

# FEMINIST UTOPIAS:

## TRANSFORMING THE PRESENT OF PHILOSOPHY

### HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

SYMPOSIUM IN REYKJAVIK AND SKÁLHOLT, ICELAND  
30TH OF MARCH TO 2ND OF APRIL, 2017



# PROGRAM & ABSTRACTS

# INTRODUCTION

**F**eminist philosophy has produced groundbreaking inventions in contemporary philosophy, including more gender-conscious conceptions of humans enriching traditional philosophical ideas and an improved scholarship on women in the history of philosophy. However, the transformative potential of feminist philosophy for renewing the discipline has not been fully actualized. The feminist utopias envisioned by feminist philosophers across traditional philosophical divides and cultures possess the potential for invigorating philosophy. Such utopias represent our striving for a more realistic grasp on who we are and how we experience the world. The symposium provides a space for theoretical and practical-pedagogical experimentation and cross-fertilization of methodologies and ideas. It aims to develop insights for further research within philosophy, literature, history of ideas, and related areas.

Over the course of four days we will explore these themes together. The first day will be spent at the University of Iceland in Reykjavík where we will listen to keynote speakers in an open conference. In the evening we leave for Skálholt which is a beautiful historic place in the south of Iceland, about an hour's drive from Reykjavík. In Skálholt we will have a three-day workshop with paper presentations and discussion sessions.

Although the structure of the sessions is quite traditional we hope that the calm and relaxing setting of the historic place Skálholt will encourage us all to feel relaxed and curious both whilst presenting and participating in dialogue. Our aim is to make space where new and emerging ideas can be born into a welcoming atmosphere where they can grow rather than be finalised and ready to be protected from a harsh critique when presented. Too often we have felt afraid of being perceived as not rational or critical enough and that has prevented us from speaking in our intuitive and creative voices. There is no imposter if every voice is welcomed and listened to in an open way.

Having said that, of course all kinds of presentations are welcomed! If you plan to use PowerPoints we kindly ask you to send the presentation to [nhh1@hi.is](mailto:nhh1@hi.is) three days ahead of the conference. This is done to avoid all technical delays. Although the time frame for the parallel sections is short we will create as much time as possible for discussion about all presentations, and for taking walks around the hallways and surroundings of Skálholt, which is an ideal place for contemplative philosophical walking.

We will use the opportunity of being in the vicinity of some of Iceland's most popular tourist attractions and take a short trip to Gullfoss and Geysir on Friday, March 31. You can expect all sorts of weather in late March/early April: sunny bright days, rain storms, and even snow storms. Therefore we recommend that you bring normal winter clothes and waterproof/tolerant shoes (in case it rains) but not necessarily your hiking gear! The conference will be held in different buildings in the Skálholt area. One of the location points of the conference is in 10 minute walking distance from the main location and the walk itself providing very picturesque scenery. There are some hot tubs outside the residences in Skálholt where people can relax in the evenings so we highly recommend that you bring bathing suits. Also, Iceland has amazing swimming pools with hot spring water so bringing a bathing suit is a must when visiting Iceland anyway.

There will be a welcoming reception when we arrive in Skálholt on the evening of Thursday March 30th. Apart from that you will need to buy your own drinks if you wish to have wine with dinner in Skálholt; a bar will be open there during dinner-time. For other beverage consumption take note that alcohol is sold in special liquor stores (none being located around Skálholt) in Iceland and in the Airport tax free shop. As the tap water is perfectly clean, you will not need to buy bottled water in Iceland although you will see it in many places for sale.

We're very excited to see you all,  
**The organizing committee**

The symposium is co-hosted by  
Feminist Philosophy: Transforming Philosophy at The University of Iceland and  
NSU Study Circle *Feminist Philosophy: Time, History and the Transformation of Thought*  
[http://heimspekistofnun.hi.is/feminist\\_utopias](http://heimspekistofnun.hi.is/feminist_utopias)

# PROGRAM: REYKJAVÍK

## THURSDAY MARCH 30 2017

Open Conference		<i>Feminist Utopias: Transforming the Present of Philosophy</i>
9:00 - 16:30		Registration for those attending the full conference in Skálholt.
10:00 - 10:30	Location: Hátíðarsalur, Aðalbygging (Aula, Main Building)	<b>Opening Address: Sigríður Þorgeirsdóttir</b> (University of Iceland)
10:30 - 11:30		<b>Keynote Address: Alison Jaggar</b> (University of Colorado, Boulder) "Feminist Utopias: Transforming the Methodology of Political Philosophy"
11:30 - 12:00		<b>Break</b>
12:00 - 13:00		<b>Keynote Address: Kristie Dotson</b> (Michigan State University) "On the Value of Challenging Philosophical Orthodoxy: A Tale of Two Careers"
13:00 - 14:00		<b>Lunch Break</b>
14:00 - 15:00		<b>Keynote Address: Willow Verkerk</b> (Kingston University) "Reinterpreting Philosophy: Questioning Universality with Exemplarity and Difference"
15:00 - 15:30		<b>Break</b>
15:30 - 16:30		<b>Keynote Address: Nancy Bauer</b> (Tufts University) "Philosophical Ideology and Real-World Power"
16:30 - 17:00		<b>Closing Address: Eyja M. Brynjarsdóttir</b> (University of Iceland)
17:15		

### Arrival in Skálholt

When we arrive in Skálholt (around 19:00) guests will be shown to their rooms, there will be a reception and practical information, and we will have dinner.

# PROGRAM: SKÁLHOLT

## FRIDAY MARCH 31 2017

8:00 - 9:15	Breakfast		
9:30 - 11:30	<b>Utopian Thoughts</b> Rebecca Gutwald Waltraud Ernst Synne Myrebøe Cressida Heyes	<b>Irigaray</b> Steinunn Hreinsdóttir Elena Tzelepis Nathalie Ek Jonas Green	<b>Beauvoir</b> Elspeth Mitchell Katja Čičigoj Oisín Keohane Johanna Sjöstedt
11:30 - 13:00	Lunch		
13:00 - 14:30	<b>Gender &amp; Identity 1</b> Matthew Cull Elif Yavnik Katji Lindberg	<b>Politics &amp; Power 1</b> Filipa Melo Lopes Mary Rawlinson Nicola McMillan	<b>Epistemology 1</b> Lorraine Code Emmalon Davis Paul Giladi
14:30 - 15:00	Break with snacks (get your stuff for the trip)		
15:00 - 18:30	Trip to Gullfoss & Geysir		
19:00	Dinner		
Paper Titles			
<p><b>Utopian Thoughts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rebecca Gutwald: "How (not) to build your feminist utopia: Philosophical considerations about feminist world-building"</li> <li>• Waltraud Ernst: "Utopia of the present: Donna Haraway's Challenging Re-conceptualizations of Feminist Philosophy of Nature"</li> <li>• Synne Myrebøe: "Not Yet There: No-Where as Potential for the Present?"</li> <li>• Cressida Heyes: "Does Sleep Have a Feminist Future?"</li> </ul> <p><b>Irigaray</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steinunn Hreinsdóttir: "Irigarays mimesis as a radical deconstruction of the feminine"</li> <li>• Elena Tzelepis: "Othering the philosophical tradition: Alternative possibilities for political and affective sensibility"</li> <li>• Nathalie Ek: "The Mimesis project: Towards a transformation of philosophical discourse"</li> <li>• Jonas Green: "Subversive Mothers: The Problem of Finding a Law Outside the Phallic without Reproducing the Phallic Logic"</li> </ul> <p><b>Beauvoir</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elspeth Mitchell: "Feminine Becomings: The Girl &amp; The Second Sex"</li> <li>• Katja Čičigoj: "Feminism and/as Universalism: Rethinking sexual difference and universality in post-feminist, post-metaphysical times"</li> <li>• Oisín Keohane: "Beauvoir at the Cinema: 'The Married Woman' and Cavell's Remarriage Comedies"</li> <li>• Johanna Sjöstedt: "Simone de Beauvoir and the End of History"</li> </ul> <p><b>Gender &amp; Identity 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matthew Cull: "Anti-Essentialism about Gender: Realist, Constructionist, or Error Theoretical?"</li> <li>• Elif Yavnik: "Nietzsche and Feminine Subjectivity: How the Coming of Women Is to Transform the Human Species"</li> <li>• Katji Lindberg: "The wild philosopher - on performativity, masculinity and thought collectives"</li> </ul> <p><b>Politics &amp; Power 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Filipa Melo Lopes: "Misogyny and (Post-)Feminist Backlash: Difficulties in accounting for Raunch Feminism's Perpetuation of the Patriarchy"</li> <li>• Mary Rawlinson: "From Rights to Justice: Rethinking the universal in ethics and politics via sexual difference"</li> <li>• Nicola McMillan: "Feminism, Freedom &amp; Democracy: Can Feminist Solidarity Create Freedom in the midst of Neoliberalism?"</li> </ul> <p><b>Epistemology 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lorraine Code: "The power of example: Thinking ecologically, Knowing responsibly"</li> <li>• Emmalon Davis: "The Harms of Hermeneutical Erasure: Exploring the Role of Hermeneutical Defects in Sustaining Epistemic Oppression"</li> <li>• Paul Giladi: "New Perspectives on Epistemic Injustice: Post-Kantian and Critical Theoretic Approaches to Disrespect and Alienation"</li> </ul>			

**SATURDAY APRIL 1 2017**

8:00 - 9:15	Breakfast		
9:30 - 11:30	<b>Issues in Academia</b> Robin Zheng Naomi Scheman Carla Fehr Samantha Brennan		<b>Politics &amp; Power 2</b> Ole Sandberg Rhiannon Firth Rachel Elizabeth Fraser Valgerður Pálmadóttir
11:30 - 13:00	Lunch		
13:00 - 15:00	Workshops		
	<b>Transformative Methodologies</b> How can feminists transform the academic discipline and culture? Presentation by Erika Ruonakoski: "Exploring the Methods of Teaching and Learning"	<b>Truth, Lies, Politics, Emotions</b> What has academic philosophy been missing about political reality?	
15:00 - 15:30	Break		
15:30 - 17:00	<b>Epistemology 2</b> Lauren Ashwell Camilla Kronqvist Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir	<b>Vulnerability</b> Kasper Kristensen Irina Poleshchuk Nanna Hlín Halldórsdóttir	<b>Gender &amp; Identity 2</b> Carol Hay Robin Dembroff Katharine Jenkins
19:00	Dinner		
Paper Titles			
<b>Issues in Academia</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robin Zheng: "A Feminist Disutopia: Power, Privilege, and Precarious Labor in the Neoliberal Academy"</li> <li>• Naomi Scheman: "The Problem with the Problems of Philosophy: Challenging European Modernity"</li> <li>• Carla Fehr: "Fostering Diversity and Pluralism in Philosophy: The American Philosophical Association Committee on the Status of Women Site Visit Program as Feminist Epistemological Praxis"</li> <li>• Samantha Brennan: "Transforming Philosophy Inside and Out"</li> </ul> <b>Politics &amp; Power 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ole Sandberg: "The social and gendered construction of 'Economic Man'"</li> <li>• Rhiannon Firth: "Somatic Pedagogies: Critiquing and resisting the affective discourse of the neoliberal state from an embodied anarcho-feminist perspective"</li> <li>• Rachel Elizabeth Fraser: "Feminist Ontology and Anti-Work Politics"</li> <li>• Valgerður Pálmadóttir: "How is the Personal Political?"</li> </ul> <b>Epistemology 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lauren Ashwell: "You Don't Know What You Want: Challenging Assumptions in the Self-Knowledge Literature"</li> <li>• Camilla Kronqvist: "Speak to Us of Love: Some Difficulties in the Scientific and Philosophical Study of Love"</li> <li>• Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir: "The Inner Landscape of the Body: Phenomenology of Sensuous Knowledge"</li> </ul> <b>Vulnerability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kasper Kristensen: "On the Human and Non-human Vulnerability - Spinoza on the Animal"</li> <li>• Irina Poleshchuk: "Experience of pain in temporalizing of mother-child relation"</li> <li>• Nanna Hlín Halldórsdóttir: "Emotional revolutions as ontological transitions"</li> </ul> <b>Gender &amp; Identity 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carol Hay: "In Defence of Feminist Solidarity as a Utopian Ideal"</li> <li>• Robin Dembroff: "Unethical Truths: Truths that Reinforce Injustice"</li> <li>• Katharine Jenkins: "The Ontology of Oppression: Bridging the Gap Between Feminist and 'Mainstream' Social Ontology"</li> </ul>			

**SUNDAY APRIL 2 2017**

8:00 - 9:15	Breakfast		
9:30 - 11:30	<b>Empathy &amp; Care</b> Hanna Bäckström Jill Hernandez Ylva Gustafsson Patricia Sheridan	<b>History / Literature / Utopia</b> Penny Weiss Susanne Sreedhar & Julie Walsh Eret Talviste Mirjam Hinrikus	<b>Sex &amp; Violence</b> Rosa Vince Nanette Ryan Sydney Keough Karyn Freedman
13:30	Busses leave for Reykjavík		
Paper Titles			
<b>Empathy &amp; Care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hanna Bäckström: "Doing good: Feminist ethics and the paradoxes of helping others"</li> <li>• Jill Hernandez: "Harms and Goods: On How the Atrocity Paradigm Can Become a Utopian Moral Driver for Change"</li> <li>• Ylva Gustafsson: "Empathy in health care: the rise of cognitive science and the loss of narrative medicine"</li> <li>• Patricia Sheridan: "Private morality as a Public Good: The social virtue of Catharine Trotter Cockburn and the Bluestockings"</li> </ul> <b>History / Literature / Utopia</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Penny Weiss: "Revisioning Childhood in Feminist Utopias"</li> <li>• Susanne Sreedhar &amp; Julie Walsh: "The Dystopia of Marriage: An Early Feminist Account of Freedom"</li> <li>• Eret Talviste: "Defying Genres: Hélène Cixous's Intimate Maps of Time"</li> <li>• Mirjam Hinrikus: "Irresolvable ambivalences in the works of A.H. Tammsaare (1878-1940): Misogyny and the attraction of femininity in Estonian literature"</li> </ul> <b>Sex, Love &amp; Violence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rosa Vince: "Pornography and Testimonial Smothering: How Women are Silenced"</li> <li>• Nanette Ryan: "Self-Respecting Sex"</li> <li>• Sydney Keough: "Hermeneutical Injustice, Narratives, and Understanding"</li> <li>• Karyn Freedman: "Talking about Listening: Sexual Violence against Women, Epistemic Injustice, and the Transformative Power of First-Person Narratives"</li> </ul>			

# ABSTRACTS

## FRIDAY, MARCH 31 2017

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### SESSION: UTOPIAN THOUGHTS

REBECCA GUTWALD

University of Munich (LMU)

#### **HOW (NOT) TO BUILD YOUR FEMINIST UTOPIA: PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT FEMINIST WORLD-BUILDING**

The goal of my contribution is to examine how we, as feminist philosophers, can gain new insights into issues of social justice by engaging with feminist utopias (and dystopias). The proviso is that these works fulfil the criteria of creative world-building which I will lay out in my talk. I will argue that many works of the early proto-feminists such as Christine de Pizan, Margaret Cavendish or Moderata Fonte meet these demands as well as many later works of feminist science fiction (e.g. by Charlotte Perkins Gilman or Doris Lessing). My thesis is that the study of this body of literature can help us in fulfilling a central and ancient role of philosophy – that of radical inquiry into the basic aspects of human life. I shall present two arguments to support my thesis: first, in a methodological examination, I point out that feminist utopian fiction works best for philosophical inquiry if it constructs a complex, consistent and detailed scenario – a whole world, so to speak. It replaces experience by imagination, because we do not have the former when it comes to gender equality and other issues of fundamental social change. Building a utopia shows us what we have not experienced yet, namely different, potential circumstances of justice, new social structures, new forms of living together etc. My second argument is related to the first, but has normative implications. Alternative worlds do not depict idealistic goals of social justice. Social justice is not transcendental, but should be comparative, as Amartya Sen has put it. I argue that we should use utopias to replace the often uncomplex thought experiments in political philosophy as a source of inspiration to envision something radically unknown to custom and develop novel ideas for social justice.

WALTRAUD ERNST

University of Bielefeld, Germany

#### **UTOPIA OF THE PRESENT: DONNA HARAWAY'S CHALLENGING RE-CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE**

Nature provided space for big dreams in feminist philosophy – nightmares as well as utopias. Nature has been a realm to hide from questionable narratives of cultural and technological progress and a location to identify with as a woman through images of shared vulnerability, suffering, and usurpation. Nature has been described as a source of longing for harmony and innocence to tie in with future hope and as constant power and breeding ground for an overwhelming multitude of organisms, an inspiration for emancipation, authority and live itself. Already in her first book, "Primate Visions" (1989), Donna Haraway has challenged established feminist as well as androcentric views of nature. No one else has taken more effort to show in which way nature has been the spot for scholars and laypersons to promote their visions of culture while pretending to reveal nature's secrets. Hence, following Haraway's, nature has been wrongly conceptualized as the other of culture. Moreover, nature has been culture all along. In her second book, "Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature" (1991) she analysed how "nature has been systematically constituted in terms of the capitalist machine and market" (59). In contrast to this, Haraway promotes an understanding of nature as trickster. In my view, this figure represents the ground for the author's natural utopia. In her new book, "Staying with the Trouble. Making Kin in the Chthulucene" (2016), Haraway turns on both, "apocalyptic or salvific futures", and departs even with a declared anti-utopian project, "a practice of learning to live and die well with each other in a thick present". Yet, the way Haraway discusses e.g. pigeons as companion species in processes of "becoming-with" is not only deeply related to "speculative feminisms", as the author puts it herself. I argue that the transformative power she develops does not lead to something revolutionary, to transgress all present power regimes. Rather, she teaches a new way to look at other organisms. She points out the possibilities of deeper ways of bonding with the other. This kind of relationality, I will show, can rather be called a utopia of the present.

SYNNE MYREBØE

Umeå Universitet

#### **NOT YET THERE: NO-WHERE AS POTENTIAL FOR THE PRESENT?**

What are utopias if not a gesture towards the imaginary good? But, when Thomas More chose to name his imaginary island, he used the Greek word Utopia, No-where, as a name for this yet-to-come-imagery. For More, this was certainly an idea of the good life, well out of reach from his contemporary. The good place he imagined was unknown. It was no-where. Thus, since More, the etymological understanding of utopia has often confused the Greek pronoun [ou], no- with [eu], good-, whereby no-place came to be understood as the good place. Regardless of Mores intentions, I want to seize upon this topos-double, the

good-place as the (so far, and at the same time) no-place, reflecting upon the title "Feminist utopias: Transforming the Present of Philosophy". I will argue that a radical, transformative potential should put the topos-double in play where Utopia means "no-where as the good place" and the "good place as no-where". My rejection of Utopia as the good place alone is connected to an understanding of the good place as some-place already there, which only need some kind of adjustment or borders. Likewise, I disregard the potential of no-where as a transformative praxis for philosophy as long as we are talking about a subject and a practice already-there that we seek to transform. Departing from an understanding of Utopia, as a yet-to-come-imagery, its potential but also its difficulties, I will take an example from my research on the philosophical work of Martha Nussbaum. Well known and (often notoriously) recognized for her broad and extensive work, Nussbaum recurs to ancient ideas on the cultivation of emotions as a condition for democracy and man's actualization of his or her political potential. Her reading of Plato and not the least Aristotle are disputed, also, she would probably reject any connection with feminist utopias. However, I find her philosophical work interesting as a tentative construction of a place-to-come where emotions, and what she calls traditional feminine values, can be actualized, not as philosophy's other, but as its inseparable part. Hence, by focusing on the good-place as something already here (political liberalism), I will argue that Nussbaum's transformative potential for philosophy falls flat.

CRESSIDA HEYES

University of Alberta

### DOES SLEEP HAVE A FEMINIST FUTURE?

The US military is conducting research into ending the human need for sleep. In a sleepless utopia, human beings could fight longer and work harder. This imaginary is closely linked to neoliberal work patterns: "I'll sleep when I'm dead," busy and important people like to say. Time spent in the land of nod is wasted time that could have been put to productive use. For women burdened with a double shift, or precarious and erratic paid work, or care work (paid or unpaid) that takes place at all hours, sleep's relation to labour is even more fraught. Point 1: other things being equal, a future without sleep will lead to women doing a lot more work. Point 2: sleep and death are intimately linked in a popular gendered aesthetic. The sleeping/dead white woman is a powerful trope. In narratives like *Sleeping Beauty*, women's sleep represents a temporality that neither moves forward (as when we age) nor entirely stops (as when we die). In these stories white, heroic, masculine agency ensures the continuing world, and, ultimately, the woman's life. "Progress" is a thoroughly masculine domain, and the future is assured, in part, through a woman's unconsciousness and a man's wakefulness. How can these two contrasting narratives about sleep, gender, and the future be held together? They plainly do co-exist, but they are also in philosophical tension, with one imagining women's expansive productivity, the other our non-existence. This paper argues that class and race explain the gap: the passivity of the sleeping/dead woman is completely dependent on her white, bourgeois status. If not an actual princess, she is an alabaster-skinned beauty who is not required to scrub the floors or care for restless babies. Neoliberal work and class structures reinforce the point: the unconscious women of today are high-fashion models, paid to represent decadence via passivity, while the women whose sleepless future is most coveted are care workers—typically brown immigrant women who stay up in elder homes or work hospital night shifts. Imagining a sleepless feminist future thus illuminates intersections of privilege and oppression even in our alleged utopias.

## SESSION: IRIGARAY

STEINUNN HREINSDÓTTIR

University of Iceland

### IRIGARAY'S MIMESIS AS A RADICAL DECONSTRUCTION OF THE FEMININE

French feminist philosophers have been at the forefront of disclosing how Western philosophy and psychoanalysis have covered over sexual difference, which means that philosophy is monosexual, giving a priori value to logocentrism based on a masculine viewpoint, logic and objectivity. The feminine has been non-existent as a doer in language. Luce Irigaray has done especially interesting work in revealing a latent, hidden feminine meaning within classical texts of philosophy, in order to make space for a subjectivity that is one's own, grounded on embodied, lived experience. She deploys the most critical and creative tool, mimesis, in her reading of canonical texts of philosophy to deconstruct and loosen up the myth of the given. A practical and political example of mimesis is the "Slut Walk" where the negative view ("I am a slut, a piece of meat") is proclaimed in a playful way, undermining given views about sluts. Mimesis is a sort of "cover up" in language that establishes a transformative interim-space, where transcendence can take place. It is grounded on the human desire to perceive ourselves and the world and to form our lives. Irigaray's starting point is that we enter subjectivity through language. The embodied self is thus a texture, situated in a world with many sedimentary layers. It is therefore crucial in our perception of the world and being in the world to deconstruct and (re)interpret texts and concepts as phenomena. Irigaray's most lyrical text, "When Our Lips Speak Together" displays the mimetic method in deconstructing the monopoly of the male subject position in a linguistic play with multiple voices and perspectives, resulting in a process of discovery and exploration. The two pairs of lips are a counter symbol and a positive female imaginary, implying movement, openness, proximity and care. Furthermore, the the "Lips"-text transforms dominant patterns of the philosophical imaginary subjectivity, and shake the philosophical discourse. Irigaray's deconstructive method shows how mimetic interpretation can uncover the unexpressed and hidden in an effort to find ourselves. Applying mimesis opens for emotional and critical aspects, creativity and productive energy. As such mimesis is important for reading, writing and teaching philosophy, an instrument that supports strengthening creative philosophical thinking.



ELENA TZELEPIS

University of Athens

### **OTHERING THE PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITION: ALTERNATIVE POSSIBILITIES FOR POLITICAL AND AFFECTIVE SENSIBILITY**

In her book *This Sex Which Is not One*, the feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray notes that Platonic mimesis is double: There is mimesis as production, which would lie more in the realm of music, and there is the mimesis that would be already caught up in a process of initiation, specularization, adequation and reproduction. It is the latter form that is privileged throughout the history of philosophy, Irigaray remarks, whereas the former seems always to have been repressed. Yet, she argues, it is doubtless in the direction of, and on the basis of, that first mimesis that the possibility of women's writing may come about. This is the kind of mimesis that Irigaray enacts in order to work out, through, and on sexual difference, in order to revisit the discursive and material sites where "woman" is essentialized or excluded. The mimetic mode of Irigaray's early period texts sets the stage in this paper, as I am particularly interested in discussing mimesis in relation to the question of "woman": that polysemic other that resists definitions and appropriations invoked by the philosophical discourses. Judith Butler's theorization of gender performativity and transformative agency is enabling to capture the potentiality of such mimesis for the purposes of interrupting the normative and exclusionary standards and opening up alternative possibilities for political and affective sensibility. As a philosophical critique and reinterpretation of Western metaphysics, Luce Irigaray's mimesis is read and appreciated –despite its own inevitable limits and unresolved paradoxes- as a performative provocation. What interests me in Irigaray's mimetic writing is the exploration of mimesis as a critical engagement with the differing and deferring forces of philosophical tradition that does not merely and fatally renormalize this tradition but rather it points to its limits and its suppressed traces of alterity. What is at stake is difference within mimesis: the possibility of alteration emerging from the necessarily unstable logic of iteration. What I am elaborating in this paper is that a philosophy tainted with the critical force of mimesis becomes a conceptual, cultural, and political practice that puts the normative categories of signification and symbolic significance into crisis. Beyond the known bound-aries of convention and moral imagination, such a force of disruption within reiterative discourse – that is, such hiatus, spacing, or *différance* - has the potential of becoming a paradigm for the conceptualizations of the yet-unthought.

NATHALIE TORNEUS-EK

University of Uppsala, Sweden.

### **THE MIMESIS PROJECT – TOWARDS A TRANSFORMATION OF PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE**

The under-representation of women in philosophy is a well-recognized fact, both concerning the philosophical canon, and in academic philosophy and among philosophy students. When trying to approach this problem, the dilemma of side-lining arises. How are we to achieve an inclusion of women, without neither diminishing their contribution alongside of their male, already recognized, peers - nor creating a new, "ghettoized" philosophy of women, outside canonical philosophy? "As the saying goes: one cannot just 'add women and stir'" (Sarah Hutton). The Mimesis project turns to the mimetic writing of Luce Irigaray for an articulation of this problem. The aim is to translate her methodology into practice, towards the inclusion of women in philosophy. In her mimetic writing, Irigaray sets out a dialogue with Plato, Aristotle i.a., without making it clear who says what. She inserts her own agenda in an already canonized context – thus affirming the power of discourse at the same time as she entitles herself to change its outcome. The boundaries between the philosophical precursors of power and of discourse, and the revolutionary intruder are dissolved. Irigaray realizes the impossibility of staying wholly outside of the philosophical canon. This is the main point of the Mimesis: it is not merely a methodology of destruction of old ideals and of creating something new, but an outline of the complex interplay of power between inclusion and exclusion that is needed for a real transformation of philosophy, towards a real inclusion of her ideas. In the mimetic framework, this entails a revolution of philosophy, departing from the interplay between inside and outside, between inclusion and exclusion – not a "new philosophy of women". The Mimesis project sets out to explore the possibilities of everyday academic work departing from Irigaray's mimetic writing as a subversive power to change the philosophical framework. The projects inquiries are methodological but at the same time utmost practical. We are experimenting with seminars, workshops, information platforms and social relations, everything on a student based level, and we wish to take the discussion about a feminist approach to philosophy and the problem of the inclusion of women to another level, one where the complex interplay between inside and outside the power of discourse can be acknowledged and – hopefully - approached.

JONAS GREEN

Birkbeck College, University of London.

### **SUBVERSIVE MOTHERS: THE PROBLEM OF FINDING A LAW OUTSIDE THE PHALLIC WITHOUT REPRODUCING THE PHALLIC LOGIC**

Feminist critique of Lacan and Freud has often focused on the absence of a non-phallic signifier that would give woman a place within language. This was famously pointed out by Luce Irigaray and part of her solution was to introduce the non-symbolic feminine into the symbolic and thereby undermining the rigorous structure of the phallic symbolic at the same time as it would allow a non-phallic symbolic to take shape. This and similar positions were criticised by Julia Kristeva for introducing the psychotic, non-symbolic into political discourse. In part as a response to this critique there has been a revival of attempts to refigure the maternal within feminist readings of psychoanalysis. Adhering to a queer critique of gender binarism, Juliet Mitchell has been working through the sibling relationship to try to explore horizontal developments of sexual difference. In her work she also explores the maternal law that restricts the ability to give birth alongside a paternal law that restricts access to the phallus. Bracha Ettinger has investigated bonds to the maternal, and the limitations of the body in the development of the separation of these bonds. These are only a few of the contemporary interventions in psychoanalysis' phallic logic. Within psychoanalytic theory, the phallic and castration signifies the entry into the symbolic that offers both an entry into knowledge and an escape from the dyadic relation with the maternal. By accepting the symbolic castration the child can escape the devouring relation with the mother. As a response to this model, feminists have tried to come up with a theory that will allow the mother to come out of the psychotic, pre-symbolic and into what can be symbolised. But what would happen if, instead of trying to come up with another signifier, we analyse what the phallus is trying to cover? The phallus has been assumed to represent the possible castration and therefore loss in general. But what if, instead of reading the phallus as representative of one mode of loss, we would read

the phallus as one representation of a split of the self. Towards the end of his seminar, Lacan developed the *sinthôme* as a development of the symptom. Where the symptom is a linguistic phenomenon, the *sinthôme* includes the limit of the linguistic, it includes the non-symbolic in the linguistic and thereby also including the maternal. So what would happen if we would take this as point of departure to undermine the phallogocentric symbolic instead of trying to invent another symbol. Instead of trying to answer Freud's (in)famous question: What does woman want?, would it be possible to build a utopia on not knowing what she or he wants? Would it be possible to remove the unifying signifier altogether?

## SESSION: BEAUVOIR

ELSPETH MITCHELL

University of Leeds

### FEMININE BECOMINGS: THE GIRL & THE SECOND SEX

The new translation of the *The Second Sex* (1949) by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, published in 2010, provides Anglophone scholars an opportunity for new investigations in English of Simone de Beauvoir's landmark text. This paper will trace how the girl can be read as a necessary but predominantly unacknowledged figure in *The Second Sex*. I propose that the girl is a decisive position in Beauvoir's philosophical account of the situation of woman. Yet, there has been relatively little scholarly attention given to Beauvoir's literary and philosophical writing on childhood and even less concern to the specificity of the girl. It is in no doubt that *The Second Sex* is a book which addresses the question: 'what is woman?' Nevertheless, in *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir devotes a large chapter to the lived experience of the girl and includes a broad section that engages with 'Formative Years'. Here, she develops the space and rich resources for understand the girl as a subject whilst describing the specificity of her embodied, lived experience. At the same time the girl is an important figure to think with in respect of the philosophical concepts Beauvoir attends to. I thus consider the question of how one 'becomes' in the feminine condition, which ultimately grounds Beauvoir's exploration of the situation of woman. How might we understand the most famous phrase of *The Second Sex*, 'One is not born, but rather, becomes woman' if we shift our focus to the girl? In Beauvoir's study we get access to a figure caught up in as much myth as woman herself but through a close reading of *The Second Sex* I will approach the question of the girl to refine and extend our understanding of Beauvoir's project and to identify the importance of the girl for feminist theory.

KATJA ČIČIGOJ

Justus-Liebig University, Giessen

### FEMINISM AND/AS UNIVERSALISM: RETHINKING SEXUAL DIFFERENCE AND UNIVERSALITY IN POST-FEMINIST, POST-METAPHYSICAL TIMES

The political force of the analysis of women's status as the Other in *The Second Sex* of Simone de Beauvoir, I would argue, lies in thinking sexual difference as ontologically constituted by the tension between the particular and the universal. While being systematically reduced to the status of the Other, to sexual difference, Beauvoir's ontological account of women renders them equally irreducible to sexual difference – they are human beings too. This inherent tension between the particular and the universal, to be found in Beauvoir, is, as I will argue in this paper, crucial for rethinking feminism after poststructuralism. After the several critiques of modern feminism, often informed by poststructuralist philosophy – i.e. postcolonial and queer theory, critical race studies, black feminism etc. – both the generality of sexual difference (the systematic nature of the reduction of women to sexual difference) and the universality of the status of human being, which allows women to make egalitarian feminist claims against patriarchal exclusions, have come into question, delegitimising the feminist project and dissolving it into the appearance of a post-feminist era devoid of sexually-informed social tensions. However, I will argue that today more than ever we need to return to both conflicting sides of Beauvoir's analysis of woman, and question anew the universalist purchase of feminism. In lieu of the contemporary fragmentation of women's identities and concerns, the misuse of feminism to legitimate western imperialist agendas with the pretext of exporting "universal" progressive values to other than Western areas and cultures, I will argue for the necessity of articulating the relation between feminism and universalism anew – not in order to discard all universalist claims as irremediably illegitimate, but rather to critique falsely universalising gestures in the name of a more egalitarian, more inclusive universalism. By rethinking the articulation of the link between universality (or universalism) and sexual difference, I will attempt to argue that a universalist, but not heterosexist, nor imperialist, feminism is conceivable today. A real feminist utopia?

OISÍN KEOHANE

University of Dundee

### BEAUVOIR AT THE CINEMA: 'THE MARRIED WOMAN' AND CAVELL'S REMARRIAGE COMEDIES

In 1948, one year before publishing *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir visited the United States of America for the first time. This trip partly explains why *The Second Sex*, and especially the chapter entitled 'The Married Woman', frequently compares the situation of married French women to American women. Beauvoir also pays some attention to film stars in the book, I will thus reread *The Second Sex* on marriage in the light of Stanley Cavell's study of 'remarriage comedies', bringing into relief Beauvoir's exploration of marriage in fiction and non-fiction with Cavell's filmic study of marriage. I will thus draw attention to what we might call the elective affinities between Beauvoir and Cavell, their shared philosophical interest in such topics as virginity, marriage, friendship, and sex, as well as the significance of women around the age of thirty for both authors. I will also, however, point out their differences and the ways we might evaluate such differences. Of particular interest will be Cavell's description of marriage as a form of erotic friendship, and Beauvoir's description of the sex life of the married woman (that the gendered phenomenological work of Debra B. Bergoffen continues). In addition, I will consider how Beauvoir would, in 1959, go on to

present Bardot in article for 'Esquire' as the most liberated woman of post-war France, one which displaces what Beauvoir calls the safe cinematic 'girlfriend' (exemplified for Beauvoir by Irene Dunne), or the dangerous cinematic 'vamp' (exemplified for Beauvoir by Marlene Dietrich). Having drawn connections between Cavell and Beauvoir's work on marriage, the final part of my talk will briefly examine a film that connects both Beauvoir and Cavell – Godard's *Contempt/Le mépris* (1963), which stars Bardot as a married woman.

JOHANNA SJÖSTEDT

### **SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR AND THE END OF HISTORY**

Abstract Missing

## **SESSION: GENDER & IDENTITY 1**

MATTHEW CULL

University of Sheffield, UK

### **ANTI-ESSENTIALISM ABOUT GENDER: REALIST, CONSTRUCTIONIST, OR ERROR THEORETICAL?**

Using the Distinctions Drawn by Analytic Philosophers to Help Clarify the Claims of Anti-Essentialists about Gender

Whilst rejecting the global constructionism often suggested by their continental cousins, analytic philosophers have largely accepted local constructionism about gender and racial identities, distinguishing between epistemic and metaphysical, causal and constitutive constructionisms. However, some philosophers, not least Antony Appiah and Naomi Zack, have urged that we treat race in error theoretic terms. Further, philosophers such as Philip Kitcher and Robin Andreasen have revived the idea of biological realism about race. It is this tripartite taxonomy that I propose to use to help to clarify the claims of the anti-essentialist theories of gender. Anti-essentialism unites such thinkers as Judith Butler, Naomi Zack, Cressida Heyes, Natalie Stoljar and Julia Kristeva, who claim that there is no essence to the category 'woman'. Such theorists provide perhaps the most radical critique of, and the best hope for a utopian, inclusive account of gender grounded in the variety of gendered experiences. A question: where does the anti-essentialist fall on the tripartite division generated by analytic philosophy over recent decades? Linda Alcoff and Ron Mallon, suggest that (at least some) anti-essentialists are error theorists, but it is often assumed that anti-essentialists are constructionists of one sort or another – partly because anti-essentialism is often conflated with an opposition to biological essentialism. In this paper I will argue that anti-essentialist positions do not always fall neatly into the categories provided by the tripartite taxonomy, but that the distinctions made by analytic philosophers about social constructionism can help us to understand exactly what is being claimed by anti-essentialists. Drawing a distinction between structuralist anti-essentialists and anti-structuralist anti-essentialists, I consider the possibility of a biological realist structuralist position, suggesting that whilst the position is available, no actual anti-essentialist would defend such a position. I then show that most structuralists are not purely constructionists about gender, but that they combine realism and constructionism in ways that are helpfully enlightened using the distinctions made by analytic philosophers about local constructionism. Finally I demonstrate that anti-structuralists are not error theorists. I conclude with some thoughts about the radical and perhaps utopian possibilities of anti-essentialist approaches to gender in light of these clarifications.

ELIF YAVNIK

Penn State University

### **NIETZSCHE AND FEMININE SUBJECTIVITY: HOW THE COMING OF WOMEN IS TO TRANSFORM THE HUMAN SPECIES**

Nietzsche proves challenging for his women readers: One immediately recognizes the valuable insights for feminist thought in his work, yet one cannot help hearing the outright misogynistic comments. In this paper I examine feminine subjectivity in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche, and I argue that it invites women's engagement in philosophy and in life, not by politely making space for them, nor by passively lending its elements to feminist appropriations, but by actively and profoundly summoning women, to come and to transform human existence. Various women interpreters have examined Nietzsche's thought to see whether it allows for a feminine subject. The positions offered on this question may be arranged broadly in three groups: (1) he does not allow it and that is problematic, (2) he does allow it, yet there are still problems connected with it, and (3) he does allow it and so there are no problems. After examining these three views, I conclude by considering a fourth one: Nietzsche does not allow feminine subjectivity, because he cannot. And the way he renders transparent his inability is more promising than problematic for feminist readers. Zarathustra's relation with the figure of life displays Western masculine consciousness yearning for the feminine other. In Zarathustra, this yearning is expressed but its significance is not rendered clearer. Beyond Good and Evil ? 231 shows how Nietzsche acknowledges and embodies the outermost limits of traditional philosophy, and admits that the question of 'man and woman' belongs to a 'stupid', 'granite' bottom of thought where one's intellect is almost completely passive. Nietzsche's understanding of this passive stupidity presents a clear contrast to his emphasis on activity in ethics. Providing an account of how biology and ethics interlace in Nietzsche's work, I conclude that Nietzsche's work summons women, in a way that recognizes the radical transformation of human existence, consciousness, ethical orientation, and of the species that their coming would entail.

KATJI LINDBERG

### **THE WILD PHILOSOPHER - ON PERFORMATIVITY, MASCULINITY AND THOUGHT COLLECTIVES**

How does forms of exclusion and seclusion operate in a philosophical “thought collective” (Fleck [1935] 1997)? In this paper I would like to investigate how the habitual, in terms of masculinity and the dressed body, is performed. From the outset of the philosophical institution in Tromsø, Norway, belonging to “the radical University”, I will map patterns of reiterated identity. This case study will also function as a starting point to further discuss the idea of performativity (Butler 1990, Folkmarson Käll 2016, Stoller 2010). In her analyses of “male elegance”, as a position challenging normative masculinity, Louise Wallenberg, borrows Roland Barthes discursive concept “systèmes vestimentaires” (2010, 69. See Barthes [1957] 2006, 4). On one hand the gender constructions are constantly reiterated, but, on the other, Wallenberg argues: “The construction of masculinity [...] enables gaps and glitches in which a deviant masculinity can take place [...]” (82). Such a gap is occupied by the male philosophers at “the radical University”. Rather than dressing up in white skirt and tie, they adopt as working suit, a backpack, hiker boots and a style of “the wild man” (Bostad 1995, 30). The duality of the dressed body as performed identity can be considered as both discursively and institutionally constructed, but also as lived and in that way presenting a space to reinvent meaning (Folkmarson Käll 2016). The position of “the wild philosopher” challenges the high intellectual, continental ideal, but it also fences off other kinds of lived experience (Bostad & Pettersen 2015, 129-148).

## SESSION: POLITICS & POWER 1

FILIPA MELO LOPES

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

### **MISOGYNY AND (POST-)FEMINIST BACKLASH: DIFFICULTIES IN ACCOUNTING FOR RAUNCH FEMINISM’S PERPETUATION OF THE PATRIARCHY**

The early twenty-first century saw a surprising rise in women-led movements that seem to reinstate gender hierarchy in the aftermath and in reaction to major changes in the status of women. Some of these ‘backlash’ movements claim we now live in a gender egalitarian ‘post-feminist’ world where women can embrace subordinate roles as a matter of apolitical personal choice. But the most perplexing women-led backlash is the kind which appears to perpetuate hierarchy in the name of feminism. This is what I will call (post-)feminist backlash. Kate Manne’s recent work on misogyny provides a theoretical framework to explain how patriarchal social relations are perpetuated by men and women. Manne characterizes misogyny as a property of social environments, where women who are perceived as violating patriarchal norms are met with hostile reactions. These reactions ‘keep women down’ and systematically stifle their efforts to exit their subordinate position. In this presentation, I will argue that (post-)feminist backlash is indicative of a distinct way in which the gender hierarchy is perpetuated, one that renders Manne’s account incomplete. This incompleteness is important because it undermines the effectiveness of Manne’s recommendations for a gradualist strategy in dismantling the patriarchy. To show this, I first briefly explain Manne’s account. Secondly, I introduce (post-)feminist backlash by focusing on one example of it: raunch feminism. I look in detail at one case, that of ‘sex-positive’ CAKE parties, held in New York from 2000 to 2007. I then argue that what is happening at CAKE cannot be explained by misogyny. Finally, I propose a different story, in terms of what I call ‘meaning vertigo’. I claim that recognizing this phenomenon as distinct from misogyny is important for effective feminist politics.

MARY C. RAWLINSON

Stony Brook University

### **FROM RIGHTS TO JUSTICE: RETHINKING THE UNIVERSAL IN ETHICS AND POLITICS VIA SEXUAL DIFFERENCE"**

Liberal feminism’s focus on equality and rights raises the question ‘equal to what?’ Either women comprise an exceptional case, and their rights are “special,” not human rights; or, sexual difference makes no difference in the concepts of politics and ethics, and women’s experience is already subsumed under Man’s. Proclamations of “equal” rights for women ring hollow, given the continuing underrepresentation of women in the councils that determine the future, as well as the persistent devaluation of their labor and their disproportionate vulnerability to violence, homelessness, and poverty. These proclamations assume that the thought of sexual difference has nothing to contribute to the universal in ethics and politics, so that equality requires merely extending the rights of Man to women. My paper develops, as an alternative to the discourse of rights, an ethics and politics oriented by justice and conditions of possibility for real liberty. Women’s liberty, and not only women’s, is structurally compromised under global capital. Focusing on security, prosperity, and mobility, I articulate universal but differentiated and historically informed conditions of agency. Beginning, not from a speculative universal, but from the concrete universals that everyone has been born of a woman and everyone needs to eat, I develop an ethics of intergenerational generativity, figured in the two mothers, Demeter and Persephone. On this account, ethics and politics require, not merely tolerance, or respecting the other’s rights, but engaging with others to generate conditions of agency across generations, so that in the just state every mother’s child is born in security and with the opportunity to make a working life in collaboration with others. This narrative of justice and solidarity aims at the creation of a community capable of collective agency, while also preserving the singularity of each and all.

NICOLA MCMILLAN

University of Lancaster, UK

### **FEMINISM, FREEDOM & DEMOCRACY: CAN FEMINIST SOLIDARITY CREATE FREEDOM IN THE MIDST OF NEOLIBERALISM?**

In this presentation I aim to meet scepticism about the possibilities for democracy and freedom by employing a feminist framework which conceptualises freedom through the lens of identity and solidarity, by contrasting the work of two feminist philosophers: Wendy Brown and Allison Weir. Brown’s critical theory has in recent years turned to how (liberal) democracy is undermined by neoliberal culture (Brown 2003, 2006, 2010, 2015). Brown argues that neoliberalism

reduces citizenship to an individualist notion of self-care and promotes deference to political authority, while simultaneously orienting subjects towards fulfillment of their individual desires. For Brown, democracy needs to be an immediate, hands-on experience, through which we work together towards shared goals. However, Brown continually problematizes democracy as a logical possibility, by arguing that democracy cannot consider itself a process of or towards freedom, due to the fact that our subjectivities always sit in a nexus of power. Brown leaves us with the sense that democracy can, in current times in the west, only erupt sporadically, rather than be conceived as a continual, shared project. I will argue against this conclusion, by forwarding the argument that freedom is practiced through group (and particularly feminist) identity and solidarity, which is the focus of Allison Weir's recent work (Weir 2013). Weir argues that we construct power and freedom through our relationships and identifications with others. It is through working together that we construct counter discourses and identities which create new forms of solidarity. While Weir agrees that we cannot escape power, therefore, she is clear that we must continue to conceive of freedom as a possibility, and build freedom together. While Brown doubts such possibilities, Weir offers us a vision of a political landscape in which we are all already practising such freedom. I argue that Weir's work therefore invites us to recognise and amplify these freedoms and practices. Thus, I will ultimately argue that Brown's pessimistic view of democracy is unwarranted, and that, even in our current economic and political climate, we should retain a theoretical focus on freedom, in the service of conceptualising and creating democratic futures.

## SESSION: EPISTEMOLOGY 1

LORRAINE CODE

York University

### THE POWER OF EXAMPLE: THINKING ECOLOGICALLY, KNOWING RESPONSIBLY

Much of the most interesting current feminist work in epistemology, ethics, politics, and methodologies develops its argument with reference to or in analyses of examples, many of them quite fully narrated. This practice commonly derives from a sense that projects committed to knowing responsibly and well cannot achieve their purposes without fleshed-out, specifically situated examples to illustrate, or to convey a lived sense of, the issues that have generated them: yet the very fact of reliance on extended examples and case studies has met with strong criticism from more traditional epistemologists and moral theorists. The worry evidently is that such reliance is bound to be careless in its alleged appeals to "anecdotal evidence" or in its generalizing from one, or too few, particulars. To a large extent this criticism derives from the rigidity of post-positivist empiricist convictions that such approaches will inevitably be careless, sloppy, insufficiently rigid in the connections they affirm. They shift the burden of proof inappropriately, and sacrifice exactitude in so doing. These worries harken back to long-standing skeptical views of the epistemic value of narrative, and especially of generalizing from one, or too few, particulars: the implication being that doing so prompts a slide into incommunicable relativism. Here I will argue for the power and promise, in feminist and post-colonial inquiry, of invoking fleshed out examples, narratives, case studies into epistemic practice, maintaining that the very idea, and hence the practice, of social epistemology opens space for claiming – and/or contesting – their validity. I will propose, also, that well-invoked examples open the way to interpretive-hermeneutic engagement with epistemic questions both within epistemology and in feminist-postcolonial projects in ethics, political philosophy, aesthetics, and social philosophy more widely conceived. There is no doubt that such a contention can be dangerous within established post-positivist orthodoxy, but the claim of this paper will be that practices such as those I engage contribute significantly to just, responsible knowing, to promote epistemically responsible conduct.

EMMALON DAVIS

Indiana University, Bloomington

### THE HARMS OF HERMENEUTICAL ERASURE: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF HERMENEUTICAL DEFECTS IN SUSTAINING EPISTEMIC OPPRESSION

Miranda Fricker (2007) defines hermeneutical injustice as "the injustice of having some significant area of one's social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to hermeneutical marginalization," (158) where hermeneutical marginalization picks out the background condition in which some are less able to contribute to the pool of shared resources. On Fricker's account, hermeneutical injustice primarily concerns dysfunctional epistemic practices which effect the production of concepts. But dysfunctions in our hermeneutical practices occur not only within the processes through which new concepts are generated, but also within the processes through which such concepts are disseminated and utilized within a broader epistemic culture (Pohlhaus 2012). Consequently, hermeneutical marginalization cannot be eradicated by simply eliminating all instances of hermeneutical injustice; this is because hermeneutical injustice is one of many epistemic dysfunctions which contribute to the sustained hermeneutical marginalization of some knowers. This paper identifies an additional epistemic dysfunction which perpetuates hermeneutical marginalization but which does not involve a lacuna in conceptual resources (as in the case of hermeneutical injustice). In the examples I offer, concepts and interpretations developed within the margins successfully enter into the shared pool of resources but enter in such a way that shrouds the participatory role of the marginalized knowers responsible for their production. As a result, the shared pool of resources is effectively expanded to incorporate new meanings, but the role of marginalized contributors in the process of meaning-making is erased. I call this the harm of hermeneutical erasure. I argue that hermeneutical erasure contributes to the hermeneutical marginalization of non-dominantly situated knowers but cannot be analyzed in terms of hermeneutical injustice. I conclude that the virtue of hermeneutical justice must be coupled with additional correctives if just epistemic environments are to be achieved.

PAUL GILADI

University of Sheffield

**NEW PERSPECTIVES ON EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE: POST-KANTIAN AND CRITICAL THEORETIC APPROACHES TO DISRESPECT AND ALIENATION**

One of the most important developments in feminist epistemology in recent years has been Miranda Fricker's concept of epistemic injustice. Epistemic injustice arises when somebody or a social group is wronged in their capacity as a knower. This can usually happen in two ways: (i) testimonial injustice, which occurs when a speaker is given less credibility than they deserve because the hearer has prejudices about a social group to which the speaker belongs; (ii) hermeneutical injustice, which occurs when as a result of a social structure rendering group X powerless, members of group X lack the cognitive resources to adequately make sense of their social powerlessness. My aim in this paper is to propose that an insightful way of articulating the feminist concept of epistemic injustice can be provided by paying significant attention to recognition theory: the failure to properly recognise and afford somebody or a social group the respect they merit is an act of injustice, not in the sense of depriving them of goods and resources in favour of distributing those goods and resources elsewhere, but in the sense of depriving individuals of a progressive social environment in which the respect afforded to them plays a significant role in enabling and fostering their self-confidence as a rational enquirer in a conversation. Epistemic injustice robs individuals of such a status, thereby creating an unequal and asymmetrical cognitive environment in which they are not deemed one's peer. Under this post-Kantian and critical theoretic approach, societies are gauged by the degree to which all individuals have equal opportunities for self-realisation afforded to them by the intersubjective structures of recognition. Given this, when somebody or a social group is not adequately recognised, such an instance is a damning indictment of society on the grounds that its social structure and moral grammar fail to encourage symmetrical cognitive environments and thereby leaves individuals who are prejudiced against in a state of self-alienation. While, of course, very few societies ever approximate utopian standards, the idea of an epistemically just environment, as Kant would say, is an idea to be diligently pursued.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 1 2017****SESSION: ISSUES IN ACADEMIA**

ROBIN ZHENG

Yale-NUS College

**A FEMINIST DISUTOPIA: POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND PRECARIOUS LABOR IN THE NEOLIBERAL ACADEMY**

The problem of precarious academic labor has gained increasing attention, including in the profession of philosophy (see e.g. the American Philosophical Association's recent three-part blog series on Adjunct Teaching and Student Learning). Over the last fifty years in the U.S., the professoriate has flipped astonishingly from 78% tenure-track vs. 22% non-tenure track to 30% vs. 70% – a neoliberal trend echoed throughout much of the rest of the world. I identify two sets of gendered and racialized myths and attitudes common amongst academics, including philosophers, that contribute to academic precarity. The first is the so-called "myth of meritocracy," that is, the idea that outcomes on the academic job market are determined solely or primarily according to scholarly ability. While women faculty have long been assumed to be lacking in either the intellectual ability or the single-minded commitment required to be a scholar, the structural feminization of academic labor, then, has enlarged the scope of stereotypes about merit to include contingent faculty, who are now similar victims of the myth of meritocracy. The second, dubbed the "Do What You Love" ideology, is the notion that academic labor is performed for its intrinsic rewards and not financial compensation. Such an ideology has long been attached to traditionally female forms of carework, e.g. mothering, teaching, domestic housework. The moral pressure to suppress one's own interests in favor of others' is an inherently gendered phenomenon which forms part of the feminization and hence devaluation of academic (teaching) labor. By theorizing these myths and attitudes, I connect the problem of precarity to issues of bias and discrimination which have hitherto received much greater attention within the discipline. I argue that commitment to the latter requires stronger commitment to the former, and hence that academics have distinctive responsibilities to devote their considerable resources, skills, and expertise to working collectively against the rise of contingent academic labor. Such efforts must be to prioritize the concerns of the most marginalized and multiply disadvantaged members of the community, both in and outside the academy.

NAOMI SCHEMAN

University of Minnesota

**THE PROBLEM WITH THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY: CHALLENGING EUROPEAN MODERNITY**

Modern philosophy emerged in explicit engagement with the political, economic, and social transformations in Europe, including Europe's interactions with the rest of the world. The philosophical subject—the bearer of the problems of philosophy, the philosophical "we"—was the (allegedly) generically human modern European heterosexual, able-bodied, Christian, bourgeois man; and he needed to be articulated, theorized, and empowered. This practical, political philosophical task was explicit in the work of early modern philosophers but has become buried, leaving core philosophical problems looking like socially disengaged intellectual exercises. If we take seriously the historical specificity of the philosophical subject and of the problems of philosophy, the question becomes: What are the tasks of philosophy in a world in which the allegedly generic status of the modern European bourgeois (&c) man is increasingly

challenged by a diverse range of “others”? Distinctively feminist, along with anti-colonial, critical race theoretic, and queer philosophy, all grapple with this question about philosophy’s questions; but the challenge has had little impact especially in analytic epistemology and metaphysics, where the core problems are still mistakenly seen as ahistorical and universal. So we need to ask, not whether philosophy ought to engage with the larger society, but, rather, how philosophers ought to grapple with our various personal and institutional entanglements (of dependence, complicity, resistance) in political, economic, and social structures: we are always already engaged. Some questions: What will become of philosophy when those who practice it engage explicitly and critically with the fraught complexities of saying “we”? What would it mean for philosophy to play as germinal a role in the struggles around diverse emerging alternative (post)modernities as it did in the emergence of European modernity? In order to play that role philosophers will need to be variously engaged with those struggles—to learn from them as much as to contribute to them—and that argues for the importance not only of increasing diversity in the professoriate but equally for moving “from margin to center” approaches to core philosophical problems that take such diversity seriously.

CARLA FEHR

University of Waterloo, Ontario Canada

### **FOSTERING DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM IN PHILOSOPHY: THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN SITE VISIT PROGRAM AS FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGICAL PRAXIS**

Philosophy shares the whiteness of many humanities disciplines, and the maleness of many engineering, mathematics and natural science disciplines. It is situated at a problematic intersectional location in the academy that largely excludes women of colour. This paper shows how the American Philosophical Association Committee on the Status of Women (APA CSW) Site Visit Program uses concepts developed in feminist social epistemology of science to interrogate the practices and culture of philosophy. The goal of this program is to facilitate local grassroots culture change in individual philosophy departments to make them better places for people who are members of underrepresented groups to learn and work. The Site Visit Program makes practical use of the concept of situated knowledge (that our social and material location influences what and how we know), and of scholarship in the philosophy of race and feminist philosophy on the epistemology of ignorance (that ignorance can be actively constructed to protect extant cultures and power structures). The program uses a qualitative social science methodology to make explicit some of the ways that department members’ material and social locations, or in other words their situatedness, impacts their experiences in, and of, the workplace, and showing how different people experience the same workplace differently. People in positions of relative power are often ignorant of ways that the culture of a workplace can harm people who are not in positions of power. This program is designed to provide departments with resources that can help them overcome this ignorance and develop a culture that nurtures the job satisfaction and success of people in underrepresented and marginalized groups. The APA CSW Site Visit Program is only one approach improving the culture of professional philosophy. It is most effective in cases where most members of a department have goodwill and are willing to invest in culture change. After explaining and justifying the Site Visit Program’s theoretical and methodological foundations in terms of feminist epistemology, I will invite my audience to offer constructive critiques of this program.

SAMANTHA BRENNAN

Western University

### **TRANSFORMING PHILOSOPHY INSIDE AND OUT**

An emerging story about the persistence of workplace inequality - in the absence of formal barriers to entry and progress for women, minorities, and disabled persons - looks to the twin causes of implicit bias and micro-inequities. Recent research in feminist ethics on implicit bias and micro-inequities has the potential to transform philosophy in two different ways. First, such work bridges the disciplines of philosophy and psychology. Traditionally ethics does not pay much attention to empirical work in psychology and focusses on the wrongness of actions. But if we are interested in understanding why people behave the way they do and how to change their behavior then it’s essential that the project be conducted as interdisciplinary research. See, for example, the Implicit Bias and Philosophy International Research Project at the the University of Sheffield. The project’s head Jennifer Saul writes, “Unconscious biases against members of stigmatised groups have been studied by psychologists for decades, but only recently have philosophers explored this phenomenon. This project brings researchers from both fields together with policy professionals to work through the implications.” Second, if philosophy as a discipline acts on the results of such research the discipline itself could be transformed to become more inclusive. Feminist philosophers are interested in work on implicit bias and micro-inequities because they want to change our workplace cultures. What would Philosophy look like if it were more diverse discipline in terms of its practitioners?

## **SESSION: POLITICS & POWER 2**

OLE SANDBERG

University of Iceland

### **THE SOCIAL AND GENDERED CONSTRUCTION OF ‘ECONOMIC MAN’**

In my doctoral research I focus on the role the assumption of ‘Homo Oeconomicus’ has had, and continues to have, in political theory. This is the assumption of the atomistic individual who is motivated by calculations of personal utility. I believe this is an inadequate model of human behavior but, more importantly, it is a model that under the right circumstances can spill out of the realm of theory and influence actual human practices and subjectivities: Put crudely, the more we are told that our fellow beings are naturally selfish, the more likely we are to act according to the theory. Social models can therefore become self-realizing. But the assumption of Economic Man has never been gender-neutral. It has been assumed to apply in specific realms, particularly in economics and politics,

which have traditionally been male-dominated, while a completely different model of human behavior has been assumed in the so-called “private” sphere of the family and other relations where altruism and care are supposed to prevail. If I am right that theoretical claims about “human nature” can be self-realizing then this difference has an impact on actual gender roles. While I am agnostic about the degree to which gender differences are “natural,” surely the socializing aspect of dominating political and cultural discourse has some effect. We shouldn’t be feel validated to find competitive and self-interested individuals in a society where that behavior is the social norm, and likewise it doesn’t say much about inherent gender differences to find that women and girls are more focused on nurturing personal relationships (Gilligan) when that is also build in to the same social model. What is more interesting is the political function these assumptions have. Both the model of the selfish and independent (male) individual and the model of the relational and altruistic (female) being are being used to justify and maintain forms of domination. While many feminists have embraced the ethics of care it has the danger of reaffirming the patriarchal division of labor. Meanwhile the atomistic model of homo oeconomicus leads to the Hobbesian view that men cannot be trusted to cooperate and must therefore be ruled by a centralized authority. Both models thus serve to legitimize existing forms of domination.

### **RHIANNON FIRTH**

University of East London

### **SOMATIC PEDAGOGIES: CRITIQUING AND RESISTING THE AFFECTIVE DISCOURSE OF THE NEOLIBERAL STATE FROM AN EMBODIED ANARCHO-FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**

This paper takes as its context widespread feelings of anxiety within neoliberal society caused by a combination of material and discursive factors including precarious access to work and resources. It is argued that the state uses ‘discourses of affect’ to produce compliant subjects able to deal with (and unable to desire beyond) neoliberal precarity and anxiety. Critical education theorists have argued that discourses of ‘well-being’, emotional support and self-help have gained increasing purchase in mainstream education and in popular culture. These discourses are dangerous because they are individualized and depoliticized, and undermine collective political struggle. At the same time there has been a ‘turn to affect’ in critical academia, producing critical pedagogies that resist state affective discourse. I argue that these practices are essential for problematizing neoliberal discourse, yet existing literature tends to elide the role of the body in effective resistance, emphasising intellectual aspects of critique. The paper sketches an alternative, drawing on psychoanalytic and practiced pedagogies that aim to transgress the mind-body dualism and hierarchy, in particular Roberto Freire’s work on Somatherapy and feminist practices of consciousness-raising. The presentation will draw on a previously published paper, yet will expand the contribution of the paper to focus upon the influence and inspiration of feminist consciousness-raising for a reconceived, collective political body and will also focus on the implications of somatic pedagogies for women’s and feminist bodies.

### **RACHEL ELIZABETH FRASER**

University of Cambridge

### **FEMINIST ONTOLOGY AND ANTI-WORK POLITICS**

Lots of work is unpleasant, dull, or demeaning. Marxist responses to this fact have come in two flavours: ‘better-work politics’ and ‘anti-work politics’. The former, broadly speaking, affirms the value of work, seeking to organise labour differently and improve the conditions of workers. This tradition, as Weeks (2011) puts it, ‘acclaims’ work and aims at the restoration of its dignity in an unalienated form’. The anti-work tradition is more radical: it rejects the ‘romanticism of productivity’ common to ‘better-work Marxism’ and mainstream contemporary discourses on work, and argues not for the reform of work but for its abolition. Like Marxism, feminism comes in pro and anti-work varieties. Many of liberal feminism’s energies have been devoted to ensuring that women are able to sell their labour; Marxist feminists have often had a more chequered relation to work and its discourses. Often, what underlies disputes between ‘anti-work’ and ‘better work’ runs much deeper than questions of political strategy. Rather, anti-work theorists and their adversaries often (sometimes tacitly) have conflicting metaphysical commitments: they endorse different social (or socio-economic) ontologies. In this paper, I will use the resources of analytic metaphysics to map out the different views one might take on the metaphysics of work - including reductionist, social constructionist, and aspirational eliminativist views - and will make vivid the commitments of these different ontologies. Contemporary analytic feminism has had tremendous success in using the tools of analytic metaphysics to illuminate core categories of contemporary progressive politics (‘race’ and ‘gender’ are the most prominent) examples. But race and gender are naturally thought of as kind, and analytic metaphysics has a rich set of resources for thinking about kinds. Work is not naturally thought of as a kind, but as an activity, or a practice. As such, this paper will also function as an important test of the limits of analytic metaphysics in the political realm.

### **VALGERÐUR PÁLMAÐÓTTIR**

Umeå University

### **ABSTRACT: HOW IS THE PERSONAL POLITICAL?**

The statement that “the personal is political” has been a characterising feature of feminist activism and theory the last fifty years. The phrase continues to prove its actuality today for example when women use social media to ‘break the silence’ concerning sexual violence (the beauty tips revolution case in Iceland) or criticize breastfeeding shaming (free the nipple) to name a few examples. We could thus say that what philosopher Adriana Cavarero calls a particular ‘feminine style’ of analyzing ‘personal’ experience collectively has accompanied feminism for a long time. In the radical feminist context, where the phrase originates, it was connected with realizing oneself as a political subject through ‘consciousness-raising’. Women met in small groups, spoke about their experiences and analysed it critically. Often, consciousness-raising was accompanied by a dis-identification with traditional ideas of femininity. For the radical feminists the phrase ‘the personal is political’ meant that individual problems were in fact structural and cultural – a result of unequal societal power relations. However, recently the personal narrative has been deployed to appeal people’s emotions instead of pursuing a political analysis of policies and structures. This is clear with the rise of social media, and with various human rights campaigns using individual fates to inspire empathy. Furthermore the personal narrative is closely related to what has been called (often pejoratively) ‘politics of recognition’ or ‘identity politics’ – which has led critical thinkers such as Wendy Brown to



call for a more future oriented politics that focuses on ‘what we want’ instead of ‘who we are’ – politics that transcends identities and focuses on ‘world building’ – à la Hannah Arendt. Recent interest in the conditions for ‘the political’ has led to an increased interest for Hannah Arendt’s political philosophy – and for her the distinction between ‘the private’ and ‘the political’ is crucial. From an Arendtian inspired analysis, the personal narrative could as well be viewed as de-politicizing as politicizing. Yet, has a somewhat different understanding of ‘the political’ than the early radical feminists. In this presentation, I will compare the radical feminist notion of politics and ‘the political’ with the Arendtian understanding. Hence, I aim to juxtapose the notion that “the personal is political” developed within the women’s liberation movement; their implicit ideas of political subjectivity and speech, and the ideas of Hannah Arendt.

## SESSION: EPISTEMOLOGY 2

LAUREN ASHWELL

Bates College, Maine

### **YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT YOU WANT: CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS IN THE SELF-KNOWLEDGE LITERATURE**

It has become very standard in the self-knowledge literature to start with an assumption of first-personal authority. Any theory, it is claimed, stands or falls with needing to make sense of why we grant people a presumption that they know their own minds: absent strong reasons to the contrary, we supposedly assume that first-personal avowals of mental states are true. But this is clearly not the case as a general social phenomenon. Once we consider that the granting of first-personal authority is done by someone situated in a social position to someone else who is also situated, it is not surprising to notice that it is very often distorted by social biases. Work in analytic philosophy on self-knowledge therefore takes something that is essentially interpersonal, yet hides this nature by assuming that a homogenous “We” grant each other equal power to have authority in testifying to the content of our minds. It also misses the ways in which this interpersonal interaction may change what we are trying to do in making claims about what we believe, desire, and intend, and what our audience may take us to be trying to do. In this paper I focus on the failure to grant women self-knowledge about their own desires, although I think that the practice of failing to grant first-personal authority is much broader than this. In light of the failure of the presumption of the general granting of first-personal authority, I discuss what can be salvaged of work on self-knowledge.

CAMILLA KRONQVIST

Åbo Akademi University

### **“SPEAK TO US OF LOVE”: SOME DIFFICULTIES IN THE SCIENTIFIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF LOVE**

One key element in feminist philosophy has been the criticism of received notions of the rational character of human life and thought, in particular as they have been championed at the expense of lived experience and a careful consideration of ordinary life (cf. e.g. Calhoun 2004, Moi 1999). In my paper I show how such presuppositions come to show in current philosophical discussions of love and present a way of thinking of the personal struggles and moral difficulties involved in studying love. This illuminates the possible roles one should assign to the “personal” in feminist thought. I draw on different attempts to articulate the Wittgensteinian notion that philosophizing about a concept is a matter of bringing it back to its natural home, the lives we live with language. I do, however, also press what this may mean when the language we want to find the home for is the language of love. What is e.g. involved in taking seriously the idea that poetical language is a vivid aspect of love, and how do poets aid us in our search for an understanding of the meaning of the concept of love? I explore the notion, central to the philosophy of Iris Murdoch, that coming to know a value concept, such as love, in depth involves a “movement of understanding [...] towards increasing privacy, in the direction of the ideal limit and not back towards genesis in the rulings of an impersonal public language.” (Existentialists and Mystics, Penguin Books, 1999, p. 322). This suggests that there is not only one publically available language of love, but that specific conceptions of love cannot in any simple sense be pried apart from that philosopher’s personal experience of love in their encounters with other people.

GUÐBJÖRG R. JÓHANNESDÓTTIR

University of Iceland

### **THE INNER LANDSCAPE OF THE BODY: PHENOMENOLOGY OF SENSUOUS KNOWLEDGE**

In this paper I will examine the relation between the concepts of landscape and body. This relation appears for example in the fact that in Icelandic as in many other languages landscape features are named after parts of the body (for example shoulder, neck, foot, mouth, arms). Another interesting relation between the Icelandic landscape concept *landslag* and the body is that in the first examples of the word being used in the Icelandic Sagas it is written *landsleg*. “Leg” in Icelandic refers to a place where something can lie and has been used both to refer to a woman’s uterus and to a final resting place (*legstaður* means resting place) and this relation creates an opportunity to reflect on how all bodies come from a “leg” at the beginning of life and then get a “legstaður” at the end of it. In the paper I will examine these relations between the concepts and phenomena of landscape and the body further, for example by looking into Jonna Bornemarks phenomenology of pregnancy and Merleau-Ponty’s concept of Chair/flesh. Through letting the concepts of landscape and body shed light on each other within a phenomenological framework my aim is to show how these visible and tangible phenomena also include invisible sedimented layers of sensuous knowledge that we need to pay more attention to in philosophical thinking.

## SESSION: VULNERABILITY

KASPER KRISTENSEN

Uppsala University

### **ON THE HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN VULNERABILITY - SPINOZA ON THE ANIMAL**

Spinoza's non-hierarchical and non-anthropocentric ontology provides many tools for feminism in understanding the sexual difference and challenging the domination of men over women. However, Spinoza's claims about the different natures of humans and animals render his ethics strongly anthropocentric. According to Spinoza our emotional transpositions, what he calls imitation of the affects, follow the logic of similarity and difference. The identification with the emotions of others depends both the previous emotions towards a given entity but also on our idea of the similarity between ourselves and that entity. Because Spinoza posits an essential difference between human and animal emotions, it seems that animals are excluded by definition from our feelings of empathy. But does the essential or natural difference between human and animals nonetheless creep into Spinoza's view on women who he sees less capable than men in public life of politics? Despite his usefulness in some areas of emancipation from oppressive forms of thought, is Spinoza after all one of those traditional sexist-speciesist male philosophers? That is a possible conclusion, but not the only one — and perhaps not even the most coherent one in Spinoza's own philosophical terms. Following Hasana Sharp's work I will explore Spinoza's treatment of the animal as a figure of imagination. Due to the real differences between humans and animals there is always a danger of anthropomorphism in imitating the animal affects. But this should in no way mean that animal would stay as the great Other. According to Deleuze's notion of ethics as ethology there is no predefined limit to human-animal encounters and their assemblages. Consequently, the idea of animal as the essential Other but also as the romanticized figure of human emancipation are seen as imaginary constructions: they both render our adequate understanding of nature vulnerable. In my presentation I will study the implications of the imaginary understanding of animal both to humans and animals alike, and, lastly, tie this discussion together with the sexual difference between men and women.

IRINA POLESHCHUK

University of Helsinki

### **EXPERIENCE OF PAIN IN TEMPORALIZING OF MOTHER-CHILD RELATION**

In this paper I draw on Levinas's philosophy of intersubjectivity, which is deeply rooted in context of temporality. I believe that temporality of intersubjective relation is a foundational principal, which changes and constructs the ethical self of subjectivity. However, my primal concern is to analyze the ethical becoming of female subjectivity in mother-child relation and concentrate on possible traumatic modalities of female subjectivity, which appear because of experience of pain. Thus, I will focus on the following research questions: How does pain construct or deconstruct temporalizing female subjectivity and how does the meaning of the ethical becoming of subjectivity change? How does pain influence temporality of intersubjective mother-child relation? How does the experience of the stratum of pain reformulate the meaning of mother embodiment? Following Emmanuel Levinas I argue that the mother-child relation is based on immemorial but also on eschatological temporality: coming from the past, which has never been present enough responsibility for the child is projected into the future. Giving and sharing one's own flesh, touching, caressing are forms of being for-the-other at the moment of present but also in the future. Addressing the notion of affection developed by Michel Henry I will show that the experience of pain tears female embodied subjectivity inside out, paralyzes the touch and caress, withdraws the self from embodied mother-child relation, questions the present as being for-the-other and stops the unfolding perspective of the future. Thus, responsibility, as the foundational principle of the ethical becoming of subjectivity in mother-child relation is under question. Finally, I will argue that pain becomes a shared embodied experience, which initiates different types of temporality for female subjectivity: instants, shifts, laps of time, asynchronization and diachrony.

NANNA HLÍN HALDÓRSDÓTTIR

University of Iceland

### **EMOTIONAL REVOLUTIONS AS ONTOLOGICAL TRANSITIONS**

2015 was a year of feminist revolutions in Iceland that locally went under the name "emotional revolutions" (i. tilfinningabyltingar). "Free the nipple" and "Könnur tala" (e. Women speak) had the power of changing the "common sense" concerning gender dynamics and a general approach to dealing with emotions. What characterized these revolutions was a sharing of difficult experiences or enhancing one's bodily comfort in (virtual, female) spaces of alliance and solidarity. Feminist philosophy, along with multiple other brands of critical theories, spends considerable energy in opposing what we can call the liberal ontology of the "strong, autonomous individual". This ontology is arguably dominant in discursive and institutional mechanisms of Western societies, seeping into the most "personal" spaces. Not only does it limit possibilities of being but excludes those that cannot be this strong individual. In a response to this, an ontology of vulnerability (or care, or dependency) has arguably been developed in feminist thought in order to produce a more "humane" environment. These emotional revolutions were certainly characterised to some extent by confessional revelations in line with Foucault's analysis of the pastoral power in the development of modernity (and thus a certain kind of management of the liberal subject). However, I will argue that this act of sharing is rather an attempt to rupture the dominant ontological construction and transition into a more open form of vulnerable being.

**SESSION: GENDER & IDENTITY 2**

CAROL HAY

University of Massachusetts Lowell

### **IN DEFENCE OF FEMINIST SOLIDARITY AS A UTOPIAN IDEAL**

Feminists at least as old as J.S. Mill have observed that solidarity doesn't exist between many women, at least not in any straightforward way. Women often have more in common with the men who share their race or class than they do with women across race and class lines. This means that individual women often share stronger bonds of solidarity with other men than they do with other women. In conjunction with the lessons of intersectionality, the apex of this line of thinking leads to the conclusion that women don't constitute a coherent social group at all and thus that feminist solidarity is both an impossible utopian goal and an undesirable utopian ideal. Any attempt to articulate some of the shared experiences women face under oppression (e.g., a disproportionate risk of sexual violence at the hands of men, issues of reproductive autonomy, a wage gap, etc.) is thus frequently met with the accusation that one is prioritizing the interests of straight, cisgendered, middle-class, white women over the interests of all other women. This feminist willingness to abandon solidarity as a utopian ideal is troubling, I will argue, because it deprives women, as a group, of valuable things that solidarity can offer members of all oppressed groups, including both the power of collective action and the more immediate possibility of improving one's quality of life under oppression. This is not, of course, to suggest that feminist solidarity is more important than other solidarities, or that resisting sexism should always trump resisting other oppressions. It's a defence of the much weaker claim that it isn't clear that feminism should never trump, and that too often, historically, it has failed to be a priority. Even among those who dedicate their lives and their work to fighting injustice, fighting sexist oppression too frequently fails to make it to the top of the list. Women have been forced to choose between duties of solidarity to other women and duties of solidarity to whatever other oppressed groups they're members of so often that we've forgotten that solidarity between women exists at all. And, I worry, this systematic failure to fulfill or prioritize duties of female solidarity is yet another way sexist oppression is entrenched or perpetuated.

ROBIN DEMBROFF

Princeton University

### **UNETHICAL TRUTHS: TRUTHS THAT REINFORCE INJUSTICE**

Many important social debates concern who should count as belonging to various social categories. Who should count as black? ...as a woman? In both everyday and academic contexts, it is widely assumed that these questions turn on whether someone is correctly called 'black', a 'woman', and so on. That is, it is assumed that we should count someone as (e.g.) a woman just in case it would be correct to call them a 'woman'. My project argues that this assumption is wrong: whether someone should count as a woman turns not on whether the term 'woman' is correctly applied to that person, but on ethical considerations about how we ought to use the term 'woman'. I then develop this type of reasoning across a number of issues in social ontology, and explore its theoretical upshots. I develop a novel account of unethical truths – truths the assertion of which tend to both implicate and reinforce social injustices. Identifying unethical truths is, I argue, a new and important tool for doing social ontology. For example, many theories of gender describe gender categories as socially constructed (i.e., dependent on collective intentions and actions) in an attempt to reveal the ways in which humans rather than biology are responsible for gender injustice. But by recognizing unethical truths, we can reveal and challenge the social forces perpetuating gender injustice without appealing to social construction. Even if we do refer to biological categories with terms like 'woman' and 'man', using those terms with those meanings implicates and reinforces gender injustice. Recognizing this motivates important questions about how we can improve these categories, or beneficially shift the reference of gender terms. For example, given the social significance of falling under the extension of a term like 'woman', what referent for 'woman' would ensure that those who we think should be counted as women fall under its extension? My project explores this issue in depth, as well as the issue of whether we should shift the norms of use governing racial terms in order to acknowledge transracial identities.

## **SUNDAY, APRIL 2 2017**

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### **SESSION: EMPATHY & CARE**

HANNA BÄCKSTRÖM

Umeå University

### **ABSTRACT: DOING GOOD: FEMINIST ETHICS AND THE PARADOXES OF HELPING OTHERS**

The notion of vulnerability has gotten wide attention in feminist theorizing on ethics recent years, following the so called ethical turn of postmodern philosophy. I stress in this paper though, that a poststructuralist version of feminist ethics should take as its starting point not only the concept of shared vulnerability, but also the aporias of good intentions and the conflicts embedded in charitable acts of helping others, which is arguably the other side of the coin. Looking closer at the difficulties of doing an altruistic deed, I am interested in a feminist ethics that takes into consideration the power dynamics and (perhaps) inevitable conflicts of the ethical relation between self and other. My discussion takes as its starting point interviews conducted with voluntary social workers in Sweden, working with Roma migrants from Eastern Europe. In these narratives, three such areas of conflict stand out: The ambiguous character of reciprocity, being both an important dimension of equality and the logic putting the recipient of a charitable gift in debt, the fact that a just, objective structure entails a violent, excluding dimension, and lastly, the curious affect of compassion that, despite arguing the opposite, seem to put the moral self rather than the suffering

other at the centre. In regards of the first paradox mentioned, I raise the question as to whether it is possible to imagine a third alternative to both altruism and reciprocity, based on a totally different conception of property and desire, than the one advocated by what Hélène Cixous has named the “masculine economy”. Though, I will also maintain that a feminist approach to ethics should be wary of any harmonic, utopian solution to the paradoxes of doing good. The impossibility of the gift, as Jacques Derrida has framed the problem, is perhaps a necessary part of the messy ground for ethical responsibility. To avoid the notion of vulnerability becoming simply a new ethical principle to motivate our concern for others, I argue that we also need to articulate, analyse and take responsibility for our sometimes necessary failures to care for others in non-violent ways.

JILL HERNANDEZ

### **HARMS AND GOODS: ON HOW THE ATROCITY PARADIGM CAN BECOME A UTOPIAN MORAL DRIVER FOR CHANGE**

This paper raises new challenges for the atrocity paradigm as a way to strengthen the paradigm’s overall goal of holding people responsible for perpetuating atrocious harms. Although philosophy is still mourning the recent passing of Claudia Card, the legacy of her atrocity paradigm will surely be its demand that we hold others culpable for allowing and perpetuating systems of harm which threaten our ability to flourish, and its consequent rejection of a conceptualization of evil that shifts blame away from the people who create suffering in the world. As an ethical theory that challenges the ground for-- and responses to - horrendous evil in the world, the atrocity paradigm rejects traditional, privation accounts of ‘evil’. By denying that evil is abstract, the atrocity paradigm demands that evil is “a higher order moral concept... [that] presupposes culpable wrongdoing in a moral agent as the source of the harm it does or risks” (Card, 2002, 12). The shift towards concrete, systemic moral evil ought to refocus ethics onto the goals of preventing atrocity and holding human agents responsible for it. Two aspects of an atrocity make such a shift in ethics possible: its systematicity and its transmutativity. Atrocious harms result from systems of oppression or violence that deprive a person from having access to what is necessary to live a tolerable and decent life, in a way that could never be justified, even by some later good. Whereas the systematicity condition explains the structure from which atrocities occur, transmutativity distinguishes atrocities from lesser harm -- an atrocity transforms people into something wholly distinct from who they were prior to suffering the harm. (In physics, ‘transmutation’ changes one element into another by way of nuclear reaction. Similarly, ‘transmutativity’ is an apt descriptor for the component of atrocious harms which removes an agent’s ability to experience a ‘great good’, and so transmutes a person’s flourishing into a life without dignity.) The coercive effects of an atrocity, “trample individual autonomy...erase self-determination,” and, “the associated harm can be expressed as the harm of dehumanization.” As a moral theory, the atrocity paradigm’s focus on the systematicity and transmutativity of atrocity is distinctive and important. But, I will argue that the moral project of the atrocity paradigm is actually threatened by the paradigm’s commitment to transmutativity, because certain transmuted goods can rescue people from the prospect of living an intolerable and indecent life. Transmuted goods have an equal moral force as atrocity, and share the characteristics of an atrocious harm: they could have been otherwise; humans are accountable for bringing them about; and they are ultimately praiseworthy (rather than blameworthy) since they non-negligibly benefit the person who experiences them (just as an atrocious harm non-negligibly injures the person who suffers it). This reimagining of goods conceives of morality as a system within which both atrocities and transmuted goods are possible, are maintained by human action, and produce goods that can counteract the felt consequence of atrocious harms. If there are transmuted goods, however, it would be difficult for an atrocity paradigm ethicist to account for them, because atrocious harms by definition seem to preclude positive transmutativity-- how some who suffer atrocity recreate meaning in their lives through certain moral goods, such as forgiveness, altruism, generosity, or kindness. These goods provide evidence against the paradigm’s view that atrocious harms unalterably deprive a person from what is required to tolerably live, but they also help explain why so many victims of atrocity go on to have lives that the paradigm concludes they ought not be able to have, and clarify how we can fulfill our obligations to victims of atrocities: communities are obligated to prevent atrocities, preserve human dignity, and facilitate the ability of others to live life decently. A response might be to give up the inalterability of an atrocity. But such a response is facile—in essence, it demands that the atrocity paradigm give up atrocity, since the distinctive feature of systemic harms is that they alter an agent’s ability to meaningfully live. Rather, the atrocity paradigm should embrace transmuted goods. Although the paradigm would have to address how even transmuted goods could alter the inalterable, there are several ready replies. First, those who experience an atrocious harm never are fully divorced from its impact, even if there are goods which change the trajectory of the harm and confer dignity back to the agent. (This preserves the transmutativity of the atrocity and still allows transmuted goods to create the possibility for a meaningful life.) Second, like atrocious harms, transmuted goods transform the agent, rather than the harm, such that the presence of transmuted goods in a moral system does not undermine the fact that there are atrocities; rather, when there are atrocities, we have a moral obligation to those who suffer them. (This also ensures that atrocities are never justifiable by some later good, such as a meaningful life.) There are benefits to incorporating transmuted goods into the paradigm, as well. Transmuted goods seem to be the sort that the atrocity paradigm ethicists think should result from moral action. The paradigm’s current status as an impactful normative framework from which to practice engaged philosophy would also be improved by a theory of moral goods. And, although the ongoing challenge remains—to hold people accountable for evil in the world—transmuted goods can reinforce the paradigm’s call for humans to do the heavy lifting of eradicating oppression in the world by replacing it with lasting good.

YLVA GUSTAFSSON

Åbo Akademi University, Finland

### **EMPATHY IN HEALTH CARE: THE RISE OF COGNITIVE SCIENCE AND THE LOSS OF NARRATIVE MEDICINE**

During the last 20 years there has been an increase in advisory literature in medicine concerning methods for learning to become an “empathic listener”. Halpern (2013) describes the increasing interest in the patient’s perspective as a reaction against “detached concern” which was influential among medical professionals in the 1960s. The concept of “detached concern” arose alongside the scientific advances in medicine at that time. The strife towards a scientific approach affected medical care in that doctors and nurses were supposed not to get too emotionally involved in their patient’s suffering. In the 1970s this approach was beginning to be questioned. The shift towards a patient oriented perspective has been especially important for marginalised groups and for women. Patient narratives have brought forth how a person’s individual life experiences and the lived societal context, deeply affect the meaning of illness and suffering. Patient narratives have given voice to ethical considerations that from a classical biomedical perspective have largely gone unnoticed. (f.e. Brison 2002, Carel 2008). The aim of this paper is to discuss the current interest in empathy in medicine. Does the increase in writings on empathy in medicine reflect an interest in patient narratives? My suggestion is that today’s research on empathy, on the contrary, reflects a decreasing interest in patient narratives and health

care personnel narratives. The majority of today's research on empathy favours a "scientific" approach towards empathy. One sees an influence from cognitive science, in the claim that empathy consists in a mental function. This is also reflected in the attention given to experimental research on empathy, including neuroscientific research. There is also a growing amount of quantitative research on empathy (Pedersen 2009). I argue that cognitive theories on empathy are influenced by philosophically problematic assumptions about interpersonal understanding. However, these theories reflect not only a philosophical confusion but also reflect a changed attitude to societal, political and ethical questions in health care. The pressure for cost efficiency in health care turns societal problems into psychological, generalizable, phenomena that can be measured quantitatively. The consequently decreasing interest in medical narratives seriously affects how women's and marginalised groups' experiences are acknowledged in health care.

PATRICIA SHERIDAN

University of Guelph

#### **PRIVATE MORALITY AS A PUBLIC GOOD: THE SOCIAL VIRTUE OF CATHARINE TROTTER COCKBURN AND THE BLUESTOCKINGS**

This paper will explore the intellectual relationship between the eighteenth-century philosopher Catharine Trotter Cockburn and the Bluestocking circle. This might seem, on the face of it, to be a somewhat esoteric pairing. The Bluestocking writers have received very little attention in philosophical scholarship and, while Cockburn has fared a great deal better in recent years, her intellectual connection with other women thinkers of the eighteenth century has not been explored at great length. My discussion will concentrate on two of the dominant voices in the Bluestocking circle Catherine Talbot, and Elizabeth Carter. These women shared with Cockburn a virtue ethical approach. I argue that this affinity between the Bluestockings and Cockburn illuminates important new avenues for thinking about the Bluestockings as philosophers in their own right and for thinking about Cockburn's feminist morality. Further, their shared moral outlook sheds interesting light on the emergent feminism of the eighteenth century and the contributions of Cockburn and the Bluestockings to a new and growing discourse about women and their social and political role. Their common morality was that of the personal and private sphere of human life, a sphere commonly relegated to women. The implication we find in all of these thinkers is that the virtues traditionally referred to women—friendship, empathy, care, and attention to one's personal relationships—did in fact exemplify human morality itself. The Bluestockings believed, as Cockburn did, that virtue is the practice of rational self-governance and benevolent concern for the well-being of others. It is entirely mistaken, they believed, to think these might in any way come into conflict. On the contrary, these natural impulses work together to achieve the greatest degree of agency and happiness. They adopted an ideal of human virtue as the perfect balance of individual reason and social sentiment, and sought to extol the feminine virtues of sociability and reason as a kind of template for human morality. Considering that for these women, society as a functioning system depends on the effective moral virtue of each of its individual members, their moral activism, as it were, had wide-ranging implications. Their conception of individual flourishing required a deep commitment to the individual's relationship with others — in fact, a solitary person could never, for them, achieve true virtue. These women were redefining the boundaries of public and private, individual and community, the personal and the political in ways that have not been entirely appreciated in the history of philosophy.

## **SESSION: HISTORY / ART / UTOPIA**

PENNY WEISS

Saint Louis University

#### **REVISIONING CHILDHOOD IN FEMINIST UTOPIAS**

As part of a book I am writing, *Feminist Reflections on Childhood: Historical and Contemporary Visions*, I am working on a paper on feminist views of childhood in feminist utopias. My argument is that feminists seem to approach the adult-child power relationship with the same lens as they approach hierarchies based on sex, class, and race. They are suspicious of inequality and of romanticizing care relationships (for both sides), for example, and look to give the silenced greater voice and legitimacy despite stereotypes that mark them as less than fully human. This is a distinctive approach to childhood, and one not widely enough associated with feminism. Looking at multiple utopias also allows different feminist visions of childhood and adult-child relations to be put into conversation. I look to both historical and contemporary utopias, written in a variety of forms. I use short stories (as found, for example, in *Utopian and Science Fiction by Women* and *The Feminist Utopia Project*) and full-length texts (such as *Herland* and *Woman on the Edge of Time*). I hope to make visible that there are anarchist-feminist visions, afrofuturist feminist visions, socialist feminist ones, etc. I want to speak to what they share, and also to the multiplicity of experiments where they diverge. I have already discovered this common ground and diversity among historical feminist philosophers on the subject of childhood, but want to look more precisely at feminist utopias. How do authors deal with epistemic injustice toward young people? How do young people participate in various communities? How are the sexualities of the young expressed? How are relationships among the young given space, independent of their parents? What language is used to oppose that of "managing" and "controlling" the young? What is the relationship between dismantling patriarchy and reconceiving childhood?

JULIE WALSH AND SUSANNE SREEDHAR

Wellesley College & Boston University

#### **THE DYSTOPIA OF MARRIAGE: AN EARLY FEMINIST ACCOUNT OF FREEDOM**

Utopian discourses were common in early modern Europe, but all of the examples we study now were written by men (e.g., Harrington, More). The aim of this paper is to introduce a new voice, that of the French noblewoman, Anne-Marie-Louise d'Orléans, Duchesse de Montpensier. In her correspondence (1660-1661) with fellow woman at court, Motteville, Montpensier describes a utopia, the defining feature of which is that it is a place where women can be free. In

fact, what Montpensier is doing here is articulating the conditions under which women's freedom is possible. Montpensier uses a notion of freedom that adumbrates those espoused by Enlightenment thinkers like Rousseau: when other people determine how you live your life, you are not free. For Montpensier, we argue, the "other people" in her view are not necessarily men, but rather children. This makes heterosexual love, and especially heterosexual sex, incredibly threatening to freedom because of the possibility of conception and the restrictions of motherhood. Motteville, prefiguring Astell and Wollstonecraft, argues that marriage ought to be reformed. Because love between men and women is natural, she states, it cannot be eliminated altogether. Motteville, then, seems to concede that certain kinds of restrictions on freedom come as a matter of course for women. While she sees that the situation of married women might be improved, she is doubtful that the sweeping social changes suggested by Montpensier are possible. We focus on the correspondents' dueling views of human nature in order to make sense of the theoretical source of their disagreement. For Montpensier, it seems possible (and perhaps even required) to suppress and, indeed, eliminate the sexual desire that can result in procreation. For Motteville, such suppression and elimination is not feasible. This leads her to argue for marriage reform, and not abolition. The question of whether a feminist utopia—or those conditions under which women can be truly free—can include marriage, love, or family is one that is still relevant today.

ERET TALVISTE

Northumbria University

### **DEFYING GENRES: HÉLÈNE CIXOUS'S INTIMATE MAPS OF TIME**

This paper explores how Hélène Cixous's work undermines the mind-body dichotomy in traditional Western philosophical canon by (re)writing and (re)constructing history through lived experience. As her writings defy traditional genre boundaries, I will look at her fiction and non-fiction to suggest that her resistance to genres is a way of creating feminist utopias. I argue that aesthetics, and using art as a method of reasoning, is crucial for her in creating alternatives to present socio-political system because art, like embodiment and emotions, has been marginalised in traditional philosophy. Although Cixous has distanced herself from both philosophy and feminism, I will nevertheless explore how her work aligns with some of the most prominent feminist schools of thought today. By reading her recent novels *Hyperdream* and *So Close* as well as her earlier, more theoretical *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, *Rootprints* and *'Sorties'*, I will demonstrate that her work should not be considered exclusively as a part of French psychoanalytic feminism and/or postmodern feminism. I demonstrate that examining her writings with 'care focused' or ethical feminism, transitional ecofeminism, and affect-oriented feminism opens up new ways of understanding her ideas about embodiment and non-human. These feminisms offer a broad and demanding conception of the self's relationship to the other in order to rethink ethics. One of the central aims of these feminisms, and of Cixous's work, is to move beyond the mind-body dualism where body, materiality, and emotions are associated with the feminine, and accordingly marginalised. I propose that reading Cixous's work alongside those feminisms allows an understanding of the myriad ways in which she undermines, but also engages with, the Western philosophical canon. Furthermore, I suggest that Cixous's blending of art and theory, and her refusal to be associated with feminism or philosophy, can be seen as radical attempts to create a new way of writing and understanding the past. In this sort of writing, an affective and intimate voice is given to lived experience of marginalised individuals (and groups) who have been left out of official historical narratives.

MIRJAM HINRIKUS

Tallinn University

### **IRRESOLVABLE AMBIVALENCES IN THE WORKS OF A.H. TAMMSAARE (1878-1940): MISOGYNY AND THE ATTRACTION OF FEMININITY IN ESTONIAN LITERATURE**

Many feminist literary researchers (Showalter, Felsky etc) have argued that examples of literary modernism are saturated with gendered meanings and ideas. Furthermore, according to M. Dekoven, shifts in the gender relations at the turn of the century (from 1880 to 1920) were a key factor in the emergence of modernism. As it is known, these shifts are associated with the influence of the first wave of feminism and its protagonist – the so-called New Woman. Consequently different cultural media began to implement the various discourses of feminism to communicate more loudly and effectively. However, misogyny continued to increase (as is perceivable even today), associating with diverse fears of women's new emerging power. In Dekoven's terms, these conflicting tendencies become visible in cultural artefacts as irresolvable ambivalence toward powerful femininity – a fascination and the strong identification with empowered femininity, accompanied by with humiliation and mockery thereof. Dekoven's argument has yet not been extensively tested in the context of Estonian literature, but seems very well suited to this purpose. One most pervasive example of this kind of mingling is "Ruth", a 56 page essay-novella by J. Randvere from the beginning of the 20th century. At the very beginning of this story, the narrator argues similarly to the famous sentence from Flaubert's "Madame Bovary": "This (is) myself, if I were a woman". Examples of identification with femininity blend in "Ruth" with strong expressions of misogyny, which associate in turn with names such as Baudelaire, Weininger and Nietzsche. Similar in structure but more complex and interesting are examples of literature published in Estonia during the First World War and in its aftermath. In this paper I am primarily interested in two such texts: the play "Judith" (1921) and the novel "Truth and Justice" IV (1932) written by one of Estonia's most canonical writers, A. H. Tammsaare. In my presentation I will endeavour to relate these two texts and track the signs of misogyny (often in combination of masculinism) and its mingling with the opposite trend, the enchantment of femininity. It seems that both of these contradictory discursive lines are again associated with the same names – Weininger, Nietzsche, Simmel, Key, Marholm, Mayreder.

**SESSION: SEX & VIOLENCE**

ROSA VINCE

University of Sheffield

### **PORNOGRAPHY AND TESTIMONIAL SMOTHERING: HOW WOMEN ARE SILENCED**

Dotson's account of testimonial smothering can illuminate a way in which pornography silences women's refusal of sex. I argue that Dotson's account of testimonial smothering can be applied to the situation where women do not refuse unwanted sex. This provides an illuminating, and so far underexplored, way in which women are silenced by pornography. I first claim that women often do not voice refusal when they do not in fact want to have sex, and I demonstrate that this is often because of fear or a sense of duty. Kristie Dotson develops an account of silencing, introducing two kinds; testimonial quietening and testimonial smothering. I focus on testimonial smothering: this occurs when a speaker silences themselves because they realise that the hearer will not understand them. Dotson locates her view within black feminist epistemology, so she is suggesting that these are ways in which black women in particular are often silenced. I extend her analysis, arguing that this concept has a much broader application: in particular, it can help us understand ways in which women are silenced by pornography. To do this I explain Dotson's account of testimonial smothering, and introduce her concepts of 'pernicious' and 'situated' ignorance. Pernicious ignorance is ignorance about a group that is harmful, and situated ignorance is pernicious ignorance that results from one being in a certain social or epistemic position. I deploy these concepts to explain how men may not understand women's desire to refuse and why that refusal may be unspeakable for them. In particular, I suggest that rape myths count as a kind of pernicious ignorance, and that many men believe rape myths, partly due to the influence of pornography. Finally, I consider two example cases in which women want to refuse sex, but that refusal is silenced, and explain them with Dotson's testimonial smothering and the varieties of ignorance. I show that this ignorance is contributed to by pornography, and in that sense – a sense that has been overlooked in the existing discussions – pornography silences women. Acknowledging these problems enables feminists to combat the silencing of women, and opens up the debate on what prescriptions for pornography could be for a feminist utopian vision.

NANETTE RYAN

Georgetown University

### **SELF-RESPECTING SEX**

There are many important dimensions to morally good sex. Consent is one of them and it has received a lot of academic and non-academic attention alike. While consent does have a degree of 'moral magic' – it can transform an otherwise impermissible act into a permissible one – the magic of consent is limited. Even consensual sex, like other consensual activities, can be harmful for those who engage in it, and in particular for women, in that it can limit future opportunities, and over time can contribute to the habituation of women into submissive roles. Given that even consensual sex can be fraught in these ways one question that arises is what the necessary and sufficient conditions are for self-respecting sex|if we know that sex can be morally problematic, how do we navigate the terrain in a way that is compatible with our self-respect? At least in liberal spheres, one of the most plausible candidates for self-respecting sex is sex that is 'welcomed and wanted.'<sup>1</sup> In this paper I consider this proposal arguing that sex that is welcomed and wanted is not sufficient for self-respecting sex because it is compatible with, and can be an expression of, one's compromised self-respect. As such, by way of navigating the morally precarious terrain of sex, engaging in sex that is welcomed and wanted will not be sufficient to safe-guard one's self-respect.

SYDNEY KEOUGH

University of Michigan

### **HERMENEUTICAL INJUSTICE, NARRATIVES, AND UNDERSTANDING**

Sometimes we face epistemic hardships which are also unjust. The aim of this presentation is to provide a clear account of three such hardships, and to identify some of their potential causes. To do so I'll focus on two contemporary cases of rape. I'll argue that in both cases the survivors suffered the same three epistemic hardships: (1) difficulty understanding one's own, significant experience; (2) difficulty understanding oneself in light of one's experience; and (3) difficulty rendering one's experience and its significance intelligible to others. The first of these hardships may seem especially puzzling—how can someone with an adequate grasp of the facts of her experience nevertheless fail to understand what has happened to her? To address this puzzle, I'll appeal both to the distinction between understanding and knowledge and to the distorting influence of dominant rape narratives. I claim, first, that survivors' epistemic difficulties are caused in part by the affective recalcitrance that survivors experience. To understand an experience, one must enjoy a stable and consistent set of attitudes about that experience; and this is difficult to achieve when one's cognitive and affective attitudes about an experience are misaligned. Second, I claim that this affective recalcitrance results from violating the rules of conduct and sentiment established by the dominant rape narratives. So, by setting the standards for how 'real' survivors should feel and behave, dominant rape narratives contribute to misunderstanding in two ways: (a) they provide interpretive schemas which are sometimes internally inconsistent and which rarely match the features of survivors' actual experiences; that is, they provide (epistemically) bad theories of rape. And (b) they establish norms of sentiment that contribute to affective recalcitrance on the part of survivors who do manage to acquire (epistemically) good theories of rape. The presentation will proceed as follows, and should last approximately 15 minutes. I will introduce two rape cases and detail the epistemic hardships that each survivor, Susan Brison and Tove Danovich, suffers. I'll also explain why understanding rather than (only) knowledge is at stake in these cases. Then I'll briefly review extant accounts of hermeneutical injustice and use Brison's and Danovich's cases to argue that such accounts are extensionally inadequate and insufficiently explanatory. I contend that these accounts place too great an emphasis on the role of prejudicial lacunae in the dominant interpretive resources. Finally, I'll offer my alternative explanation of the epistemic hardships.

KARYN FREEDMAN

University of Guelph

**TALKING ABOUT LISTENING: SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE, AND THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF FIRST-PERSON NARRATIVES**

We are currently witnessing an exceptional moment in the history of feminist epistemology. Not since the emergence of standpoint theories in the 1970s has feminist epistemology been so innovative and so distinctly capable of influencing the direction of contemporary philosophical discourse. We can mark the beginning of this trend to the early 1990s and the renewed attention to testimony as a source of knowledge. With an emphasis on both hearers and tellers, the turn to testimony initiated a move away from individualism and focused instead on situated knowers. Miranda Fricker's groundbreaking *Epistemic Injustice* (2007) subsequently triggered a proliferation of research in this area, resulting in an unparalleled richness of conceptual vocabulary with which to capture our shared social experiences. In this paper I rely on these epistemic resources to develop an argument about the transformative power of first-person narratives, using as my case study sexual violence against women. First, I draw a parallel between the widespread resistance among dominantly situated knowers to confront the realities of sexual violence and the motivated ignorance that we see in cases of White Ignorance. In both cases, privileged interest motivates a cognitive bias that results in an epistemic injustice. Standard analyses of epistemic injustice focus on the culpability of the hearer, whose self-interested selectiveness with respect to the evidence is the primary cause of the epistemic harm. In this paper, however, I focus on the teller, not because she is accountable for the knowledge loss in testimonial exchanges, but because she has a singular power to effect transformative change through testimony. First-person narratives, in particular stories about marginalized experiences, can make tangible uncomfortable truths in a way that theorizing about these cases misses. The best way to undermine situated ignorance is to amplify the voice of the marginalized through storytelling. My focus here is on sexual violence against women, but the argument generalizes. Reading Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me* (2015) can help us imagine what it is like to live in a black man's body, just as reading stories on the blog 'What Is It Like to Be a Woman in Philosophy' illuminates that experience.