



8th Edition: Global Congress on

Gender and Sexuality Studies

September 08-10, 2025

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PROCEEDING BOOK

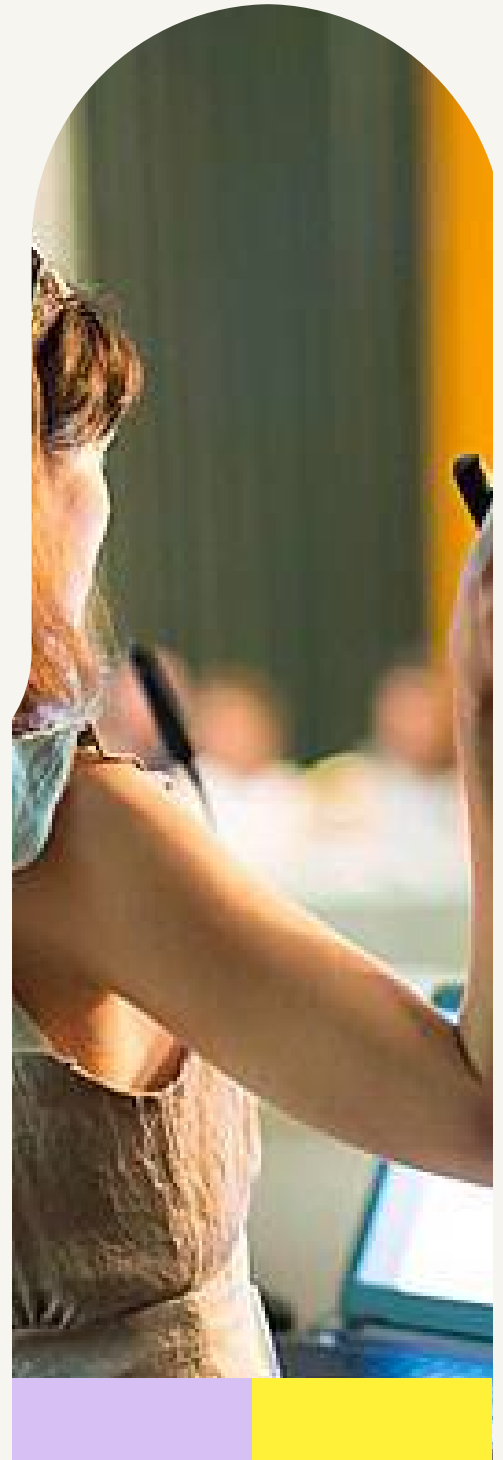


Introduction

The Gender and Sexuality Conference 2025, organized by the Sciinov Group, was successfully held on September 08-10, 2025. This two-day event brought together experts, scholars, activists, and thought leaders from around the world to discuss a wide range of topics related to gender, sexuality, and their intersections with social, cultural, and political issues.

The event provided a platform for both established and emerging voices, with participants from diverse backgrounds contributing to dynamic conversations about the evolving understanding of gender and sexuality in today's world. The Sciinov Group was proud to host this inspiring and impactful conference, which not only highlighted critical issues but also offered hope and actionable solutions for a more inclusive future.

Keynote Presentations



Human Rights of the Third Gender in India: Beyond the Binary

Dr Lopamudra Sengupta

Bangabasi College, University of Calcutta.



Abstract:

This book centres on the discussion of the present condition of transgender persons in India. The presence of tritiya prakriti, or third gender, was not unknown in ancient India or in the medieval period. However, treatment towards persons belonging to the non-binary category grossly differed in the socio-cultural context of South Asia, which emphasised the importance of the community and not the individuals as bearers of the rights. In this discussion, an attempt will be made to expose the sufferings that individual in non-binary categories have undergone and the resistance they have put forward in claiming back their legal entitlements. However, this book traces the journey of the transgender persons popularly known as the hijras in India. From 'Invisibles', as referred to by Zia Jaffrey in her book, the journey of visibility became the concern of utmost importance. This book traces this complex journey and analyses how the State, Media, and other Non Governmental organisations have played an important role as agencies in creating a positive impact in bringing out this visibility.

The most important question that needs to be addressed at this moment is whether the changes that have occurred in India since the 1990s are a long-term phenomenon, are they sustainable, and is it all inclusive? Will the marginalized communities in the global South be able to overcome the challenges that the socio-cultural realities of this country have posed? The book tries to find out these answers from the narratives of Trans persons and the difficulties they face at this moment. It captures the different shifts that have taken place and explores the new pathways that are striking a balance between globalisation and regional or local realities.

Biography:

Dr. Lopamudra Sengupta is an Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science at Bangabasi College, Calcutta University. Her areas of specialization are Human Rights, Gender Studies, and Sustainable Development in South Asia. She is associated with the transgender movement in Kolkata for more than two decades and is former member of the West Bengal Transgender Persons Development Board. She received the best paper award at the second National Conference on Politics and Governance, at India International Centre, New Delhi, in 2014. She also received the best paper presentation award at the First World Asian Studies Conference, Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 2015.

She is the recipient of the prestigious Shastri Indo-Canadian Publication Grant (SPG 2019, New Delhi) for her monograph *Beyond the Binary: The Third Gender in India* published by Routledge in 2023. Dr. Lopamudra Sengupta received UGC Travel Grant, in 2018-2019 for presenting her paper in Toronto, Canada in July 2018 organized by International Sociological Conference. She has been awarded a grant for a major research project and is working as the Project Director in the project on Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development of the rural artisans in West Bengal by the Indian Council of Social Science Research and Ministry of Human Resource Development. (MHRD, New Delhi)

How Breast Cancer Glitched my Body, my Self, and my Work as an Academic

Dorothy Woodman

University of Alberta, Canada.



Abstract:

How is a breastless site more rather than less? Paul Preciado argues that “A sexual organ is any organ (inorganic or organic) that has the capacity to channel the potentia gaudendi through a nervous system connecting a living body to its exteriority or by producing a network of bodies and machines” (Preciado 2018, 12). This potential goes beyond the merely legible. In my stage three breast cancer, glitched cells colonized my body, rendering my left breast a cratered moonscape, a haunting absence. It glitched my time, creating what I considered a temporary disruption. It settled me into academic work on breast cancer as distinct from my own body; it was the work of the mind, a performance of competency. The power of “the glitch” lies in its “incessant cutting and stitching, breaking and healing” (Russell 2020, Chapter 5). Healing, no longer an endpoint, but “always on the move” (Russell 2020, Chapter 2), enfolded bodies, both mine and those in the texts I read in a movement of discovery with new anti-diagnostics and prognoses as potentia. Breast cancer becomes the channel for networking with stories of power gender as glitch: in Marvel’s Jane Foster/Thor character (see Weibe and Woodman) and in trans imaginaries like Bishak Som’s Apsara Engine. A superhero glitched with breast cancer and a trans graphic artist glitching bodies and lived-in spaces. Breast cancer has opened me to consider how the glitched, in breast cancer and queer bodies, creates Braidotti’s potestas and potentia through the disruptive power of glitching. Whereas breast cancer created a glitch in time, I could now understand my body affected by it as empowered to glitch while being glitched. Breast cancer has impacted not just what I research, but how I do it. Gender is glitched by breast cancer to create potential avenues of exploration; it opens texts to consider gender as power by building upon Foucault and Butler as seen through Russell, Preciado and Braidotti.

This talk will focus on excerpts from the chapter in the following work:

(BC) Breast Cancer in the Academy: Critical Identities, Connective Agencies, and Pedagogies of Change (COLLECTIVE WORK), edited by Wendy K.Z. Anderson and Tehmina Pirzada (EDITOR), under advance contract with Rutgers University Press.

Biography:

Dorothy Woodman has a PHD in English Literature and is a Full Lecturer at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta. She has publications in medical narratives and body politics topics, utilizing intersectional, queer, and feminist theories. Her major publication, *The Cancer Plot: Terminal Immortality in Marvel’s Moral Universe* (U of Alberta P, 2023), is a co-authored work with Reginald Weibe (Concordia University in Edmonton),

Challenges and Opportunities from Past to Present. Exemplary Case Studies of the Roman de Silence and Mauritius von Craûn

Albrecht Classen

University of Arizona, USA.



Abstract:

Gender is, as we all know, a social category, not a biological one. Contrary to many expectations, in the pre-modern period, numerous women were able to turn into powerful poets and made their voices heard. Those were both religious/mystical writers (Hildegard of Bingen) and secular poets (Marie de France). This paper introduces an entire cohort of highly self-conscious and influential female writers from across Europe who managed to carve out a niche in literature for their own purposes, and this quite contrary to common notions in modern perceptions.

Biography:

ALBRECHT CLASSEN received his Ph.D. from the University of Virginia in 1986. He has a broad range of research interests covering the history of German and European literature from about 800 to 1600. He has currently published 132 books and well over 800 articles dealing with comparative issues, gender topics, environmental concerns, and cultural historical themes. Most recently appeared *Prostitution in Medieval and Early Modern Literature* (2021), *Charlemagne in Medieval German and Dutch Literature* (2021), *Tracing the Trails in the Medieval World* (2021), *Wisdom from the European Middle Ages* (2022), *The Secret in Medieval Literature* (2022), *Globalism in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age* (ed., 2023), and *Der Niederrheinische Orientbericht, c. 1350* (trans., 2024). A new book on court criticism and of evil kings in medieval literature appeared in 2024. In 2017, he received the rank of Grand Knight Commander of the Most Noble Order of the Three Lions.

Standing Up to Yale University's Silencing of Women, and Title IX Civil Rights Non-Compliance Contributed to Two Preventable Campus Murders

Susan Daria Landino

Director, Allies Reaching for Equality (A.R.E.), USA.



Abstract:

We started at Yale University with high hopes, Suzanne Jovin as an undergraduate in 1995, me in the Vice President's office in 1999, and Annie Le in a bio-med PhD program in 2007. We alerted the university to our concerns. Suzanne complained about an alleged assailant; Annie complained about her lab tech who could sabotage her research subjects. Suzanne went to a female dean, crying, contemplating filing a formal complaint. Annie complained about her lab tech. Suzanne and Annie lost their lives as they remained in harm's way. Yale, with its broken system for reporting sexual misconduct did nothing to respond to Suzanne and Annie when they reported the harassing behavior. Both women were murdered shortly after their complaints. While supporting students reporting sexual misconduct, I caught Yale falsifying crime statistics, and then the Vice President's office turned its powerful wrath on me, stopping my efforts to help students stay safe – but I am the lucky one, here to tell this story.

The story includes witnessing Yale's Title IX and Clery Act illegal practices that impacted students' civil rights in the aftermath of sexual assault. After trying to escape the retaliation and being rejected from 110 campus jobs, and suffering workplace violence, I became an informant for the federal government in its investigation of Yale. Ultimately, I was marched off campus like a criminal. Later, I filed the first non-sports-related Jackson v Birmingham Title IX retaliation complaint, Burhans v Yale, and prevailed.

Biography:

Susan Daria Landino attended Manhattanville College, Oxford University and received an M.A. from the University of Connecticut. She worked in news broadcasting, the film industry in California, and began working in the Vice President's office at Yale University in 1999.

Landino developed a new legal remedy after assisting dozens of scholars with individual Title IX complaints. She has employed the False Claims Act to empower plaintiffs as a group to file complaints against universities that allow systemic Title IX non-compliance while receiving federal funds. The legal complaint alleges that Yale University deliberately disregarded Title IX while receiving billions in federal funds.

SportsCrit: Disrupting The Field - Reframing Gender, Race, And Power In Athletic

Gyasmine George Williams

Cal Poly Pomona, USA.



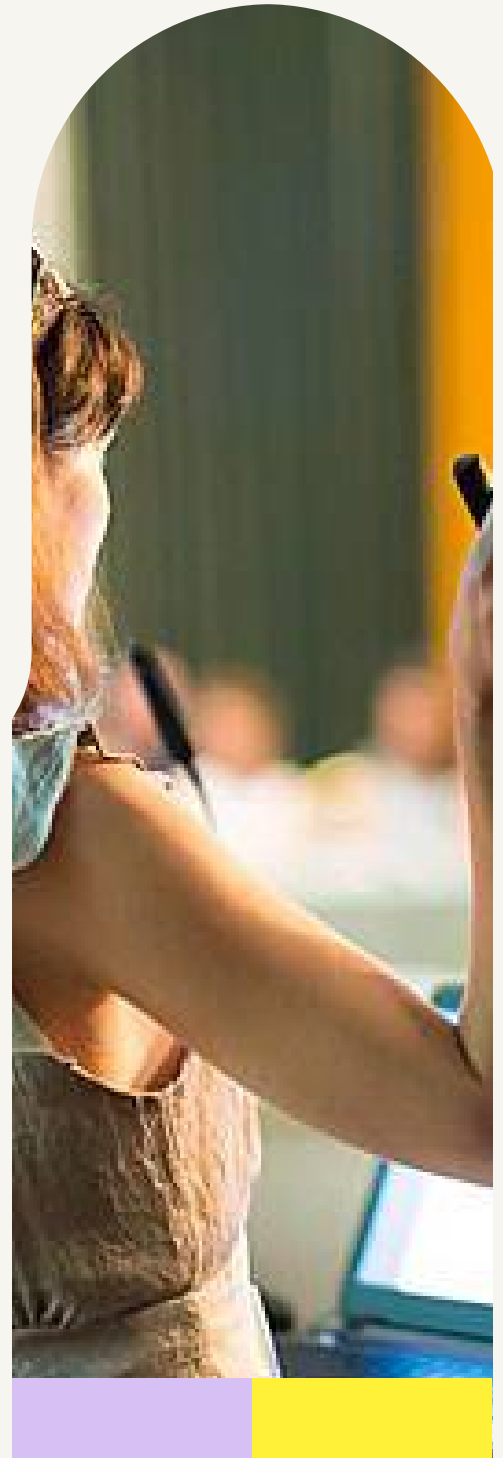
Abstract:

In the ever-evolving landscape of sports, issues of gender, sexuality, and race continue to be both amplified and marginalized. As a scholar-activist and creator of SportsCrit™, I introduce a revolutionary pedagogical framework integrating Critical Race Theory, ethnic studies, and Black athlete activism to interrogate and transform sports education and practice. This keynote will explore how sports are not neutral spaces but deeply embedded sites of systemic inequities from gendered pay disparities and media framing of women athletes to the intersectional marginalization of LGBTQ+ and non-binary athletes of color. I will challenge attendees to disrupt traditional narratives, reframe how we view power dynamics in sports and rewrite the playbook for inclusivity and equity. Through critical case studies, athlete narratives, and media analysis, this keynote will offer actionable strategies for educators, researchers, and activists to foster intersectional advocacy in athletic spaces. Join me in envisioning a sporting world where gender, race, and sexuality are not barriers but sources of strength and leadership.

Biography:

Dr. Gyasmine George-Williams, affectionately known as Dr. G., is an Assistant Professor of Race, Sport, and Social Justice in the Department of Kinesiology and Health Promotion at Cal Poly Pomona in the United States. Dr. G is a scholar-activist, educator, and the visionary creator of SportsCrit™ an interdisciplinary pedagogical framework that fuses Critical Race Theory, ethnic studies, and Black athlete activism to challenge and transform racial, gendered, and power dynamics in sports. She has dedicated her career to disrupting inequities in sports education and fostering spaces where marginalized voices are centered, celebrated, and empowered. Her groundbreaking research and curriculum design has been featured in national conferences, symposia, and academic journals, including her recent works *From the Field to the Frontlines: Exploring Activism Through the Lens of The Black Athlete Activist Leadership Model (BAAL)* in Oxford University Press, and the *Activist Tiered Systems of Support (ATSS) Framework: An Ecosystem of Care and Well-Being for Student and Athlete Activists*, published in the *Sport Social Work Journal*. Dr. G.'s forthcoming book, *Teaching the Tough Plays: The SportsCrit™ Pedagogy for Equity in Sports Education*, offers educators and practitioners actionable tools to interrogate systems of oppression and cultivate liberatory spaces for athletes. Her work bridges academia, activism, and community engagement, making her a leading voice in the movement for gender and racial justice in athletics and beyond.

Oral Presentations



Women in China to Rejuvenate the Nation by Reproducing More: Is “Mom’s Job” the Answer?

Usha Chandran

Jawaharlal Nehru University, India.

Abstract:

In view of the increasingly evident demographic imbalance in China in the recent past, women are seen as vital and indispensable in solving the issue of birth-rate due to their reproductive ability. Women are to play an important role in the national rejuvenation drive by birthing the new generation of the Chinese people. Women’s social role as wives and mothers has resulted in their economic role as secondary earners, as a result family obligations are seen as one of the biggest obstacles in women’s work. This paper evaluates the link between women’s familial, social and political role in contemporary China, by applying Social Role Theory to establish women’s social role and Expectation States Theory, to discuss its connection with women’s economic and political roles.

The paper argues that attempts to reiterate traditional mindset of seeing women merely as “mothers”, reflects the continuing androcentric approach of the authorities in viewing women’s “bodies” as “wombs” used for nation building, right from ‘One Child Policy’ to ‘Three Child Policy’. Parallely, there seems to be a systematic attempt to legalise and formalise the already existing practice of gender discrimination at work and recruitment so as to urge women to focus on marrying, birthing and bringing up children. The paper concludes that the concept of “mom jobs” and other perks and incentives for birthing and childcare are attempts to distract or silence women, indirectly pushing them to “go back home”, opposite to Mao’s attempt of pulling them “outside the four walls of the house”.

Biography:

Dr Usha Chandran, Assistant Professor, Centre for Chinese and South East Asian Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, holds a PhD in Chinese from JNU. Her research interests include gender discrimination at work and other gender issues in China and comparison with India, interface between gender and language as well as popular culture and women’s subjectivity in literature. Presented papers in India and China, publications include authored book (due Aug 2025), two edited volumes (due 2025-26), all three by Routledge, as well as nine book chapters and journal papers.

Exploring the Accessibility of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for Persons with Disabilities in South Africa

Zimkitha Mahlangu

Durban University of Technology, South Africa.

Abstract:

Access to sexual and reproductive health is a challenge for persons with disabilities despite the policies and legislation that have been developed. This paper explores the accessibility of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services for persons with disabilities in South Africa through the lens of the social model of disability. The social model emphasizes that disability is not merely a result of an individual's impairments but a consequence of societal barriers, including inaccessible environments, discriminatory attitudes, and exclusionary practices. Despite South Africa's progressive policies, persons with disabilities continue to face significant challenges in accessing SRH services. These barriers include physical inaccessibility of healthcare facilities, inadequate staff training, negative societal perceptions, and a lack of tailored information for individuals with disabilities. The social model highlights how these systemic issues, rather than individual impairments, prevent persons with disabilities from enjoying their sexual and reproductive rights. Using the qualitative secondary data, the paper advocates for a shift in healthcare policies and practices, calling for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in SRH programs, the improvement of healthcare infrastructure, and the promotion of positive societal attitudes towards the sexuality of people with disabilities. It also emphasizes the need for comprehensive training for healthcare providers and establishing support networks to facilitate better access to SRH services. By addressing the structural barriers through a social model approach, South Africa can move closer to achieving equitable SRH access for all.

Biography:

Dr Zimkitha Mahlangu is an emerging researcher and a Postdoctoral Fellow at the International Centre of Nonviolence (ICON) at DUT, with a PhD in Community Development from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. Dr Mahlangu has experience in NGOs, public service and higher education. She has published journal articles and submitted numerous book chapters. Moreover, she has presented her research at several national and international conferences. Her research interest is on social justice, intersectionality, community development, and peacebuilding.

Gender studies, ancient society and roman law: an overview

Arnaud Paturet

CNRS, Center for Theory and Analysis of Law École Normale Supérieure, France.

Abstract:

For a long time, Roman history, taken in its social and legal aspects, was written as a history of males, before Women's Studies and very recently Gender Studies tried to re-established a kind of balance, even if this last field is still little explored by law historians. The hierarchical structure of Roman society - reputed to have been highly macho - was not necessarily based on a simple sex relationship but on agender relationship in which the individual's biological sex was not enough to fix his or her identity. Actually, many criteria relating to bodily attitudes in the broad sense (body language, clothing, hygiene, morality, personality etc.) were ultimately more important in assessing an individual's sexual identity. In this complex social game, the Romans could consider the existence of a *tertium genus hominum* (third form of human) between man and woman. In line with a detailed social analysis and the idea that law is an extension of social culture according to many anthropologists, we have to consider that interpretation of legal texts would require the use of a specific reading grid to assess their gendered issue. Through the exegesis of some roman legal texts relating to public and private spheres organization, we will illustrate how a gender-specific reading grid could possibly refine our knowledge of Roman law and roman society in general. We can see that legal system considers an identity in line with biological sex as observed in the treatment of specific legal cases. The latter remains marked by the binarity of the sexes, in a rigid categorization that legal operators have never succeeded in overcoming, and which has served as a matrix for subsequent legal systems during European legal history.

Biography:

Trained as a privatist lawyer and antiquarian historian, Arnaud Paturet is a researcher at the CNRS (UMR 7074 Centre de théorie et analyse du droit/ Nanterre University-École normale supérieure) and teaches in various Universities (ENS, Centre national de la fonction publique territoriale, École nationale supérieure de Police, Institut du travail social de la région Auvergne, Université Clermont-Auvergne).

As a jurist and legal historian, he is particularly interested in Roman law as a historical discipline, but also in its projection as a matrix of Western law and modern mental images. His main research themes are death and funeral rituals, suicide, legal concepts and categories, religion, slavery, bodies, gender differentiation, disability, the figure of the father, etc developed in many books and articles. They reveal a strong societal connotation that goes beyond legal technique. These works are conducted in compliance with an original method combining historical sociology/ anthropology and legal sciences.

The rise of transphobia and the targeting of trans youth in conservative political discourse in Canada and the US and the implications for trans youth of restoring biological sexual binaries as “supposed reality”

Mirela Violeta David

University of Saskatchewan, Canada.

Abstract:

In Canada several provinces passed provincial laws that limited the freedom of gender expression for trans youth. Saskatchewan passed a controversial law The Parents’ Bill of Rights in 2023 not allowing students in K12 classrooms to use another pronoun that aligns with their gender identity without parental consent. As a result of this law sex education by third party organizations such as the Saskatoon Sexual Assault Center or Out Saskatoon have been barred from K12 classrooms. This was followed by similar laws in Alberta and New Brunswick. During the provincial election the acting premier Scott Moe pledged the first thing he will do if re-elected would be to ban boys from girls’ locker rooms. This galvanized his support in rural areas, and he narrowly won re-election.

During the presidential campaign Donald Trump promoted transphobic discourse equating gender-affirming surgery for minors as “child sexual mutilation” or child molestation, and the RNC launched expensive campaign adds targeting trans youth. These transphobic discourses galvanized the religious right and were very successful in helping Trump get re-elected. President Trump signed a series of executive orders targeting transgender youth ending federal funding for gender affirming care, banning trans athletes from women’s sports. In his first address to congress despite having upended the international security and economy order, Trump chose to emphasize these transphobic executive orders. Under the guise of defending women from gender ideology President Trump also signed an executive order to supposedly restore the biological reality of sex, restoring the man/woman binary as the only two genders acknowledged and thus undoing decades of gender progress that gender theorists have made in separating sex from gender. This paper explores the implications for trans youth of such right-wing policies in Canada and the US and considers how we teach students in women and gender studies programs about these divisive issues in the age of an attack on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Biography:

My research is situated at the intersection of Modern Chinese history, gender history, intellectual and cultural history and medical history. I am interested in different forms of eugenics in praxis, in particular birth control praxis and venereal disease policies in 1930s China. I am also interested how different ideas pertaining to eugenics insert themselves by means of translation into other debates on love, birth control, population and sexology in 1920s Chinese women’s magazines.

French Development Aid Matrix: Decolonizing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Representations

Ange Meralli

Ballou HIV - UNAIDS Regional, Senegal.

Abstract:

Gender studies have become increasingly visible in France and are now widely applied to the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) field. In contrast, decolonial perspectives remain largely absent from French strategies, research, and operational practices, despite their relevance at a time when national identity and self-representation are under intense political debate. Addressing the colonial matrix that continues to shape French institutions and external relations challenges dominant narratives of meritocracy and universalism, as well as the power dynamics linked to gender, race, and class.

From the situated perspective of a racialized, French woman from an overseas territory with nearly fifteen years of experience working on SRHR and HIV, this paper examines how colonial legacies sustain an “epistemology of ignorance.” Through mechanisms of racialization, ethnicization, and subalternity, SRHR norms and knowledge production are shaped by practices of objectification and by representations that systematically erase or marginalize certain voices. These “representations of absence” reinforce unequal power relations both within France and in its interactions with the Global South.

By questioning the universality of SRHR models and highlighting the need to decolonize unconscious frameworks, the paper calls for new ways of thinking and acting that acknowledge creolization, plural epistemologies, and the urgency of transforming knowledge and power relations.

Biography:

Ange MERALLI BALLOU holds several Master's degrees in International Humanitarian and Criminal Law, International Relations, Humanitarian Project Management and MBA and UD in Gender Practices and Public Health. As a Public Health Advisor at the UNAIDS Regional Office in West, Central and Northern Africa, she supports feminist and community-based governments, IOs, NGOs and CSOs to strengthen the right / access to health services and the reduction of inequalities. Her areas of expertise revolve around sexual and reproductive rights, gender inequalities and the class, race, domination intersection in emergency and development contexts.

Female Friendship at the Medici Court of Vittoria della Rovere

Adelina Modesti

University of Melbourne, Australia.

Abstract:

What characterizes friendship between women in early modern Europe, especially for a female ruler? Loyalty, fidelity, commitment, diplomacy, empathy, trust, bonds of reciprocity, of affection, of kinship? How does female friendship or collaboration impact on patronage and the arts, or on international diplomacy? This paper will explore these questions through an examination of the friendships and cultural collaborations that Maria Vittoria Leonora Feltria della Rovere (1622-1694), Princess of Urbino and Grand Duchess of Tuscany, developed with women at her court in Medicean Florence. The grand duchess also developed strong friendships and extensive networks with women throughout Italy and the Continent, from her ladies-in-waiting and nuns to noblewomen and royalty. With many of these, Vittoria maintained life-long relationships, deploying them as agents in her many cultural and diplomatic endeavors: as personal secretary, administrator and ambassador, as a purchaser of portraits from Rome or Turin, as buyer of clothing and luxury goods from France, and as chaperone for her ladies-in-waiting on their journeys to other cities or countries in pursuit of their own creative endeavors. Indeed, much of Vittoria's life can be defined by her relationships with women, from her widowed mother, grandmothers, her aunt and future mother-in-law, to the sisters, novices, students, and other female members of the Medici family at La Crocetta, the convent where the young girl resided in Florence. Once grand duchess, Vittoria proved to be a generous benefactor, protecting women from abusive husbands and relatives, educating them in female colleges and convents, or promoting them as writers, singers, and artists at her own gynocentric court.

Biography:

Former Lecturer in Theory and History of Art and Design at Monash University, Adelina Modesti is Honorary Senior Fellow in Art History in the School of Culture and Communication, University of Melbourne, researching early modern women's cultural production, material culture, and female patronage. With Consuelo Lollobrigida (University of Arkansas Rome Center) she convenes the Annual International Women in the Arts Conference and is co-editor of the Brepols series Women and Gender in the Arts: New Horizons. Her most recent publications include *Elisabetta Sirani* (Lund Humphries/Getty Publications, 2023) and *Women's Patronage and Gendered Cultural Networks in Early Modern Europe. Vittoria della Rovere, Grand Duchess of Tuscany* (Routledge, 2020).

Single men and gender relations

Ketaki Chowkhani

Manipal Academy of Higher Education, India.

Abstract:

There is very little research on single men in India. “Who is a cool dude in school?” I asked my undergraduate students in a class on gender studies. Apart from the usual replies of strong, successful, macho, I was also told the cool dude is someone who has a girlfriend and hence is seen as superior to the rest of his classmates. “Uski bandi hai (he has a girl)” chimed in another student. This points to the heterosexual imaginary (Ingraham), but more importantly to the ‘romantic imaginary’ and ‘compulsory coupledness’ (Wilkinson) that govern the lives of boys and men in India and around the world in late modernity (Wilkinson). If having a girlfriend/wife/partner makes a man a cool dude, what does being single make him? Stereotypes abound about the single man globally, ranging from the stud, the ‘free man’ to the criminal, the creepy uncle, the loner, the mamma’s boy, the one who had a ‘love failure’ and never recovered from it. Some of these stereotypes might be true, but they don’t necessarily apply to all men who are single, especially not to the ones who are single by choice and single by heart. What kind of masculinity do these kinds of single men demonstrate, and what does that then tell us about gender relations and gender equality?

Drawing from 30 interviews with single by choice men in India, I rethink the category of the ‘friend zone’ and what single men’s relationship is with women and other men. This will point to how single men are not only redoing masculinity, but contributing to the debate on gender equality.

Biography:

Dr Ketaki Chowkhani is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Manipal Institute of Social Sciences Humanities and Arts, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal, where she teaches India’s first ever course on Singles Studies. She is author of *The Limits of Sexuality Education: Love, Sex, and Adolescent Masculinities in Urban India* and co editor of *Singular Selves: An Introduction to Singles Studies*, both published by Routledge in 2024. She is an avid birder and swimmer.

Exploring the Intersections of Gender and Sexuality: Rushed marriages during COVID – 19 and beyond

Kanchan Mathur

Institute of Development Studies, India.

Abstract:

The COVID-19 pandemic precipitated profound disruptions in social, economic, and familial structures across India. Among its lesser-studied consequences was a surge in rushed marriages, particularly affecting adolescent girls and young women (AGYW). This paper, draws on field research from four states of India to interrogate how the pandemic intensified patriarchal anxieties around sexuality, family honour, and women's roles within marriage. By situating rushed marriages at the intersection of gender, sexuality, and crisis governance, the paper demonstrates how social control over young women's bodies and choices was both reinforced and legitimized during COVID-19. The analysis highlights how notions of protection, morality, and economic survival intersected to justify early and forced unions, often curtailing girls' education and autonomy. Closure of schools particularly meant that girls were out of the protective net of school, raising fears for their physical safety and concerns about threats to their sexual purity and, consequently, izzat, 'family honour,' parents also saw marriage as a tool to protect their daughters against unwanted advances and sexual abuse. The paper argues that there is an urgent need to avoid past pitfalls and instead transform the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic into better support for adolescents, especially girls and young women being pushed into rushed marriages. Further, it examines how these practices persist in the post-pandemic moment, raising urgent questions about rights, agency, and long-term wellbeing. In doing so, the study contributes to feminist scholarship on marriage and sexuality, while foregrounding survivor voices to advocate for community-centric and policy-level interventions.

Biography:

Kanchan Mathur is a senior feminist researcher and gender specialist with over 35 years of experience. Formerly the Officiating Director of the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur, she has held key roles at national and international institutions, including a Visiting Fellowship at IDS Sussex and leading the Women's Resource Centre at RIPA. Her work focuses on women's rights, gender-based violence, and inclusion, with extensive publications including the book *Countering gender Violence: Initiatives towards collective action in Rajasthan* (Sage 2004). She has led major national studies on WASH, education of marginalized girls, sexual and reproductive health and impact of COVID-19 on women and girls.

Fatherhood 2.0: Exploring the Masculinity of stay-at-home fathers in Urban India

Suvangee Gupta

Manipal Centre for Humanities, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, India.

Abstract:

This paper aims to examine the gender performance of stay-at-home fathers in India. India has lacked extensive research on a man's masculinity when he becomes a father, especially if he is a stay-at-home, unemployed father. A very restrictive hetero patriarchal family set-up has always seen fathers as the breadwinners of the family, while the mother stays at home and takes care of the domestic sphere. But what happens if the father makes a conscious choice of not being employed and staying at home in order to take care of the children? How does this affect the family dynamics? How does this impact his masculinity and his gender performance? And more importantly, is society as accepting of a stay-at-home father as it is in case of a stay-at-home mother? This research is located within the larger framework of masculinity studies, family studies and care-work. It reflects on a man's masculinity and his gender performance when he chooses to be a stay-at-home father in order to take care of his children. This paper tries to explain a man's masculinity as a social construct, shaped by a multitude of factors. In doing so, it brings in references from the theory of gender performativity by Judith Butler. Central to this theory is the idea that an individual's gender is a fluid, non-essentialist construct which is shaped by her/his embodied experiences and symbolic representations. This paper also delves deep into the man's experience as a stay-at-home father and how he looks at fatherhood. Since this paper is on fatherhood and masculinity, it also references Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity. This research is solely based on the Indian context and, it will examine the urban middle-class men. In short, this paper aims to look at fatherhood and domestic masculinity in India.

Biography:

Suvangee Gupta is a PhD candidate of Sociology at Manipal Academy of Higher Education. Her area of interests are Sociology of Gender and Sexuality and Masculinity Studies and her topic for research is Fatherhood 2.0 : Exploring the Masculinities of stay-at-home fathers in Urban India.

Hybrid Identities in *Homeland Elegies* (2020) by Ayad Akhtar and *The Parisian* (2019) by Isabella Hammad

Walid Abdallah Rezk

Rezk Suez University, Egypt.

Abstract:

Both *Homeland Elegies* (2020) by Ayad Akhtar and *The Parisian* (2019) by Isabella Hammad are novels that explore themes of identity, belonging, and cultural displacement against historical backdrops (modern America and early 20th-century Palestine respectively). Both novels delve deep into the complexities of cultural identity and the struggles of characters who navigate between different cultural worlds. In *Homeland Elegies*, Akhtar reflects on being a Pakistani American in contemporary America, while Hammad's *The Parisian* explores the identity crisis of a young Palestinian man studying in France. These novels will be analyzed through a diaspora studies framework to illuminate the complexities of identity, belonging, and displacement within contemporary literary narratives.

Biography:

Dr. Walid Abdallah Rezk is an esteemed Egyptian academic specializing in English language and comparative literature. A native Arabic speaker, Dr. Walid earned his PhD in English and comparative literature, focusing on the intersections of modern Arabic, English, and American literature. With over fifteen years of experience in higher education, he has established himself as a respected English teacher and scholar. Currently, Dr. Walid serves as an assistant professor at the Faculty of Arts, Suez University, where he imparts knowledge on grammar, composition, and comparative literature. Dr. Walid is a prolific researcher and author, having published numerous research papers and books that bridge the cultural and literary gaps between the East and West. His notable work includes "Escape to the Realm of Imagination," a comparative study of the works of Tawfiq Al-Hakim and Jack London. He has also collaborated with American poet Andy Fogle on translating Arabic poems into English, winning the RHINO POETRY prize in 2015.

Gendered Harms in the Digital Era: AI and Algorithms as Fuel for Sexual Violence against Women

Catia Pontedeira

University of Maia (CIEG/ISCSP) & University of Minho, Portugal.

Abstract:

Sexual violence has long been recognised as a pervasive form of gender-based violence, yet the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) introduces new layers of complexity to how it manifests, is concealed, and potentially amplified. Generative AI technologies, in particular, open pathways for creating non-consensual sexual content, manipulating intimate images, facilitating online harassment, and expanding the reach of sexual exploitation. This paper offers a critical literature review of the intersections between AI and sexual violence, drawing from criminological and feminist perspectives. Instead of examining technical functionalities, our focus is on the implications of AI integration. We analyse how AI may reinforce structural gender inequalities, render experiences of sexual violence invisible, and generate new opportunities for perpetrators—such as deepfake pornography, automated grooming, and surveillance-based coercion. At the same time, we reflect on how AI is being positioned as a potential tool for prevention and detection, including predictive policing, content moderation, and digital evidence collection, while questioning the risks of bias, accountability gaps, and lack of gender-sensitive frameworks. By synthesising emerging research, we aim to highlight both the threats and possibilities that AI poses in the context of sexual violence. This paper will be of interest to conference participants concerned with the ethical, legal, and criminological challenges of digital technologies, gender and sexuality and with developing critical approaches to ensure that AI does not become complicit in reproducing or escalating sexual violence.

Biography:

Cátia Pontedeira has an European Criminology PhD. She is currently a Professor at the University of Maia and the University of Minho at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in Criminology. She is an integrated member of the Interdisciplinary Center for Gender Studies, Higher Institute of Social and Political Sciences of the University of Lisbon (CIEG/ISCSP-ULisboa). Catia conducted several studies for the European Institute for Gender Equality as coordinator and contributed as Senior Researcher. She was also a researcher of more than 15 international projects with competitive funds. She contributed to more than 75 training actions for frontline professionals and has had numerous media appearances, mostly related to gender-based violence, in different media outlets in Portugal. She is a member of the Observatory of Murdered Women (OMA-UMAR), and researcher of the European Observatory of Femicide. With an extensive network in Criminology, Cátia has contributed to several books, manuals and papers. Main areas of interest are: intimate partner homicide, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual crimes, sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence, prevention of violence and sentencing studies

Beyond Boundaries: Unveiling the Intersectional Challenges of Arab Women in UK Academia

Noor Tazka

University of Warwick, United Kingdom.

Abstract:

Arab women remain critically underrepresented in UK academia, where their identities intersect across gender, race, religion, and migration in ways often overlooked in mainstream feminist and postcolonial scholarship. Despite growing attention to diversity in higher education, limited research addresses the lived experiences of Arab women navigating these spaces. This study fills that gap by introducing a decolonial and feminist reinterpretation of Mestiza Consciousness to theorize the complexities of belonging, hypervisibility, and exclusion among Arab women scholars in the UK.

Drawing on qualitative narratives and intersectional analysis, the research demonstrates how Arab women face microaggressions, tokenism, and systemic bias while simultaneously resisting erasure by asserting their identities unapologetically. The study contributes an unprecedented lens for understanding Arab women's academic trajectories, showing that their resilience and collective practices are not simply acts of survival but forms of resistance that reimagine inclusion beyond tokenistic diversity.

The findings highlight that belonging is not about assimilation but about reshaping academic structures to reflect the multiplicity of marginalized identities. By bridging feminist, decolonial, and Arab diasporic perspectives, this thesis offers both theoretical innovation and practical implications for higher education policy and leadership. It establishes a foundation for future research that amplifies Arab women's voices and contributes to broader movements of decolonizing academia.

Biography:

Noor Tazka recently completed her Master's in Gender and International Development at the University of Warwick, where her dissertation received the highest mark in feminist and gender studies. A Syrian feminist researcher, she has extensive experience in teaching, social entrepreneurship, and women's empowerment initiatives. Her work focuses on intersectionality, decolonial theory, and Arab women's experiences in diaspora. She is now pursuing opportunities for PhD research and collaboration that challenge dominant narratives and build inclusive futures.

Gender As An Analytical Lens In Pre-Colonial Africa: Toward A Black Feminist Epistemology Of The Cacheu Region (1588–1687)

Letícia Reis

UFMG – Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil.

Abstract:

This study explores gender expectations in pre-colonial African societies, focusing on their social and historical roots. Using Cacheu, a 17th-century West African territory deeply tied to the transatlantic slave trade, as a case study, it examines European travel accounts to understand how local customs, conflicts, and gender dynamics were represented. By critically analyzing these narratives, the research highlights how European views of “Otherness” shaped stereotypes while also uncovering the roles of African gender categories, particularly in textile production and trade.

Through an intersectional approach, the study looks at how stereotypes were constructed while also tracing possible gender roles in Cacheu. Special attention is given to weaving and the participation of both men and women in the textile trade. The research engages with existing literature on African gender studies, especially works by Black African women and queer scholars, to provide a more nuanced view. Its key contribution is showing how gender relations influenced broader social structures, while recognizing that Portuguese sources often imposed a rigid, binary understanding of gender that reflected European moral and cultural biases.

A central feature of this work is treating women as a broader category of analysis rather than focusing only on individual stories. While earlier studies often relied on biographies or case studies, this research aims to build a wider picture of gender relations by connecting them to the movement of people and ideas in Cacheu.

Grounded in African feminist scholarship, particularly from Black, African, and queer voices, the study places gender at the center of analysis. It moves beyond personal stories to show how gender shaped social, moral, and economic life in Cacheu. In doing so, it contributes to a fuller understanding of gender in West African history while challenging Eurocentric views preserved in colonial archives.

Poster Presentations



Urban Dominance in GSA/LGBTQ+ Student Organizations Compared to Rural Spaces.

Jack Hanson

Independent Researcher, USA.

Abstract:

Research has shown that LGBTQ+ youth tend to receive less support in school environments than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. While evidence suggests that supports for LGBTQ+ youth predict positive mental health outcomes, support levels may vary based on geographic factors. Recognizing how LGBTQ+ support changes due to population density may inform political legislation that creates affirming school settings nationally. To explore this, we administered a nationwide survey to LGBTQ+ people aged 13-17 ($M_{age} = 15.552$, $SD_{age} = 1.17$) about their experiences with school support based on genderidentity and sexual orientation. 808 participants were asked if teachers supported their identities, whether they felt safe and accepted given their identities, and whether their schools had Genders and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs)/LGBTQ+ student organizations. Using RUCC scores derived from participants' zip codes, we conducted a multivariate analysis to examine whether rurality predicts LGBTQ+ supports. Results indicated that students who attended schools with an LGBTQ+ student organization were significantly more likely to live in rural areas than urban areas. While this data contradicts assumptions that urban areas would be more likely to have LGBTQ+ student organizations, our findings demonstrate how groups may improve LGBTQ+ youth well-being in rural populations and how targeted policy endeavors may expand resources in these marginalized communities.

Biography:

Jack Hanson, B.M. is a researcher and aspiring clinical psychologist interested in developing anti-suicide and trauma-focused interventions, particularly among LGBTQ+ people. Their research seeks to combine culturally-competent care and evidence-based practices to improve mental well-being. Having studied at New York University and Columbia University, Jack has researched person perception, stereotyping, and bias under Dr. Jon Freeman as well as obsessive-compulsive and related disorders under Dr. Fugen Neziroglu. Currently, Jack works as a 988 Lifeline Counselor, providing support to those in crisis. They plan to improve mechanisms in treatment models, aiming to help people achieve greater mental health outcomes.

Situational Analysis of Gender and Power Barriers Affecting Pregnant Women's Access to Malaria Control Interventions in Ivory Coast

Ekassi Eloundou

Save the Children, Ivory Coast.

Abstract:

The project, which scales up interventions to combat malaria, is a community program that is structured around major axes, the main ones being: vector control, management of simple malaria cases in the community of children under 5 years of age, located more than 5 km from health centers. In the process of implementing the project, the analysis of the main challenges encountered can be summarized as both systemic factors and unfavorable human barriers. The issue of Gender and Power and its influence in the community as a weighting factor in the decision-making process of households in their search for health care still seems far from being addressed. The issue of Gender and Power and its influence in the community as a factor influencing the decision-making process of households in their search for health care still seems far from being addressed. As part of the Global Fund Grant Cycle 7 grant preparation process, the literature review made available by the country team to the various PRs for the drafting of the technical proposal mentioned the need to integrate Ethical, Human Rights, Gender and Equality considerations. The Gender and Power Analysis (GAP) is the result of a literature review and a review of the data collected commissioned by Save the Children to inform a possible “test and learn”, by answering key questions regarding gender and power barriers that affect access and quality of malaria prevention and response among pregnant women and children under 5 years of age in the NFM3 community component implementation areas in Côte d’Ivoire.

Biography:

Ekassi Eloundou is a bilingual Gender Equality Specialist with over seven years of experience advancing gender justice across humanitarian and development contexts in West, Central, and Sahel Africa. She has worked with UN agencies, national governments, and leading international NGOs including Plan International and Save the Children, where she currently serves as Deputy Director of Program Development - Quality and Gender Advisor in Côte d’Ivoire. Her work focuses on embedding gender-transformative approaches within education, health, protection, and governance systems, while championing inclusive policy reforms, feminist leadership, and intersectional strategies. Ekassi is deeply committed to shifting power and amplifying the voices of girls, women, and structurally excluded communities.

Accepted Abstracts



Embracing our Scars: A Radical Approach to Self-Harm Through Lived and Unspoken Experiences

Breana Wiles

Revolutionize Your Soul, USA.

Abstract:

Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) is the deliberate and direct destruction of a person's body tissue, without suicidal intent and for reasons not socially or culturally sanctioned (Self-Injury Outreach & Support, 2018). Self-harm is still a topic that is not talked about enough, especially with the growing concern for the safety of LGBTQIA+ youth. LGBTQIA+ youth are coming out at earlier ages, thus bringing to attention the added risks for this population. Many LGBTQIA+ youth end up engaging in some form of self-destructive behavior from dealing with the stigma and negative socialization around them. Within the LGBTQIA+ youth population, self-harm alongside depression and suicide is especially common. According to The 2020 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health by the Trevor Project, an alarming 40% of LGBTQIA+ youth ages 13-24 reported seriously considering suicide within the past year and 48%-60% reported engaging in self-harm over the past year (The Trevor Project, 2020). This disparity shows the importance of providing LGBTQIA+ youth with resources that affirm their identities. As professionals and parents, it is important to understand the types of self-harm, average age range when it can occur, causes, populations, risk factors, and self-harm in connection with mental health and suicide. It is imperative to provide protective factors for LGBTQIA+ youth in helping to replace self-harming behaviors with positive coping strategies. Helping LGBTQIA+ youth in different contexts including from a professional, parent, and educator perspective allows unique ways in which each can assist an LGBTQIA+ youth who is self-harming. The stigma, shame, and many misconceptions about self-harming behaviors is discussed in depth including from the lived experience of this author and professional experiences working with queer youth. Most importantly, it is imperative to know how to approach LGBTQIA+ youth who are self-harming including how to speak in a compassionate and empathy-based framework. Clear interventions and therapeutic techniques based in evidence-based practices on alternatives to self-harm, lived experience, and previous practices with queer youth who are self-harming are provided and discussed.

How Female Sex Robots and Chatbots Impact Views of Women

Julie Wosk

State University of New York, Maritime College, USA.

Abstract:

Recent stories in the media report cases where people are falling in love with chatbots, and even proposing marriage. The idea of falling in love with an artificial woman is not new, as I have written about in my books *Artificial Women: Sex Dolls, Robot Caregivers, and More Facsimile Females*, and *My Fair Ladies: Female Robots, Androids, and Other Artificial Eves*. Media stories have emphasized the psychological drawbacks of having romantic or sexual feelings toward a female chatbot (chatbots promote isolation) but the stories say little about how interacting with a female sex robot or chatbot has an impact on attitudes toward women.

My presentation will explore how these type of virtual relationships often perpetuate stereotypes about women and also set up false expectations about interacting with real women in a relationship. My examples will include data from recent research reports as well as examples from films and fiction.

Hearing Women's Voices

Veronica Rueckert

Veronica Rueckert Coaching LLC, USA.

Abstract:

Women's voices face serious challenges in the workplace, in public forums and their own homes. A recent political rollback of efforts to center and protect the voices of women, people of color and other marginalized voices means it's more challenging to hear and respect these voices than it was a year ago. Drawing on my book, "Outspoken: Why Women's Voices Get Silenced and How to Set Them Free," (Harper Collins), the first half of this talk will take stock of cultural views towards women's voices, past and present, as well as academic research looking at attitudes towards women's voices in the workplace, on the Supreme Court of the United States, in political systems and the entertainment industry to frame current and past challenges faced by women. The second half of this talk will be oriented towards solutions, both personal actions women and supporters can take to raise awareness of the "talking gap" for women, and those with marginalized voices, and how to engage in self-care and advocacy by rejecting toxic cultural influences, creating network of allies and steering organizational culture toward inclusivity, among other solutions. The conclusion will be encouragement to call women's voices to the center, create space for them and insist upon their value.

Breaking the Silence: Confronting NDII, IBSA, and the Cultural Norms That Perpetuate Harm

Susanna Gibson

MyOwn Image, USA.

Abstract:

The digital age has revolutionized connection and self-expression but also created fertile ground for exploitation through nonconsensual distribution of intimate images (NDII) and image-based sexual abuse (IBSA). These crimes disproportionately impact marginalized communities, with LGBTQ+ individuals nearly four times more likely to be victimized and women, particularly women of color, targeted at alarming rates. Black women are 1.5 times more likely than white women to be victims of IBSA, and women overall make up nearly 90% of survivors. As a survivor, I've witnessed how societal norms rooted in victim-blaming and shaming minimize these violations and silence survivors. My advocacy focuses on addressing the unique vulnerabilities faced by marginalized communities and dismantling the harmful narratives that enable abuse. This lecture explores the intersections of technology, sexuality, and consent, emphasizing the urgent need for legal reform, education, and cultural change. I will highlight the transformative power of state-level policies, which offer more immediate and effective protections than federal legislation. From expanding definitions of NDII to improving survivor recourse, these reforms are critical to combating these crimes. By confronting the systemic inequities and fostering collective action, we can build a future where dignity, consent, and justice are safeguarded online and offline—especially for those most disproportionately impacted.

Biography:

Susanna Gibson is a Nurse Practitioner and former Democratic candidate for the Virginia House of Delegates who faced devastating abuse after discovering she was the victim of the nonconsensual creation and distribution of intimate recordings. Sensationalist reporting by The Washington Post and other outlets, which failed to recognize these acts as crimes of sexual violence, fueled the global spread of the images. This coverage triggered relentless online abuse, death threats, and in-person harassment. Refusing to be silenced, Susanna founded MyOwn Image, an organization committed to combating technology-facilitated violence, image-based sexual abuse, and disinformation. Globally recognized, she now shares her story to advocate for survivors, drive legislative reform, and inspire cultural change to address these pervasive harms.

Widowhood, Mourning, and Becoming: Hijra Resistance and Love at the Koothandavur Festival

Samrat Sharma

Pennsylvania State University, USA.

Abstract:

The annual Koothandavur Festival in Tamil Nadu, India, rooted in Hindu mythology, provides hijras a sacred space to perform rituals of marriage and widowhood, blending cultural, religious, and gendered dimensions. Through the symbolic union with the deity Aravan and subsequent widowhood, hijras embody the fluidity of identity, challenging societal norms of gender, caste, and exclusion. These rituals, far from mere performance, become assertions of agency, visibility, and humanity, compressing traditional timelines of love, loss, and personhood. Drawing on C. Riley Snorton's framework of "becoming," this paper examines hijras' engagement with Koothandavur as a transformative act of identity negotiation. The transition from bride to widow defies the rigidity of gender binaries, creating a space for reimagined belonging. Audre Lorde's concept of the erotic underscores this as a reclamation of embodied power, where mourning becomes a declaration of love and resistance against Brahmanical patriarchy.

Hijras' widowhood rituals blur the lines between performance and authenticity, reconfiguring grief as a political and collective act. Using insights from Black feminist and trans-feminist thought, including the works of Judith Butler, Alexis Pauline Gumbs, and bell hooks, this study positions Koothandavur as a site of expansive love and thriving. Widowhood emerges as a space of reclamation, challenging caste-based exclusions and societal erasure, while forging kinship and community.

This paper interrogates the questions: Who do you desire to be? How do you desire to love more expansively? How can marginalized communities move from the right not to die to the right to live? By reclaiming widowhood as a ceremony of becoming, hijras exemplify how rituals rooted in exclusion can transform into acts of survival, love, and resistance, offering transnational feminist frameworks for envisioning liberation and joy.

Biography:

Samrat Sharma is a Dual-title Ph.D. Student in the Department of Education and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the Pennsylvania State University. Their research interests include Trans Studies, Transnational feminism, Informal Literacies, Trans Pedagogy, and Trans Futurism.

Black Queer World-Making in Afro-Peruvian Female Queer Hip Hop Artists

Pilar Caceres

University of Texas at Austin, USA.

Abstract:

Hip Hop has been part of the Black expressive American culture that allows Black youth to narrate their reality and organize as a community, and it has been a place to imagine new realities. Through the internalization of Hip Hop, young people around the Diaspora re-adapted American Hip Hop to express the local reality of marginalized communities. This article explores how two Afro-Peruvian female queer artists are disrupting the local Hip Hop scene through their music by criticizing heteronormative impositions. Yanna and Gilow are the predominant voices in the local Hip Hop Afro-Peruvian scene that brings representations of Blackness and queerness to engage with a practice of Black queer world-making, where they construct and imagine new possibilities for their Blackness and queerness outside social expectations of capitalism, heteronormativity, and anti-Blackness. Yanna and Gilow disruptively show possibilities beyond the oppressive realities that they and their communities face because of their race, gender, class, and sexuality. I analyze the song “Millone\$” by Yanna and “Carpe Diem” by Gilow through music and performance analysis focusing on Yanna’s and Gilow’s lyrical content and visuals.

Biography:

Pilar Caceres Cartagena is a Ph.D. student in African and African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Her research focuses on Hip Hop Studies, Black Queer Studies, Afro-Latinx Studies, Black Feminist epistemologies and Post-humanism. She holds a B.A. in Sociology from the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos and an M.A. in African and African Diaspora Studies from the University of Texas at Austin.

Thoughts and Prayers: An abolitionist feminist case study on prosecuting school shooters and their parents

Dayana Garcia

Grinnell College, USA.

Abstract:

While nations around the world create laws regarding their citizens' access to weapons, the United States of America remains at the forefront of the "thoughts and prayers" strategy to ending the gun-violence epidemic. According to the current V.P J.D. Vance, school shootings are a "fact of life", but what is factual about sending our children to school and hoping they do not get shot today? What is factual about preparing our kids to be shot while they should be preparing for their futures? This research funded by the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Foundation provides a case study of Jennifer and James Crumbly, the first parents in the United States to be convicted alongside their child, Ethan Crumbly's, who was found guilty of committing a school shooting. From an abolitionist feminist perspective, the prosecution of the parents of a school shooters ignores many, if not all, of the underlying factors that allow for school shooters to be created and enabled. Here we discuss the dynamics of parental responsibility, the lack of social safety nets, and the protection of violent masculinities. Tying current U.S. politics to gun regulation makes clear a system of validation and enabling of violence for the sake of a white Christian nationalist agenda. The right to bear arms has exceeded its intent and has become a capitalist tool for white Christian nationalists to gain power in mainstream politics and protect the interests of organizations who keep them funded like the NRA

Biography:

Dayana Garcia (She/They) is in their fourth year at Grinnell College double majoring in Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies and French. She is a current Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow and has presented her research at the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, GA and the Midwestern Mellon Conference at Northwestern University. She works as a victim advocate at a domestic violence shelter and provides dating violence prevention education.

Gender Materiality: Introducing Marxist Dialectics into Psychological Gender Theory

Nic Bensmiller

Teachers College, Columbia University, USA.

Abstract:

In the field of psychology gender is predominantly framed as binary, and when it is not, it has developed into a three-gender system of “man, woman, or trans”. Psychological science and theory has often held the perspective that sex and gender are one and the same and that characteristics of gender difference are due to biological differences (Yoder & Khan, 2003). This epistemological trend is referred to as biological essentialism and is categorically inaccurate. There do exist, however, tangible differences in how people are treated and impacted due to their gender presentation. The concept of gender materiality intends to complicate the narrative of gender expression/presentation to hone in on the aspects of gender that are targeted by hegemonic oppressive structures without adhering to biological essentialism. This presentation will outline relevant definitions, history, and theory to better understand how gender is received in the world, and consequently how gender impacts peoples’ material lives using the framework of dialectical materialism. Preliminary data from qualitative interviews gathered for a dissertation study will be presented in tandem with the theory to provide examples of how transgender nonbinary people conceptualize gender materiality in their daily lives

Biography:

Nic is currently an advanced doctoral candidate in Counseling Psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University. Prior to this, they completed a dual masters in psychological counseling from the same program. They are also a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in New York State, whose practice focuses on transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people who have experienced trauma (including oppression-based complex trauma), disability, and significant mental health difficulties.

Trapped in Translation: The Limits of Non-Binary Advocacy in South Korea's Gendered System

Robert Hamilton

Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Korea.

Abstract:

In South Korea, legal and social system are deeply intertwined with strict notions of gender binaries, making it difficult, if not impossible, for queer Koreans to gain recognition and protections. While movements in other countries have challenged these structures, Korean activists and activists in Korea often rely on arguments that fit within existing heteronormative frameworks simply to be understood. This approach, however, often reinforces the same binary that excludes many queer individuals. This paper investigates how queer activism often turns into conservative versus progressive activism that requires conformity to male/female classifications. By analyzing activist strategies, legal frameworks, and cultural narratives, this highlights some of the potential pathways for creating a more inclusive approach that acknowledges gender and sexual diversity. While today, we are moving increasingly into global conversations that promote reimagining gender and sexuality beyond binaries, queer advocacy in Korea still requires activists to communicate through the language of patriarchy, which reinforcing the very structures it attempts to challenge.

Biography:

Robert Hamilton holds a Ph.D. in Sociology and researches gender, sexuality, and human rights, with a focus on queer activism and legal recognition in South Korea. He is a professor of Korean-to-English translation at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, where he has lived for several decades. His work explores how language, law, and social structures shape social advocacy efforts in East Asia.

Rethinking Edward Carpenter's Representation of Queer Samurai

Akiko Mizoguchi

Tokyo Woman's Christian University, Japan.

Abstract:

Edward Carpenter, an activist for gay rights in early twentieth-century Britain, in order to relativize the heteronormative Euro-American discourse of sex, followed his contemporary European sexologists' ways of presenting same-sex practices of historical or cultural "Other" societies. In his *Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk* (1911) in particular, he discusses how in "pre-Christian times and among the early civilizations," "intermediate people and their corresponding sexrelationships played a distinct part in the life of the tribe or nation, and were openly acknowledged and recognised as part of the general society" (v). Yet when he, in advocating his ideal "uranian" love, includes Japanese Samurai same-sex relationships in the category of military comradeship along the ancient Dorian Greeks, he seems to have problems accommodating the dynamics of how Japanese modernized intellectuals, when either negating or affirming the existence of pre-modern Samurai homoerotic and homosocial culture, were actively redefining and reconstructing their "national" identities (including their own sexualities) in the context of Western modernity. This problem also explains his difficulty in discussing in depth Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), one which German contemporary pro-gay sexologists attributed to the "Samurai" comrade love. My paper intends to discuss Carpenter's view of Samurai sexual practice in relation with how he chose to consider modern Japanese society in light of his ideal same-sex love.

Biography:

Akiko Mizoguchi completed her MA at the University of Leeds and ABD at Tsuda College, Japan. She is a Professor at the Department of English, Tokyo Woman's Christian University. She has published 20 papers and co-authored 11 books mainly on British colonial literature on Africa and African literature in English. She has been serving as an editorial board member of *Black Studies* (published by Black Studies Association in Japan) and was the chief editor of the journal for 5 years.

Queer Inclusion and Agency in Transitional Justice: Insights from the Canadian Final Report into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Caitlin Biddolph

University of Technology Sydney, Australia.

Abstract:

Transitional justice (TJ) processes are increasingly recognising queer people as victims, including as targets of anti-queer violence. While queer activists have participated in, contributed to, and created their own TJ processes at the informal level, formal institutions like the United Nations have only recently recognised queer people as targeted victims within their TJ policies, and that they ought to be addressed and included in TJ processes. In this article, I explore discourses of queer inclusion and agency in TJ. To do so, I focus on the Final Report of the Canadian National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. By focusing on this mechanism, which explicitly includes queer Indigenous perspectives in its truth-telling practices, I explore possibilities of meaningfully including queer people in TJ. I undertake a discourse analysis of the report to identify how queer (or 2SLGBTQQIA) people are positioned and represented as variously rights bearers, activists, and epistemic agents of TJ. Using a queer decolonial approach and the concept of vernacularisation, I argue that the Final Report offers a more expansive approach to queer inclusion and agency, whereby Indigenous Elders, families, and 2SLGBTQQIA people are discursively situated (and situate themselves) as agents of TJ. Following the contributions of Indigenous feminist scholars, I argue that the Final Report centres Indigenous epistemologies that conceive of queer agency as relational, resistant, and resurgent, offering an example of what TJ can look like when it meaningfully includes queer people as justice agents. However, given the settler colonial context within which the Final Report is situated, I argue that queer inclusion must also be problematised and decolonised when it occurs within settler colonial and statist agendas. Efforts at making TJ queer(er) must centre the needs and activism of queer people affected by violence, even if that means rejecting the possibility of formal TJ ever being meaningful spaces for queer recognition and agency.

Machines of Silencing: Gendered Digital Violence as Systemic Control

Laure Salmona

Feminists Against Cyberbullying, France.

Abstract:

In an era where technological infrastructures shape desire, identity, and social control, digital gender-based violence (DGBV) is not merely an unintended consequence—it is a structurally embedded phenomenon that both prolongs and amplifies systemic gendered injustices. This presentation explores how digital tools—from non-consensual deepfake pornography to tech-facilitated intimate partner surveillance—are used to discipline, discredit, and silence women and marginalized communities. Now widely used as a tool of misogynistic abuse, deepfakes enact a simulated sexuality that erases consent, distorts reality, and reproduces patriarchal fantasies through algorithmic means. Meanwhile, digital domestic abuse (via geolocation tracking, cloud account control, or spyware) blurs public/private boundaries and turns intimate life into a terrain of coercive control.

Importantly, these violences are reinforced by algorithmic biases: platform moderation systems and AI recommendation engines are trained on data that invisibilizes harm against racialized, LGBTQ+, or disabled users. Such design choices not only ignore these experiences—they systematically de-legitimize and de-amplify their voices. In this sense, digital infrastructures act as machines of silencing, enacting epistemic violence by denying marginalized people the ability to narrate, protest, or even name their abuse. European initiatives like the Digital Services Act (DSA) mark an important step toward accountability. Yet their real-world application remains uncertain, and the borderless nature of digital environments undermines their protective reach. Regulations framed at the national or continental level cannot fully shield users from harms produced by transnational platforms operating through opaque, extractive logics. To move beyond binaries, we must reclaim technology as a contested space—where feminist resistance, narrative agency, and survivor knowledge form the foundation of justice.

Biography:

Laure Salmona is a feminist activist and leading expert on gender-based and sexual violence in digital spaces. She is the co-founder and executive director of *Féministes contre le cyberharcèlement* (Feminists Against Cyberviolence), an organization committed to combating online abuse through research, advocacy, and intersectional feminist analysis. She is the author of *Politicizing Cyberviolence: An Intersectional Reading of Online Gender Inequality* (2023) and *15 Myths About Cyberviolence and Online Harassment* (2025). A graduate of Sciences Po Paris, she has conducted multiple studies on the topic and regularly speaks at international conferences to challenge the gendered power dynamics embedded in digital technologies.

Gender Performativity and Queer Identities in A Taste of Honey by Shelagh Delaney through Judith Butler' Outlook

Samira Shahanjarini

Goethe University, Germany.

Abstract:

This paper explores how Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* (1958) critiques rigid gender norms, heteronormativity, and traditional family structures through the lens of Judith Butler's theory of gender performance. Set in postwar working-class Britain, the play centers on Jo, a teenage girl with a neglectful mother, and Geof, a gentle, gay man who becomes her caretaker and companion. Both characters disrupt dominant expectations of gender and sexuality: Jo rejects conventional femininity, expresses discomfort with being a woman, and embraces androgynous self-presentation, while Geof subverts masculine norms through his nurturing and emotional presence. The analysis draws on Butler's notion that gender is not innate but rather a performative act shaped by repeated behaviors and social norms. Jo's refusal to embody romantic or maternal ideals and her rejection of her mother's lifestyle illustrate how gender can be reimagined and destabilized. Her relationship with Geof forms a kind of "queer kinship" rooted in care and mutual respect, which stands in contrast to the biological and heterosexual family models of the 1950s. The paper argues that Jo functions as a disruptive, "unsettling" figure in her social world much like Kathryn Bond Stockton's concept of the queer child challenging normative roles and revealing the fragility⁵ of imposed gender and familial systems. Ultimately, *A Taste of Honey* anticipates contemporary queer theory by presenting gender and identity as fluid, performative, and capable of resisting binary constraints through everyday acts of resistance and alternative modes of kinship.

Biography:

Samira Shahanjarini is a master's student in Anglophone Literatures, Cultures and Media at Goethe University Frankfurt. She previously earned an MA in English Literature from Science and Research University, Iran. With a strong background in theater, she has performed in Iran, Germany, and Spain. Her work intersects literature, performance, and queer identity. She translated Tom Stoppard's *Indian Ink* into Persian for the first time. In May 2025, she presented two well-received papers at ACCUTE, Toronto. Her current research focuses on trauma, diaspora, and queer narratives, aiming to build bridges between academic inquiry and artistic expression.

From Venus to virtual: the female body and the future of women in a world full of AI.

Maja Vande Velde

Graycon Consulting, Belgium.

Abstract:

The representation of women and our views and beliefs of beauty, has been shaped by art, media, and technology throughout history—from the voluptuous Venus figures in Rubens' paintings to the stylized ideals of photography and advertising in the modern era. With the rise of AI, we stand at another turning point: will this technology liberate female representation, or will it further reinforce limiting stereotypes?

This talk provides a historical overview, starting with the Baroque beauty standards of Rubens, followed by the influence of photography and advertising on female imagery in the 20th and 21st centuries. We then look toward the future, where AI plays an increasingly dominant role in shaping and disseminating representations of women—ranging from AI-generated influencers to algorithmic biases in hiring processes.

By placing these historical and technological developments side by side, we reveal how visual representations have consistently adapted to prevailing power structures and technological possibilities. The key question remains: can AI finally break away from the restrictive patterns of the past, or are we doomed to remain trapped in algorithmically reproduced stereotypes?

Biography:

Maja Vande Velde studied Film, Theater, and Literary Sciences, and developed a strong interest in how art and culture confront people with their worldview and themselves. After a 15-year career in media and television, she transitioned into marketing. With the rise of AI, she now focuses on helping businesses navigate AI solutions that truly meet their needs. As an activist, she is dedicated to defending women's rights in AI and tech, critically examining the impact of algorithmic systems on gender equality and representation.

Reproductive health and disability : Working towards a more inclusive and supportive environment for adolescents girls with disabilities

Ernestine NGO Melha

Association for Aid in the Education of Disabled Children (AAEEH), France.

Abstract:

An estimated 15% of the world's population live with a disability. In some settings and cultures, menstruation remains a taboo subject. Girls and women with disabilities face double stigma due to social norms related to gender and menstruation, as well as their disability. This double stigma can lead to social isolation and even forced sterilization. Yet access to reproductive health, without discrimination, is a fundamental right for all women and girls. Mainstreaming disability into menstrual hygiene involves making adjustments in the design and implementation of programs and policies to address specific vulnerabilities related to disability.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), global and national health and development policies must prioritize menstrual health, with investments reflecting its important role in human rights, public health, gender equality and sustainable development.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that in Africa, for example, 66% of girls do not have good information about menstruation before they are confronted with their first period. However, access to reproductive health is a fundamental right for all women and girls. Periods have become a public health issue, on which it is important to discuss openly.

This contribution aims to present and discuss preliminary findings of an ongoing project « dignity kits for girls with disabilities » implemented by the Association d'Aide à l'Education de l'Enfant Handicapé (AAEEH) and to provide the next steps or way forward.

Biography:

Dr Ernestine NGO MELHA is an education and disability specialist. Associate professor in educational sciences, author of numerous publications and associate researcher with the national institute for special educational needs and disability (INSEI) in France.

She is the founder, CEO and main representative to the UN of Association d'Aide à l'Education de l'Enfant Handicapé (AAEEH), an NGO founded in 1998 committed to education, disability and cross cutting issues as well as equity and social justice. Selflessly, with more than 25 years of experience, Ernestine actively and significantly contributes to the advancement of disability mainstreaming in various fields.

Coptic Survivor” or Sally Zakhari’s combating of clerical sexual assault in the Coptic Church online.

Stephanie Amin

Queen Mary University of London, United Kingdom.

Abstract:

Two weeks after the publication of testimonies against ABZ, Sally Zakhary, an Egyptian Coptic Christian woman living in the USA posted her testimony of abuse inflicted on her by a Coptic orthodox priest when she was a minor. Zakhary first rallied for her own case, exposing the papacy’s apathy. Later on, she took up the cases of other anonymous victims. Today, Zakhary has succeeded in fostering the “Coptic survivor community service” online whose main mission is to advocate for Coptic Christian children and adults who have endured abuse at the hands of the clergy. An intersectional approach is necessary to seize the space in which Zakhary operates as part of the Coptic community, a minority living with a Muslim majority. Crenshaw (1994) had brought women of color’s hesitancy to seek help in domestic violence situations to their unwillingness to submit men of color to the violence of the white police. In that sense, Zakhary went against an important minority code by tackling this issue publicly. Furthermore, a deeper assessment of elements of her repertoire of action allows us to understand the particularity of her activism. These include the language barrier, the rallying of priests on her side and putting forward her strong faith and her commitment to the Coptic orthodox faith and Church as well as utilizing the geographic distance and benefitting from the privileges of being a US national. This paper will rely on digital ethnography as well as interviews with members of the community in order to fill these gaps.

Biography:

Stephanie Amin is an independent researcher and filmmaker. She holds a master’s degree in political science from Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne. She has worked on several projects with Dr. Nadine Abdalla and others as research assistant including his recently published book “Labor Against Regime”. Her role as research assistant consisted in data collection, organization, digital ethnography and thematic coding, as well as transliteration and indexing. She is currently the research assistant on the ERC project Digital Al-Andalus entrusted with the digital ethnographic data collection and annotation. She has also worked with DISTAM unit of the CNRS as well as ARI- Arab Reform Initiative. Stephanie Amin is interested in gender studies in the Arab world, intersectionality, digital humanities and documentary film.

Queer Intersectionality, Queer Exile

Yael Mishali

Tel Aviv University, Israel

Abstract:

In this paper I plan to examine how a relationship between a lesbian femme and an FtM transperson shapes and affects each of their identities, focusing particularly on their sense of belonging to different LGBT communities. I will suggest viewing the femme position in this context as a form of lesbian exile based on her difficulty to self-identify as a lesbian and the loss of her indirect visibility as a part of a butch-femme couple. I will attempt to account for the potential intersections between the trans-femme couple and the queer community (specifically in Israel) so as to answer the following questions: can a femme who is in a relationship with a transperson continue using “lesbian” to present herself and if so, how can it implicate her or her partner? Can she keep her lesbian position without disavowing his identity? Arguably, queer thought criticizes the false promise of “coming out”; However, do queer people waive their right to know how one identifies? I will attempt to account for the ways in which coming out confines and endangers the femme-trans couple by stipulating each of their chosen (yet pre-prepared) identities with the acceptance of attached norms. I will examine how each act of coming out stabilizes one identity by destabilizing another even as far as entangling the articulation of one identity with the erasure of another. To this end I will incorporate my personal narrative in order to avoid gender or sexual essentialism, by placing the text as one possible experience.

Gender-Based Violence in the Global South: Resistances and Responses

Ramona Biholar

The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica.

Abstract:

This presentation is based on the 2024 book “Gender-Based Violence in the Global South”. It presents an intimate critique of the vulnerability produced and reproduced through gender-based violence in an already profoundly vulnerable context--the Global South. Inevitably, the discussion raises questions about the place of gender-based violence and the specific histories intertwined with the current manifestations of gender-based violence in the Global South, that are at the intersections of gender, class, and rural-urban locations within societies in the Caribbean, the Pacific region, Central and South America, and on the African continent. While the emphasis is placed on understandings and interpretations of the gender-based violence phenomenon that are indigenous to the Global South, this presentation also highlights necessary discussions around prevention, coping mechanisms, and mobilisation initiatives as modes of resistance and response to gender-based violence that originate from, engage with, and reflect Global South cultural values and idiosyncrasies.

Radical Bodies: Feminist Resistance through Embodiment, Pornography, and Performance

Minna Jose

Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, India.

Abstract:

Contested, commodified and circulated, the female body is a battleground of discourses in an era of hypervisibility. Feminist theorist Shannon Bell and performance artist Annie Sprinkle reconfigure the terrain of sexuality, performance and power through their unique form of spectacularised politics. This paper interrogates the productive intersection between Bell's fast feminism and Sprinkle's post-porn performance, situating within and in strategic tension with postfeminist sensibilities. Bell's theorisation, characterised by immediacy, affective intensity and embodiment, finds striking parallels in the post-porn movement. Sprinkle's artistic trajectory across Public Cervix Announcement, Post Porn Modernist foreground pleasure activism as performative and often ritualised acts. Their tools of intervention curate an aesthetic excess drawn from humour, parody, and provocation, reclaiming erotic visibility that has been historically pathologised. They refuse the sanitisation of the feminist discourse, rendering them felt through visceral sensation and confrontation. This paper conducts close readings of Sprinkle's performance texts and visual artefacts, contextualising them through a theoretical framework that draws from Emmanuel Levinas' ethics of relationality, Georges Bataille's notion of transgressive eroticism, and Michel Foucault's critique of power and subjectification. These lenses allow for an interrogation of how Bell and Sprinkle reconfigure the relationship between the erotic and the political—not as separate domains but as entangled forms of resistance. As Bell asserts, Sprinkle's postporn theatre unites the pornographic with the philosophical, becoming the very mode of its production. This paper analyses Bell's theoretical provocations and Sprinkle's performance as a vital form of interventionist politics that remains pertinent in the digital age. Censorship and surveillance engage with illegible renditions of sexuality under the guise of community standards and respectability politics. Bell and Sprinkle posit the body in its porous, desiring, leaking, uncontainable form that undermines neoliberal co-option, self-containment and control. The paper concludes by considering the overture of OnlyFans as a re-engagement with the erotic not as a consumer identity but as a radical modality of relation that embraces contradiction, fluidity and transformation.

Biography:

Minna Jose is a research scholar at the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee. Her research critically engages with the performative dimensions of Postfeminism. Her previous work has analysed the embodied practices of artists such as Orlan, Annie Sprinkle, and Lady Gaga. She is currently working on the aesthetics and politics of artificial intimacy. Most Recently, her research article on the Swedish performance artist Arvida Byström and the AI sex doll Harmony was published in *Porn Studies* (4th April 2025)



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