their bodies under patriarchy. Judith Butler argues such, reformulating psychoanalytic abjection into political abjection. Accordingly, these theorists appear in opposition: Kristeva explains the subject but not politics, while Butler explains politics but not the subject. This paper dismantles the dichotomous understanding of Kristeva and Butler, following Sara Beardsworth’s mapping of their dis/similarities, so that an emancipatory praxis may be located in Kristevan abjection with a Butlerian slant. Acknowledging Butler’s emphasis that symbolic law’s force resides in reiteration, alongside the capacity for Kristevan semiotic expression to destabilize signification practices, leads to certain abject figures holding liberatory potential. Barbara Creed’s vagina dentata is an example as a paradigmatic subjectivity which threatens an oppressive (exclusionary) symbolic order through deploying a radically ambiguous alterity.

Lynne Huffer, Emory University, “Respite: An Essay Is Being Written.” How to write an individual life in the midst of the escalating ruin that is life on this planet? Written in the mode of “autotheory,” this essay aims to unsay the self that defines the Anthropocene. Through a sustained exploration of the “invention” of that self as Man (anthropos) in the work of Sylvia Wynter and Michel Foucault, this autotheory is written from an explicitly genealogical perspective. Using Blanchot in Writing the Disaster to rethink the planetary disaster the Anthropocene signals, the “I” of the essay looks back to history’s earlier disasters of genocide and the slave trade to show how they constitute the foundations of today’s anthropos. The essay’s ultimate aim is to cultivate autotheory as a practice of the self that works to undo her: to write an ethics of self-unsaying for being with what is as respite.

Ege Selin Islekel, Loyola Marymount University, “Carceral Milieus and the Coloniality of the State: Biopolitics of the Genre of Man.” This paper investigates why and how contemporary modes of power are invested in the production of certain spaces, such as the spaces of enclosure, spaces of territory, or spaces of security, and what function such spatial productions play for biopower. The first section develops Foucault’s analyses of power, and especially, biopower, as not only biologico-political, but also spatial and geographical analyses. The second section turns to Wynter’s analysis of the emergence of a new political subject (Man1), as inseparable from the emergence of a new spatial attitude. The last section turns to the spaces of the State in relation to the biopolitical task of state racism. I argue that the link between the state and state racism emerges from the spatial attitudes of coloniality.

Daze Jefferies, Memorial University, “Drowned Knowing: Fragments Toward Island Trans Fishy Temporalities.” Although the lives of most trans women in Newfoundland have exceeded capture from the historical record (Jefferies 2018), fishy fragments (surreal archival ephemera and embodied theory and/as poetics) help me imagine the histories of trans women islanders as entangled with emotional oceanic geographies. In this autoethnographic paper, my thinking is informed by palimpsestic archives – histories of failure in capture, erasure, and resistance (see Alexander 2006; Haritaworn, Moussa and Ware 2018; Snorton 2017). I follow fishy fragments of Newfoundland trans women’s historical lives, and embodiments toward livable futures, with two aims: 1) to make better sense of the ways that gender and sexual diversity in Atlantic Canada have been shaped by diffractions of settler colonialism and outmigration in layers of historical time, and 2) to creatively map trans temporalities (when and where ⟷ then and there) in island worlds.

Taryn Jordan, Emory University, “Ceremony Found: Black Haptic Eros After and With the Human.”

Kathy Kiloh, OCAD University, “On Eva Hesse’s Contingent: An Aesthetic Investigation of Julia Kristeva’s Herethics.” Julia Kristeva refers, in her 1976 essay “Stabat Mater,” to a “herethics.” Based on maternal love, herethics is heretical in its separation from the law of morality, even as it stands in a positon to strengthen and reinforce such a law (Tales of Love, 262-3). This love is the basis of all social bonds. But from a patriarchal perspective, one could imagine it to be the most terrifying of levelers, capable of undoing the work of individuation that has established the separation of mother and child (263).While it is unclear how such an ethics can come to be in a world that remains devoted to patriarchal power and authority, I argue, with reference to the modernist sculptural works of the American artist Eva Hesse (1936-70), that the exploratory and experimental aesthetic imagination may advance our understanding of what form a herethics could take.

Sarah M. Kizuk, Marquette University, “Settler Shame: A Critique of the Role of Shame in Settler Identity in Canada.” This project traces and problematizes the limits of what I call “settler shame” by offering a critique of this sense of shame as it contributes (or doesn’t, as the case may be) to the making of Indigenous-allied identity in Canada. The phenomenon of settler shame touches on our self-understanding as a citizen, and thus, our self-presentation of being Canadian. Feeling ashamed of our identity as settlers causes a confrontation between who we take ourselves to be as Canadians and what we want being a Canadian to mean. However, settler shame also desperately seeks resolution, preferring to re-establish the self rather than the other-oriented concerns justice. My thesis is that settler shame is a risky political affect in that it can contribute to the reification of a new wave of settler colonialism and thereby upholds dominant and hegemonic settler identity, is a faulty mode of the recognition of others, and, finally, that it makes no commitment to the material demands of justice nor to the futurity of Indigenous Peoples.

Abby Kluchin, Ursinus College, “Feeling Willing: Toward an Intersubjective Theory of Consent.” Is it possible to reimagine consent as an intersubjective process? Consent as typically understood is at heart an expression of contract; it owes a direct and enormous debt to social contract theory. Consent articulates a transactional relationship between two or more subjects conceived as endowed with sufficient agency and autonomy to make and uphold an agreement that extends beyond the present moment. It hinges on the idea that the relationship between the individual and their body is, above all, a relation of property: that we own our bodies, rather than that we are, in some meaningful sense, our bodies. But as we learn from a host of affect theorists (Sedgwick, Tomkins, Brennan, Stewart) as well as classic psychoanalytical thinkers (Freud, Klein, Bion), these presuppositions about subjectivity ignore the ways in which affects circulate among bodies; they certainly do not approximate the lived experiences of embodied human subjects. They allow us to conceive individuals as fundamentally porous and dynamic, beings that affect and are affected. This paper will appeal to this conception of subjectivity in envisioning an intersubjective version of consent that ought to be an integral part of any new feminist sexual ethics, particularly in the context of the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements.

Rebecca Longtin, SUNY New Paltz, “Decolonizing Sensory Perception: Wynter, Foucault, and the Construction of the Sensible.”

María Lugones, Binghamton University

Kym Maclaren, Ryerson University, “Criminalization and the Self-Constituting Dynamics of Distrust.” Foucault’s analysis of incarceration reveals what Sartre calls a “counter-finality” at work in correctional institutions: although the surveillance to which incarcerated and post-incarcerated people are submitted should be producing self-regulation and greater habits of abiding by the law, we find instead, on the whole, greater delinquency. The final end achieved, in other words, is the opposite of that ostensibly intended: surveillance and incarceration tend to constitute criminals (a fact lent further weight by empirical literature on the “school to prison pipeline”). How are we to understand this? My proposal, through a phenomenological analysis of trust and distrust, is that surveillance, by virtue of the distrust it involves, produces delinquency by negatively constituting individuals’ sense of self-worth, their sense of “I can” or behaviours available to them, and their sense of their own relation to society.

Lisa Madura, Vanderbilt University, “Anti-Social Habit and Critical Disruption.” Merleau-Ponty describes habit as being at the heart of world-creation and as having the paradoxical effect of simultaneously enabling and disabling social life. Through an analysis of anti-social habit, I aim to articulate and prescribe a certain attitude of ambivalence toward what some philosophers call the condition of “being at home in the world.” The ambivalence stems from the fact that, while being at home in the world affords a certain stability that we strive for, making the world a home depends on being habituated in ways that can result in profound unfreedom and inhospitality. In this paper I hope not only to clarify the dangers of habit when it is unequally available to differently situated members of a society, but to point toward the possibilities for holding open a gap between “having” and “searching” in perceptual life that might mitigate those dangers.

Lee Maracle, University of Toronto, “Decolonization, Continental Feminism, and Indigeneity.” First, we need to acknowledge  the origins of modern health, feminism, and democracy on this island. Indigeneity is: Justice for all, everyone eats and women have power. Decolonization is a whole different matter. This talk will begin with the origins of democracy, modern medicine, feminism and justice as indigeneity and move to decolonization which is about restoring the authority of the original nations of the land known as Turtle Island.

Suzanne McCullagh, Miami University, “Becoming-Woman and/or the Disappearance of Woman in Ecological Ethics.” Simone Weil affirms submission and obedience to necessity and the decreation or undoing of the self as ethical and political virtues. While her thought affords unique insights into suffering and injustice, there is something deeply unnerving about her expressed desire to disappear. An orientation towards disappearance and dissolution is also found in certain strands of posthumanist ecological ethics which dismantle the category of human and urge a disavowal of human identity, insofar as it is constituted as different from the more than human world. This paper seeks to interrogate the operations and stakes of such disappearances through an analysis of the transformative undoing of the biologist-protagonist of Jeff VanderMeer’s Southern Reach Trilogy. While undoing the category of human may increase capacities for sympathy with and ethical responsiveness to the more than human world, does orienting thought in this way risk occluding from view social injustices?

Elaine Miller, Miami University, “Foucault, Fanon, and Wynter on the Unsettling of Culture.”

Alexandra Morrison (Michigan Technological University), “Mood as a Social Phenomenon.” How far can phenomenological approaches to the phenomenon of mood help us if we want to understand mood in its collective aspect? Beauvoir acknowledged the importance of the rupture of our familiar worldly engagement arguing that Angst, the condition of the possibility of philosophy, is at once an ethical and political disclosure. Liminal mooded disclosures like Angst, then, seemingly the most personal of experiences, somehow simultaneously open us to the social realm. Beginning with Butler’s description of an “ethics of anxiety,” queer and feminist political thinkers have, in recent years, taken up this theme anew, thinking it alongside outsider lives made marginal by the vagaries of corporate capitalism, racism, and sexism. In this workshop paper, I will explore the various complexities and ambiguities that attend calls for a "politics of disorientation" from philosophers like Ahmed, Ortega and Lugones.

Mukasa Mubirumusoke, Claremont McKenna College, “The Human, the Limit, and Civil War.” For this paper I want to think of the tenets and possible limitations of Sylvia Wynter’s humanism precisely at the figure of the limit by using a fellow genealogist, Michel Foucault, and afro-pessimist Frank Wilderson. At the limit of the human, and civil society, there is another realm to consider, namely the slave and social death. At this limit, can we imagine practices and performances of black transgression that comply with what Frank Wilderson describes, in juxtaposition to civil society, as civil war, “a war that reclaims blackness not as a positive value but as a politically enabling site… of ‘absolute dereliction.’” Is this “dance with death” a mode of transgression as a play with the limit that is familiar to some of Foucault’s articulations of transgression and ultimately a challenge to Wynter’s humanism?

Anna E. Mudde, Campion College, University of Regina, “Crafting Presence in the World: Singularité, Material-Discursive Solidarity, Strategies of Access.” In this paper, I take up Aimi Hamraie’s call to feminist scholars to “understand themselves as designers and makers who are accountable for the material arrangements and practices upon which their scholarship depends.” To do so, I think seriously about the importance of epistemological and ontological methodologies of location in feminist thinking by bringing María Lugones into conversation with Simone de Beauvoir. Extending this conversation to Hamraie’s observation that “valuable academic labor often appears immaterial and disembodied: feminist philosophers hold one another accountable for what we say and think, but infrequently for what we make and materialize,” I then explore the potential of craft-thinking (a way of attending to technē, broadly construed) to enliven strategies for opening lived situations to the consideration of others, as part of designing and living material and discursive practices of solidarity.

Uma Narayan, Vassar University, “How ‘Sisterhood’ Becomes ‘Doing Good’: Asymmetries of Positionality, Privilege and Political Concern between Western Subjects and their Nonwestern Others.” There are a variety of discourses and practices that position Western feminists (and Western political subjects more generally) as people who have a moral and political obligation to concern themselves with the welfare, suffering or empowerment of Nonwestern subjects, often women and intervene to “do good” on their behalf. Conversely, there are virtually no discourses and practices that assign moral and political obligations to Nonwestern feminists (or Nonwestern political subjects more generally) to intervene in matters involving the welfare or suffering of Western subjects, including women. A central goal of my paper is to make this asymmetry explicit and distinguish it from charges such as “essentialism” more commonly made against Western feminist representations of their Others. I will subsequently explore the consequences of discourses and practices that construct Western subjects as entitled to and obligated to concern themselves with the world entire, while not extending this global scope of concern to Nonwestern subjects.  I critically examine, among other things, the roles assigned Western-funded NGOs in enabling Western subjects engage in practices of “doing good” and explore alternative political possibilities for Western subjects.  Along the way, I examine certain blind spots in Western political theory that are connected to the picture of Western subjects as obligated to “do good” in distant places.

Marjolein Oele, University of San Francisco, “The Dissolution of the Pregnant City: A Phenomenological Account of Early Pregnancy Loss.” This paper investigates the limit experience of early miscarriage. It argues, firstly, that this form of loss and death is conceptually under-articulated, yet experientially prevalent. Secondly, rethinking early pregnancy loss stimulates correction of many accounts of death that are predominantly focused on the loss of individuated, singular beings, rather than that of the constellation or milieu. Thirdly, recognizing the importance and prevalence of dying constellations may bring further understanding and recognition to those caught in the grieving aftermath of miscarriage. I will show that Gilles Simondon’s account of pre-individuation allows us to formulate early pregnancy as a process that interrupts and disrupts the individuated space of the physical unit. Accordingly, I argue that early pregnancy loss involves losing a bridge to a pre-individual space, and a confrontation with a form of death that inserts pre-individual relationality into grief and transforms the griever’s future in seemingly ephemeral, but ultimately meaningful material ways.

Kelly Oliver, Vanderbilt University, “The Special Plight of Women Refugees.” One focus of decolonizing feminism has been a discussion of the ways in which transnational feminism challenges the notion that nation-states and national sovereignty serve women’s interests. This challenge is aimed at both the conceptual and material levels, insofar as women’s interests are always context dependent. Focusing on women refugees as a group with shared interests, and yet acknowledging vast differences in cultural, social, historical, and material conditions among the world’s refugee women, demonstrates the need for transnational feminisms that go beyond national sovereignty, universal human rights discourse, and perhaps even feminism itself. The plight of refugee women across the globe is dire; and yet rescue politics is part of the problem and not the solution. While feminist struggles must be fought in every country on earth, and all corners of the globe--at the top and the bottom of every social and political hierarchy--refugee women have the fewest resources for initiating those struggles. Most of them are struggling for their very survival. While gender-based violence is a problem across the globe, women refugees are uprooted from support systems, personal and institutional, and their transitory life provides very few opportunities for organized resistance. Focusing on the plight of refugee women forces us to take a transnational perspective, which gives us a different sense of what both feminism and decolonizing feminism might mean. Most acutely, the focus on refugee women demonstrates the fluidity, and in some cases counter-productivity, of insisting on the opposition between categories of indigenous and settler.

Romy Opperman, Pennsylvania State University, “Thinking the Afterlife of Slavery Ecologically: Saidiya Hartman’s Natural History.” This paper focuses on the Benjaminian natural history which Hartman develops in Lose Your Mother. I argue that this opens onto a radical rethinking of the notion of oikos (home) in the word ecology, of thinking home otherwise than inheritance and domesticity, and confronting the apparent contradiction of dwelling and fugitivity; where the givens of a milieu are the condition, not the limit, to practices of freedom. This is important for radical imaginaries and strategies of feminist environmental justice, not least because it points to some ways in which decolonial and Black feminist projects can be brought into fruitful dialogue. In the final part of the paper I address Hartman’s arguably anthropocentric focus, developing her notions of material witnessing and mourning, so as to begin to think the after-life of slavery ecologically.

Elisabeth Paquette, University of North Carolina-Charlotte, “Indigeneity and Solidarity in Decolonial Theory: On Sylvia Wynter and Jodi A. Byrd.” In this paper, I seek to address the inherent complexity and difficulty of engaging in practices of solidarity, while also stressing the importance of these kinds of endeavors. In particular, this paper turns to the geopolitical context of the Americas, and the coinciding colonization of Indigenous and African peoples in the writings of decolonial theorist Sylvia Wynter. I argue that Wynter pays careful attention to the processes of colonization of Indigenous and African peoples in an attempt make evident distinct processes of dehumanization. In The Transit of Empire (2011), critical Indigenous theorist Jodi A. Byrd engages in an analysis of the ways in which decolonial theories can often unintentionally efface Indigeneity in attempts to address capitalism, sovereignty movements, and anti-Black racism globally. In this paper, I seek to employ the methods develop by Byrd in order to offer an in-depth analysis of Wynter’s account of Indigeneity, and furthermore demonstrate the ways in which Wynter succeeds at employing a politics of solidarity. “Autopoietic Systems: Organizing Cellular and Political Spaces.” In this paper, I provide an account of Sylvia Wynter’s engagement with “autopoiesis,” a concept that comes from Humberto R. Maturana and Francisco J. Varela. In Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living, Maturana and Varela state that “the way an autopoietic system maintains its identity depends on its particular way of being autopoietic, that is, on its particular structure, different classes of autopoietic systems have different classes of ontogenies” (1980, 98). With this in mind, in this paper I develop how this conception of autopoietic systems is both present in, and operates through, Wynter’s employment of space and place, poetry, and wonder. While Wynter is not tied to the concept of autopoietic processes developed by Maturana and Varela, she draws from their work and extends beyond their conceptual analysis for the purpose of developing her conception of what it means to be human. It is this extension that I develop throughout this paper.

Andrea J. Pitts, University of North Carolina-Charlotte, “A Death-Dealing Displacement of Difference: Crip Theory, Crimmigration, and Penal Abolitionism.” To enrich arguments for penal abolition, this paper examines the criminalization of immigration as a site of what Ruth Wilson Gilmore has called “premature death.” Specifically, I examine Robert McRuer (2006) and Julie Minich’s (2010) respective readings of Gloria E. Anzaldúa as a crip theorist de la frontera, and Jay Timothy Domage’s Disabled Upon Arrival (2018) to show the mutual imbrication of debility and the militarization of the settler colonial border between Mexico and the United States. In effect, I propose that what Gilmore describes as “the death-dealing displacement of difference” among racialized institutional hierarchies can be found in the relationship between health and an aspirational stability of the civic body.

Lorna Quiroga, Carleton University, “Different Ways of Weaving Gender, For a Pluriverse Proposal.” In this presentation, I want to share some reflections that emerge from collaboration with an indigenous group of artisan women in Paraguay. My relationship with them lead me to suspend for a moment the idea that gender is “socially constructed” and ask, what might we learn about gender if we consider seriously Indigenous concepts according to which “social construction,” if anything, is something that involves both humans and non-humans? In this sense, I would like to suggest the possibility of approaching “gender” as a set of practices that entails a particular knowledge in which temxara, Yshiro women, are co-constructed with non-humans within the land. Tacking inspiration from authors like María Lugones, Vanessa Watts, Kim Tallbear, Arturo Escobar and Marisol de la Cadena, this move, I argue, might help avoid the ontological violence of modern/colonial narratives by foregrounding the radical difference of other ways of weaving “gender”—among other modern/colonial categories. This entails an approach that works through gender as an equivocation, as an homonymic term that refers to different things, namely, different ways of weaving/worlding that are nevertheless connected with each other.

Maura Roberts, University of Alberta, “Relating in Place: Engaging with Strawberries and Indigenous Feminisms.” Thinking alongside Indigenous feminisms and gift giving, this paper situates settler colonialism, capitalism, and heteropatriarchy as structural influences limiting multiplicity in identity, relations, and futures. Engaging Robin Wall Kimmerer’s “The Gift of Strawberries” from Braiding Sweetgrass, I consider what it means to be non-binary and non-Indigenous on Turtle Island, and how a re-orientation in place can yield otherwise modes of resisting settler colonialism. Thinking through capitalist reductions that take place through exchange-value assessments, I argue this reduction is intended to negate the multiplicity of relations and responsibilities one holds in place. Rooted in the historic and contemporary work of Indigenous feminists to co-articulate settler colonialism, racism, and heteropatriarchy, I argue it is foundational to engage and embody these knowledges as a means of resistance.

Whitney Ronshagen, Emory University, “Eating Together as ‘World’-Travelling.” This paper considers eating as a kind of “world”-travelling by bringing together María Lugones’ concept of “world”-travelling, Mariana Ortega’s reading of Lugones, and Uma Narayan’s examination of food and identity in colonial and postcolonial contexts. Specifically, I explore how eating might allow us to better negotiate boundaries and borders between selves and communities through the playful openness Lugones describes, and when this might either lead to a failure to travel well or when “world”-travelling might simply fail. For example, “world”-travelling through eating is not reducible to trying an assortment of different more-or-less “authentic” “ethnic” foods. Instead, eating as “world”-travelling requires commitment to openly engaging with the particular relations that shape our eating experiences, and attending to the cultural, affective, industrial, economic, colonial, and political forces that enter these intimate scenes of eating together.

Tristana Martin Rubio, Duquesne University, “Age, Time, and the Politics of the ‘Biological Clock.’” My paper offers a critical phenomenology of the experience of “running out of time” captured by the reproductive metaphor of the “biological clock.” It brings together insights from Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology of Perception on the body, freedom, lived time, and anonymity with insights from feminist philosophies of the body. Broadly, I argue that rather than issuing from anything purely biological, the metaphor of the biological clock captures an experience that manifests in existence as temporal frustration at the juncture of the body-world relationship. In part one, I argue the metaphor is lived by some women as a qualitative alteration to lived time and to the body. In part two, I examine how this qualitative change renders the body open to technological mediation by way of two examples: home ovulation kits and “egg freezing.” I conclude by arguing that the experience is differently inflected across race and class and has its rooted in a pronatalist cultural history.

Victoria Smith, Memorial University, “Women Embedded in Nature: A Critique of Mary Mellor’s Materialist Ecofeminism.” This paper focuses on Mary Mellor’s ecofeminist ethics to assess their value in facing the global warming crisis. Mellor’s materialist approach is concerned with the relationship between women and nature, and advocates for an ethics sensitive to that relationship. The first section develops Mellor’s materialist and ecofeminist positions in more detail; and the second section interrogates Mellor’s notions of transcendence and immanence so as to clarify her view of the experiences of women. The paper concludes by questioning the feminist implications of Mellor’s position, and by exploring the potential for her ethics in response to the threat of global warming.

Fanny Söderbäck, DePaul University, “Fantastic Antigones: Queer Deaths, Trans Lives, and the Right to Grieve.” This paper examines a recent Antigone figure, Marina from Sebastián Lelio’s film A Fantastic Woman. A trans woman in contemporary Chile, Marina grapples with double loss: that of her lover and that of her right to grieve. Marina and Antigone’s stories intersect in myriad ways, the most obvious of which is their shared experience of being refused to publicly mourn and partake in the burial of their loved ones. I examine the ways in which trans experience might activate but also complicate themes from the original drama. In the case of Antigone, it was as a woman that she was barred from a political landscape that would be able to see her as capable of transgressive action. As for Marina, her predicament is that others fail to recognize her, precisely, as a woman, which is why her grief is delegitimized. She is simultaneously pathologized and criminalized: her very existence is on trial.

Lucinda Vandervort, University of Saskatchewan, “Conceptions of Individual and Group Consent in the 21st Century—From Theory to Implementation.” “Consent” has a central albeit largely mythic role in theories of justice under colonialism from the 16th century to the “post-colonial” present. There is continuity in terminology, in the purportedly justifying functions of consent, and in critical insights about the role of historic socio-economic and political conditions in structuring the outcomes of “consent.” As a result, consent theory, like “rule of law” and “human rights,” appears to remain constant and yet is re-conceptualized over time in tandem with social and political theory. This paper argues, however, with reference to individuals and groups who are gendered or Indigenous, that at each time and place the crucial determinates of the outcomes experienced by those affected are the means used to implement theory, not the theory as such. The lived-experience of women and Indigenous peoples, respectively, with implementations of “affirmative” and “free and informed” consent provides supporting evidence.

Florentien Verhage, Washington & Lee University, “Surging from the Wreckage: Developing Decolonial Phenomenological Practices.” In close dialogue with the work of Christina Sharp, NourbeSe Philip, and Tina Campt, in this paper I critically address phenomenology’s (in)ability to listen to the unheard voice of the colonized and racialized subject. I appeal to Gloria Wekker’s evocative image of “diving into the wreck” of colonialism and to Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s account of the painter who says, “perhaps I paint to break-out [surgir],” in order to develop a notion of phenomenological upsurge. This is a practice that (i) learns from Sharpe’s methods of aspiration, annotation, and redaction, (ii) attends to refusal as an act of agency, (iii) unsettles other phenomenological practices, and (iv) breaks boundaries around disciplines. Thus, I wonder, what does it mean for phenomenology to dive into the wreck and participate in the important decolonial work of “listening to the hum,” “not-telling,” “unsaying,” and “unforgetting”?

Caleb Ward, Stony Brook University, “Locating Responsibility to a Partner within Structural Critiques of Sexual Consent.” Discussions of consent in legal and moral philosophy often allow evidentiary concerns to eclipse the feminist commitment that women ought to have agency in sexual encounters. In light of this failure, some contemporary feminists have advocated jettisoning the concept of consent entirely. Is the concept of consent irredeemable, or is it rather a certain conception of consent that must be guarded against, while the deeper concept remains useful? Resolving this conflict between abolitionism and reformism is necessary to develop any consistent feminist account of responsibility to a sexual partner. I propose that we understand a partner’s consent as a momentary expression of that person’s ongoing subjectivity. This allows everyday acts of consenting to be recognized as producing time-bound and contingent ethical claims on a sexual partner that call for a certain kind of response—a response that acknowledges and valorizes the subjective experience and will of a partner.

Talia Welsh, University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, “Self-Care Won’t Save Us: A Feminist Critical Phenomenology of Health Promotion.” Working with feminist analyses of the problems with the neoliberal focus on individual choice and responsibility, I highlight the labor involved in healthy self-care. I argue that health labor produces surplus capital and relies heavily upon a culture of affirmative, delayed body fantasies. While feminist critiques demystify neoliberal ideologies of individual choice, the insistence, even from feminist writers, of the moral authority of health presents additional resistances to feminist critique. In the case of health, one is made docile by sexist, ableist, and classist health care ideologies. However, one also has existential anxiety about suffering, illness, and death that helps fuel such labor. In conclusion, I argue against the moral and feminist value of healthy self-care labor and for a larger conception of what feminist self-care might entail.

Shiloh Whitney, Fordham University, “Decolonizing the Authenticity Critique of Affective Labor: From ‘The Wilderness of the Unmanaged Heart’ to Decolonial Affective Ecologies.” What critical categories are needed in an intersectional feminist politics that resists the exploitation of affective labor? Appeals to emotional authenticity fail, first because they distort the phenomenology and ontology of affective life: there is no “wilderness of the unmanaged heart.” I show how this follows from Ahmed’s theory of affects as economies. Second, the valorization of emotional authenticity participates in the way the work is exploitative. Drawing on Lutz’s work on the anthropology of emotion, I expose the coloniality of the notion of the “wilderness of the unmanaged heart,” and argue that the equivocal valorization of emotional authenticity in western discourse itself functions as an exploitative affective economy predicated on the coloniality of race and gender. In refusing the ideal of the “wilderness of the unmanaged heart,” we open up the possibility of aspiring instead to decolonial affective ecologies.

Elden Yungblut, University of Western Ontario, “A Transfeminist Mobilization of Luce Irigaray’s Strategy of Mimesis.” Judith Butler’s famous theory of performativity can be distinguished from her political observations regarding the precarious sociocultural conditions that determine the intelligibility of a life according to the extent to which it reflects or conforms to dominant norms. In contrast to the common strategy of performative subversion, I therefore highlight a strategy that may be mobilized in the midst of the ongoing battle to overcome the ontological and social precarity faced by trans and queer subjects, namely Luce Irigaray’s strategy of mimesis. Irigaray’s strategy is uniquely powerful, I argue, insofar as it can facilitate the elaboration of nonnormative desires and subject positions from within the dominant culture using precisely its masculinized language system.