

Abstracts of Scheduled Presentations

12th Annual Lavender Languages Conference

February 11-13, 2005

Balder, Sara (University of Colorado at Boulder)

Linguistic factors involved in the continuity of heterosexism in Chilean society

In Chile, a Latin American country that is currently experiencing a newly-expanded aperture of communication, the creativity with which jokes and comments are made about gender and sexual minorities is both disturbing and intriguing. Drawing on linguistic mechanisms such as metonymy, metaphor, connotation, and inference, normative Chilean discourse depicts the value system surrounding popular beliefs about gender and sexual identity. In this paper, I examine both the semantic composition and the performative functions of normative Chilean discursive practices, addressing how these components endorse the marginalization of gender and sexual minorities. I examine linguistic forms such as verbal comments and address terms in an exploration of the social significance of such discourse as it is used in everyday social interaction.

Through an analysis of verbal comments such as *se le quema el arroz* (his rice is getting burnt), *se le da vuelta el paragua* (his umbrella gets reversed), *le gusta por el camino de tierra* (he likes to take the dirt road), and address terms such as *maricón*, *maraca*, *culiado*, and *hueco*, I demonstrate that heterosexist language used in Chile presupposes a direct relationship between gender identity and sexual orientation. I then concentrate on the complex system of performative functions embedded within such discourse, exposing examples of coercion, derogation of gender and sexual non-normativity, internal and external group functions, dominance and hegemonic masculinity, and normative gender work. My analysis conclusively demonstrates the normative social conceptualization of gender and sexuality in everyday Chilean discursive practices.

Barat, ZsaZsa (University of Szeged)

The dialectic interaction between linguistic and geographical aspects of space: The legal case of Háttér LGBT NGO vs. Károli Gáspár Calvinist University

In my talk I will do a critical discourse analysis of the historic LGBT litigation case in Hungary. The ongoing litigation is the first test case of the Equal Treatment Act, 2004. It was submitted by the NGO as a gay collective that is a potentially threatened target by the homophobic arguments that were published by the University's leadership. The University felt under pressure by the media coverage of their decision to expel a gay student who came out on campus. As part of their justification their press release contended that homosexuality is an inherent character trait and therefore anyone with this orientation cannot obtain an MA degree in theology education. The language analysis will mostly be concerned with the rhetoric of argumentation in the appropriate documents, with a focus on the major exclusionary divides the arguments hinge on. As far as the broader gain of my current research project is concerned, in the course of the analysis I am trying to unsettle a series of divides: namely, the language use vs. conduct; equity vs. freedom of speech; geographical space vs. discursively constructed space; and finally the identity politics vs. politics of difference dichotomy. I will argue that insofar as our arguments are caught within the dominant patterns of this infinite chain of "nested dichotomies" – in Susan Gal and Gail Kligman's (2000) sense of the word –, our evaluations are bound to be enactments of the principle of partition itself that re/produces the opposing complementarity of the binaries instead of subverting them. The latter is made possible only if we consider the case from the perspective of the victim (which is not the same as speaking on behalf of the dispossessed). This move may count as the act of opening up the discursive field to an inclusionary politics of identity, to the building of an allegiance in the current

struggle over institutional changes, and to a public space that is the domain of effective discursively mediated action.

Bibler, Michael P. (University of Mary Washington)

Before "Queer": Outing Homophobia in Truman Capote's "The Thanksgiving Visitor"

Although Truman Capote persistently claimed that he didn't like to write about homosexuality or politics—even advertising that he never voted in his life—his 1967 short story "The Thanksgiving Visitor" clearly addresses the problem of homophobic bullying and imagines the possibilities for a queer resistance to that kind of violence. In this loosely autobiographical story, Capote describes his childhood troubles with a bully named Odd Henderson who regularly beats the young Capote figure, called Buddy, because he thinks Buddy is a "sissy." When Buddy tells his elderly cousin Sook about the daily abuse he is suffering, she decides that the best way to stop Odd's bullying is, surprisingly, to invite him to their family Thanksgiving dinner. Defiant and resentful, Buddy tries to retaliate against Odd at the dinner, but Sook again appears to side with Odd by chastising Buddy in front of everyone else. With this narrative, I argue, Capote figuratively outs homophobia—not gender or sexual deviance—as an "odd" or queer behavior that needs "straightening out," thereby normalizing alternative sexual and gender identities in the process. And in this way, the story attempts a kind of linguistic resistance against homophobic discourse and violence that is similar to the reclamation of the word "queer" in the early 1990s. Moreover, through Sook's attempts to correct Odd's violence by accommodating him, Capote also tries to imagine what a "proper" retaliation against homophobia should look like. Published during the most violent period of the Civil Rights Movement, and less than two years before the Stonewall riots in New York, this story subtly proposes a remarkably nonviolent response to homophobic violence that ironically comes in the guise of "traditional" southern values—an irony that is especially poignant now, given the anti-gay rhetoric that marked the 2004 presidential elections.

Carnes, Michelle (American University)

Where the Girlz Are: Creating Community in Public Space

My project explores a 'strip club without walls' called *Girlz Nite Out: The First-Ever Gentleman's Club for Women*. *Girlz Nite Out* is a event collective of women performing in the Washington DC area for African-American women, hosted by a variety of DC nightclubs which are transformed into a girlzdancing-for-girlz space, moving to another location for each subsequent event. This presentation uses analysis of text to explore how the collective began, how participants learned about it and the networks through which participants continue to know where and when events will take place. Combining the texts with the use of space for the events, we'll also connect these texts with the locations and understand the social moment that is *Girlz Nite Out*.

Chung, Haekyung (Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute)

Grammatical Gender and Sexuality in Slavic Languages

The Russian, Polish, Ukrainian terms for lesbians and gays raise several problems that need to be addressed from the perspective of gender—both grammatical gender and gender identity- and sexual identity. Terms for lesbians and gays are asymmetrically gendered with lexical gaps on female counterparts, which lead to two suggestions. First, female and male same-sex relations are not understood as being congeneric; they are viewed as different phenomena. This reflects the fact that in those countries there has not been a clear notion of

'homosexuality' and 'homosexual'; in the state socialist context 'homosexuality' and 'homosexual' were artificial and empty categories so that homosexuality could function as a counterconstitutive of Class (Russia) and Nation (Poland). Second, the discourse of sexuality developed around the opposition of feminine/masculine not around homosexuality/heterosexuality. Another problem is gender crossing in the application of labels to lesbians and gays, which is value-laden. Most terms designating gays are feminine forms, and these forms exacerbate injury, while referring to a lesbian with the masculine form carries positive connotation. This fact also raises the question of how effeminacy and femininity are discussed within heterosexism. The distinction of effeminacy and femininity is subsumed by the operative dichotomy in state socialism; state/individual opposition that is different from public/private opposition in the western societies. 'The individual' was exclusively linked with sexuality and with lesbians and gays. This explains why and how lesbians and gays were remained closeted.

Davis, Dana-Ain (Purchase College, SUNY) (Plenary)

Interrupting the silence: Searching for the speech acts of Black lesbian mothers on welfare

After five years of research on welfare reform policy, this paper explores a new turn; an inquiry into the intersection of poverty, sexuality and race. Previous research focused on the intersection of poverty, violence and race, specifically the impact of welfare policy on Black battered women. Draconian policy mandates of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) compromised Black women's ability to survive. Consequently they engaged in a range of strategies that facilitated their ability to negotiate everyday living, including the use of speech acts. But there has been a virtual silence regarding the experiences and needs of poor lesbians of color, particularly Black lesbians and welfare reform policy. This paper raises questions about the fact that there has been little or no gesture of recognition, no audible interpretations of what Black lesbians on welfare face in light of the 1996 reforms.

Eilderts, Luke L. (Pennsylvania State University)

Les Garçons qui préfèrent les garçons: Gay Male Culture as Portrayed by One of France's National Television Networks

In recent years, equal rights for the GLBT community in certain European countries have greatly improved. For example, same-sex marriage or civil unions have been legalized in countries such as Belgium, Denmark, and Sweden to name but a few. In November 1999, France adopted the PaCS (Pacte civil de solidarité), a piece of legislation which allows same-sex couples to legally solidify their relationships in the same manner as a civil union. With growing rights, legal protection, and public visibility, the GLBT community has increasingly become a growing target audience for advertisers. Recently, one of France's five national television networks, M6 (broadcasting since March 1st, 1987), which portrays itself as the hip alternative to the older stations, presented the program Follement Gay (a play on the expression "être follement gai(e)" meaning "to be extremely happy", where "follement" comes from the word "crazy"), a three-hour show aimed at "boys who prefer boys." This program marked an important first for national French television as a show targeted specifically at a gay male audience while trying to maintain mainstream appeal. In Follement Gay's desire to showcase gay male culture to a largely heterosexual audience, which homosexual representations were being offered? Was Follement Gay promoting French gay male culture or simply reinforcing heterosexual stereotypes of homosexuality? With this paper, I analyze which images of gay male culture are promoted by M6 through music, movies, advertisements, television shows, and gay icons in order to demonstrate how Follement Gay was neither folle nor very gay.

Etz, Rebecca (Rutgers U)

Talking the Talk to Walk the Walk: Lesbian Space in New Zealand.

Language is the blind spot of many studies seeking to understand social space. Work by scholars such as Mitchell and Howell tends to emphasize the physical activity of space-claiming, disregarding the space-claiming and space-defining power also found in discursive practices. My investigations of community and identity formation among lesbians living in New Zealand suggest that this is short-sighted. In my research, I use lesbian-identified discourse and rhetoric to explore the significance of spaces defined, designed, demanded and dismantled by the women with whom I work. An arena for social expressions of power, these women often employ lesbian-informed discursive strategies both to govern and to reinvent the many public spaces through which they travel. For them there is no question that language is inextricably linked to space and sexual identity. The most subtle power reversal effected by the lesbians participating in my research is the colonizing of straight space for lesbian purposes, mini rebellions in which lesbian identity, humor and/or activity can “pass” or press forward within straight society. Through their imagining and colonizing of spaces, lesbians learn to project their identity and aestheticize their surroundings with a homonormative style. Their language practices not only allow them the space to imagine, but give them the ability to imagine a lesbian social space that is as fluid as their movements are through it.

Foertsch, Jacqueline (University of Texas, Denton)

What's in a Name: Semantic Slippage in Gender and Sexuality Studies Key Terms

This paper considers the relationship between the terms “gender” and “sex” in contemporary gender and sexuality studies, asking for a reconsideration of the value of the word (and concept) of sex. Judith Butler has argued for the dismantling of this term – insisting persuasively that sex is already gender anyway, that one’s gender is “man” or “woman,” that sexual difference is at its core homophobic, etc. Yet other quarters in gay and lesbian studies have brought to light the vital, vast spectrum of masculinities and femininities characterizing human gendered identities; it is these that constitute the concept of gender, and yet the term is overused in unproductive, even absurd ways. Reference is made almost constantly in feminist and gay and lesbian studies to “the opposite gender,” “one’s own gender,” etc., yet we know the case is more complex than that: in fact, there are countless genders (ratios of masculinity to femininity) in evidence for contemporary theorists of human sexuality, and effective arguments have already been made (e.g., Barbara Johnson) that gays and lesbians themselves seek out “the opposite gender” (butch/femme, etc.) in erotic relationships. A feminist theory reference, therefore, to “the opposite gender” when simply meaning “men” utterly confuses the issue.

We now expect gender to name these two importantly separate categories, largely because theorists like Butler have sought to argue that, in a rigorously conceived poststructural paradigm, sex simply “can’t” exist. This paper, however, concludes by examining the work of two equally persuasive poststructural theorists (Anne Fausto-Sterling, Thomas Laqueur) whose arguments, despite their anti-“sex” project, dependent inherently, and productively, on the concept of sex.

Gill, Harjant (San Francisco) (Film screening and discussion)

Some Reasons For Living: an ethnographic look into the lives of two transgender Latina women

Some Reasons for Living is an ethnography examining the day-to-day struggles in the lives of two transgender Latina women. The film looks at their relationship and kinship constructions through their conversations on love, work and life. At the core of it all, is a sad reality that these two women have to accept and address. The reality is that our society treats them as if they were less of human beings. Because of their gender identity, they are more likely to become victims of a hate crime than any other

minority group. This film is based on a year-long ethnographical research project sponsored by SFSU's Visual Anthropology Dept. conducted from Sept 2002 till August 2003. The project was funded by a Youth Initiated Projects grant from the Youth Leadership Institute and by a grant from the Horizon Foundation

Giron, Robert L. (Poetry reading)

His translation of the late Jesus Gardea's only poetry collection Canciones para una sola cuerda / Songs for a Single String was a finalist for the 2003 Violet Crown Book Award for Literary Prose & Poetry He is a Pushcart Nominee and is the founder of Gival Press, located in Arlington, VA.

Gordon, Jr., William (Rutgers University)

Safer-Sex Parties and the Public Sphere: Urban Black Male Homosexual Practices and the Production of Space Specific Normativity

Black homosexual safer-sex parties in New York City operate in opposition to many normative standards in the city, from legal codes to public discourses on sexuality in the black community, but through that opposition produce normative standards specific to the space of the safer-sex parties. These normative standards are produced discursively through the marketing and advertising on the internet, but also through the regulation of access to and behavior in the parties themselves. However, due to the unique position of being private spaces for public sex, these regulations are not unilaterally enforced and produce normative practices in the process contrary to the discourses on the internet and regulation in the sites. Through multiple codes—body type, gender expression, age, dress, language, and sexual practice—the men in the sites reinforce and challenge at the same time HIV/AIDS discourses on men who have sex with men, models of black masculinity promulgated in hip-hop culture, urban homosexual culture, and the multi-ethnic black sexual culture of New York City.

Grant, Kathy (American University)

Deaf Lesbian Space

This paper examines a queer paradigm vulnerable to power as it challenges the notions of space. I will discuss how Deaf Lesbian Space (DLS), which differs from lesbian space, is used textually and literally as a unique desire-ing cite of transgression. The difference between Deaf lesbians and lesbians are twofold in this research: one, the object of desire is another Deaf lesbian whose primary language is American Sign Language (ASL); and two, the space is not one that is readily created so does not occur often. Distinct from bar scenes and music festivals, it is my claim that a specific Deaf Lesbian Space is produced biennially when elite Deaf lesbians gather at a Deaf Lesbian Conference.

Examples of how discourse creates Deaf Lesbian Space will also be included in this discussion since the discourse created the existence of the conference and continues to perpetuate future Deaf Lesbian Spaces.

Jennifer A. Hamilton (Saint Mary's University)

We Need More Sex: Queering Female Sexual Narratives on Sex and the City

When the HBO hit series *Sex and the City* debuted in 1998, numerous feminist theorists criticized the show for its apparent thematic representation of Adrienne Rich's concept of "compulsory heterosexuality" (1981). This paper will explore how *Sex and the City* offered voyeuristic opportunities for viewers to engage with a superfluity of female sexual practices and/or identities. While the plotline often appeared hetero-normative, I will argue that attaching and solidifying the identity 'heterosexual' to the characters, theorists and critics have failed to address any and all of the show's queer themes and narratives. Drawing heavily on feminist analysis and queer theory, this paper will examine how the four central female characters negotiated their sexual identities throughout the six-year run of the show. Additionally, I will discuss the concept of female televisual sexual representation and consumption. From the aggressive sexual narratives, lesbian lovers, and drag king photo shoots, *Sex and the City*, in all its popularity and mainstream appeal, left some lesbian and/or queer-female viewers wanting more.

Heintzleman, Lori (University of Colorado-Boulder)

The fashioning of a new persecuted minority: ex-gays!

The evangelical Christian organization Exodus lists its mission as "Proclaiming to, educating, and impacting the world with the biblical truth that freedom from homosexuality is possible when Jesus is Lord of one's life" (www.exodus.to). It is strongly invested in presenting homosexual orientation as a maladaptation—rather than an inherent trait—that can be repaired. As mainstream culture comes to a greater awareness and consensus of homosexuality as a natural variation of human sexuality, those who claim an ex-gay identity—or support such a concept—find their position increasingly contested. As a result, Exodus representatives and affiliates have begun to use the language of an oppressed group to describe themselves. They speak of being "silenced" by a "gay elite", ignored by "activist judges", and barred from bringing their perspective to discourse sites such as public schools by national organizations like the NEA. Framing the discourse in such a way elicits sympathy for the "persecuted"; it also calls into question the existence of true or fixed gay/lesbian identity. Further, it helps to explain the evangelical Christian opposition to same-sex marriage—i.e. allowing gays into the institution of marriage would entrench those persons in a "maladaptive" sexuality, thus prohibiting them from pursuing "healing" and then being able to marry heterosexually "as God intended".

Data sources for examination of this topic include personal narratives (oral testimonies) delivered at past Exodus conferences, ethnographic notes taken at the Exodus 2003 national conference and affiliated Restoring the Glory 2004 local (Colorado) conference, and commentary published on Exodus's website and monthly newsletter.

William Leap (American University)

"Opening a Space for Critical Reflection: Personal Narrative, Evaluation Clauses, and the Discursive Public Sphere"

Habermas defines the public sphere as work of political engagement by means of which state authority becomes "publicly monitored through informed and critical discourse by the people." This paper explores instances where gay men include this monitoring function into the telling of their life story narratives and invite participants in narrative moment to engage in the same function. A key narrative feature to that end is the evaluative clause whose function, to date, has been theorized textually but not politically. When gay men's life stories provide discursive contexts for state critique, and become connected to public sphere function, needs to be specified; whether this is a function of narrative process, or an indication of the significance of gay language itself, also needs to be explored.

McCune, Jeffrey (Northwestern University)

PRESENTED BY TITLE ONLY

Re-Mixing the Closet: The Down-Low, Black Masculinity, and the Language of Privacy

In contemporary constructions of the closet, there is an attitude that this is a desired place of exit, not of comfort/content. However, the down-low and many black gay men argue that both the language of the "closet" and the closet, as a threshold paradigm, is not sufficient to describe their experiences or place of location. This paper argues for the potential transgressive nature of the "closet," as re-defined by black men, when examining the many strictures posed by public display and surveillance of blackness. This, I argue, becomes an important issue in understanding black male sexual discretion and the politics of passing for straight.

Mahon, Ryan (American University)

Locating Queer Themes in Popular Media: Lessons Learned Public Service Announcements by the United Nations and ECPAT: Human Sex Trafficking and Same Sex Contact

Human sex trafficking is opposed by great numbers of people, often regardless of political affiliation. Despite this apparent lack of partisanship, the US government is dominated by a party that seeks to deny same sex couples the right to marry through a constitutional amendment, and given recent requirements by Congress to fund public service announcements (PSAs) to educate the public about sex trafficking, it is particularly important to guard against the politicization of these PSAs. A number of recent PSAs created by the United Nations and ECPAT indicate that homosexual content in sex trafficking PSAs may 1) de-emphasize punishment when boys are the victims of sex trafficking, and 2) may unintentionally indicate that homosexuality is synonymous with pedophilia. Given the widely perceived objectivity of the United Nations, and the respect that ECPAT has among those who work in human sex trafficking, it would be relatively easy for US officials to adopt homophobic narrative elements of existing PSAs based on the UN or ECPAT models. To illustrate the continuity and contention of these homophobic narrative elements by Americans, I will present reports of the reception of two PSAs produced abroad by American viewers.

Mann, Jeff (Poetry reading)

His first chapbook of poetry, Bliss, won the 1997 Stonewall Chapbook Competition. Mountain Fireflies, which won the 1999 Poetic Matrix Chapbook Series, and Flint Shards from Sussex won the 1999 Gival Press Chapbook Competition. He is also the author of Edge, a memoir.

Mansouri, Aous (University of Colorado – Boulder)

Habibchi: Language and identity in gay Egyptian men

This presentation is work in progress and stems from personal observations I had over the summer while visiting Saudi Arabia. I was fortunate enough to meet a group of homosexual Arab men who identified as gay. The expatriates visiting from Egypt showed signs of a burgeoning phenomenon where linguistic communication was becoming a way in which this community marks itself. This phenomenon is not restricted to Egypt, personal observations have been noted in other areas of the Arab Middle East. Egypt is an Arab country with a predominantly Muslim population. Traditionally, these cultures have had a tendency to mildly tolerate homosexual practices as long as one adhere to the social norms and does not admit to anything perceived as deviant (Murray 1997). Egypt also values the family unit, and there is pressure on these men to marry and raise

a family. And recently, according to the Human Rights Watch report (March 2004), there have been numerous – and highly public – arrests of homosexual men as well as clamp downs on establishments that had mainly catered to that group. Halliday (1976) talks about the use of ‘anti-language’ in societal pockets that mark themselves as alternatives to mainstream society ‘anti-society’. In this instance, a novel way of communication is created in part due to the reality that surrounds these men. Some of the changes observed were phonemic (the voiceless dental stop /t/ becomes aspirated and then affricated) and productive, while others include the creation of new lexical items to suit their own needs (e.g. neologisms for ‘police’ and such).

Mohring, Ron (Poetry reading)

Mohring’s chapbook Amateur Grief was selected by Maureen Seaton for the 1998 Frank O’Hara Award; a second chapbook, Beneficence, was published in 2002 by Pecan Grove Press. In 2003 his collection Survivable World won the Washington Prize.

Morgensen, Scott (Macalester) (Plenary)

Racial Analogies and Global Sexualities: Reading Racial Formation in US LGBT Organizing

Based on ethnographic study in San Francisco Bay Area LGBT community centers, this paper examines how the racialization of US LGBT organizing clarified in the 1990’s. Early decade LGBT anti-racist work inspired by civil rights strategies tended to read racial identities comparatively, such as when promoting anti-racist white identity. Over the course of the 1990’s, post-civil rights strategies led LGBT organizers to promote multiculturalism, as when they named “diversity” as an answer to both internal and external conflicts over race. While this historical shift can be read as an index of differences between civil rights and post-civil rights strategies, this paper will mark a commonality that links them: when LGBT organizers used both to invoke racial analogies and global sexualities. White anti-racist and multicultural projects framed sexual minorities as akin to an ethnicity, by analogizing them to US racial groups, or to authentic cultures worldwide. This paper examines claims on racial analogies and global sexualities to show why and how they naturalized white and Northern stakes in LGBT politics, despite an intent to challenge them. The paper recognizes such claims as creative activity: they reveal that LGBT organizers were analyzing their racial, national, and global location, and that those locations were undergoing change. Yet the paper also questions the kind of analysis or change organizers might seek, given that ethnographic research reveals LGBT politics to have acted at a distance from the anti-racist sexual politics modeled in queer of color and two-spirit mobilizations.

Moriel, Liora (University of Maryland)

Pardon My Closet: Towards a Theory of Passing

The closet has been a powerful metaphor for hiding any social skeleton, especially the visible skeleton in the transparent closet. The point was to allow people not to notice, rather than to hide what was there. Passing, on the other hand, has been a powerful metaphor for transcending some problematic aspect of one’s (authentic?) identity to allow people to see what was transparently not there. The social convention of classifying personal identity elements only to place them on public levels of acceptability along a visibly invisible power/policy pyramid is defined as racism, of which sexism, homophobia and anti-Semitism, to name just three, are examples. Here, I would like to bring up some bullet-points for discussion about why I see passing as having potentially subversive elements, about view the recent trend to re-closet as a problematic part of passing, the one that reverts to the default norm to bolster one’s own position as if one were seen as an individual rather than as a piece of an insidious whole.

Passing is usually defined as covert movement from one identity group to another, generally—but not necessarily—from margin to mainstream. This movement involves such mastery of the subtle characteristics and idiosyncrasies of the group passed into as to remain undetected. Therefore, passing is about the blending and blended areas where supposedly different groups nevertheless coexist, usually race/color (specified as Blacks and whites), although the term has been extrapolated to encompass other themes as well, for example, gender (masculine and feminine) and sexuality (hetero- and homosexual). The closet is widely defined as a psychic location in which the individual feels protected from the vagaries of public censure for personal, usually but not limited to, homosexual acts. Finally, identity has been conflated recently with authenticity, but still carries the familiar definition of the persona one presents in social situations, or feels/believes oneself to be. By the way, a Google search of “identity” generates over 34 million “hits,” many of which deal with identity theft—a new phenomenon that we should surely try to integrate to our thinking about identity today. In addition, the closet and identity are closely correlated. As Dr. Jack Drescher notes in the October 2004 issue of *Psychiatric Times*, “when individuals become homosexually self-aware, there is a wide range of psychosocially constructed attitudes and responses they may develop toward their own homosexuality” and this helps shape their identity.

I offer thoughts on what a holistic Theory of Passing may include. I will introduce my matrix of “variable visibilities,” since we do not necessarily pass along every parameter all the time, nor do we necessarily closet every facet in every situation.

Morrish, Liz (Nottingham Trent University, UK) and Helen Sauntson (University of Birmingham, UK)

A Code of Our Own? The Discourse of Lesbian Erotic

The aim of this paper is to investigate lesbian erotic short fiction using some of the techniques of corpus linguistics. We use corpus-based methods, such as word frequency lists, key words and collocational analysis, to examine the ways in which lesbian sexual identities and sexual practices are constructed in the genre of soft porn. The data comes from a 60,000 word electronic corpus of lesbian erotic short stories from the late 1980s and early 1990s when such material became widely accessible, chiefly in the USA. The material and its analysis is viewed as the product of a historical moment: we will discuss the rise of the sex-positive lesbian, the challenge to cultural lesbianism and feminism of female masculinity (Halberstam 1998), and the resistance to an anti-pornography movement associated with the work of Catherine Mackinnon in the late 1980s.

Ochoa, Marcia (Stanford University)

Pasarelas and Perolones: Caracas' Avenida Libertador As Stage for Transformista Identity

For decades transformistas, or Venezuelan transgender women, have used the area of Avenida Libertador in Caracas to perform and market sex work. Based in fieldwork on Libertador, interviews with transformistas, and the 1981 Venezuelan film “Trans,” this talk explores the ways in which Ave. Libertador becomes a stage for transformistas' work and identities. As an urban space developed in the long trajectory of modernization in Caracas, Ave. Libertador represents a particular site for the positioning of transformista subjects in the negotiation of modernity both on their bodies and in the Caracas urban imaginary. From the pasarela, or pedestrian bridge, to the perolón, or paddy wagon, transformistas perform an imposing presence on this stage, which showcases them while it simultaneously subjects them to incredible violence. How do transformistas negotiate and, indeed, “work” such a contradictory space? I suggest that these contradictions are precisely the footholds needed to transform a space of violence into a space of brilliance. This paper argues that transformistas' presence on the Avenue is a discursive practice whereby they interject themselves into the national public, capitalizing on the visibility and fame they produce to carve out the possibility of their survival.

Pascale, Celine-Marie (American University) Plenary

Gender, Sexuality & the Politics of Visibility

Drawing on 180 hours of television and responses to an exit form used in 23 in-depth interviews, I offer a feminist, poststructuralist analysis of common-sense knowledge about sexuality, sex, and gender. Using inductive analysis, I examine the systematic production of sexual identities through common-sense knowledge and argue that the very practices that make lesbian and gay people visible also extend their subordination. I conclude with consideration of the broader implications of my findings both for daily life and for the study of gender and sexuality in academia.

Peterson, David (University of Nebraska at Omaha)

The Lambda Conspiracy: The Politics of Homophobic Discourse in an Evangelical Christian Novel

This presentation examines the use of homophobic discourse in Spenser Hughes' *The Lambda Conspiracy* (1993), an evangelical Christian novel set in 1998 to 2000 when a powerful homosexual group, headed by a nefarious gay New Age leader, attempts to "enshrine the homosexual agenda as law in every major area of society" through a "Human Rights Amendment" to the Constitution.

The novel's queer characters embody all the evils conservatives attribute to liberals, the latter being homosexuals themselves, co-conspirators with homosexuals, or their unwitting dupes. Emerging from Nazi Germany's social policies and America's liberal permissiveness, the lambda conspiracy's web is indeed vast. It is active in religion, with strands supporting the New Age Movement, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the Episcopal Church as well. It is active in government, having snared the Congress, the Supreme Court, and the White House (though a Republican is president), along with the IRS, FCC, and the NHS; it dictates military policy; it shrouds the East and West Coasts in a terrible pall of sin, with its blackened heart in Washington, D.C.

Though written at a time when American politics began again shifting in a conservative direction, and published just before the Republicans' "Contract with America" won them a majority in the U.S. Congress, the novel presents Christians as marginalized Midwesterners/Southerners who must rise up as the Church militant to protect themselves and the American way of life from the dangers of a decadent, liberal-elitist, homosexualized millennialism.

The novel uses homophobic discourse to create a metaphoric connection between American/global leftist politics and homosexuality to underpin evangelical/fundamentalist Christian discourse on sexuality's power to direct American (and global) society, culture, and politics.

Provencher, Denis M. (University of Wisconsin, La Crosse) S6

"Parlez-vous queer? Language and Sexual Citizenship in Contemporary France"

In this presentation, I provide an overview of my current book project, *Parlez-vous queer?* that examines the tensions between US and French articulations of homosexuality and sexual citizenship as they emerge in various contemporary French popular culture genres and first-person narratives. These include national gay and lesbian news magazines, advertisements, AIDS and post-AIDS fiction, sexual travel novels, commercial French cinema, coming-out stories and map drawings of the "gay city" derived from ethnographic interviews. In

this project, I argue that contemporary French gay and lesbian cultures and their cultural productions rely on a set of long-standing French narratives that withstand US models of gay language and experience. I maintain that French gay experiences are mitigated through (gay) French language that draws on several canonical voices—including Jean Genet and Jean-Paul Sartre—and various universalistic discourses—based on a republican model of citizenship that does not celebrate “differentiated” or “individual” rights (Fillieule and Willem Duyvendak 1999: 205; Caron 2001: 149-161). For this reason, while French gay and lesbian citizens recognize such terms and trends as “the closet” and “coming out,” they do not draw on such performances of individualism when they articulate their own differences. Moreover, the model to which these French narratives correspond create a linguistic space in which “non-normative” relationships and “subversive” homosexual citizenship emerge (Bersani 1995: 113) as viable alternatives to the current US-model model of the “good” homosexual citizen that draws heavily on a hetero/homo divide. For this reason, the notion of the “closet” remains largely invisible in the French context. Indeed, language remains an important tool in this current analysis and provides a rich domain for the exploration of the French “queer” responses to such recent global trends. This current project contributes to the growing scholarship on gay and lesbian language (Leap 1995, 1996, 2002; Livia and Hall, 1997; Moonwomon 1995; Moonwomon-Baird 1997) and the language of desire (Kulick 2000, 2003; Cameron and Kulick 2003; Campbell-Kibler, Podesva, Roberts, and Wong 2002) and draws out French examples as they relate to sexual citizenship (Richardson 1998, 2002; Stychin 1998, 2001; Bell and Binnie 2000; Plummer 2001; Leap 2003; Leap and Boellstorff, eds. 2004; Binnie 2004). Finally, this study also has crucial implications for the field of French Studies as it proposes a new global “gay” paradigm in the postcolonial Francophone context that replaces a transatlantic Anglo-American model.

Reitsma, Richard (University of Mary Washington)

A Queen's Tale: E“race”ing Queer Sexuality in The Lion King 1.5 and A Shark's Tale.

Recent animated features such as The Lion King 1.5 and A Shark's Tale deal with issues of difference and acceptance by negotiating the territory of race, masquerading in the drag of vegetarianism. In the case of The Lion King 1.5, the race issue is essentialized by its locale in the Dark Continent, and the very “africanness” of the animated creatures who inhabit the landscape. A Shark's Tale, on the other hand, takes place underwater, but is no less racialized: The reef inhabitants are essentially black, as opposed to the sharks who are godfather mafia types (undeniably white, predatory, and carnivorous).

However, if one is attuned to gay themes, one can see that race and vegetarianism are merely covers for a different kind of difference. What is the message when obviously gay images are incorporated into a film supposedly about accepting racial difference, manifested as a difference in “taste” (not eating meat)? This point is explored through characters who find their identity in exile, and whose different “tastes” (not for females) are explored in a racial context (“black culture”), but whose behavior is stereotypically gay, yet utterly asexual.

I will examine clips from the two movies, showing similarities between these films and other gay films. I argue that the rejection of carnivore behavior in a racially charged environment might be read as a trope for gay identity and a pitch for tolerance (just so long as things remain asexual --buddies, but never lovers). In the end, one wonders what the message is for children?

Tan, Christopher (University of Illinois)

Turning the Lion City Pink: Interrogating Singapore's New Gay Civil Servant Statement

Even though it has been 20 years since the separate emergence of queer and Southeast Asian studies within anthropology, the state of being queer and Southeast Asian is still relatively under-investigated. This paper seeks to fill the gap by interrogating Singapore's 2003 declaration of equal employment opportunities for gay civil servants. Singapore's official embrace of sexual minorities is an isolated Discursive move by a neoliberalist state to attract the “creative class” by claiming tolerance of “difference” (see Florida, 2002). Despite the

significance of the statement of acceptance, this paper argues that it has been ineffective because of contradictions within other discursive arenas. For example, homosexuality still remains criminalized because of antiquated British colonial laws. The state-regulated media also continue to demonize homosexuality as they valorize the heterosexual patriarchal family in the Discourse of the declining birthrate. Interrogating Singapore's new civil servant statement will not only reveal the state of being queer and Southeast Asian, it can also illuminate the limits of neoliberal policies that embrace "difference" in the name only with transcending the confines of the capitalist logic.

Tate, Winifred (American University)

Learning to Tell the Story: How Violence Against Lesbians and Gay Men in Colombia Became Human Rights Abuses

This paper examines the expansion of Colombian non-governmental human rights organization's human rights mandate to include violence against lesbians and gay men. I argue that this process is part of a larger transformation – however incomplete and partial – of NGOs from partisan leftist organizations that originated from the radical Catholic and Communist organizations of the 1970s to professional human rights organizations backed by international funding. Unlike other efforts to broaden the NGO mandate (including efforts to track violence by guerrilla organizations), this shift involved a focus on the social categories of victims (rather than perpetrators) and was driven by the leadership of a small cohort of NGO and gay and lesbian activists. By articulating their experiences as a rights claim based on the public testimonial genre of human rights activists (the experience of oppression, personal transformation through action, and subsequent prosecution), gay activists were able to successfully locate their struggle on the human rights agenda of NGOs despite the entrenched homophobia of Colombian many human rights activists.

Tobler, Aaron (American University) S1

A 20/20 Focus on "Gaydar": A Study of Television News' Representation of Gender and Sexuality

On October 29, 2004, American Broadcast Company's (ABC) newsmagazine program, "20/20," explored a notion that certain people can simply "tell" whether a person is gay or not. Using an admittedly non-scientific test, John Stossel reported that "60%" of the graders in his segment were correct in their assertions that some of the test subjects were gay or straight. This for Stossel and 20/20 does not represent statistical chance, and they attempt to validate their curiosity through the insertion of a supplemental study by Psychology Professor Michael Bailey's "The Man Who Would Be Queen" (Joseph Henry Press, 2003). Despite the claim that their own test represents mere curiosity and not Bailey's scientific reliability, I argue that this segment does reveal homophobic discourses. My paper explores how readings of performance and assumed subject position can reveal often hidden heteronormative and homophobic discourses. Of particular importance is the context in which this occurs: a nationally watched and acclaimed network newsmagazine. While unpacking the discourses within the segment through a text and discourse analysis, I will argue that 20/20's position allows it to perpetuate certain themes under a banner of unbiased, objective news.

Toscano, Peterson (p2son productions) S5

"Talking trash at the Homo-No-Mo Halfway House: Looking at language and life in the ex-gay movement"

Through five characters Peterson Toscano takes you on a tour of the Homo No Mo Halfway House, a Christian, residential, 12-Step program that attempts to save men from the snares of homosexuality through bizarre rules, a masculine resuscitation regime and brain numbing reconditioning. Based on Toscano's real life experience in various Ex-gay ministries, he weaves together humor, program jargon and outrageous eye-witness accounts to

form a presentation that is hilarious, poignant and insightful. Further information about the performance piece on which this presentation is based is available at <http://www.homonomo.com> .