Console-ing Passions
Abstracts

Kristian Adamson, University of Sydney, Australia “Three Percent, Rounded Up: The Problem with Positive Representations of Women”

In this paper I will present the results of my own research on the last thirty years of above-the-line creative labour in Hollywood. The changes in women’s participation in Hollywood as writers, producers and directors will be outlined, and sites of fracture in men’s dominance of the industry will be identified as part of the process of mapping the prevailing trends across the period. This demonstration of gender inequality in Hollywood will do more than merely confirm what might have already been suspected as true. The identifiably gendered divisions of labour in Hollywood will also be used to inform and propose methodological principles for researchers approaching other elements of the ‘cinematic institution’.

To illustrate the utility of a more complete empirical understanding of Hollywood I will use the data compiled in my study to situate feminist engagement with post-feminist film within the context of an industry which not only excludes women but actively rewards men who do so. Post-feminist film has at its core an ambiguity. On the one hand it offers “positive representations” of empowered women and on the other these are always within a larger narrative framework that undermines feminist demands. This ambiguity has proven resilient and resulted in a kind of stalemate in recent debates about postfeminism. I argue that one means to think beyond this impasse is to combine an empirical analysis of creative labour practices with a critique of cinema centred on feminism as an ethical demand.

Thomas Apperley, University of Melbourne, Australia “Gendered Gaming Literacies”

In Australia, despite the increasing portion of the digital game ‘audience’ that is made up of women and girls, it is also apparent that there is a peculiarly patterned gendered use of digital games. This paper draws on the fields of new media literacy and game studies in order to examine the gendered use of digital games in relation to the multimodal literacies learned through game play; otherwise described as ‘gaming literacy’ (Salen, 2007; Zimmerman, 2009). Previous work on gender and digital games has argued that lack of access to digital games, and exclusion from digital game cultures prevented girls and young women from making valuable connections between digital leisure and digital labour. This research draws on a medium-sized survey (300+ participants) undertaken in three Melbourne high schools in November-December 2007, which examined students’ out-of-school literacy practices as a part of a larger ARC Linkage Project. The data suggests that despite several commonalities, high school aged female and male students have vastly different engagements with digital games. These differences are not simply in terms of the particular games, and genres of games, that are played but in the notably different understandings of the role that digital games played in their leisure activities and attitudes to the notion that ‘learning’ might be taking place. Examining digital game use in this manner makes it possible to approach the issue of ‘gaming literacy’ in a granular fashion that avoids framing the issue of access to digital games in a have/have not manner by instead suggesting that there are many different gaming literacies. However, the survey results illustrate that among the participants these literacies had a peculiarly gendered pattern of use, which suggests a gendered understanding of the connection between digital leisure and digital labour.
Ben Aslinger, Bentley University, United States “What is Queer Game Studies?”

This paper extends the concerns of the feminist game studies project by examining what a queer game studies project might be and whether queer game studies must develop new languages. I draw on feminist game studies work from scholars such as Mia Consalvo (2003) and Nina Huntemann (2010) as well as the evolution of the gender in/and gaming debates in From Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and Computer Games (2000) and Beyond Barbie and Mortal Kombat: New Perspectives on Gender and Gaming (2008). Work on gender and gaming illustrates how methods such as cultural studies, ethnography, textual analysis, and political economy may be leveraged to examine industrial, design, and cultural practices in games.

I address how a queer game studies project might call attention to the ways that game scholars label ludic practices as mainstream or transgressive, and I work to highlight the challenges of analyzing sexual alterity in games. Queer game studies scholars might harness the playful aspects of queer theorizing to account for queer design and play practices without creating binaries between the mainstream industry and the designers of what Mary Flanagan (2009) calls “critical play” practices and experiences. Harnessing the playful aspects of queer theory might also provide a way to queer some of the classics of play theory from Johan Huizinga, Roger Callois, and Brian Sutton-Smith.

The Edge magazine piece “Playing it Straight” (2010) stresses that sexual alterity has proven difficult for even accomplished game designers to incorporate into games without resorting to stereotypes. Scholars must examine if existing languages used to assess queer representations are sufficient. Scholars need to do more to create a language of analyzing sexual alterity through ludic signifiers. At the same time, we should not throw out valuable analyses of queerness in cinema and television studies and journalism and mass communication.

Tully Barnett, Flinders University, Australia “‘Intimate Sequences’: Textual Infections in Melinda Rackham’s Carrier”

Melinda Rackham's Carrier (1999) is a biopolitical web-based multimedia installation created during a time of exuberance in the ways online culture is changing the human, and in a moment of sharp interest in the intersection of notions of cyber with notions of gender, sexuality and the body. Carrier, which won numerous awards and was exhibited in virtual and physical galleries and festivals around the world, posits the relationship between humans and viruses as symbiotic and exciting, and dramatizes that relationship, questioning the boundaries between flesh, virus and machine by creative an interactive textual experience inviting dialogue between the reader/viewer and a seductive "infectious agent" known as "sHe". Rackham uses her net.art to provide information about Hepatitis C and to work against the social stigma of the disease by questioning the heart of common understandings about viral infection.

This paper situates Rackham's Carrier in a moment of cyberfeminist activity and enthusiasm popular around the turn of the millennium and argues that Rackham uses biological and viral metaphors to interrogate society's relationship to information, machines, viruses and bodies and to critique traditional binaries of male/female, human/nonhuman/ inhuman, sick/well, self/Other. At the same time, Rackham is performing a textual infection and symbiosis with her multimodal net.art, in that the cyber can be seen as itself a virus entering and replicating within literature as Rackham plays with notions of storytelling in a changing world. This is reflected in the language of textuality Rackham employs to discuss DNA and the processes of infection. If, as Baudrillard argues,
viruses 'contain within them the whole logic of our system', how do we conceptualize the gender dimension of viral infection as performed in Melinda Rackham's *Carrier*?

**Rebecca Beirne, University of Newcastle, Australia “The Evolution of Lesbian-centred Programming on Small Screens?”**

When *The L Word* debuted in 2004 (Showtime, 2004-2009), the fanfare that accompanied it was very much based on its ‘first’ status as a lesbian-centred television series, which offered a point of difference from the gradually increasing numbers of one-off lesbian characters or couples on television drama, comedy and reality programming. Since this time, however, other lesbian-centred series have screened on television, been resold on DVD and accessed via internet download and live streaming sites. Within an Anglophone context, the most significant of these have been *Sugar Rush* (Channel 4, 2005-2006) *Work Out* (Bravo 2006-2008), *Exes and Ohs* (Logo 2007, 2010). While *The L Word* clearly fits into the genre of melodrama, these newer shows diversified into teen dramedy, reality drama and situation/romantic comedy. Does this genre and network diversity, however, affect the varieties of lesbian representation we see on post-millennial television? This paper examines how each of the lesbian characters/personalities in these series are represented, particularly in relation to whether they demonstrate a fuller depiction of lesbian love and sexuality than their predecessors. It also considers the role media industries play in enabling these images, as they are produced and screened by historically queer friendly networks such as Channel 4 (partially government-funded network with a mandate for diversity) and Showtime (Viacom/CBS), as well as newer queer-friendly (Bravo – NBC Universal) and queer focused (Logo – MTV/Viacom) networks. While brought into being by networks, it is important to note that in the new media environment, many viewers, particularly those not in the US, access these texts via the internet, and together with a consideration of the role this may play in audience response, this paper will conclude with a brief discussion of the emergence of internet based lesbian web TV series such as Angela Robinson's *Girltrash* (2007).

**Frances Bonner, University of Queensland, Australia “What Women Can Do and Where: Continuing Constraints on Female Television Presenters”**

The constraints placed on female television presenters are still more severe than those placed on males in the same situation, but there is greater latitude afforded those women presenting food programmes. This paper explores both sides of this assertion, principally for the UK and Australia, looking at women presenting news, documentaries, chat and reality talent shows, as well as noting the almost total absence of women presenting panel shows. A brief survey of male presenters and of the time in the schedule for broadcast television indicates major differences. The special case of female food presenters, cooks and chefs, is then considered to reveal that the constraints of size, age and ethnicity are not applied so restrictively. The difference can be explained by various consonances between food and ethnicity or size, but the fact that these presenters are women acting domestically cannot be overlooked. A second pass through the data on women presenters will examine their locations with an eye to identifying other instances where domesticity modulates constraints.

Because this paper arises from reflections after completing a book on television presenters generally, it will call on a large corpus of data to identify themes and undercurrents in the operations of gender on presenter-led television at a time when the number of channels and the ways of consuming programmes make encompassing even a small proportion of the television
landscape very difficult. Because it is being presented in Adelaide, there will of course be reference to Maggie Beer, Poh Ling Chiew and Dorinda Hafner.

**Monique Bourdage, University of Michigan, United States “Not Just ‘Another Humourless Bitch’: Feminism and Gender Representations on *Mad Men***

As historical fiction set prior to the emergence of second wave feminism, *Mad Men* provides a unique text in which to examine feminists’ engagement with a series that may simultaneously contain feminist and antifeminist messages and also provides an opportunity to reflect on what the show says about gender representations in the past and present. In Third Wave Feminism and Television: Jane Puts It in a Box, Merri Lisa Johnson proffers the need to explore the conflicted identities of feminist television fans. The likelihood for a multiplicity of interpretations deems study of audience reception, particularly that of female audience members, especially important given the complex and troubled ways in which gender relations are represented on *Mad Men*.

This study was conducted through a face-to-face, in-depth interview with an individual chosen through purposive sampling. The participant self-identified as both a feminist and a fan of *Mad Men*. The conclusions of this case study are based on both data analysis of the interview transcript; field notes taken throughout the project; and textual analysis of the show’s fourth season, Inside *Mad Men* features pertaining to each episode of the fourth season, trade press on the series, and other scholarly and non-scholarly writings about the show.

The overarching research question behind this study is: How do self-identified feminists engage with a program set prior to second wave feminism’s women’s movement? However, asking how feminists view gender representations and relations on *Mad Men* is not enough to understand the implications the series may have for feminists and definitions of women and gender today. Viewers experience television through a range of identity categories simultaneously, and their interpretations will vary based on the historical and social context they bring to the show. This study is an attempt to understand the conflicted identities of one feminist fan.

**Anita Brady, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand “‘Wholesome Lesbian Twins’: The Topp Twins and New Zealand identity”**

In his introduction to a feature on the film Untouchable Girls, a documentary about the musical and comedy duo the Topp Twins, television presenter Mark Sainsbury asked: “Who would have ever thought our national identity could be summed up so perfectly by yodelling lesbian twins from Huntly?” (Television New Zealand, 2009). The paradox that Sainsbury’s question suggests – between a New Zealandness normatively imagined as rugged, rural and conservative, and two lesbians who have somehow ended up among its most celebrated representatives - was almost universally echoed in other publicity and reviews of the film. This paper examines both the terms of that contradiction, and the significance of its repeated articulation as somehow connected to the very New Zealandness being announced. Utilising Judith Butler’s theory of gender performativity, the paper draws particular attention to the deployment of discourses of authenticity to legitimate Jools and Lynda Topp’s performances and misperformances of identity. Through their characters of Ken and Ken for example – two archetypal farmers firmly moulded in the image of the “kiwi bloke” - the Topp Twins demonstrate an unquestionable fidelity to the inaugurating discourses of “New Zealand masculinity” while simultaneously disturbing the gender performance that such discourses might usually effect. What this paper suggests is that Untouchable Girls, and its attendant publicity,
is dominated by an insistence on the particularity of “New Zealand” as a cultural context willing to celebrate its own contradictions, and the Topp Twins as performers uniquely able to utilise those contradictions for potentially subversive ends. It argues that the film demonstrates that the Topp Twins’ “authenticity” enables them to insist upon the ways in which their subversive confusions are to be read, and to potentially reveal and reconstitute a “queer paradox” as integral to New Zealand identity.

Phoebe Bronstein, University of Oregon, United States “Dis/Locating Home: Amidst the Ruins, Re-Constructing One’s Place in Treme’s New Orleans”

*Treme*, the HBO series based on post-Katrina New Orleans, opens with the intertitle “Three Months After”, as viewers are introduced to a still flooded in parts, heavily policed, trashed, but musically alive New Orleans. Primarily filmed on location in New Orleans and with many local New Orleans (and *Treme*) actors, *Treme* insists on a distinct relationship with the city of New Orleans, the presence of filming even changing and shaping the physical and imagined geography of this post-disaster city.

I argue that the neighbourhood, and by proxy the city of New Orleans, is (re)constituted in the wake of Hurricane Katrina through a series of comings, goings, and movement through the space: for example, forced migrations both in and out of the Treme and New Orleans, unwanted tourist attention (and commodification of the devastation for tourist eyes), the arrival of naive aid workers from Wisconsin, and funereal parades. Not only do characters come and go in and around (and are forced in and out of) New Orleans, but so too does FEMA money, constantly referred to within the diegesis of the show, arrive in the city. Within this context, I am interested in how home is constructed, located, and dislocated via race, class, gender, and sexuality in the wake of both the man-made and natural disasters of Hurricane Katrina. Furthermore, I consider *Treme* in conversation with the Spike Lee film When the Levees Broke, the during and post-Katrina news coverage, and the more recent news coverage of the BP Oil Spill.

Rebecca Brown, University of Sydney, Australia “The Weekend has Landed ;-) : Facebook, Young Women and Intoxication”

The last decade has witnessed a rise in anxieties regarding young women’s levels of alcohol consumption (Measham, 2009). Women who consume alcohol are portrayed within official alcohol policy and the news as unfeminine and as transgressing gender norms, yet at the same time are positioned as vulnerable and at risk (Day et al, 2004). Alcohol policy discourse constitutes drinkers as irrational individuals who drink solely with the goal of intoxication, who therefore need to take responsibility for their actions. Current media campaigns aimed at young women are hinged on notions of risk and regret, where it is assumed that young women will necessarily regret ‘letting themselves go’ in the cold light of day. For example, the Australian ‘National Binge Drinking Campaign’ warns young women ‘Don’t turn a night out into a nightmare’.

Analysis of young women’s use of Facebook to broadcast their drinking practices demonstrates the limitations and inadequacies of the public health campaigns which are grounded in assumptions of risk and regret. The everyday and mundane use of Facebook updates - to announce anticipation and preparation, incomprehendable statements in the drunken moment, and the Sunday morning post-mortem of ‘tagging’ photos - point to a culture of ‘normalised intoxication’ (Measham and Brain, 2005) and also show that young women’s drinking practices are bound to ongoing shared
narratives between friends (Griffin et al, 2009). Pleasure rather than regret is found to be located within risky consumption practices. The mediation of hedonistic drinking practices on Facebook therefore can be used to reject notions of the female ‘binge drinker’ as an isolated and irrational individual.

Chelsea Bullock, University of Oregon, United States “In Poor Taste: How Materialized Codes of Identity Unseat Politics in The Real Housewives of D.C.”

The Real Housewives of D.C. seeks to distinguish itself from the other The Real Housewives of… iterations by claiming to privilege proximity to power above all else. The show’s location in D.C. then becomes central to this very assertion. This claim to power is exhibited via the housewives’ attention to crucial codes of conduct, from extending Southern hospitality to making appropriate wardrobe choices, which exemplify, enforce, and reify that power. These codes of conduct are used to determine who belongs in these positions of power (or at least within the correct circles that are close to the White House) and who is only masquerading. However, this show, like its sister shows, is widely criticized in mass American media as trash television, which, like its soap opera predecessors, is an explicitly gendered, and often racialised, dismissal.

Stacie Scott Turner, the only African American housewife on the show, says on her BravoTV.com blog that fans write her expressing their appreciation for her part in representing a positive portrayal of African American womanhood and African American family on television. For these fans, Stacie Scott Turner represents one positive image in a sea of negative images of the African American woman and family on the rest of television. Within this context, dismissing the show as trash also dismisses its political impact and its intervention in mainstream representations of African American women and families. By rejecting The Real Housewives of D.C. as trash and refusing to acknowledge its political potential, American critics reiterate the position of women, both the target audience and the characters, as powerless—a consequence exposed in the tension between narrative and criticism. I examine how labelling this show as trash intertwines with the narrative of the show itself, a narrative emphasizing class, political posturing, and good manners.

Kyra Clarke, University of Sydney, Australia “The Pleasure of Agency: Young Women, Pedagogy and Affect in Australian Film”

While in many films the pleasures of young women are negatively constructed, I believe Australian film has great potential as a sexuality education pedagogy for reconsidering and reconnecting with young women. It is rare for the sexual agency of teenagers to be respected and acknowledged and particularly rare in the case of young women. In fact the discourses available in environments such as schools promote the risks and dangers of sexual activities for young women. Recently, writers such as Rasmussen have considered the importance of pleasure to sexuality education, noting particularly how this can affect their transformation and agency (446). Rather than perceiving agency as only relating to the sexual act itself, I will consider confidence in bodies and conversation as significant in producing pleasure in life and relationships. I feel that Australian film may be an effective medium for considering these issues in the classroom, encouraging discussion of pleasure and agency.

Not only is film often regarded as an enjoyable and thus pleasurable medium to view, it has the potential to generate affect in the viewer. As Rasmussen suggests ‘pleasures are exercised through bodies’ (447) and consequently, I will consider the affect generated by these films and how it may
assist learning by allowing young people to empathise and understand experiences other than just their own. I argue that there is a great deal of potential in this intersection between pedagogy and affect for recognising the pleasures and agency of young women.

Norma Coates, University of Western Ontario, Canada "The Persistence of Infamy: ’Tween and Teen Girl Taste and Narratives of the Decline of Popular Culture"

Just after the end of (yet another) lacklustre season, Salon blogger Steven Axelrod placed the blame for the elevation of generic-sounding male singer Lee DeWyse to the title of American Idol where it obviously belonged: on the backs of “Midwestern ’tween speed-dial monsters.” He omitted the gender of these so-called monsters because it was clear that he was not referring to boys, given the number of times through the season that other pundits had blamed ’tween girls – and their 40-something mothers – on the sorry state of the program that season.

Axelrod and modern bloggers are not alone. Girls were blamed for the poor quality of popular music at its American dawn in the 1850s, and femininity was, in the evocative and often-repeated words of philosopher Andreas Huyssens, constructed as “modernism's Other” by the end of the same century. “Tween and teen girls – and their mothers – continue to be demonized by critics and purveyors of popular culture alike, even as they make piles of money for the latter.

This presentation starts to try to interrogate why the narrative of the “monstrous” control of ’tween girls over popular culture continues to be produced and reproduced while demonstrating a remarkable resilience through market, demographic, and cultural shifts over decades and even centuries. It will do so by scrutinizing discourse about television music programs and their audiences, focusing on American Idol, music sitcoms of the 1960s and 1970s, including The Monkees, The Partridge Family, and various vehicles starring Bobby Sherman, and television variety and dance programs of the 1950s. These discourses suggest an on-going project of policing while guiding and justifying not just their taste, but popular taste as constructed through hegemonic flows of capital and culture.


"Brainy girl" types on teen television dramas of the 1990s and early 2000s were initially shown focused on reading, writing, journalism, science, or math. They were later assimilated into “the gang” who included the “popular” or “sexy” characters of both genders, and became primarily focused on boys and friendship and left a life of the mind behind. This was best exemplified on Beverly Hills, 90210, My So-Called Life, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Freaks and Geeks, and Gilmore Girls, although it can be seen on shows as early as Father Knows Best and up through Veronica Mars.

More recent programs, including American shows like Gossip Girl and Secret Life of the American Teenager, the British Skins, and the Canadian revival of Degrassi: The Next Generation show a different type of girl. She can be good at school, yet not be set aside as the “brain.” More frequently these shows feature the rebel or the “talented girl,” as the “other” but all the girls on these show start out objects of desire—usually for boys, but sometimes for girls. I would also be interested in looking at how Australian teen dramas such as Heartbreak High, Bluewater High, or Being Eve have treated this sort of girl.
I would particularly like to consider these characters in terms of “coolness” and how girl viewers co-opt portrayals of such characters to build their identities in online forums such as Facebook as cool rather than studious, and also consider how, as the “mean girls” phenomenon has morphed into a worldwide bullying crisis in the media, how these shows use social media to enact bullying scenarios.

Melissa Connor, University of South Australia, Australia “Crafting Community and Creativity: the Indie Craft Blog”

Recent attention on the potential of online networking to allow all users to be “produsers” (Bruns, 2007) has seen changes in the amount of creative work now available online. My research looks at Australian authored ‘indie’ craft blog, as an example of a space for women to participate in a generative creative practice and form communities. Indie crafters are a globalised group of makers, willing to share their expertise, skill and time. The craft blogs are a solution to the problem of the isolated arts worker as they provide an outlet for the often home-based craft maker to gain feedback and critique. For a savvy blog author it can also result in getting the work seen by a global audience, mainstream press attention, publishing deals and can transform a ‘hobby’ into a business. How new media communication allows for the negotiation of the Do-It-Yourself, subcultural identity of indie crafters and participation in traditional media is a focus of the research. With new modes of collaboration, creative sharing and knowledge production the craft blog is an exemplifier of technology meeting traditional handcrafts, community making and individual creativity.

Amanda Cote, University of Michigan, United States “Our Princess is in Another Castle: Feminist Media Theory and Female Video Game Characters”

Historically, video games represent a gendered space, created for and dominated by males. Many authors, such as Henry Jenkins, have already discussed the problems that result from this gendering, such as decreased female access to technology. Surprisingly, no one has yet looked at the problem specifically through the lens of feminist media theory. The goal of this paper is thus to fill this void and show how these older theories apply remarkably well to representations of female video game characters, despite their original focus on film.

Laura Mulvey’s concepts of sexuality and capability provided a way to divide characters into initial categories. I then chose a famous female Nintendo character, one that I hoped would be easily recognizable by gamers and non-gamers alike, to illustrate each combination of these two characteristics. Each of these archetypes, such as Princess Peach of the Mario Bros series, makes many appearances in their own game series, as well as in other games and venues.

Using these archetypes, I am able to discuss and expand on a number of other topics in feminist media theory, such as Mulvey’s arguments about the passivity of female characters and Mary-Ann Doane’s discussing of transvestitism as a means of empowering females. The power of the male gaze is also a key aspect of this paper, as video gamers are not only assumed male but are also represented within games as a male avatar in most circumstances.

Through the frame of feminist media theory, problems with female representations in video games are illustrated in new ways. This not only illuminates current problems, but also serves to demonstrate ways in which female gamers can work to overcome the gender divide and in which video games could be improved and made more readily accessible by both male and female players.
Christine Daviault, University of Otago, New Zealand “Female persistent non-player characters, a chance for genuine female engagement in video games or distraction? Feminist reading of Alyx Vance in Half-Life 2: Episodes One & Two”

This presentation will offer a feminist reading of the character of Alyx Vance, a “persistent non-player character” (PNPC) in the first-person shooter digital games Half-Life 2: Episode One and Half-Life 2: Episode Two set in the future and pitting humans against aliens from another world. Vance is interesting because she is not the typical white, busty, scantily clad female character more commonly found in digital games. She is of Black/Asian descent, not particularly busty, does not wear revealing clothing, and is smart and adept at manipulating computer systems. As such, she challenges traditional depictions of gender in digital games and reflects calls for the rejection of sexist/racist representations and more inclusive design in games, which has been the focus of most of the research on female avatars in games.

However, she is also interesting because she is not a lead character. As a PNPC, she is an avatar that cannot be played but is “recognisable as a separate character from the background population.” As such, she presents a complex relationship with the player. As a supporting character she is constantly on screen, an object of the male gaze but her importance to the game’s diegetic integrity is such that it raises her supporting role almost to that of muse for the lead character Gordon Freeman.

Influenced by the success of Lara Croft, from the game Tomb Raider, the female avatar or heroine has become more prevalent in game narratives. Part of the appeal of these characters is that they offer female game players a chance to identify with the main protagonist of the game and to feel the sense of empowerment that has been available to male players since games were first invented. Ultimately, this presentation will try to assess if a female PNPC can offer similar pleasures despite not being playable.

Melissa de Zwart, University of Adelaide, Australia "Exploring Ways of Being: Copyright, Fan Fiction and Feminism"

This paper will explore the role of copyright in encouraging the creation and distribution of online fan fiction. It will use as the focus of the case study a comparison of the approaches to online fan fiction adopted by Anne Rice, the creator of the Vampires Chronicles; Stephanie Meyer, author of the Twilight series; and Charlaine Harris (and HBO) as the author of the Southern Vampire Mysteries (filmed as True Blood). The subject of vampire is chosen both because of its enormous current popularity, but also because of the capacity that it presents for fan fiction authors to explore questions of gender and sexuality.

There is a debate regarding the role of copyright in protecting or preventing the production of culture, in particular copyright’s role as a tool of corporate owners to suppress and prevent the creation of independent (amateur) works. This paper will consider whether in fact copyright has a role in facilitating amateur production. Building upon the work of both literacy and legal experts it will ask whether, rather than rejecting copyright, it can in fact be recast or refocused to facilitate the ongoing creation of popular and literary culture by amateur authors. The result of such a refiguration would be to open up what Susan West calls the “authordoxy” to multiple voices, not just to those who are authorized to speak/write/be heard, and thus to enlarge and enrich the conversation for all and, incidentally, to refigure literacy as the ability to respond to a conversation
already and always ongoing in a way that “invites the participation of others”).’ (Lunsford 1999 citing West 190). This paper will look at fan fiction as a social and cultural act and explore the legal context of such creativity.

Melissa de Zwart, University of Adelaide, Australia "Final Fantasy: Cosplay, Gender and the Magic Circle"

This paper will consider how cosplay may operate as the entry point for females into online, MMOG and console games, such as Final Fantasy (in multiple versions). The author will look at the cultural and intellectual property issues that affect the cosplayer’s ability to engage with the game and use the characters as an embodiment of their own persona and identity. The author has previously considered issues of identity, intellectual property and freedom of expression in the online and game environments and will develop these concepts in this paper to explore the important role of cosplay and gaming in the expression of identity.

Kate Douglas, Flinders University, Australia “‘Learning to Love You More’: Creativity and Transgression in On-line Life Narratives”

Rarely a day goes by where we aren’t pointed to young people’s (and more particularly, young women’s) vulnerability online, especially when it comes to self representation. A much neglected point in popular media discussions (but one that has been taken up in scholarship) is that the majority of young women who use new media technologies use them safely, and use them as a tool for telling stories about their lives and connecting with the lives of others.

There are a plethora of on-line media sites and projects used by young women to share stories about their lives: from short ‘update’-or anecdote-style story sharing, through to photo and video diaries, and overtly confessional sites. Of course, none of these sites are exclusively used by young women. However, many studies have pointed to the popularity of these sites for young women and even young women’s leadership within these cultural spaces (see Boyd; Driscoll; Kearney; Montgomery; Poletti).

In this paper I look at a case study: Miranda July’s collaborative public art project “Learning to Love You More” (LTLYM) to consider the ways in which young women ‘life narrators’ present their life narratives online using creative and new media tools. I am interested in the ways in which young female participants engage with and transgress the prescriptive limits of storytelling offered by projects such as LTLYM. I argue that LTLYM offers one example of the ways in which young women’s life narrative and on-line “crowdsourcing” projects intersect and present new paradigms for approaching traumatic life narrative.

Jessie Edwards, Adelaide University, Australia “Remember How You Used to Look? Re-inscribing the Body in Make-over Television”

Re-writing women’s bodies is an integral, even foundational, component of the makeover reality television genre. From 10 Years Younger in 10 Days to The Swan, discourses of improvement operate as processes of erasure, masking and transformation, where the reveal of something bettered exists in tension with the constant memory of what lies underneath. As episodes and sometimes seasons progress, the subject is re/presented to herself in a fallen state, as an object to
be improved, and at the narrative and emotional climax of the reveal, is divided spatially and chronologically into before and after, problem and solution, sad and happy, lonely and loved, bad and good, inadequate and normal. This paper uses the ambivalent metaphor of palimpsest to understand the ways subjects' bodies, skills and self image, and the bodies of their families and homes, are overlayed and rewritten by expert knowledge and taste. Makeover television's success depends on the success of the various strategies it deploys to make the subject sensible, to construct her as known and knowable, ordered and orderable. However, this palimpsest, where complete erasure is impossible and what has gone before continues to echo across bodies, lives and memories, reinforces a notion of subjectivity as always unfinished, partial, and non-linear.

Julia Erhart, Flinders University, Australia “Modern Families, L Words, Queer Folk, Alright Kids: LGBT Parents in the Media”

In the winter of 2010, the Social Development Committee in the South Australia Parliament called for an enquiry into community perceptions of same-sex parenting. By the time the enquiry closed, the Committee had received an unprecedented number of submissions on the topic – over seven hundred, proof of disproportionate public interest in the subject. Recent national discussions about same-sex marriage brought about MPs Adam Bandt and Penny Wong, have further focussed attention on this LGBT sub-group.

Looking at a range of both commercial and community-generated media including popular TV sitcoms (Modern Family), Showtime/ HBO dramas (the L Word; Queer as Folk), independently-produced feature films (If These Walls Could Talk; The Kids are Alright), and documentaries from several production contexts (Our House; Fatherhood Dreams; Daddy and Papa; A Family is a Family is a Family), this paper looks at the position of the ‘queer parent’ in the context of historical representations of lesbians and gays and alongside popular representations of the ‘family’ more broadly. How are the families positioned within the various forms in question? How does the image of the ‘queer parent’ disturb understandings of both ‘queer’ and ‘parent’? What is the generic function of such family forms within the media under consideration? Taking into account relevant reception and distribution contexts, this paper will consider the social function such media are likely to serve.

Jane Feuer, University of Pittsburgh, United States “‘Quality’ Reality and the Bravo Network Reality Series”

This paper is part of a book on television drama. This chapter attempts to break down the binary opposition between quality TV and reality TV which is usually set up along an axis of distinction based on aesthetic value. That is, HBO dramas are art, reality TV show are trash. I would like to suggest that with the proliferation of reality shows, we now have a taste hierarchy within reality TV. The Bravo cable channel in the US has pioneered the notion of the high-end reality show including the competition shows Project Runway and Top Chef and the fly-on- the-wall shows such as Flipping Out and The Rachel Zoe Show. I would like to analyse these programs as television dramas, looking at their serialized structure in contrast to that of HBO and Showtime reality dramas. Although these programs may be “unscripted”, they are nevertheless highly formulaic and tend to follow the structural norms for serialized drama. The narrative does not “follow” people’s lives in the fly-on-the-wall fashion thought to structure direct cinema, rather “real people” structure their lives to follow the formula. This is especially true for a long-running reality show such as The Bachelor in which women who should know better from having watched the show, continue to
behave irrationally in order to make the pursuit of the bachelor more (melod)ramatic. Both viewers and participants have internalized the codes of serialized melodrama to the point that scripts are no longer necessary. I will theorize this unconscious knowledge of the melodramatic in order to show how the high-end reality show blends the codes of direct cinema documentary with those of the serialized melodramatic TV drama.

Rosie Findlay, University of Sydney, Australia “From her Bedroom to her Style Blog: Girls, Self-actualisation and Style Blogging”

Over the past six years, girls all over the world have been creating blogs to express their own amateur, authoritative perspectives on fashion and style. On these blogs fashion is resituated within the realm of the personal, and bloggers are more concerned with their own style than with the industry and its wider developments and trends. Moreover, as well as highly personal, the perspective of style blogs is a predominantly female one as the majority of bloggers are girls and young women.

Much of the criticism that has been levelled at style blogs by the media centres on risk and anxiety; namely, the dual concerns over the bloggers’ lack of consideration of their personal privacy, and the anxiety about the ‘narcissism’ that such an activity demonstrates. Such anxieties fail to acknowledge that self-actualisation of this kind- that is, expressing identity and fostering sociality through sharing images, personalising space and aligning themselves with particular brands- is not an unusual practice for girls. As McRobbie and Garber demonstrate in Girls and Subcultures (1978), girls have long created their own spaces in reaction to their exclusion to wider subcultural groups and modes of being. I read style blogs as part of this tradition in that girls are blogging as a response to their exclusion from the fashion industry as well as to be sovereign over a space of their own creation.

In this paper, I will consider the parallels between McRobbie’s theory of bedroom culture and the virtual space created and acted upon by style bloggers. Whilst the identification of self through external imagery and the enabled socialisation with others are central elements of both, the girls McRobbie wrote about were resisting by creating enclosed and private spaces. Style bloggers, on the other hand, defy their exclusion from the fashion industry by very public means. I will conclude by discussing the implications of this highly visible performance of girlhood and stylishness for style bloggers, taking into account the ways in which pleasure, agency and self-representation are bound up with this kind of blogging.

Alisa Freedman, University of Oregon, United States “Sesame Street’s American Values: Forty-One Years of Turning Urban Blight into Bright”

This talk explores the environmental and consumer politics of Sesame Street, the longest running children’s program in world television history. Since 1969, Sesame Street has taught socialization skills, encouraged acceptance of race and ethnicity, pioneered programming formats, and developed marketing strategies and cross-media promotion. Through experiments in content and form, celebrity appearances and Muppets, Sesame Street has stayed relevant and salable. Importantly, it has spread American ideologies through global children’s culture. Sesame Street aired in English in 120 countries; thirty countries developed localized versions. A key to Sesame Street’s success has been advancing liberal agendas while tapping consumer desires for idealized
American childhood. This is clear in *Sesame Street’s* vision of New York as a quintessentially American yet global city.

I look back at the first seasons when *Sesame Street* was created as a friendly block in otherwise mean New York. As the series spread worldwide, the street brightened and was cleared of trash. It was gentrified in ways similar to American cities. I study *Sesame Street*’s “curriculum,” yearly focus on issues with global appeal. Environmentalism, the choice for 2010 and 2011, is a prime example. These campaigns have occurred with the addition of characters, including Abby Cadabby, the first main female American Muppet and the only to have immigrated to *Sesame Street*. I investigate *Sesame Street* scandals in liberal and conservative media to question if the program compromises politics to commercialism. As a corollary, I analyse how Japanese *Sesame Street* promotes political and consumer ties between Japan and America.

Lisa French, RMIT University, Australia “Women in Film, Television, Video and Multimedia Industries”

Women are under represented in many key creative roles in the Victorian (and Australian) audiovisual industries, and have significantly lower representation in these industries than in the Australian workforce. This presentation imparts the results of a survey of 200 people currently working in the Victorian industries (part of a pilot trial for a planned larger national research project), which analyses women’s participation in film, television, video (non-broadcast/corporate) and digital media (including games). It focuses on pivotal issues of access to employment, industry progression/barriers to progression, pay equity, gender representation (job type), perceptions of gender equity, and workplace/organisational cultures.

This research project compares the current industry structure with the industry as studied in the last major survey (What Do I Wear For a Hurricane, 1992), and takes this report as its benchmark (with Screen Australia’s permission). The Hurricane report found that the Australian film and television industry was gender segregated, there were Differences in job opportunities, the skills women needed in relation to those men needed (and the training women felt they needed to do), the levels of seniority or promotion achieved over time, and pay levels. This research investigates whether this has changed, or is still true in 2009/10, and what the key issues are today. Through collection of the data, and mapping the gender imbalances and possible reasons for it, this research provides an evidence base for action.

This research was funded by the Malcolm Moore Industry Research Grant, which is awarded for industry-partnered research project, and was supported by various organisations: Women In Film and Television (WIFT, Vic); Sue Maslin, Independent Film Producer (Film Art Media); The Australian Writers Guild (AWG, Vic.); The Australian Film Institute (AFI); The Victorian Women’s Trust; Film Victoria, The Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM).

Katharina Freund, University of Wollongong, Australia “How Women do Fandom: The Complexities and Contradictions of Gender in Fan Vidding Communities”

This research describes the online fan community of “vidders”, a group of (mostly) female editors who appropriate television and film content and edit it to music. Vids are a unique new media form that combine pre-existing audio and visual content in creative ways and often convey meanings not intended by their original creators. Originating in the 1970s with slide projectors and VCR-to-VCR
editing, vidders now utilise digital editing systems, social networks, and streaming video sites to create and share their work. This paper will examine the contemporary community of vidders as it exists on Livejournal.com.

As a self-acknowledged community of women, vidders have a uniquely gendered way of responding to media attention, copyright suits, and media or mainstream attention. Throughout my ethnographic research, I was often told that vidding was "how women do fandom": my participants often commented that its femaleness was what made vidding unique, and that it stood in opposition to other, more "male" video communities (like machinima). This position, though, is highly contested within the community.

For the purposes of this paper, I will explore the gendered community aspects of vidding practices. Firstly, as most members have no formal training in digital editing, I will describe how this group functions as a community of practice through the sharing of skills and technical and emotional support throughout the editing process. I will address how vidders have responded to new forms of remix as part of wider trends in user-generated content and Web 2.0 as these vidders often come into conflict with other styles of video remix. Finally, I will detail the strategies that vidders employ to deal with copyright and intellectual property conflicts with media corporations. As a case study of a particular, gendered community, I will also consider the wider implications of this research on audience and fan studies.

Anitza Geneve, Queensland University of Technology, Australia ““Five Acts of Agency’ by Women in the Australian Digital Content Industry”

Although women are underrepresented as Interactive Content Creators within the Australian Digital Content Industry (DCI), there is little empirical or conceptual research regarding their participation. This paper reports the findings of a case study which aims to understand the influences on women’s participation within Australian DCI games and multimedia production organisations.

The exploratory case study employs multiple sources of data, including interviews with 18 female, early career, interactive content creators over the 2007–2009 period. Examples of their occupational roles include artificial intelligence programmer, game designer, and web interaction designer. The organisations they are employed within include; Krome, THQ Australia, Pandemic, icemedia and the public sector. Further data sources include stakeholder interviews and secondary sources such as industry documents.

Initial results from the case study propose the ‘Sphere of Influence’ (SoI) (Geneve, Nelson and Christie, 2009) as a ‘sensitizing analytical scheme’ (Giddens and Turner, 1988) with which to interpret the female DCI professionals’ accounts of participation. The SoI offers an integrated conceptual framework to explore environmental influences (such as culture, mediated, social and resources) and agent properties (such as tensions between their gendered and occupational identity). Findings from the study provide rich descriptive insights into the women and the DCI environment that influences their participation.

In a move from description to explanation, the case study draws on two theoretical lenses. The first involves drawing on several agency theories as "scaffolds" (Walsham, 1995). The second, employing a critical realist approach, focuses on underlying mechanisms. Synthesis of empirical and theoretical insights leads to the ‘Five Acts of Agency’, a conceptualisation of five categories of
underlying agent driven mechanisms that fostered the women’s participation. The ‘Five Acts of Agency’ are; enabled, connected, collaborative, creative and human. The paper presents rich descriptive insights from the empirical data to illustrate this conceptual framework.

Melissa Gregg, University of Sydney, Australia “Presence Bleed: New Media Use in the Information Workplace”

This paper draws on a three year study of information professionals to isolate the uniqueness of affective labour in a digital era. Focusing specifically on women working in communication and creative industries, my analysis shows the anticipatory and prospective dimensions to contemporary work practices evident in the use of online technologies and platforms in a growing number of places and contexts. Interviews with workers reveal the extensive preparatory and efficiency regimes needed to cope with the information flows expected in the today’s media industries, an intensification and extensification of work that contributes to the notion of “work’s intimacy” (Gregg 2010). Addressing the experience of women of various ages and positions in the workplace hierarchy, the paper contributes to current understandings of affective labour by noting the confluence of performative and emotional energies required in professional situations – and how this bleeds into home-based labours of cleaning, cooking and care.

Mary Griffiths, University of Adelaide:
An analysis of mainstream coverage of the Australian Football League ‘nude photo’ scandal, and the Australian Defence Force Academy ‘Skype’ incident (2010-2011) suggests that Australian media continues to take the easy way out in representing the controversial issues involved in contemporary technology uses by the young, by constructing moral panics the governing of sexuality. Media focus on selected aspects of two notorious events has been responsible for driving quick policy reactions.

I argue that, for instance, the discursive potential of social media in governing sexuality is not being accounted for adequately in reports of these cases: digital platforms now support representational practices that are helping to construct an apparent shift in sexual mores. Media’s omission of the wider context within which ‘scandals’ take place only hamstrings public policy debate. Taking a ‘mentalities’ approach, I argue that Australia’s routine moral panics are blurring what is at stake for effective policy formation in the area of ‘notable’ visual content.

Candice Haddad, University of Michigan, United States “Jordanian Queen Rania, Consort of Online Activity for Social Change: Utilizing Social Media in the Name of Maternal Feminism”

From being awarded the inaugural YouTube Visionary Award to over 1.3 million followers on Twitter to being the keynote speaker of LeWeb, the host of Europe’s premiere Internet conference, Queen Rania of Jordan has been hailed by many as one of the most influential people actively participating in social media networking. This project explores the construction of her online identity as it relates to her positionality as both a monarch of a Middle Eastern nation-state invested in a national modernizing project and as a diasporic subject (she is of Palestinian heritage). Using the method of discourse analysis, this project seeks to better understand the ramifications of Queen Rania’s progressive, liberal rhetoric, which hinges upon notions of Western liberal feminism, of social uplift, educational reform, and cross-cultural connections. This project
looks at Queen Rania’s various use of YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook, in addition to secondary texts that address her utilization of social media to garner support for her causes. Findings suggest Queen Rania’s liberal, progressive rhetoric works within a maternalistic feminist paradigm of developmental discourse, which is akin to paternalistic developmentalist discourse. Further, Queen Rania’s rhetoric of maternal feminism piggybacks on the rampant utopianist discourses surrounding the potentiality of social media. Ultimately, this project works to unpack the implications this collision of discourses has on our understandings of liberal feminist humanitarian aid within a Middle Eastern nation-building context in the age of social media.

Hannah Hamad, Massey University, New Zealand “Fairy Jobmother to the Rescue? Postfeminism and Recessionary Culture in Reality TV”

Recessionary culture and its emergent tropes have been inflecting several generic forms of reality TV in various recession themed programmes like the UK’s Undercover Boss, The Secret Millionaire, and Famous, Rich and Jobless and New Zealand’s Would Like To Work. Also, and most notably from a postfeminist critical standpoint, The Fairy Jobmother sees employment expert Hayley Taylor life coaching the long-term unemployed into a state of “job readiness,” reorienting makeover and celebrity lifestyle expert reality TV for post-recession times, as Taylor shepherds her male subject participants into suitably manly blue-collar work contexts (refuse collection, kitchen fitting, warehouses) and her female subject participants into equally feminised occupational milieus (beauty parlours, hairdressers, retail outlets). It invokes the charged figure of the postfeminist fairy godmother, with a concomitantly ideologically evasive agenda that depoliticises and decontextualises the recession, reducing the significance of its impact on employment to the level of the individual, transposing responsibility for systemic economic failure onto the individual, discursively aided by some of the most entrenched tropes of postfeminist culture, like the makeover and celebrity lifestyle expert. The show contrives the necessity of Taylor’s enactment of makeovers on the homes and exterior selves of her subject participants in a recession-era continuation of postfeminist strategies of individuation, transformation and processes of “governing the self,” as disingenuously apolitical cure-alls for social derogation, subjugation and marginalisation. In a culture of recession, postfeminist reality TV like The Fairy Jobmother recontextualises familiar scenarios of makeover, consumption and individual empowerment for a drastically different economic environment that provides a seemingly common sense fallback with which to offset unironically retrograde or uncritically normative articulations of gendered subject positions. Correspondingly, they negotiate and qualify the revised relevance of postfeminist tropes that might otherwise appear unattuned to shifted priorities in an age of austerity.

Dana Heller, Old Dominion University, United States “The G Word: Programming Lesbian Reality”

This paper will trace the discursive trajectory of lesbian gendering from Showtime’s barrier-breaking scripted series, The L Word (2004-2009) to the reality spinoff, The Real L Word (2010-). While it is not unprecedented for fictional television series to spawn reality shows (eg. ABC’s Desperate Housewives and Bravo’s The Real Housewives of...), the path from The L Word to The Real L Word is unique in that both projects are the creations of the same producer, Ilene Chaiken, whose investments in branding and franchising lesbian ensemble drama for mainstream entertainment have spurred controversy over issues of gender and authenticity. From The L Word’s first season through its outrageously campy and ultimately inconclusive final season, Chaiken’s adherence to
stereotypical gender scripts and her refusal to "take on the mantle of social responsibility" clashed with the expectations and desires of fans and critics alike.

In the *The Real L Word*, gender remains no less narrowly scripted and carefully micromanaged. However, by framing lesbian gender performance within reality television’s aesthetics of authenticity, *The Real L Word* registers distinctive tensions and debates that arise from the culture’s growing acceptance of queer stories and characters, as well as the from the mass appeal of televisual performances that do not so much promise to capture the reality of lesbian gender but transform it in accordance with the perceived limits of tolerance. Placing The L Word’s stylized practices of camp and self-parody alongside *The Real L Word’s* programming of gender, I will argue that the shift can be understood as part of a long-standing mass media discourse that perennially frames lesbian generations as aesthetically “new” (or not-your-mother’s-lesbians) in precisely the same way, as conventionally gendered. Indeed, the unspoken word most central to Chaiken’s successful franchise does not begin with “L” but with “G”.

**Alison Horbury, University of Melbourne, Australia “Women-Centred Drama in Post-Feminist Cultures: Classical Mythology and the Post-Feminist Impasse”**

This paper examines the convergence of contemporary television culture and the popular discourses of post-feminism to understand the prominence of a classical Greek myth in the narratives of successful women-centred dramas.

As Amanda Lotz has noted (2006), the post-network era has seen the immense growth of television drama created specifically for women, consumed through a diverse repertoire of technologies and digital media platforms. In this paper, I temporarily depart from the post-structuralist focus on the intersection of the text and audience as the site of contingent interpretations, to address a phenomenon taking place at the narrative (textual) level. Drawing on my study of popular post-feminist heroines, I argue that many contemporary women-centred dramas, despite considerable divergences in genre, are engaged in the project of narrating a common scenario: what I identify as the post-feminist impasse.

As Angela McRobbie points out (2004, 2009), the political, social and institutional rhetoric of post-feminist cultures position women within a network of competing and contradictory discursive technologies, images, and narratives. This complex framework is premised upon the commonsense notion of feminism’s imagined success and consequent redundancy as an organising discourse, and as such, it encourages young women to relinquish a feminist critique in order to count as ‘sophisticated’, knowing citizens. It is this foreclosure of feminist inquiry that I identify as the origin of a deadlock around unresolved feminist questions, and it is the drama produced around this deadlock that popular post-feminist narratives are primarily occupied with. As a more explicitly articulated feminist critique has been foreclosed, it is my assertion that women-centred drama has turned to allegory in order to stage the dynamics of this conflict, in particular, to the tropes of the classical Greek myth of Persephone and Demeter. Drawing on popular examples of this phenomenon (*Alias*, *Veronica Mars*, and *Grey’s Anatomy* to name a few), this paper will examine how the figure of Persephone is invoked as a means of staging the inherent tensions of the heroine’s existence within post-feminist cultures: to understand how the myth is revised in its contemporary context to work through – and in some instances, resolve – the foreclosing limits of the post-feminist impasse.
Sal Humphreys, University of Adelaide, Australia “Work that Doesn't Count: Affective Labour in Digital Networked Production – Feminized, Marginalized and Utterly Central”

Much of what drives and sustains online digital environments is user-generated content. As media environments these sites are produced in radically different processes from offline and more conventional media. This invites questions about the conditions of the labour force that produces sites such as online games and social networking sites and the conditions under which such work is carried out. While there is a burgeoning body of academic work that looks at the issues of ownership of user-generated content when it takes the form of uploaded material such as photos, writing, sound files and videos, there is less consideration of the affective work that goes into the creation and maintenance of the social networks that often lie at the heart of the success of sites. This affective work of relationship building and maintenance is typically characterized as feminine and just as typically dismissed as marginal to many of the arguments about labour and rights in new networked production-based media. Intellectual property and ownership dominate the discourses of a knowledge economy and the emotional labour of the social economy, while utterly central to the success of sites, remains on the margins of discussion. This paper will consider the intersection of rights-based discourses and IP based discourses in sites such as MMOGs and SNSs through the lens of the feminizing of the work of media content production.

Kylie Jarrett, National University of Ireland, Maynooth “The Relevance of Women’s Work: Google and the Social Reproduction of Labour”

One of the often-neglected features of Marxist thought is that capitalism not only requires the productive labour of the workforce, it also requires the social reproduction of that labour. This reproduction typically occurs in private or domestic spheres, where the education, health and attitudinal orientations of workers are assured so that they can continue to work efficiently and generate surplus value. As feminist scholars have reminded us, this affective work – typically ‘women's work’ – is the necessary unpaid labour that is a fundamental requirement for the continuation of the capitalist process. But this labour is also affectively rich, ideologically complex, disciplining work historically carried out by women in the home over those in their care, and by female social reformers involved in the training and supervision of women’s domestic labour and attitudes. Its value was, and is, economic but, due to its positive affective, social and cultural effects, it arguably cannot be reduced to that alone.

However, this notion of the social reproduction of labour is often missing or marginalised in the growing literature about the immaterial labour and affective economies of digital media. While the Italian autonomist Marxists, from whom many digital media researchers have drawn their concepts, usefully provide an understanding of the economic importance of consumer productive inputs in the media process, the tendency is to focus on value in an entirely fiscal sense. This focus on use-value is, however, a limited understanding of the various forms of currency, many of which have complex relationships with traditional fiscal exchange, that circulate within affective economies.

This paper will replace the notion of social reproduction into the digital media context by exploring the affordances of search engine Google not merely as mechanisms to provide direct or indirect value to the company’s economics, but specifically as examples of subjective disciplining. It will focus on Google’s model of relevance as a technology of the Self, exploring how, while mobilised within the circuit of capitalist exchange, it also produces a different form of cultural/social capital associated with the disciplined subjects of The Searcher and The Searched. In effect, it explores how
Google and the technological manifestation of ideologies that constitute its search algorithms function as a site where the disciplining, reproductive role of ‘women’s work’ is being performed in the post-Fordist digital era.

**Laleen Jayamanne, University of Sydney, Australia “Burlesque Turns: Organic and Non-organic Bodies in Performance”**

This paper will observe Nicole Kidman's Burlesque turns in *Moulin Rouge* (Baz Luhrmann) so as to turn thinking around the figures of actor-puppet-doll. The question to be explored is, ‘what are the powers that non-organic bodies transmit to the organic body of the actor?’ I will ask why major film directors have worked with and continue to work with Kidman despite the toxic response she generates in Australia now across the media and on the internet as well as in screen studies classes. Through this framing an important cross-media tradition of performing can be identified and specified historically. My fascination with this mode of acting, however, lies in its power to bend, twist and turn the arrow of time.

**Misha Kavka, University of Auckland, New Zealand “Mothering the Settler Nation”**

When the New Zealand Film Commission was established in 1978 to give impetus to a national film industry, the initial result was an exponential growth in film output tied to the cinematic fixation of an iconic form of white (or Pākeha) settler masculinity. In canonical films by directors like Geoff Murphy and Roger Donaldson, the settler who had figured in New Zealand literature as a ‘man alone’ was transferred to the screen, providing the framework for a persistent national self-understanding that was equal parts Kiwi bloke and ‘cinema of unease’ (Neill 1995). The late 1980s/early 1990s, however, registered a sea-change with the appearance of feature films made by Māori directors for Māori audiences (Ngati (Barclay 1987), Mauri (Mita, 1988)) as well as films made by and/or about Pākeha women, often bound to narratives about sex, death and children. It is this latter trend in the national film canon that interests me here.

Repeatedly, New Zealand films of the 1990s and 2000s are presented from the perspective of a child on the brink of the adult world. Although this has been discussed, less attention has been paid to the concomitant mother figure as the (in)visible centre of a story of settlement experienced from the troubled innocent’s perspective. I intend to investigate the mother as accessory, in the double sense of prop and accomplice, to the filmic inscription of settler identity figured as extended adolescence. Mothering the settler nation is neither a simple nor a generic task: whether she is sexualised and punished (*Piano, Rain, River Queen*), gothicised and abjected (*Braindead, Heavenly Creatures*), or displaced across a range of femininities (*Crush, In My Father’s Den*), the Pākeha mother is called upon to prop up and play out the traumatic settler narrative. Simultaneously resistant and complicit, she represents the gothic underside of a national identity that fantasises it can overcome its settler adolescence in the age of global adulthood.

**Misha Kavka, University of Auckland, New Zealand “Rules of Attraction: ‘Real’ Women and the Politics of Flaunting”**

It has become common amongst television scholars to discuss the performance of reality TV participants as a self-staging, or ‘selving’ (Corner 2002), that underlies both the aesthetics and authenticity effects of the genre. Performance alone, however, is a blunt critical tool for addressing
the gender politics of reality TV. Increasingly, gender on reality TV is something to be flaunted rather than simply performed, especially for women participants, whether on real-love shows, makeover shows or the new breed of docusoap that focuses specifically on gendered and sexual relations. Programs such as The Real Housewives of . . ., Girls Next Door and Jersey Shore foreground women whose visibility – and visualisability – seems to consist of little more than their ability to flaunt a certain hyperfeminine attractiveness. These shows suggest an incipient gender politics precisely because they are dismissed as cheap and nasty on the grounds that the women flaunt themselves as cheap and nasty. At the same time, the hyperfemininity, which they display, on their bodies as well as in their relationships, aligns with a rigorous code of attractiveness formatted by a social script and exacerbated by popular media scripts. To grasp this paradox, whereby women are able to appear only by flaunting and simultaneously devaluing the attractiveness for which they were cast in the first place, requires distinguishing between attractiveness and attraction, which I understand as the gravity of affect, the weighty response of an audience, that keeps viewers circling around such shows even when dismissing them. This paper will begin with the makeover program How to Look Good Naked to establish the relation on reality TV between femininity and flaunting, attractiveness and attraction, before interrogating the new breed of gender-oriented docusoaps in which the attraction of the program depends on the negotiation of feminine flaunting.

Judith Keilbach, Utrecht University, Netherlands “Chatting with a Chimpanzee”

In-vision announcements of the broadcasting schedule or following programs are marginal moments of live television which were (at least on German television) usually left to women. Due to their marginality and ephemerality rarely any of these announcements can be found in the archives of the German broadcasting institutions. The gendered hierarchy of live television’s highlights (live drama, entertainment shows, sports events) and everyday occurrences (announcements) as well as the archives’ selectivity is in itself an issue – even more so, if we look at the rare examples of existing footage.

This paper is based on the discovery of a 1964 in-vision announcement of an animal show (EIN PLATZ FÜR TIERE) and will first discuss the gender roles, the familiar and at the same time stiff atmosphere of German television in the 1950s and early 60s, and the archives’ selectivity in general (the particular announcement owes its archival storage to the appearance of the director of the broadcasting institution who pays a visit to the television studio to bit the female announcer farewell). Secondly the clip will be used to analyse the hierarchy of voices and structure of gazes both of which give way to male bonding between the television director and the presenter of the following animal show. Although the female announcer finally gets the chance to talk without script there’s no question that she is not entitled to do so. In the end there’s nothing else for her but to communicate with the guest of the following show, a chimpanzee, while the two men compliment each other.

Stephen Kerry, Independent Researcher, Australia “Intersex Online: the Co-emergence of a Social Movement and the Internet”

Social movements of the late twentieth century coalesced in some way around pre-existing desires, behaviours, identities or communities. The intersex movement of the 1990s emerged through very different discursive practices. Intersex individuals lacked the outward markers of gender (Women’s Movement), race (Civil Rights Campaigns) or sexual orientation (Gay Liberation). A century of
medical management of intersex resulted in the ‘institutionalisation of silence’ in which intersex individuals were denied access to knowledge of their own bodies and others like themselves. Despite the medical profession’s attempts at normalisation intersex individuals were physically and emotionally scarred by years of genital surgery and unexplained, traumatising visits to doctors. Several intersex support groups began in the late 1980s and early 1990s but it wasn’t until the mid-1990s with increased public accessibility to the Internet did a globalised network of support and information sharing become established. In their relative isolation across the globe intersex people scoured the Internet using vague references to terms learned serendipitously from their experiences with doctors or after sneak-peeks at their medical records. A new social movement was borne from these furtive key word searches. If it weren't for the Internet the intersex movement may have developed completely differently, if at all. This paper argues that because of the Internet the intersex movement is the first truly international and globalised social movement. Chat rooms, egroups and blogs offered real-time and 24/7 psycho-social support to geographically isolated individuals. This paper analyses posts on these online forums and argues that in addition to ending the isolation and challenging the medical management intersex individuals are also discussing issues of sex, gender and sexual orientation. Ninety per cent of infants with ambiguous genitals are surgically assigned and raised as girls. Thus intersex individuals, not unlike their feminist predecessors, are asking: What is a ‘woman’?

Yeran Kim, Kwangwoon University, South Korea "Capitalization of Girl Bodies"

This paper examines the strategic and systematic transformation of young femininity to cultural content as national resources in the contemporary girl industries in global–local articulation. Three aspects of girl industries are discussed. Firstly, girl idols are de-humanized as cultural content of girl industries and girl bodies are objectified as normative commodities under corporate governmentality. Next, girl bodies are re-sexualized and their sexuality is featured as ambiguous. This split and doubling mode of visualization of the girls, featuring in variation between desexualisation/sexualisation, differs from the linear one of femininity and is more effective in inviting various social groups as fans. Finally, national governance of girl bodies is examined in terms of the building up of the idol republic and the emergence of Lolita nationalism. Girl bodies are defined as national property in celebratory tones for the conquering of the global cultural market and exhibition of national power.

The three interrelated aspects of commercialisation, re-sexualisation, and nationalisation suggest that girl industries are intrinsic to the strengthening of the neoliberal governmentality of girl bodies at a global scale.

It is argued that despite some naive post-feminist celebration of media representation of empowering femininity, the girls in the new regime of gender are ‘controlled’, not only by systematic or regulatory power, but also productive and seductive power. It is also worth of noting that in a global context, various strategies different than the western ones of girl representation are prolific. This is because due to social, cultural, and historical diversities, to create various ambiguous and conflicting repertoires of girl images is more adoptable in the creation of segmented markets in terms of generation, gender, and ethnicity. Therefore, considering girl sexuality merely in the western heterosexual framework is not comprehensive enough to account for the heterogeneous diversity and complexity of body politics intersecting girl bodies.
Novi Kurnia, Flinders University, Australia "Does Gender Matter? Women's Film Festivals in Post-New Order Indonesia"

There are an increasing number of women film directors in Post-New Order Indonesian Cinema. One strategy that these women have used to support and promote their work has been the creation of women's films festivals, which take their place in a growing circuit of film festivals based around a range of themes. The paper will contextualize the women's film festivals in the Post-New Order Indonesian Film context, including the context of the broader growth of festivals, and look at the shifting definition of women's film in these women's film festivals. It will also explore the complexity, debates, the purpose and the changing nature of women film festival.

Elaine Lally, University of Technology Sydney, Australia "Music-Making in the Cloud"

Music-making and musical collaboration has been transformed in recent years by the convergence of two trends. The first is the availability of relatively inexpensive equipment for digital recording and mixing on the desktop. The second is the rise of social media, which makes 'virtual' collaboration possible across time and space. This paper forms part of a larger project of research on musical collaboration, technology and social media, and presents an analysis of material drawn from participation in the online musical collaboration community kompoz.com. The extensive literature on women in the music industry explores the dynamics of gender identities and discourses in an industry sector that in many of its forms is dominated by rigid gendered, ethnic and age-related expectations and stereotypes. This paper extends these debates to examine how women in this particular online community, with its focus on artisanal production rather than commercial imperatives, have been able to use its affordances for online and offline modes of music-making and collaboration, to open up new possibilities for creative expression and personal development.

Eva Lewkowicz, Independent Researcher, Australia "Rebel Love: Re-viewing Mexican Telenovela Tradition through the Transnational Teen Television Market"

Love conquers all in the Mexican telenovela. For over fifty years, the tragedies and ultimate triumphs at the heart of these serialised prime-time love stories have beamed into countless homes across Mexico. The nineteen eighties and nineties saw the Mexican telenovela boom as an export commodity, as viewers across Europe, Asia and the Americas embraced these romantic tales from a far away land. Scholars identified their currency in the international language of love, as the heightened melodrama, emotion and ultimately happy ending transcended international borders and cultural barriers. But sometimes love just ain't enough. As local industry executives began to modify the telenovela genre for production in their own markets, the demand for international fare decreased, and Mexican executives were left to develop new telenovela models to capture an increasingly scarce international market share.

This paper looks at one attempt to maintain the international reach of the Mexican telenovela, through the transnational teen television market. In capturing a young and commercially engaged international audience, the teen telenovela subgenre continues the tradition of Mexico's telenovela success across geographic and cultural borders. However, in capturing this diverse audience through the production of an audiovisual teen language, the traditions at the heart of the Mexican...
telenovela are challenged. In particular, the teen telenovela Rebelde (Rebel) challenges the traditionally dichotomous representation of femininity at the heart of the genre. In reading the rebellious nature of teenage love within this particular narrative, this paper shows how the traditions of the telenovela’s past face a less prescriptive future, where love is not the only possible interpreter of women’s lives (A Room of One’s Own, Virginia Woolf, 1929).

Pascaline Lorentz, University of Strasbourg, France “The Gendered Representations Building through Gaming Practice: The Sims®”

Nowadays the video games take the first place in the pastimes of teenagers in Europe and they even have reached the statute of a cultural practice in France. In 2008, the sector of the video game with a sale of 33 billion Euros exceeded cinema’s (Chantepie, 2005, p. 35). In former times this sector was a simple part of the toys’ one, but now it had become an autonomous commercial sector. Studies related to the public of the video games showed that it is composed, in great majority, of boys and men (ESA, 2008).

For years Margaret Mead (1963) showed that they are not natural male or female behaviours. In fact the cultural context, in which the people grow up, inculcates these gendered behaviours. By the way, behaviours and tastes do not depend on biological characteristics (Baudoux, Zaidman, 1992, p.43). Thus there is no reason for girls forsaking the video games in their hobbies. Nevertheless, there exists a video game which makes exception, The Sims®, and which opened a breach in the field of the pastimes.

The Sims® is the most sold worldwide video game on computer and (it) was translated into twenty-two languages. Its particularity lies in its public, which is composed of 60% females (Bramwell, 2003). This video game was not developed specifically for girls that is why it is appropriate to wonder about the reasons of such a success with female gamers.

We will thus endeavour to clarify this phenomenon by analysing two aspects. The first one is the study of the toys and games produced especially for the young girls and all the values they promote. Then, we will pay attention to the video game The Sims® itself, and propose to correlate its success to the gaming socialization of the young girls, whom have been predisposed to appreciate the gameplay of The Sims®.

Margaret McFadden, Colby College, United States “The Closer: The Feminist Case Against CIA Interrogation Techniques”

TNT’s The Closer (2005-10) stars Kyra Sedgwick as Deputy Chief Brenda Leigh Johnson, a former CIA interrogator who has joined the LAPD as the head of a new priority homicide unit. Her first task is to win the confidence of her racially diverse squad, whose mostly male members are sceptical of an outsider and who openly express sexist assumptions about her capacity to do the job. Johnson deals curtly with their insubordination, then wins their respect by extracting confessions from suspects using a wide variety of tactics. What is noteworthy about her interrogation techniques is that she scrupulously adheres to the FBI’s interview guidelines, and explicitly rejects tactics that verge over the line into abuse or torture of suspects. More specifically, she rejects tactics that are allowed in the CIA’s official interrogation handbook, known as the KUBARK manual.
This paper will make two central arguments about *The Closer*. First, the show makes the voice of authority and expertise a female one. Although Johnson builds an effective team, she is the only one who leads the interrogations, and she has always discerned the truth before an interview. Second, the show presents the fairly-obtained confession as the highest standard of proof of guilt. Given that the show began and has run throughout a period in which abuse and torture of alleged terrorists has been much in the news, the show comments directly on what is and is not proper in the U.S. justice system, repeatedly rejecting techniques that Johnson would have known through her CIA past. The show repeatedly confronts various moral and ethical quandaries, and argues for adhering to rigorous standards of protecting suspects’ rights and obtaining convictions through expert police work and legitimate interrogations. The show thus offers a critique of the US government’s claims that the “war on terror” requires extra-legal activities to obtain justice for victims of violent crimes. Further, it also offers a pointed critique of the normalization of extra-legal violence and civil rights violations by police officers that is common on many police procedurals and crime shows.

**Margaret Montgomerie, De Montfort University, United Kingdom “Dirty Love: Disability and the Implication of Perverse Sexuality”**

In this much heralded age of diversity it is rare to see a character with a disability depicted as sexually and romantically attractive on our TV screens. Popular characters with disabilities, like Monk (*Monk*) and Grissom (*CSI*) have ‘temporary impairments’ which add to their entertainment value but which also mean that a previous or developing life without impairment can be represented. Monk was married, his OCD triggered by his wife’s murder; Grissom’s hereditary deafness is cured which means he can enter a relationship with his co-worker Sara. Characters who have permanent impairments are often depicted as childlike (Andy Pipkin, *Little Britain*) vulnerable (Sue Thomas, *Sue Thomas FBI*) or to have debilitating self esteem issues (Emma Coolidge, *Heroes*). These characteristics coincide with broader discourses of disability which see mental and ‘bodily integrity’ as a ‘prerequisite of desirability’. These sanctioned versions of contemporary sexuality seem to be contradicted by characters such as ‘Cherry’ in *Planet Terror*, Jodi Lerner in *The L Word* and Amelia in *The Silence*. These screen fictions seem to offer the potential for the depiction of women with permanent disabilities as desiring and desirable. This paper will investigate the discourses of desire which underpin narratives organised around disabled characters. It will focus on potentials, prohibitions, and the unacknowledged genre of ‘crip porn’.

**Meaghan Morris, University of Sydney, Australia “Feminism, Fame and the Video Star: Cynthia Rothrock’s Career”**

Cynthia Rothrock is a martial arts performance legend of the 1980s who began acting in Hong Kong cinema in the late 1980s and became a transnational video star in the 1990s. At the height of her fame she was mobbed by fans from Germany to Indonesia and she made a stadium erupt in the U.S.A, where her thirty-odd films were not shown in cinemas; the subject of hundreds of media articles world-wide, she has been the object of adoring fan web-sites and “shrines” and features today in lovingly curated YouTube galleries of her best fight scenes. Yet in academic studies her career is often framed as one of failure to become a “real” star—that is, to get a big screen role in Hollywood. In these accounts, Rothrock ‘wasted her potential’ in ‘the ghetto of exploitation’—i.e. in direct-to-video productions. Even Rikke Schubart, a sympathetic post-feminist critic, frames her study thus: ‘Failed Female Hero? “Queen of Martial Arts” Cynthia Rothrock’ (*Super Bitches and Action Babes*, 2007).
Rothrock’s career took shape in a time of technological transition, continuing on the Internet today. This paper will ask how Western feminism’s guiding critical questions might be reframed to take better account of the work of a transnational and intermedial female star.

Lisa Nakamura, University of Illinois, United States “Racism and Sexism for the Lulz: Griefing and Gamer Culture in the Postracial and Postfeminist Age”

"Griefing” or online harassment has been around as long as the Internet has: trolls, flamers, and other social irritants have long been a distinctive subculture that has gone mainstream due to the rise of networked console games such as Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 and Halo. This is occurring at the same time that we have become both "post-racial” and as Susan Douglas argues, post-feminist. Post-racism and post-feminism enable new forms of racism and sexism to develop on telematic gaming platforms. Griefing mocks those who take the Internet “too seriously,” and enlightened racism and sexism work in the same way — by making fun of people who take griefing "too seriously." This paper analyses griefing subcultures to see what they can tell us about new forms of racism and sexism both on and offline.

Jenna Ng, Umea University, Sweden “The Space Is the Message: Mediating Spaces through Augmented Realities”

This paper explores the technology of mediated reality, specifically where smartphones or other mobile devices are used to add computer-generated sensory input and data to a live direct or indirect view of a physical real-world environment, constructing what is commonly referred to as “augmented reality” (AR) (although the “augmentation” is by no means guaranteed!). This paper makes two arguments about AR: firstly, that such media technologies create a topography of unique hybrid spaces which do not so much straddle the boundaries (real/virtual; analog/digital; organic/inorganic) as eliminate them by assimilating physical and virtual spaces into an inchoate mass of hybrid form and potentiality. In the process, the merged spaces of AR become reflexive platforms which transmit information; in their formation, they become the materiality of communication: the space is the message. Moreover, these are mobile spaces, following us wherever we go, and whose journeys through the city (as AR technologies tend to be used in urban places) can be figured akin to the flaneur. AR spaces are also summoned at will simply by activating one’s mobile device—they are invoked, rather than drawn up. In the light of these aspects, the second argument is that AR are spaces of energy and flow, whose ontological significance lies in flux, change and invocation, as opposed to trace and boundaries. In particular, both arguments will be refracted through a feminist lens, re-rendering the technology from a feminist perspective: in view of their hybridity, how can we use AR as a feminist critique of digital media? In their lack (of definition, of boundaries), what is the feminist epistemology of these spaces?

Holly Owen, Champagne for the Ladies, and Karen Orr Vered, Flinders University, Australia “Anatomy of a Moral Panic: Games for Girls, New Media and Old Stereotypes”

This presentation teams a digital media producer and an academic in a discussion about a moral panic that took on international proportions. The case in point is Coolest Girl in School (Champagne for the Ladies & Kukan Studio, 2007), touted as the first mobile role-playing game for women and
aimed “girls and guys who get it’ and later ‘people who can tell the difference between real life and a game.” Promoted with the tongue-in-cheek appeal that marks the game as a comedy, *Coolest Girl in School* was said to be, “*Grand Theft Auto* for girls, but better.” “Lie, bitch, flirt your way to the top of the High School ladder. Become the *Coolest Girl in School*” were the marketing lines that launched a global controversy.

The game’s creative director will open with background on the development of the game’s concept and its market placement. Mobile was the first gaming platform where women players outnumbered men and the cheapest platform to develop for. Her company was founded to develop cross-platform entertainment for primarily female audiences. Having done so to a level of success that won *Coolest Girl* several industry award nominations, some scholars, feminists and media critics assaulted the game with criticism based in familiar stereotypes about girls and women, what they should want and what they are capable of understanding. (In 2007 games were not aimed at primarily female audiences. Now women represent the highest growth audience across all consoles and mature women are particularly important among them, as evidenced by Nintendo’s poster girls Helen Mirren and Olivia Newton John.)

The second part of the paper, presented by a media scholar, examines the terms through which these critics waged objections to a game before they’d even seen it. Based solely on press releases, academics wielded their considerable public influence denouncing a game that they had not yet played. Controversy surrounding the game suggests several areas that we would like to explore in a dialogic fashion: While the media are new, the stereotypes are old; the level of media literacy among the game’s critics - calls for bans only increase sales of the objects they despise; is bitchiness the feminine equivalent of violence?

We welcome an open discussion with conference delegates to discuss the gendered inflections of this particular moral panic.

**Jane Park, University of Sydney, Australia “Playing with Culture and Masculinity: Martial Arts as Ironic Pastiche in *My Wife is a Gangster***

This paper looks at the ways in which martial arts function as ironic cultural and formal pastiche in the Korean gangster comedy, *My Wife is a Gangster* (dir. Cho Jin-gyu, 2001). This comedy action movie foregrounds martial arts aesthetics in its action sequences and mise-en- scène but in playful and self-reflexive ways that are able to appeal to a wide range of international audiences. In particular I will discuss how the film references and reworks different Asian masculinities, globalized through the transnational circulation of Hong Kong and Korean action films, by focusing on action sequences that showcase the female protagonist’s fighting skills. To what extent do the ironic and playful caricatures of Korean masculinity performed by the protagonist, her infantilized underlings and feminized husband activate different modes of engaging with martial arts film tropes?
Bryce Peake, University of Oregon, United States “Kinecting Gender to the Homely Body and the Bodily Home: How Microsoft’s New Game Peripheral Re-stabilizes Gendered Domestic Space as an Electronic Elsewhere”

While literature on gender and video games examines how girl gamers obtain agency in video game worlds, little to no attention has been paid to the ways that the space in which the game is played is transformed by the act of gaming. This paper uses XBOX 360’s Kinect to offer unique insights on this oft overlooked effect. Kinect’s innovative use of ‘the body as controller’—as put by Microsoft—works to blur the world inside of the video game and outside of the screen, constructing an electronic elsewhere (Berry et al. 2010): a space whose constructed-ness is as much physical as digital.

I will focus on three specific launch titles: Kinectimals, a pet game marketed to girls where players care for exotic large cats; Dance Central, a ‘hip-hop’ dance game by the creators of guitar hero marketed to a ‘general audience’; and Fighters Uncaged, a street-fighting game marketed to boys. Each forces gamers to embody specific gendered subjectivities through the ‘body as controller’, while using surround sound (K-5.1, DC-Multi-channel stereo, FU- 2.1 Stereo) to inscribe that gender into the gamed space. Kinect makes the destabilized, gendered domicile an electronic elsewhere where gendered subjectivity and gendered space are re-aligned. Using Walkerdine’s (2006) understanding of the affect of win versus that of sensitivity, I argue that Kinect attempts to re-stabilize the domestic space for girl gamers as a place for the labour of care. This labour is constructed in a strict dichotomy to the competitiveness inscribed and ascribed through boy’s games, and results in a dis-empowerment of girls both in the game and in the domicile.

Suzanne Platt, University of South Australia, Australia “Revisiting Betty Friedan’s The Feminine Mystique through a Textual Analysis of Mad Men”

The contested and mutual definitions of feminism and femininity have long been argued amongst feminist scholars, often with no clear consensus being reached (Bowlby 1987, p. 61). The Feminine Mystique (Freidan 1963), considered to be the catalyst for the western feminist movement of the late 1960s, became one of the first texts that discussed the complexities and oppression contained within ‘femininity’. Nearly fifty years on it now seems pertinent to re-examine Friedan’s (1963) definitions of femininity drawing upon her conclusion that representations of an ideal female identity were defined by media texts, and that these representations influenced 1960s social structures in America.

My thesis proposes to revisit Friedan’s (1963, p. 68) argument by exploring how 1960s media texts and popular culture influenced representations of female identity. I will draw upon 1960s and contemporary media texts as a means of comparing how female identity was and is represented in media texts. Due to the success of Mad Men (2007-2010), a contemporary text that explores 1960s America, I will conduct a textual analysis which will examine how the female characters have been constructed pertaining to the ‘female identity’ described by Friedan in 1963.

By exploring how modern audiences respond to the historical representation of femininity contained within Mad Men I will consider the effect a reflective vision has had on the development of this text. I will explore how data contained within feminist texts, pre and post-Freidan, may have influenced the producers in the development of this text (ABC 2009) and then investigate how the narrative demands a gendered performance that supports Friedan’s (1963, p. 68) theory that media
texts in 1960s America were used as a means of confirming and validating the ideal definition of femininity.

Throughout my analysis I will refer to feminist media theorists de Lauretis and Mulvey (Chauduri 2006), to suggest that the female bodies in Mad Men are constructed through the prism of a ‘male gaze’, supporting Freidan’s (1963) theory that media texts perpetuate the ideal in the feminine identity. Mulvey’s (1990) ‘male gaze’ theory can assist me to determine how Mad Men perpetuates a dominant ideal version of femininity, thus defining, confirming and then influencing how present day spectators may view the 1960s feminine body.

Maureen Ryan, Northwestern University, United States “Apartment Therapy, Mid-Century Modernism and Consumer Culture”

Design and lifestyle media is a historically mobile genre that has migrated from print magazines to television to the web. Today, a number of web-based design publications take advantage of the blog’s access to everydayness, offering images and discussion of “real” design strategies for the “real” homes of their readers. In particular, Apartment Therapy is a home design blog whose image-centric tours of lived-in homes and apartments are widely read. As a trans-media franchise that comprises a blog with multiple ‘channels’ of daily content, home design books, and more recently online videos, Apartment Therapy’s expressed focus on lived-in homes and everyday life espouses a contradictory epistemological position that at once acknowledges the difficulties of maintaining an aestheticized day-to-day existence and encourages one to strive for it nonetheless. In this paper, I consider the formal and textual attributes of Apartment Therapy’s blog in order to examine the ways in which the blog’s address and content interpellates its readers as subjects of a mobile, aspirational class, constructing a discourse of “therapy” through consumer practices that at once assuage and perpetuate those tensions.

I follow Lynn Spigel in her discussion of everyday modernism, a uniquely vernacular adaptation of the principles of modern design in postwar American television culture, to suggest that Apartment Therapy is a contemporary digital form that like television before it, articulated the tenets of modern design as lifestyle to consuming publics. Apartment Therapy’s blog embodies many of television’s structuring tensions and contradictions: a supposed capacity for intimacy is at times undercut by its implicit mass consumer address. I argue that the site enacts a hierarchy of taste and class, mobilizing mid-century modern design as a marker of tasteful restraint, against its potentially feminizing espousal of both domestic life and mass consumer culture. While the blog embraces the multiplicity of goods consumer culture offers and the modularity of those goods which allows one to ‘poach’ objects at will to construct an affective, fulfilling, and useful domestic space based on one’s own needs and desires, the blog also cautions against both its potential to overwhelm a space with (feminized) excess, and the nefarious by-product of modularity, conformism.

Jane Shattuc, Emerson College Boston, United States “The Deflowering of Lifetime’s Womanhood: The Devolution of Women as TV Niche Market”

In 2003 Heather Hundley wrote an extensive history of evolution of the Lifetime Network. She chronicled how it was the first successful network targeted to women. Yet the network dropped its claim to women’s programming in 2005. Its signature tagline “Television for Women” was
exchanged for the gender neutral "My Story is on Lifetime." In 2010 American basic cable offered only one channel Oxygen (2002--) that was still openly devoted to "women." In fact Oprah Winfrey's newest network OWN (2011--) is being marketed as a network not devoted to women, but "the common thread is everything [Oprah] has stood for the last 25 years." (Hunt). The newest trend is to allude to feminine traditions but not to state that connection overtly. With women comprising 54% of American TV viewer in 2010, it is time to question our basic assumptions about how "women" are understood within the American TV industry. This paper examines the devolution of the discourse of "women" on American TV in general but most specifically on Lifetime network from 2005.

Initially, Lifetime as a niche network had to convey its own quality and distinguish itself. Marketing assumed a much more important role as makers struggle to declare their product's difference in a crowded market. "Branding" a network as women-oriented meant trying to create a brand familiarity based on demographics and a positive brand image in order to build brand equity. "Brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favourable, strong, and unique associations in memory (i.e. brand image)” (Chan-Olmstead and Kim 305). The arrival of cable and satellite created over 300 networks. Only through strong brand recognition Lifetime was able succeed in this multichannel clutter branded as a women's network.

The paper focuses on Lifetime and how it represents cable and satellite networks moved away from social identity as the marker of difference. By 2005 successful cable networks such as Lifetime began to rethink how demographic branding which segmented the potential audience by gender, race and age--limited the potential size of their audience. The established/successful cable networks then moved to mirror the broadcast networks in an attempt to gain a larger (part broadcast) audience. The central mechanism became scripted programming and a return to the undifferentiated audience. Suddenly cable channels branded themselves as narrative or scripted TV. Not only did Lifetime advertise “My Story is on Lifetime,” USA Network proclaimed “Characters welcome.” TNT used the line “We know drama.” A new Big Three network system for scripted TV appeared on cable. But happened to feminine sensibility of the old Lifetime?

The final portion of the paper examines how the Lifetime claim “My story is on Lifetime” has and has not been connected to femininity as it has played out marketing in the past five year. How can programming be feminine and not feminine?

Jo Smith, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand “Māori Masculinity and the Ongoing Project of Settlement”

New Zealand media industries and a neoliberal "branding" logic have played a crucial role in shoring up the symbolic boundaries of this settler nation. Cultural difference (most often indigenous Māori differences) has helped signal the distinctiveness of this nation within a global context, while intra-nationally, things Māori have offered a colourful mise-en-scene to otherwise beige nation-scapes. Perhaps the most well known act of “New Zealand” branding is the national rugby team, the All Blacks, and the haka ritual that is performed at the start of any game. Once a traditional Māori war dance, this particular haka is now better known as a sporting/branding practice that unites Māori, Pākehā and Pacific Islanders under a banner of multicultural nationalistic unity. This paper considers recent media representations of Māori masculinity (in particular, the “Warrior” trope) that function as nationalistic spectacle—with ambivalent effects. This paper asks: how might these images cloak and disguise those ongoing forms of neo-colonialism so characteristic of contemporary settler nations? And how might we understand their more
recalcitrant and unruly dimensions, which challenge established ways of thinking? Drawing on examples from mainstream New Zealand advertising campaigns, news media, and programmes from State-funded Indigenous broadcaster Māori Television, this paper considers how New Zealand's mediated mode of address—its appeal to nationhood—draws on representations of Maori masculinity that continue the work of settler colonialism. My analysis begins from the underlying assumption that settler colonialism is an ongoing project and logic, which seeks to exploit, extract, and 'work over', prior presences and alternate claims to landscapes, resources or representations. I conclude that while these repressive forces certainly exist, State-funded articulations of Māori masculinity also contribute to the conditions necessary to see, or conceive, of the nation—otherwise. These ambivalent effects and complicit relations deserve closer analysis.

Carol Stabile, University of Oregon, United States “Boys Will Be Girls: Gender Swapping in Massively Multiplayer Online Games”

Historically, women and children have been understood to be potential victims of new media’s destabilizing of public and private spheres. From the fears of “obscene phone calls” that followed the widespread adoption of telephony in the first half of the twentieth century to fears of online deception and sexual predation at the end of that century, the victim par excellence of new and scary forms of mediation was a feminized one. This paper turns that logic on its head. Focusing on widespread gender swapping among male players of massively multiplayer online games (e.g. when men create and play female avatars or toons), this paper looks at how young men negotiate gendered identities in a landscape that allows them to assume and experiment with female identities. In particular, through surveys and ethnographic interviews with players, this paper analyses the crucial role that homophobia plays in structuring gender swapping practices and experiences online.

Markus Stauff, University Amsterdam, Netherlands “Articulating Gender on the Level Playing Field: The Queerness of Sports in TV Drama”

Professional, competitive sport is still a male dominated cultural practice; accordingly, the representations of sport in photography, film or television display and (re-) define masculinity within a persistent heteronormative framework. However, these dominant representations are continuously accompanied by stories reversing or questioning the hegemonic gender roles of sport.

Sports relevance for the articulation of gender, thus, cannot be reduced to its status as a recurrent and culturally well established topic; instead, I want to argue, media representations take advantage of the fact that sport offers quite basic cultural procedures of separation and comparison that enable a highly flexible display of identities: Modern sport is characterized by the separation of a special, ‘rationalized’ place from the surrounding space – the level playing field. This separation, at the same time, involves multiple procedures of mediation: Not only does the visibility of the performance become systematically transformed but also the relations between audiences and athletes, between the rules of the game and the rules or conventions of everyday live.

Using examples of the TV series GLEE, Dawson’s Creek and Friday Night Lights, I will analyse how these processes of mediation between a separated place and the surrounding space, between sports and not-sports is made productive for the articulation of troubled gender. It is, thus, not a certain quality or ideology of media sports (‘heroes’, ‘competition’) that guarantees its continuing relevance for our ideas about gender but rather its continuing processes of mediation.
Jennifer Stokes, University of South Australia, Australia "Ms. Behaving: Violence, Voice and Screenage Women"

"Also, I can kill you with my brain" River Tam, Firefly

The 1990s brought a wave of violent warrior women to first world home and movie screens; characters using physical strength as a device to allow space for their voices, and, subsequently, feminist discourses, to be aired and heard. Ten years on, mainstream screen representations of young women have adopted many of the characteristics of these warrior women, so that powerful, vocal, female characters are normalised in texts as diverse as fantasy and animation, and even teen flicks and romantic comedies. Billion dollar multimedia franchises incorporate smart, feminist characters, such as Hermione Grainger (The Harry Potter Series) and Lisa Simpson (The Simpsons), allowing audiences to enjoy ongoing narrative relationships with strong young women. There is also a growing demand for mainstream feminist stories, from Mean Girls to Whip It. These gains have often been realised through compromise and feminist scholars must continue to raise questions about contemporary cinema; such as how powerful teenage warriors River Tam (Firefly) and Hit Girl (Kickass) can coexist comfortably on the same screen as conservative, repressed Bella Swann (Twilight).

As we start the second decade of the 21st century, it is timely to consider how filmic depictions of female teenagers have shifted and the impact this may have on audience expectations and acceptance of feminist narratives. This paper will explore both the progress made and tensions arising within contemporary screen depictions of female teenagers. This paper will also consider how these depictions reflect real-world developments, including the shift occurring as more women become involved in media content production and the Networked Society allows wider, public audience commentary on texts.

Melanie Swalwell, Flinders University, Australia "Movement and Kinaesthetic Responsiveness"

Some of the most enjoyable bodily pleasures of gaming result from the felt sensations of movement in games – improvisation, freedom, becomings. Moments of kinaesthetic responsiveness evidence both the closeness and the liveliness of gamers’ aesthetic engagements with computing technology. Moreover, these movement pleasures indicate the need for more nuanced understandings of players’ relations with game worlds and avatars, as they are not relations of identification in the commonly understood filmic sense.

Drawing on her ethnographic research with gamers, the author lays out a mimetic account of movement sensations, pointing out the partial nature of the mimetic ‘becoming similar to’, and the potential this has for understanding what it is to encounter a game and to “enter” virtual environments. The paper uses kinaesthetic responsiveness to unfamiliar in-game avatar movements as a way to think responsiveness to the unfamiliar more generally. It draws on threads from aesthetic, posthumanist and feminist thought (Benjamin, Morse, Haraway, etc) to suggest that gaming provides a useful model for thinking experimentation with a range of significant others, and a player subject who is testing and potentially reconceiving relations with self, others, things, space, and so on.
Sarah Todd, University of Oregon, United States “Hips Don’t Lie: Reading Shakira’s Transnational Moves”

In the past ten years, Colombian-Lebanese musical artist Shakira has gained international fame as a crossover artist who appeals to both Spanish- and English-speaking audiences. My paper argues that Shakira's post-crossover performances of identity challenge gendered borders of nationality and ethnicity. Through a fusion of Middle Eastern, Latin American, and hip-hop dance, Shakira performs a physical embodiment of multicultural and multinational hybridity. My close readings of three music videos, “Hips Don’t Lie,” “Whenever, Wherever,” and “Beautiful Liar,” reveal that Shakira presents her identity as fluid, relational, and multilingual. In these videos, Shakira visually collapses interpersonal and geographical borders. In “Hips Don’t Lie” and “Beautiful Liar,” Wyclef Jean and Beyonce Knowles cross linguistic and cultural barriers in order to identify with Shakira. As Jean and Knowles align themselves, respectively, with Colombian and Lebanese cultures, the music videos signal transnational and interracial alliances between Shakira and her collaborators. Meanwhile, Shakira’s dancing disrupts natural boundaries in “Whenever, Wherever,” crumbling mountains and creating tidal waves. In each video, Shakira expertly negotiates dissolving boundaries through dance, using a form traditionally associated with feminine and minoritarian subjects to demonstrate the elasticity of culturally constructed borders. While her music typically does not take explicitly political or polarizing stances, and can even reinforce problematic cultural and gender stereotypes, Shakira’s mutability as a performer contains the potential to destabilize categorical understandings of Latina and other marginalized identities.

Staci Tucker, University of Oregon, United States “Griefing, Competition and Unfair Play”

Despite the rise of Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOs) as a social phenomenon, ever-growing virtual worlds that seemingly exist as “third places” for social interaction and relationship formation, there is little research on the experiences of gamers with harassment, discrimination, and derogatory speech. Gamers continue to grow more diverse with the growing popularity of MMOs, departing from the white, male, teenage stereotyped image of gamers past. However, the video game target audience remains largely male and the ever-growing diversity of the MMO audience unrecognized. This paper reports on the experiences of MMO players with harassment related to gender, race, and sexual orientation and examines the concept of griefing and the psychology of competition in how they relate to communication in online games. A series of ethnographic interviews with online players reveal feelings of violated safety and witnessed accounts of harassment and rape language. Ethnographic interviews with video game griefers reveal additional complex layers to online play, harassment, and community formation in a ludic environment.

Sue Turnbull, University of Wollongong, “A Suitable Job for a Woman: Representing Crime”

Women have been writing crime since the early nineteenth century. Indeed literary historian Lucy Sussex has made the case that a woman may well have beaten Edgar Allen Poe to the post in the birth of the crime story as a genre. While the world of crime fiction is now dominated by women who have made their mark in crime fiction, the picture is rather different when we look at what has happened when their work is translated to the screen. In this presentation I will trace the careers of a number of significant women in crime to end up somewhere in the Underbelly of contemporary
Australian crime drama exploring what Melisaa Gregg and Jason Wilson have described as the ‘economy of infamy’.

Shvetal Vyas, University of South Australia, Australia “’Traditional yet Modern’: Marital Eroticism in Indian Soaps”

One immensely popular and frequently repeated narrative strand within popular Indian soap operas is the Stockholm syndrome type story – the post marriage love story. In this kind of storyline, far-fetched circumstances necessitate marriage between unwilling and dissimilar partners and then the inevitable development of ‘love’ between them. The typical trajectory is for the marriage to remain un consummated while the two partners get to know one another and each other’s family, which is the dominant source of authority within sentimental Indian narrative fiction. The overarching discursive framework and the language is that of tradition, i.e. it is unthinkable and selfish to refuse to submit to this forced marriage, to the emotional if not physical violence of it. At the same time, the shows negotiate ideas of the self and questions/issues of love, sexuality, intimacy and domesticity, in that the realization and acceptance of ‘love’ happens within a modernist conception of the individual. The moment of acceptance, where both partners confess that this forced relationship has become a romantic one, is posited as a willing one, as free as any other epiphanic ‘realization of love’ moment within dramatic fiction. In a country where desire for a ‘modern yet traditional’ partner features prominently in matrimonial advertisements’, such shows offer an interesting entry point into questions of love and marriage.

Brenda R. Weber, Indiana University, United States “Reality (Celebrity) Check: Fat, Death, and the Aging Female Body”

The Biggest Loser is a weight-loss reality television elimination program that features massively overweight contestants engaged in what the show itself terms a ‘battle for their lives’. The philosophy of The Biggest Loser is to lose weight the ‘old-fashioned way’, through intense and frequent exercise as guided by no-nonsense trainers, calorie restriction, seclusion from friends and families, and without the aid of surgery or supplements. Each season begins with a field of roughly two dozen large-bodied competitors, narrowed every week as those who lose the most weight are guaranteed another week at the Biggest Loser Ranch and those who ‘fall below the yellow line’ by having insufficient weight loss percentages are eliminated from the program by a vote cast by those who remain. The show has proven to be a colossal ratings success for NBC (the National Broadcasting Company), consistently giving the network a top-ten placement in weekly ratings tallies. The Biggest Loser has also spawned an international set of sister texts, with comparable programmes around the globe including those in in Australia, Brazil, Finland, Germany, Hungary, India, Israel, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Scandinavia, Slovakia, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the Ukraine, and across international regions with The Biggest Loser Asia and Ar Rabeh ElAkabar (The Biggest Loser for the Arab world). Many of the contestants on the show have graduated to differing degrees of celebrity, some short-term and some more longer lasting, but all of the participants are enfolded in a hyper-saturation of visibility during the airing of their particular season. The Biggest Loser, then, does not only deal with large bodies, it is itself a large body that commands attention and promises a considerable degree of celebrity to all who rotate within its orbit.
As the burgeoning field of celebrity studies has helped demonstrate, fame performs a valuable cultural work akin to other social formations such as religion or heroism in that it often polices and makes intelligible divisions between the ordinary and the extraordinary, between the normal and the excessive, and even between life and death. Traditionally, celebrity studies theorists have tended to focus on the motion picture industry in their reflections on the meanings of fame. And while they have sometimes considered women, they have not always brought gender to the forefront as a critical analytic in the study of celebrity. In this article I analyze the particular case studies provided by one of the longest-running, most-popular, and most internationally syndicated reality television programmes, The Biggest Loser (NBC 2004 – present), seeking to demonstrate that when women who possess reality celebrity are asked to uphold the heavy lifting of mediation and inspiration that celebrity theory has marked as the cultural work of fame, the terms for that fame shift. Reality celebrity appears to offer a new position of liberation and empowerment that is amplified by women’s embodiment in utopic infantile celebrity, or the belief that the youthful body confers dividends in opportunity and fame. Utopic infantile celebrity fissures, however, in matters of motherhood, since its promises of youthful possibility are restricted to those whose large bodies have blocked heteronormative romance/motherhood rather than those who have already experienced it.

Janet Whitten, University of South Australia, Australia “Exploring with Dora and Building with Bob: Can We Really Challenge Gender Stereotypes in Children’s Popular Culture?”

Whilst promising rich new experiences, media directed at young children often unthinking conformity and gender stereotypes. Dora the Explorer and Bob the Builder are characters which offer something of a ‘middle way’ for young children and their parents, but do they really make a difference? To what extent can children and their families negotiate a safe and affirming path through the maze of products and media in a modern consumer society?

William Whittington, University of Southern California, United States “Scream Culture: the Female Voice and Surveillance Media”

Critical works such as The Acoustic Mirror—The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema by Kaja Silverman and Echo and Narcissus—Women’s Voices in Classical Hollywood Cinema by Amy Lawrence have shaped our understanding of the role of women's voices within classical Hollywood. These studies revealed a pattern of increasingly severe repression, showing how the female voice was interrupted, suffocated, and silenced. With the rise of television and the emphasis on new audio AND visual relations across media, many of these patterns were fragmented, critiqued, and even parodied, which fostered a shift related to textual authority and subjectivity. Female voiceovers, for example, found a place in genres such as science fiction and fantasy on television and in film. However, with the rise of various digital and new media technologies such as webcams, portable audio-visual recording devices, and mobile media platforms (such as cell phones), the patterns of suppression and control of the female voice have re-emerged. The postmodern horror genre, in particular, has been the site of much the “tech” tension as the female voice is once again captured and controlled. Examples can be found in television shows such as Buffy the Vampire Slayer and in faux digital “documentaries” such as Paranormal Activity (2009). The new surveillance media often engages (and represents) broadcast and recording technologies as a means of addressing issues of power and paranoia. This paper will unpack these issues as related to gender, the voice and the horror genre across television and convergent media. Of particular interest will be an
understanding of the use audio and video technology as an instrument of intrusion as well as a weapon of defence and resistance.

**Mara Williams, University of Oregon, United States** “Unicorns and Fat Princesses: Resisting Post-Feminist Discourse in the Girl Gamer Debate”

The visibility of high profile female gamers such as the Frag Dolls, Felicia Day, and Olivia Munn has led some to argue that game culture is no longer just a boys’ club. Popular first person shooter protagonists Metroid and Master Chief are similarly held up as examples that problems of in-game misogyny have been resolved. At popular fan conferences and on high-traffic game blogs the existence of girl gamers is acknowledged but only within a narrow set of post-feminist discourses of heterosexual availability and consumer empowerment. This paper attempts to move past the debate over whether gamer girls exist. Instead, it investigates the intersection between the post-feminist call to do away with the prefix ‘girl’ and a critical feminist dissatisfaction with current configurations of power within mainstream US-based game culture. This paper documents the emergence of a critical feminist gamer blogosphere and its attempts to shift debate toward discussions of workplace conditions, the unquestioned pervasiveness of rape jokes in games and fan websites, and the absence of people of colour in game texts and production.

**Hanna Wirman, University of the West of England, United Kingdom** “‘This Bath Whisk is a Must’: Illusions of the ‘Local’ in Finnish Sims 2 Game Modifications”

Alongside actually playing the game, thousands of The Sims 2 players participate in creating new and altered game character and item looks to their preferred game. These 'skins' that are shared and discussed online can be read as criticizing the game’s original content. In the dominant approach to game modifications (e.g. Kennedy 2006, Poremba 2003, Schleiner 2001) the players are then assumed to produce appropriative texts and 'skinning' itself appears as a subversive practice.

Skinning encompasses the creation of various kinds of representations, among which are those that take into account the player's local (national) culture. Creating skins allows the addition of imagery associated with local traditions and culturally specific items. This is particularly interesting given that the game originally represents and simulates a specific kind of Northern American suburban lifestyle. Such culture is widely known from other products of popular culture but nevertheless always foreign to the players from non-American cultures (cf. Flanagan 2003; Sicart 2003). And since the game is already being played in 60 countries and translated into 22 languages (Electronic Arts 2008), it is approached, and altered, by players from a multitude of cultural backgrounds.

This paper is based on a study conducted with Finnish The Sims 2 women 'skinner's and discusses the ways in which their skinning draws on local, national meanings. What the case of Finnish players seems to suggest is that instead of conceptualizing the practice as subversion or appropriation, the players are better approached as elaborating on the existing consumerist ideology of the game. The majority of the content being created represents famous Finnish brands and commercial icons. Even the local traditions that are being included take the shape of game items available for purchase and are thus subjected to the culture of commodification. The making of these skins is highly gendered not only because the majority of the 100 million players of the game are women, but also because of the gendering of household and fashion items that constitute a majority of the skins.
Fang-chih Yang, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan “Meteor Garden in Asia: Exploring the Gender and Class Politics of ‘Asian-ness’”

One of the central concerns in East Asian popular culture is the possible formation of an East Asian cultural identity through the cross-border consumption of inter-Asian media texts, mostly, television dramas. Despite the "feminine" nature of these Asian family and love dramas, scant attention is paid to the exploration of the ideologies embedded in these media texts from feminist perspectives. This paper compares and examines the different adaptations of TV drama Meteor Garden in Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and China. Originally adapted from Japanese comics, Taiwanese Meteor Garden became an immediate hit among female audiences in Asia in the early 2000s. With this success, Japan (2005, 2007), Korea (2008) and China (2009) followed suit in producing their own versions. In examining these four adaptations through the concept of "mediation" proposed by (Mazzarella, 2004) and "remediation" (proposed by Bolter and Grusin, 2000), this paper aims to explore the "realities" that are remediated and mediated in these different texts in order to highlight what constitutes "Asian-ness" and what constitutes "the national." Moreover, this paper pays particular attention to how gender and class intersect in constituting these regional and national identities.

Helen Yeates, Queensland University of Technology, Australia “Querying Dissonance: Women and Creative Media Practice in a Research Higher Degree Framework”

Within the media production research culture in Higher Education, creative practice researchers search for elusive symbolic representations that aptly nail the ‘big ideas’ driving their individual works. However, a potential clash of conceptual frameworks seems to occur frequently in relation to practice-led research in particular. Such a volatile mix of ideas linking media theory and practice can bring about productive, unpredictable outcomes that spark and drive the media practice-as-research. This paper will attempt to chart the metaphorical and literal journeys of exploration that women media practitioners within one Higher Education institution undergo, in order to explore the key issues confronting both post-graduate media students and their academic supervisors.

Engaging with a feminist perspective, this paper will critically analyse the current debates around the appropriateness of such a research culture for women, and also explore the nature of the relationship between female workers in the media industries and Research Higher Degree workers in the academy. Transdisciplinary supervisory and teaching practices are also implicated here, and the paper will propose some challenges to traditional methods of supervision practice as well as research methodologies. As the supervisor guides female media production students through the theory-practice nexus, a collaborative pedagogical process emerges which can be both disruptive and transformative for creative women in the academy.

Ashley Elaine York, University of Alberta, Canada “Rethinking Research on Television Reception: Exploring the Factors behind Viewers Watching Female Protagonist Dramas”

This presentation aims to explore the ideologies and discourses co-produced by viewers and programs in relation to three successful female-centric ‘dramedies’ currently airing across the landscape of television: The Good Wife (CBS, 2009-), The Closer (TNT, 2005-), and The United States of Tara (Showtime, 2009-). These high-ranking shows not only are helping to rebrand their respective networks and increase ratings, but also serve as model test cases to analyse whether
more transgressive gendered representations are available on pay cable (Showtime) verses basic cable (TNT) and broadcast (CBS) networks today.

From the 1970s to the 1990s, many television scholars undertook audience reception analyses that contributed to our greater understanding of how viewers render programs meaningful (see Ang 1985; Bacon-Smith 1992; Brunsdon 1978; D’Acci 1987; Hall 1973; Liebes and Katz 1993; Morley 1980; Press 1991; and Seiter 1989). These studies followed in line with the then novel methodology promoted by the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies—a methodology now considered passé, at best, and, questionable, at worst. Today's television scholars are more critical of qualitative analysis and favour, instead, quantitative analyses which find in favour of an overdetermining industry and an unagentic viewership. Whereas the Nielsen Ratings do relatively well at counting the number of viewers and households that watch a specific television program at any given day and time, they do not—and cannot—articulate how, why, and under what conditions viewers negotiate the themes and characterizations of the texts and render them meaningful.

Thus, the overarching aim of this presentation is to rethink television reception and the terminology we use to describe how audiences engage television in order to, first, theorize a new model of audience reception and, second, produce social facts that shed light on the contemporary production of media consumption.

Workshop: “Fembot Workshop: An Open Discussion about Collaborative Research on Gender and New Media for the Digital Age”

Panelists: Carol Stabile, Alisa Freedman, Karen Estlund, Bryce Peake, Chelsea Bullock, Phoebe Bronstein, University of Oregon, United States,

This workshop focuses on Fembot, a new collaborative project promoting research in gender, new media, and technologies. Fembot is a collective of interdisciplinary global scholars, a series of research symposia, and a multi-modal, peer-reviewed journal. To date, feminist scholarship on new media has occurred largely within distinct disciplines and has been disseminated mainly through subscription journals that maintain traditional print formats. We feel the assessment of scholars’ work should be updated to account for the new ways knowledge is spreading. Fembot encourages conversation about pressing issues confronting scholars today through a variety of platforms, including online discussions and face-to-face meetings. Some of the issues those conversations address include the intersection of established academic fields and new media and the role of gender in communities formed through use of digital technologies. Each issue focuses around a theme chosen by Fembot members. Readers worldwide will have access to Fembot and be able to freely use and comment on its contents. Open-access publishing is becoming more of a necessity as archives change in the digital age, and scholars turn more to their computer desktop libraries than those on university campuses.

We will discuss three main topics: 1) Fembot’s innovative model for peer review that encourages more dialogue between scholars, 2) new technologies used for Fembot (including Drupal), and 3) sample content illustrating the breadth and transmedial nature of Fembot. Our goal is to present Fembot both as a community and a scholarly tool. We will engage Console-ing Passions participants in an open discussion about assessment processes, mentorship, the nature of collaborative scholarship, and newly available digital technologies. We hope to show how future multi-media academic research and publishing will look.