

# At a Crossroads:

Reconsidering Gender and Identities



A Research Colloquium  
4-5 April 2013

Refereed Abstracts

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**Edited by  
Erin C. M. Grant, Armando Alfaro and Hilary Radner**

**Department of History and Art History**

**University of Otago**

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Finally, last but not least, this colloquium would not have taken place without the enthusiasm and energy of the many researchers, from professors to postgraduates, who agreed to share their work on this important topic. We are especially grateful to Charlotte Macdonald and Barry Reay who travelled from Wellington and Auckland, respectively, to the far South in order to participate in this gathering, bringing their considerable weight of knowledge and experience to bear on our topic. It is perhaps safe to say that, though we may not have resolved the issues raised by the twentieth century in terms of gender and identity, these, nonetheless, continue to provide substance for thought, discussion and research in the twenty-first.

## **Keynote Speakers**

### **Charlotte Macdonald**

#### **“It’s good to be a guy”: Valuing Gender in the Early Twenty-first Century**

Taking the crossroads of the market, the everyday conversation, the immigration desk and the political platform, the paper thinks through approaches to gender identity as they have developed c.1970s – 2013. Of particular interest is the shift from citizen to consumer, from a world of differentiation to one where we are all “guys.” Are we at a crossroads or simply somewhere on “the crooked line” Geoff Eley describes? (*A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005). The discussion begins and concludes in the present but will draw examples from the mid-nineteenth century world of empire and the mid-twentieth century world of modernity.

**Professor Charlotte Macdonald** is an historian with particular interests in the history of women and gender. She was a member of the London Feminist History Group while a PhD student at the London School of Economics, and has been President of the New Zealand Historical Association on two occasions. Her publications include *Women in History* (edited with Barbara Brookes and Margaret Tennant, 1986), *A Woman of Good Character* (1990), *The Book of New Zealand Women* (edited with Merimeri Penfold and Bridget Williams, 1991), “*My Hand Will Write What My Heart Dictates*”: *Unsettled Lives of Women in New Zealand, c. 1820-1915 as Revealed in Letters to Sisters, Family and Friends* (by Frances Porter, edited by Charlotte Macdonald, 1995), *Women Writing Home* (2006), and *Strong, Beautiful and Modern* (2011). She is Professor of History at Victoria University of Wellington/Te Whare Wananga o Te Upoko o Te Ika Maui.

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**Barry Reay**

### **Blurring Boundaries: Contesting the Narratives of Transsexuality**

From its first real impact in the US in the 1960s and 1970s transsexuality exhibited some rather fixed definitional traits. The new selves that were constructed by surgery and endocrinology were matched by what has been termed new self-narratives – in effect fresh sexual and gender histories. Transsexuals were those who felt like one sex trapped in the body of the other sex, and formulaic notions of masculinity and femininity invariably accompanied this idea of dissonance between gender and sex. In this framework, moreover, transsexuals were different to transvestites and homosexuals; the distinction was part of their definition. However, there is evidence that not all conformed to the rather restricting narratives of transsexuality, that those who argue that transsexuals were turned into sexual stereotypes have exaggerated this effect, and that there was a blurring of boundaries between transsex, transvestism and homosexuality. The claimed sexual certainty of transsexuality masked a world of far more ambiguous alliances and practices. This paper explores that world.

**Professor Barry Reay** holds the Keith Sinclair Chair in History at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. His most recent books include *Watching Hannah: Sexuality, Horror, and Bodily-Deformation in Victorian England* (2002), *New York Hustlers: Masculinity and Sex in Modern America* (2010), and *Sex before Sexuality: A Premodern History* (2011).

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## **Refereed Abstracts**

**Carole (Shire) Agnew**

### **Menstruation: A Foundation Stone to the Educational “Sexuality Highway”**

As we move towards a post-feminist era, the overt messages that present female sexuality as non-existent and/or inappropriate may carry less social significance. However, women’s sexuality and sexual identity is still being implicitly constrained and determined by gender-biased and hetero-normative constructs. Puberty instruction, and, in particular, menstruation, is seen as sitting outside sexual education. However, the messages created and reinforced during the instruction of menstruation contribute to a passive, stigmatised and shameful sexuality. How we teach girls about menstruation lays a foundation stone for future understanding about their bodies and their personal sexuality. The constructed meaning of menstruation is grounded in reproduction that connects a woman’s sexual maturity to pregnancy and motherhood. A reproductive discourse creates a sexual identity that is solely heterosexual and passive. An initial message to girls about their sexuality is that her body is a reproductive vessel for a man’s child, a message devoid of any concepts of sexual agency or pleasure. Alongside of this construction of sexuality, girls are also learning that menstruation, which includes her genitals, are shameful, unclean and unpleasant. Girls are taught they need to manage the unpleasantness of the genital emissions ensuring they stay clean, fresh and acceptably feminine. These messages can lead to women feeling detached and distant from their genitals, believing that they have been constructed as the source of her archaic and tainted femininity. In contrast, boys will often be taught and experience their genitals and their sexuality with feelings of power and pleasure. The messages, created very early in girls’ growing sexual maturity, can have a profound impact on how young women view their bodies, their sexuality and identity as women.

**Carole (Shire) Agnew** is following on from the completion of her Master’s thesis on the discursive construction of menstruation in puberty education. In her doctoral research, she is beginning to look into the way media, in particular, advertising, constructs menstruation for young people, and how these sources can be used as part of a critical literacy approach to teaching the subject of menstruation. Agnew’s academic interests have always lain in the fields of gender and sexuality education and she identifies as a feminist poststructuralist.

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**Armando Alfaro**

## **Suffering from Realness: Kanye West and the Contradictions of Masculinity in Hip-Hop**

In the late 1980s the image of the playboy emerged as one of the key male personas within the lyrical and visual culture of hip-hop. Since then the image of the hip-hop playboy, usually that of a young black male in pursuit of leisure, wealth, and women, has become one of the dominant performative identities of mainstream male rappers, finding its way into song lyrics, music videos, magazine and album covers, and the visual culture of hip-hop more broadly. Chicago rapper and producer Kanye West released his debut album in 2004 and quickly made a name for himself as the embodiment of an alternative masculine identity within the world of hip-hop. Drawing from another of hip-hop's traditions, that of the socially conscious rapper, Kanye West's persona reworked the hip-hop playboy as a black male subject struggling with the contradictions of a hip-hop culture driven by consumerism: although hip-hop is associated with 'the streets' and the urban underclass, most popular rappers are now part of the 'leisure' class (Hunter, 2011). The contradictory messages of hip-hop extend to its representations of men and women, particularly within the hypersexualised world of the hip-hop music video. Kanye West's image, though replete with these contradictory messages, demonstrates a reconsideration of the binary oppositions of masculine identity within hip-hop culture and it reworks the traditional gendered depictions of men and women in the rap video.

**Armando Alfaro** holds a BA and MA from Brock University, Canada. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Otago, New Zealand, in the Department of History and Art History. His research interests revolve around the relations between national cinema, genre film, and identity.

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**Fiona Eva Bakas**

## **Re-negotiation of Gender Roles and Relations Related to Social Reproduction in Tourism Handicraft Entrepreneurs: Greek Ethnographic Studies**

Strategies for enhancing the position of women have generally involved increasing women's productive activities, often through the creation of specific tourism development programs, for example the expansion of handicraft production for tourism retail. However, it is frequently argued that women must then deal with a complex renegotiation of domestic tasks as they try to combine both productive and social reproductive work. This presentation utilises feminist economics theory to stress the importance of the reproductive economy by using a social reproduction lens to examine a specific type of tourism development, for example, women's handicraft tourism entrepreneurship. To date, research on the effect of tourism

development programs that promote female entrepreneurship have focused on aspects such as impact upon childcare provision and family structures and also the changing perception of what is considered private and public space. There has, however, been little attention paid to the renegotiation of social reproduction-related gender roles at the intersection of the productive/reproductive economy. This project aims to fill this gap in literature by reporting on twenty ethnographic case studies I carried out in Greece from June to December 2012, of both male and female handicraft tourism entrepreneurs. During this period, the ethnographic techniques of participant observation, field notes and informal interviews were utilised with participants over three-month periods in Crete and Ioannina. By using a feminist economics approach, this paper discusses how social reproduction roles are evolving over time and through generations, to become less strictly male, female or gender-determined. By focusing on the economy's reproductive side, this analysis argues for a focus on the changing nature of gender roles and relations within tourism development.

**Fiona Eva Bakas** is currently a PhD student in the Tourism Department at the University of Otago, in her second year of study. While previous studies include a BSc Plant Biotechnology and more recently an MSc Ecotourism (both gained at UK universities), her current research interests focus on the gender and development aspect of tourism. Being bi-cultural (Greek/English) helped in completing an ethnographic study of tourism handicraft entrepreneurs in Greece, which was a revelation in many ways – academically, socially and personally. Past industry experience includes conference organising and online ecotourism consulting, but in her spare time, she enjoys volunteering at local community and university events, crocheting and creating leather purses.

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**Maud Ceuterick**

## **Women and Spaces In-between: Contemporary Moving Images and Nomadic Subjects**

Since the 1970s, feminist films have been organised around binaries, such as feminine/masculine, nature/culture and private/public. Also, the concept of feminine aesthetics in opposition to male dominant narratives occupies a considerable space in feminist film studies. In this paper, I want to question the existence of filmic codes of representation that specifically embody the feminine. I argue that what I define as the aesthetics of becoming, is better suited to capture contemporary subject positions than essentialist and/or structuralist approaches, grounded in binary thinking and classifications. This is especially true when one deals with nomadic women's subjectivities on screen. My analyses of recent films and visual arts, such as *Soliloquy* (1999) by Shirin Neshat and *D'Est* (1993) by Chantal Akerman, draw on Rosi Braidotti and Elizabeth Grosz's interpretations of becoming. The two scholars underscore self-transformative power structures and argue for subjects-in-process. Accordingly, my principal aim is to distinguish a particular aesthetics by showing the

strategies that *Soliloquy* and *D'Est*, among other films, use to depict subjects-in-process. The two nomadic artists not only explore their interactions with space, but also use the cinematic medium to reflect on how bodies affect and are affected by power relations. Through their aesthetics of becoming, the films go beyond acknowledging or lamenting the oppression of women, and allow for the deconstruction of essentialist binaries. Accordingly, gender relations and power structures are renegotiated in transformative terms.

**Maud Ceuterick** is a PhD candidate in the Department of Media, Film and Communication at the University of Otago. After her undergraduate studies in Modern Languages and Literatures in Brussels, she went to Cork (Ireland) to complete a Master's in Film. Her main areas of research are feminism and issues of gender, transnational cinema, language and aesthetics.

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**Judith Collard**

### **Neil Emmerson's (*habit@t*): Queering Masculine Spaces**

Neil Emmerson's art installation focuses on a memorial garden opposite the Newcastle Regional Art Gallery. This garden, dedicated to the memory of those sacrificed in World Wars, was also a site for anonymous sexual encounters. In his installation Emmerson transforms the innocuous garden setting into a hunting ground where men cruise at night for sex. Simultaneously he brings the hidden into the public sphere, the external into the interior of the gallery. His work challenged the public understandings of these spaces, queering them and revealing the multiplicity of meanings and experiences layered on what are overtly spaces of memory, where different understandings of masculinity are performed.

**Dr Judith Collard** is a senior lecturer in Art History and Theory at the University of Otago. She has published on lesbian art and feminism, and teaches courses on "Gender Issues in Art," and "Art in Crisis: 1970-1985," as well as on medieval art.

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**Catherine Dale**

### **Crossing Roads: The Self-Perpetuation of the Heterosexual Gender Divide**

Despite feminist gains over several decades, the living arrangements of groups of young female university students and their male peers appear to have changed little.

While in the 1960s, the University of Otago enforced rules against mixed flatting today students self-segregate along gender lines; today, girls in my research group have tended to live in houses across the street from the guys' houses. The latter houses host drunken parties while the former offer cleaner environments, washing machines that work and fridges with food in them. Using the campus streets as a model, this paper investigates the gendered nature of the economics of exchange between the male and female households on these streets. What makes these students perpetuate and reinforce socio-economic gender norms without any noticeable official pressure? What are the social losses and gains this renewed conservative heterosexuality produces for feminism and for heterosexual gender relations? I examine the feminist implications of the relations of exchange between the domesticity of the all-female households and the party-time of the all-male houses. While women have made gains in the economy of the marketplace, gender roles in the West continue to be structured largely in relation to physical and emotional feminine domesticity. Post-feminist literature offers an upbeat take on this situation and offers a disinterested gender imbalance. I discuss postfeminist women's freedom to operate in both the male and female spheres, on both sides of the street, in contrast to men's less flexible options.

**Catherine Dale** submitted her doctorate on the French writer Antonin Artaud at the end of 2012. She lectures in feminist theory and also teaches literary and critical theory. She has published on Artaud as well as on gender, sexuality, Deleuze, art, and narcotics.

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**Alistair Fox**

### **Genre and Gender in Mike Wallis's *Good For Nothing* (2011): Contemporary New Zealand Cinema and "The Demise of Guys"**

Cinema's role in the construction of spectacularly violent, hegemonic masculinities, especially through action films, is self-evident, with recent commentators, from academics to popular writers, suggesting that this phenomenon can be seen as a compensatory response to a deepening sense of male disenfranchisement and powerlessness. Picking up on this idea of "the demise of guys," (Philip Zimbardo and Nikita Duncan, *The Demise of Guys: Why Guys Are Struggling and What We Can Do About It*, Nook Book: Kindle Edition, 2012) this paper explores how a contemporary New Zealand filmmaker, Mike Wallis, offers a parodic reworking of another cinematic genre associated with hypermasculinity, the Western, in order to present simultaneously a deconstruction of the mythic masculine ideal, a protest at its expectations, and the vision of a reformed masculinity. In doing so, the paper will argue that gender, especially as symbolically codified in the conventions of genre, remains a potent instrument for cultural analysis.

**Professor Alistair Fox** is a professor in the Department of English at the University of Otago and has written extensively on humanism, politics, and reform in early

modern England, and more recently on contemporary New Zealand culture. His most recent books are *The Ship of Dreams: Masculinity in Contemporary New Zealand Literature* (Otago UP, 2008), *Jane Campion: Authorship and Personal Cinema* (Indiana UP, 2011), and *New Zealand Cinema: Interpreting the Past*, ed. with H. Radner and Barry Keith Grant (Intellect, 2011). He is the translator of Raphaëlle Moine, *Cinema Genre* (Blackwell, 2008), and Anne Gillain, *François Truffaut: The Lost Secret* (Indiana UP, 2013).

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**Georgia Knowles**

### **Changing Representations of Gender and Rape: An Analysis of Rape Prevention Poster Campaigns**

Rape prevention poster campaigns are a widely used prevention effort and they play a potentially significant role in changing social perceptions of rape, often challenging rape myths. Yet their effectiveness as a prevention tool hinges on how they construct rape and gender, as they have the potential to reinforce discourses that are fundamental to rape culture. This paper will analyze the representation of gender in a selection of posters that show a spectrum of different approaches to rape prevention. These posters are chosen on the basis that they focus on primary prevention, which aims to prevent sexual violence before it happens. In other words, their goal is to reduce perpetration or victimization. (This is opposed to secondary or tertiary prevention, which focuses on preventing secondary victimization or further perpetration). In my analysis I organize the posters into three key themes, prevention by risk reduction for women, prevention through highlighting punishment for sexual violence, and prevention through the reframing of masculinity as non-violent. I will argue that these posters do not utilize effective rape prevention discourses, but, rather, reinforce damaging and limited constructions of rape and gender, which are fundamental to rape culture and, thus, the ongoing perpetration of rape.

**Georgia Knowles** is just finished her Postgraduate Diploma in Gender Studies and is planning to undertake a research Master's in Gender Studies in 2013. She has been volunteering and working for Rape Crisis Dunedin for the past four years as a support worker and community educator. This year Knowles began working as the National Coordinator for Rape Crisis New Zealand. Part of this role involves being on an advisory group for the TOAH NNEST sexual violence prevention Tauwiwi caucus. This role has developed her interest in the value of sexual violence prevention education.

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**Marita Leask**

## **A Woman's Ability to Choose: A Genealogical Examination of the Link Between Abortion and Mental Health**

Although abortion discourses are often polarised into “a woman’s right to choose” versus a “foetus’s right to life,” mental health is emerging as a prevailing paradigm for understanding abortion in New Zealand. Paradoxically, mental health is the ground that enables legal access to abortion and the basis on which some psychological researchers and anti-abortion activists seek to restrict access to abortion. Arguably, mental health as a criteria, has gained such widespread cultural resonance because it masks the less politically palatable aims of allowing abortion on request and of prohibiting abortion. Nevertheless, the harnessing of discourses about mental health by both those who support access to abortion and those who oppose abortion reshapes women’s status as subjects in reproductive decision-making. Whereas in the foetal-based paradigm women are morally condemned as murderers, the mental health discourse serves to call women’s mental capacity into question. Thus, in the mental health paradigm women are painted as unfortunate victims of circumstance who need guidance through the law or psychological support. The argument for a woman’s right to choose presents women as autonomous agents who are best placed to make reproductive decisions governing their bodies and their lives. However, in challenging women’s mental capacity and thus their status as moral actors, the mental health paradigm undercuts women’s very ability to choose abortion. Accordingly, this presentation analyses historical, legal and psychological discourses that link abortion with mental health in order to explore the ways in which these discourses may constitutively shape women’s identities.

**Marita Leask** holds two Honours degrees in Law and Gender Studies from the University of Otago. Her Gender Studies Honours dissertation examined the discursive relationship between abortion and mental health and how this paradigm affects women’s subjectivities. This year Marita is furthering her interest in the issues surrounding abortion through her Master of Arts thesis, which explores conceptions of legitimacy and abortion. Over the course of her research, Marita is interested in exploring the constitution of subjectivities, conceptions of choice and gender politics.

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**Fred LeBlanc**

## **"Just Tell Them You Want Bottom Surgery": Transnormativity in Medical Practice and the Desire for Androgyny**

This paper suggests that the term transgender is largely understood through transsexual discourses, consisting of both the medicalization of transsexuality and the articulation of cross-gender performances, and (re)embodiment based on essentialist biological and psychiatric *wrong body* discourses. The cultural privilege of these

medical discourses means they become hegemonic and develop the very terms and vocabulary of transsexual subjectivities, which are then reified by various transsexual narratives that rely upon these very vocabularies for their own formation. This is in opposition to the transgender subject that is idealised in queer theories for its fluidity and desire to playfully pick and choose between gender allusions. Furthermore, the public rendering of some transgender bodies as nonconformist results in violence and the need to explore alternate spaces of being, namely the internet. Since there are virtually no controls over what can be published on the internet, it can be a place where marginalized voices and personal narratives can be heard, which has the potential to build community, and raise consciousness about gender(s) and transgender oppression, but can also be used to legitimate transnormative productions of the self. Online transgender resources, including informational resources, message boards, social interactions, etc. can be an effective medium through which to challenge cultural conceptions about gender dualism by providing critical and ontological alternatives to gender. This analysis of one online community of transgender individuals suggests that non-transsexual transgender subjects that do not wish to be reassigned to the opposite gender (that is, they desire an androgynous/non-gender embodiment) are disempowered by medical practitioners who act as gatekeepers to medical technologies, as they do not reproduce transnormative medical and cultural confirmations of gender dualism. This paper suggests that informal networks, like online communities, offer these subjects a space to explore alternatives to gender and learn ways to subvert the patient/practitioner dynamic and access hormone replacement therapy, among other technologies.

**Fred LeBlanc** is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology, Gender and Social Work. His research focuses on the conservative turn of sexuality and gender in post 9/11 American sociopolitics. His doctoral thesis is being written on queer terrorism in X-Men comic books.

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**Jonathan W. Marshall**

### **Hystericization and the Impossibility of Gender Legibility: A Heuristic for the Description of Non-emergence**

Joan Scott proposed gender as a “useful category of analysis,” whereby one examines not only subject positions, but gendered discourse. In this move from identity to language, Scott points to a contested field where masculinity and femininity fail to fully crystalize. Instead they are performatively generated in the moment through acts and gestures. The task is to identify the patterns of this process. I offer a diagnostic model that elucidates the pathology that arises when one imagines that gender exists in clearly discernible terms. I offer a heuristic which charts not the visibility of men and women as subjects, or which over-turns invisibility by bringing into sight those previously not seen, but rather which helps to identify that which defies structural emergence, a set of symptomatic forms which embody not the masculine or the feminine but the impossible tearing within the body effected by incoherent ideologies.

Following Foucault, I call this “hystericization.” I do not propose to describe the hysteric per se, but to echo Didi-Huberman in isolating a series of physical processes that spasmodically erupt in bodies rendered incoherent by the conventions of legibility. Although this model arises out of fin de siècle Europe, it has applicability for early modern and modern Europe, and for those hybrid global cultures that arose elsewhere. Sometimes described in neurological terms as seizures whose patterns can only be defined through an inexact comparison to more comprehensible acts (“choreiform,” meaning “dance-like,” or “epileptoid,” signalling a resemblance but non-identity with epilepsy), sometimes manifest in demonological trials and practices (the monstrously powerful diabolic body which co-exists with, and explodes out of, nominally gendered flesh), but perhaps best captured by such avant-garde poetic forms as European Surrealism, the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, or Japanese butoh dance (Hijikata once likened the movement of his dancers to an “ash pillar walk,” his damaged, sexualised performers verging on dissipation into deathly powder), hystericisation occurs where bodies and subjects shudder with the social and formal contradictions of identity, gender, and corporeal coherence.

**Dr Jonathan W. Marshall** is an interdisciplinary scholar with a background in history. He teaches theatre and performance at the University of Otago, New Zealand. Marshall’s research explores interdisciplinary and inter-arts phenomena, including the relation of neurophysiology to the cultural history of modernism. He has published on the connection between Kleist’s work and the history of medicine (Fischer and Mehigan, eds., *Kleist and Modernity*, 2011), the relationship of contemporary photography to theatre and global capitalism in *Double Dialogues* 14 (2011), history of the post-WWII avant-garde Japanese dance form butoh, as well as other topics.  
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**Sharon Matthews**

### **“Disturbed” Masculinities in the Plays of James K. Baxter**

Gail Bederman (1995) argues that gender is a historical, ideological process that can be seen to work through a complex political technology composed from social institutions, culture, and daily practices. The combination of these elements produces a set of *truths* about the constitution of an individual based upon that individual’s body. But can these truths be reconciled within either the individual artist, or within their literary representation? Viewed within these technologies, New Zealand poet and playwright, James K. Baxter’s polyvalent representation of gender (and sexuality) can be seen as both response to, and reaction against, “the formative, constricting and distorting effect” of the distinctive social patterns of secular Puritanism, especially the severe restrictions on sexual behaviour enforced “by the external mechanisms of public shaming and punishment and by the internal mechanism of guilt.” Much of Baxter’s work reflects a fascination with the socially forbidden or the sexually transgressive. However, the narcissistic anxiety implicit in the poet’s grounding of

tropes of opposition and division within a somatic imaginary — fragmented, half-men made wounded by the “concupiscence of the flesh” — implies an irresolvable ambivalence towards the gendered body. The fragility and instability that constitutes Baxter’s version of masculinity does not simply work to re-inscribe masculine patterns and values with more force and power; rather it transgresses the very terms he invokes by embracing destitution, degradation and failure. The complexity of Baxter’s treatment of gendered figures thus offers a case study in tracing these contradictory, and ultimately incompatible social and rhetorical desires within the work of literary production.

**Sharon Matthews** is a PhD candidate in the Department of English at the University of Otago. Matthews has an extensive background in theatre and performance as both practitioner and critic. Her research interests are twentieth-century New Zealand theatre, the plays of James K. Baxter, and adult literacy. She recently presented at the 2012 Geering Seminar on James K. Baxter, sponsored by the St Andrews Trust for the Study of Religion and Society.

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**Karen Nairn**

### **Children of Rogernomics: How Does This Neoliberal Generation “Do” Gender?**

There was a moment in time in New Zealand when the feminist message ‘Girls can do anything’ was part of a formal programme initiated by the Labour Department in 1985. The focus on encouraging girls to think about non-traditional occupations was soon eclipsed by the country’s pursuit of neoliberal reforms that tended to assume a non gender specified worker, and the primacy of paid work, irrespective of how gendered that work might be. In the early 2000s we launched a project about New Zealand’s neoliberal generation, focusing on 93 young people born since 1984 when the neoliberal reforms were initiated. They were interviewed as they were leaving high school. This paper explores the ways in which participants’ gendered identities activated and renegotiated current neoliberal and gender discourses. Participants were invited to compile “anti-CVs” – anything that would not be included in the more instrumental CV – to convey their sense of self at that moment in time. The anti-CVs included symbolic, photographic and written material and offer an important site/sight for exploring what their authors perceived as culturally intelligible performances of femininity and masculinity. They offer some insight into the situatedness of gender discourses and the contradictory nature of subjectivity displayed by participants’ engagement with both conventional and non-conventional gender performances. The young women and men from our study, were to a greater or lesser extent, engaged in a discursive tug-of-war around gendered performances as they sought to lead culturally intelligible lives.

**Dr Karen Nairn** is a senior lecturer at the College of Education, University of Otago, Dunedin. Her current research focuses on youth identities and post-school transitions.

She has written the book (with Jane Higgins and Judith Sligo) *Children of Rogernomics: A Neoliberal Generation Leaves School*, published in 2012. More broadly, her research focuses on processes of exclusion in education shaped by gender, sexuality and race.

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**Bumbekile Ncube**

**“From Gender Conflict to Existential Crisis”: Power Relations and the Gendered (Post)colonial Subject in Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Condition* and Keri Hulme’s *The Bone People***

Studies of gender in the twentieth century have seen the demise of oppressive ideological systems that marginalised women. For (post)colonial writer Tsitsi Dangarembga, placing women at the centre of her narratives was part of the process of destabilising a strong sexist system that kept Zimbabwean women at the periphery of their own lives. Dangarembga’s writing was crucial in defining a trajectory for self-definition and autonomy for Zimbabwean women, simultaneously allowing them to be rewritten into history. However, during the process of self-definition, Dangarembga makes note of the fact that change is a complicated process that does not only fuel resistance to the status quo, but also brings with it a sense of alienation and fragmentation – what Frantz Fanon categorises in *The Wretched of the Earth* as a “nervous condition.” This paper explores some of the problems and dysfunctions associated with changes in gender perceptions as observed in the last four decades and as presented in Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions* and Keri Hulme’s *the bone people*. Significantly, Keri Hulme’s literature moves away from categorising (post)colonial problems in simple gender terms, but reveals them as something going beyond sex wars heading more towards an existential crisis. Hulme reconfigures the plight of the (post)colonial subject from one that involves an identity crisis and alienation to one that centres on a need to connect with others outside of themselves. The different approaches taken by Dangarembga and Hulme in their works will reveal that while research on gender still remains a relevant category for literary and societal analysis in (post)colonial nations such as New Zealand and Zimbabwe, it cannot be understood outside of other dimensions of identity such as sexuality, class and nationality.

**Bumbekile Busani Ncube** is from Zimbabwe and holds a BA Honours and MA in English from the University of Zimbabwe. She is currently in the final stages of completing a PhD in the Department of English at the University of Otago. Bumbekile’s thesis research focuses on sources of dysfunction in the shaping of (post)colonial masculine identity as represented in selected Zimbabwean and Māori fiction. Her research interests include psychoanalytic literary criticism, postcolonial and identity studies.

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**Leigh Paterson**

## **Manvertising: A Critical Appraisal of Communication Design in the Masculinisation of Consumables**

Commercial graphic design cultivates ideals around masculinity using dominant male archetypes to manipulate ideas of gender identity through sophisticated advertising campaigns. This practice is certainly not new, but there has been a recent shift in the way male identity is portrayed and the type of products that are being gendered has in turn changed drastically. This form of “Manvertising” is especially prevalent in the branding and marketing of consumables with campaigns being created exclusively for male audiences. These campaigns are perpetuating ideals about “being a man” often with a hyper-male tone and associated masculine imagery that identifies the perceived needs and wants specific to men. Companies such as Fonterra, Frucor and Burgen are targeting males in an attempt to make conventional gender free products “manly” - yoghurt and ice cream are now laden with testosterone, featuring taglines like “Real Man Food, Man” and “Feed the Manchild.” My paper analyses examples of “Manvertising” within the field of communication design, then discusses the impact and implications of this commercial practice on the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.

**Leigh Paterson** is a design educator from Otago Polytechnic, School of Design, Dunedin, New Zealand. Leigh specialises in graphic design and design history and theory.

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**Marialuisa Risoli**

## **Pornographic Encounters: The Experience of Flesh in Angela Carter’s Fairy Tales**

My paper explores the state of *abjection* and the experience of *jouissance* in Angela Carter’s fairy tales. Using this genre as a vehicle of sociopolitical commentary and critique, Angela Carter was able to disrupt the conventions of the fairy tale by having recourse to the extraneous features of pornography and horror. Evoking Julia Kristeva’s “willing victims” of the abject, her strikingly diverse female characters, moved by yearning, willingly cross the boundaries of their enclosures and start to tell their own stories of Otherness and Difference. In this state of transformation her heroines, i.e., her subjects, explore the world of the abject and discover sexual difference and fascination, proposing alternative constructions of desire and gender. Carter’s recourse to the processes of *abjection* and *jouissance* allowed her to draft new conditions of possibility for the female subjects by giving a provocatively pornographic angle to her stories. However she also aimed at subverting the patriarchal convention that saw the female as passive victim of the dominant male predatory instinct. This stirred up controversy in 1970s and 1980s feminist circles

who were less willing to consider Carter's pornographic fairy tales as a critical example of feminist sexual emancipation. Carter's use of pornography was still viewed as entrapment within dominant male fantasies (see Duncker, Dworkin, and Morgan). In contrast, I argue that Carter's provocatively sexual fairy tales carve a space for a "moral" pornography, from which a critique of the existing relations between sexes takes place. Her texts demystify the flesh, in the name of "a world of absolute sexual license for all genders," to use Carter's own words.

**Marialuisa Risoli** is studying for a PhD on Comparative Literatures in the Department of Languages and Cultures at the University of Otago. Her research project focuses on the representation of the abject in twentieth century fairy tales with a particular stress on Western European tradition. Marialuisa graduated in German Studies at the University of Turin (Italy) with a thesis on "The Shadow Archetype in Grimm's *Children's and Household Tales*."

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**Steven S. Sexton**

### **Macho to Metrosexual: How Secondary Students Are Defining and Displaying Their Masculinity**

This presentation is in response to Mark McCormack's (2012) book titled, *The Declining Significance of Homophobia: How Teenage Boys Are Redefining Masculinity and Heterosexuality*. In this, McCormack describes how teenage boys in England have undergone a dramatic shift over the past six years in how they perceive their own and other students' masculinity, heterosexuality and homosexuality. Anecdotal evidence from a study (Sexton, 2012) into how queer students in Otago perceive their school environment offers some supporting evidence for McCormack's ideas around "gay discourse," but that study did not explicitly seek to address wider issues around student self-regulation and peer-regulation of masculinities. This presentation will report on an exploratory study with this as its explicit focus. Secondary students from the Otago region were contacted for inclusion in this study. Specifically, this study sought to include participants with pre-existing strong/close friendship circles. Students were informed that their peer group interactions would be the topic of the focus group session, for example: mate-ship, bravado, teasing, hazing, self and peer group regulation of behaviour. This study will provide male secondary-aged students in Otago the opportunity to express for themselves (Ruddick and Fielding, 2006) how their friendship circles interact and regulate their behaviour. It will explicitly seek to address the extent that homophobic language has been reported as changing (McCormack, 2012). To what extent has McCormack's concept of "gay discourse" replaced "fag discourse" (Pascoe, 2005)? How do those Otago teenagers, who participate, report on the intersection of their schooling with their image of self (Rasmussen, 2006)?

**Dr Steven S. Sexton** is a Senior Lecturer at the College of Education with an emphasis in primary science education. His research interest areas are: teacher

cognition, especially how the role of the teacher is perceived by various stakeholders; science education to include teacher self-efficacy in science; and the intersection of non-normative/heteronormative masculinities and femininities in school.

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**Lee Smith and Kim Brown**

## **Femininity: The New and Not So New Options Available to Young Women in Aotearoa/New Zealand Schooling Contexts**

Young women today have greater options at school than in past decades when most girls' choices were confined to domestic-oriented learning followed by a trajectory to marriage and motherhood. In their education and personal lives young women are now positioned as the "can do" winners, evidenced by large numbers participating in tertiary education, having careers, and exhibiting sexual agency in their relationships and/or encounters (Anita Harris, *Future Girl: Young Women in the Twenty-first Century*, London: Routledge, 2004). The school formal in the New Zealand context is constituted as a site of fairy-tale heterosexual romance, and a space where young women are expected to spend extensive amounts of energy and money on their beauty work. In this two-part presentation we explore how young women negotiate femininity and how they fit with the "new ways of being" (Harris, 17) available to young women in New Zealand schools. Kim Brown will identify some constraints and possibilities acting upon the subject positions performed by young women in schools. Lee Smith will then report on whether a group of young women from two New Zealand secondary schools took up and/or resisted the cultural construction of the school formal as a space of mythical heterosexual romance. She will document the young women's formal preparations and report on whether they saw beauty work as a necessary component of the night. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of how the young women's conceptualisations of the formal and their beauty work practices 'fitted' with traditional discourses of femininity and/or the "can do girl" (Harris, 10).

**Dr Lee Smith** completed her PhD, titled "Gender and the School Formal." She is currently co-editing a book titled: *Querying Education in Aotearoa: Contemporary Studies of Heteronormativity in New Zealand Education*. Her published works include: Pega, F., Smith, L.A., Hamilton, T. and Summerfield, S., *Factors Increasing and Decreasing Binge Drinking in Young People Attracted to More than One Gender: A Qualitative Study of Focus Groups* (Wellington: Department of Public Health, University of Otago, 2012); Smith, L. A., Nairn, K. and Sandretto, S., "Heteronormativity and Hegemonic Masculinity at the New Zealand School Formal," *Gender, Place & Culture* (under submission).

**Kim Brown** is studying for her MA (Education) at the College of Education, University of Otago, with a focus on: when schools strive to achieve excellence for all, how do children make sense of their learning and their identities as learners? Co-authored works include: Brown, K., Nairn, K., van der Meer, J. and Scott, C., "We

Are Not Teachers or Are We?’ Negotiating Roles in PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions),” *HERDSA* (under submission).

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**Bradley Watson**

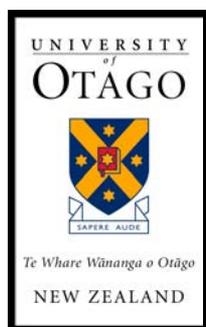
### **Competing Expectations: Reconsidering the Samoan Woman’s Body in Tusiata Avia’s Poetry**

With the arrival of papalagi (foreigners) into the Pacific in the late eighteenth century, the way women of the Pacific have considered their bodies—and have had their bodies considered—has become a complex negotiation. Framed by the colonial gaze—a gaze that is both scopophilic and heteronormative—the Samoan woman has been seen by outsiders as a promiscuous and sexual body. In contrast, and perhaps ironically, with the colonial introduction of Christianity, Samoan men and women have approached the Samoan woman’s body as a virginal one, where any form of sexualisation is considered taboo. This paper explores these competing approaches to the body of the Samoan woman through a historical and literary lens. It focuses primarily on how New Zealand born poet of Samoan descent, Tusiata Avia, negotiates representations of the body in her poetry. I argue that Avia’s performative poetics gives a voice to the Samoan woman while successfully balancing competing colonial and Samoan approaches, shifting the body away from past expectations and into a contemporary context. The paper highlights how gender and postcolonial issues intersect in Avia’s poetry, offering an alternative cross-cultural understanding of how the contemporary Samoan woman negotiates her body. Furthermore, in a broader sense, the paper addresses the slow rate at which gender issues have been, and continue to be, considered in the Pacific.

**Bradley Watson** is completing his MA in English at the University of Otago. His thesis considers how Pacific women poets renegotiate their bodies within colonial and Pacific stereotypes, and how this renegotiation intersects with art and across other forms of media. His past research has also considered how African American cultural identity is developed across media – specifically within the genre and medium of hip hop music. His research interests include cross-cultural studies, New Zealand and Pacific literature, multimedia, gender and postcolonialism.

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