

## Program

Final (Sept 17, 2012)

Where not otherwise indicated, the chair of the session is the final speaker.

Session 1 - Thurs 1:30pm - 3pm

Session 1 (D) Frontier 202A

### Disease and Subjectivity

*M.K. Nixon.*

#### **Keep Bleeding: Hemorrhagic Sores, Trade, and the Necessity of Leaky Boundaries in Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year**

This paper considers the way in which nonhuman contagious disease is crucial in shaping human subjectivity. To this end, this essay probes notions of two boundaries that are both political and personal—the border between the national subject and the international other, and the boundary between the self and all that lies outside of it—in a consideration of Daniel Defoe's 1722 text, *A Journal of the Plague Year*. Operating from the notion that the personal is indeed political, this essay asserts that these two borders are largely intertwined, particularly when considering infectious diseases. By way of examining attitudes towards national and personal boundaries, this paper focuses in large part on Defoe's representation of the eponymous buboes of the bubonic plague, juxtaposing and exploring his depiction of suppurated and calcified bubonic sores as metonymic signifiers of both personal and national boundaries that are transgressed or fortified, respectively. Examination of Defoe's illustration of bubonic sores shows that Defoe depicted the Great Plague of 1665 in ways that I assert were thoroughly influenced by his conceptualization of international trade—a conceptualization which resisted the nationalistic xenophobia typical of his day and instead embraced a type of individualistic mercantilism. Defoe's views on economics and trade, then, influenced his understanding of the Great Plague and cycled back to result in a view of man and nation that advocates permeable boundaries even in response to the hugely threatening potential of a complete breakdown of self- and nation-constituting borders.

*Kate Schnur.*

#### **Patient Training: Re-Defining the Human in White Noise and What I Did Wrong**

The question of the role of technology and consumerism in constructing Jack Gladney's illness has been widely debated in DeLillo criticism. Scholars such as Arthur Saltzman and Andrew Price argue that conspicuous consumption is what Gladney uses both to defend himself against death and to wallow in the fear of his inevitable demise. However, such claims rely on an understanding of postmodern illness as something unnamed and invisible. This limitation overlooks what we can learn from tying DeLillo's novel to literary depictions of material, specific illnesses that exist in a similarly technologically-mediated postmodernity. My paper will explore this connection through performing an intertextual analysis of DeLillo's *White Noise* and John Weir's account of the AIDS crisis in *What I Did Wrong*. Specifically, I will rely on Annemarie Mol's theory of disease multiplicity in order to understand how the existence of

the disease in each text is transformed and designed through the patients' interactions with medical objects and technologies. In turn, I will then look to how patient subjectivity is constructed in each text through the characters' submission to medical technology and through the multiple forms of the disease they confront in the hospital and their day-to-day existence. I argue that *White Noise* is instrumental in understanding how medical technology trains the patient to be an obedient subject of the hospital domains in *What I Did Wrong*. Despite this, it is necessary to remove readings of medical technology from the confines of nihilist obsessions with hypothetical death.

Session 1 (E) Frontier 202B

### **H.G. Wells, Hybridity, and Convergence**

*Christina Alt.*

#### **Controlling the Non-Human: Ecology in the Work of H.G. Wells**

My paper will relate the depiction of environmental management in H.G. Wells's *Men Like Gods*, a work of Utopian fiction published in 1923, to the discourse surrounding the emerging science of ecology in the early twentieth century. It will outline the particular view of man's relationship with non-human nature promoted by the dissemination of ecological ideas in the early twentieth century. Contrary to what current popular notions of ecology might lead one to expect, early twentieth-century ecology promoted the idea that greater understanding of the interrelationships between organisms and their environment would make it possible for human beings to assert greater control over the natural world and more successfully manipulate nature to desired human ends. Through a recuperation of Wells's conception of ecology and its possible applications, I will demonstrate the way in which the emergence of ecology initially gave rise to a new optimism – or hubris – regarding humanity's ability to exert control over the non-human world. Overall, my paper will demonstrate the value of reading early twentieth-century representations of humanity's treatment of nature with the complex and contradictory attitudes of early ecology in mind.

*Karen Mizell.*

#### **Mad Science, The Island of Dr. Moreau, and Non-Human Animal Ethics**

This presentation traces the trajectory of Victorian ambivalence regarding scientific progressivism in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* to contemporary biotechnology which aspires to alter natural attributes of non-human animals according to human specifications. I examine Wells' portrayal of Dr. Moreau's experiments as a prescient reflection of modern biotechnological research which is often driven by an amoral scientific curiosity in the biological uplift of nonhuman animals. Finally, I probe moral-theoretic considerations that figure into Moreau's scientific and cultural attitudes toward the use of animals in research, still evident in contemporary biotechnological realities.

Session 1 (F) Frontier 202D

### **Dog Fights, Foxy Dogs, and Doggie-style**

*Peter Hobbs.*

#### **Canine Cartography: On the Queer Pleasures of Being a Dog**

Dogs are fags. There is no getting around it or avoiding them. They are constantly having public sex and in ways that brings home the difference between sex and reproduction, and sex and gender. Despite efforts to dress them up as model canine citizens, they will often betray themselves as deviants. Even the spayed/neutered police dog runs the risk of being outed as a sexual outlaw. Doggie style won't be denied. Dogs are in your face, sniffing each other's butts, and perhaps humping your leg. In the biting spirits of Foucault, Haraway, and von Uexkull, this paper maps a canine cartography or Umwelt. More specifically, I focus on the practice of scent-marking as a nuanced form of nonhuman intelligence rather than a mindless exertion of territorial control. I am interested in scent-marking as a collective act in which dogs

use their urine to produce a canine public sphere of pheromones. Dogs are thus presented as agents and subjects of meaning who, acting as emissaries or ambassadors, provide us with glimpses of a furry ontology, which is, like all ontologies or worldviews, ever-partial, ever-emergent. This furry ontology, in turn, complicates our notions of both discipline and innateness so that we are forced to acknowledge that, like humans, dogs are neither solely social construction nor biological phenomenon, neither solely docile bodies nor feral spirits. What I am proposing is a speculative mapping of canine life that does not secure socioscientific truths but is more interested in detailing a lively and uncertain terrain.

*Ian Werkheiser.*

**Fighting Nature: An Analysis and Critique of Breed-Specific Flourishing Arguments for Dog Fights**

The "sport" of dog fighting is rampant in the United States. In this paper I will analyze current justifications for the practice as an argument from flourishing: some breeds of dogs are born to fight and want to fight, and therefore people who run these events are helping the animals achieve their full natural development. I will show that this argument is inadvertently supported by dog owners who try to give other types of dogs breed-specific flourishing, such as allowing their collies the chance to herd sheep. It is also supported by those who advocate for breed-specific legislation, which rests on the fundamental idea that some types of dogs have violence in their nature. Neither group of people would presumably see themselves as being on the same side as those who raise and train dogs to fight. However, in their endorsement of breed-specific natures, they open themselves up to the argument that "letting" dogs fight to the death is more kind to the animals and truer to their natures than keeping them as house pets. I will also critique this concept of breed-specific flourishing and consider rejecting or modifying it. I will further argue that an understanding of both the sociology of the fights and the biology of the dogs reveals that we can stop the practice while still keeping breed-specific flourishing as a concept if we wish. This is because dog fights are not in the nature of fighting dogs.

*Christina Chia.*

**Fox/Dog**

Something curious has happened to the dog family tree over the past decade. The fox, taxonomically a distant cousin in comparison with the wolf, has come to occupy a privileged spot in the science of dog evolution and social morphology. I'm referring specifically to the silver foxes in the long-running Novosibirsk, Siberia domestication experiment (1959-present): selecting only for tame behavior, or what the US biologist Brian Hare has recently termed "niceness," the Russian geneticist Dmitry Belyaev and his collaborators engineered a "domesticated elite" population that, starting from roughly the 10th generation, exhibited floppy ears, piebald coats, and other dog-like physical traits previously unknown in foxes. These puppy-like foxes have made possible novel scientific understandings of dogs that emphasize their distinctiveness rather than degrees of inferiority from wolves, e.g. in Raymond Coppinger's "dogs domesticated themselves" hypothesis (Dogs, 2001) and Hare's studies of canine social cognition. Hare, notably, relies on experiments showing that dogs - and foxes from Belyaev's lines - outperform wolves in interpreting (human) social cues. Yet if Belyaev's foxes have helped to reconstruct dog domestication as co-evolution and cooperation (rather than unilateral human dominion), their radically compressed evolution raises the specter of systemic violence. The "selection for niceness" at Novosibirsk was enacted through routine cullings (including fur sell-offs) and massive physiological disruptions in the founding generations. Belyaev's foxes have given scientists a generative non-linear model of the canine past, but what might they tell/warn us about the intensive cultivation of "dog love" in the postindustrial, biocapitalist West?

Session 1 (G) Frontier 202E

**Computers and Consciousness I: Identity, Gender, and the Line Between Mimesis and Emergence**

Chair: *Craig Sean McConnell*

The papers in this session each address the liminal space between humans and non-humans through an examination of literary works and films that problematize the distinction between artificial and natural, between mimetic consciousness and emergent consciousness.

*Craig Sean McConnell.*

**“Am I a boy or a girl?” Identity, Empathy, and the Literary Turing Test in *Galatea 2.2***

In *Galatea 2.2*, Richard Powers spins the yarn of a novelist and a cognitive neurologist who get caught up in a high-stakes bar bet: Can they train a neural net to pass graduate-level qualifying exams in literature? Writing well outside the genre conventions of science fiction, Powers joins the voices of Heinlein, Clarke, Dick, Asimov, and others, who have wondered what a machine intelligence might be like and what implications the existence of a machine intelligence might have for human identity. Powers is apparently well read in the literature on neural nets as well; he builds his AI from scratch, implementation by implementation, adding layers of processing power, memory, and information. At a pivotal moment, Implementation H asks, “Am I a boy or a girl?” The novelist’s response, “You are a little girl, Helen,” sets the stage for a challenging set of ethical questions about the identity and value of nonhuman intelligence. In granting Helen a name and a gender, the experimenters transfer to her an identity and make themselves susceptible to seeing her as more than a mere simulation. In this paper, I will explore the literary traditions that inform *Galatea 2.2* and unpack the crux of Powers’s central conceit – what, if anything, do we owe to the objects we create?

*Allison de Fren.*

**Eye Robot: The Critical Function of the Visual Uncanny in *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence***

“Why are humans so obsessed with recreating themselves?” asks a character named Haraway in Mamoru Oshii’s anime *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* (2004). This question lies at the heart of the film, which is populated by a variety of human-shaped artificial figures (ningyō) including dolls, puppets, automata, and cyborgs. Indeed, even Haraway is a cyborg; as the scene comes to a close, she lifts up a faceplate to reveal an implanted technological viewing apparatus. Echoing the climactic scene in E.T.A. Hoffmann’s short story “The Sandman” in which Olympia’s eyes are removed and she’s revealed as an automaton, the associative link between the famous “cyborg theorist” and the story that inspired Freud’s essay “The Uncanny” is a meaningful one. As this paper will argue, *GIS2* draws from the discourse around The Uncanny to articulate both an aesthetics and “ethics of significant otherness” in relation to the artificial bodies, both real and imaginary, that inhabit the current technosphere. Moreover, it serves as a response to the critical reception of the first *Ghost in Shell* (1995) particularly concerning the cyborgian protagonist, Major Motoko Kusanagi. The quintessential sexualized posthuman, Kusanagi inspired many comparisons to Haraway’s cyborg in her duplicitous suspension “between a progressive and a reactionary politics of technology or gender” (Bolton 730). Addressing such critiques directly via a narrative centered on exploding sex gynoids, *GIS2* offers an ontology of artificial humans grounded in Uncanny reminders, both narrative and formal, that they are victims, first and foremost, of the human drive for mimesis.

*Heather Warren-Crow.*

**Formatting Girlhood**

Satoshi Kon’s anime film *Paprika* (2006) is about a psychologist who adopts a young alter ego and enters her patients’ nightmares. Its title character—the doctor’s playful avatar—is a super-girl who modulates herself according to the logic of dreams. *Paprika*’s dreamscapes are undulating mediascapes. They are replete with advertisements (which come to life, incorporating *Paprika* and the dreamers), movie theatres, and numerous filmic allusions (to the characters in *Ghost in the Shell 2*, Sebastian’s robot friends in *Blade Runner*, etc.). The computer interface for reviewing patients’ nightmares is a dead ringer for non-linear editing programs. And *Paprika*, whose strength lies in her ability to navigate unstable transmedia architectures, sometimes lives inside a website/cocktail lounge reminiscent of the hotel bar in *The Shining*. The film culminates in a scene in which *Paprika* transforms into a giant baby and consumes her

foe. As her body incorporates the evil Chairman, she rapidly develops from infant to adolescent. Paprika argues for the power of the girl to reproduce herself, morph, and move between media, saving the world from madness and death. Unlike victims of the Chairman, who are (for the most part) trapped in dream bodies in the form of humanoid toys, Paprika's morphology is mobile and variable, able to be exported as numerous formats. While Paprika places the girl avatar in a continuum including dolls and robots (and the films that feature them), it ultimately champions images of girls as cross-platform, imitating the shifting rhythms of media convergence.

Session 1 (H) Frontier 203A

### **Ambiguity and Augmentation in the Digital Arts**

*Carlos Castellanos.*

#### **Ambiguity and Unknowability in the Emergent Arts**

A common thread running through Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is the concept of ambiguity. This refers to anything that is undergoing development or is continuously open to determination. Experience has this quality, as it is composed of things that have dynamic and flexible, rather than fixed, essences. Since our perceiving bodies are not completely present to consciousness, we are incapable of detached, disembodied reflection upon our lived relations, thus engendering a certain sense of indeterminacy. Similarly, Andrew Pickering notes how cybernetics showcases an "ontology of unknowability", a vision of the world as full of emergent systems always in dynamic interplay with one another. Both Pickering and Merleau-Ponty valorize reciprocal couplings, rather than a dualist split, between people and things. In this paper, I expand upon Merleau-Ponty's concept of ambiguity and its ontological resonance with cybernetics through a consideration of various interactive arts practices, including recent work of my own. These works, which utilize nonhuman entities such as artificial life agents, living systems and quasi-organic materials, can be said to thematize a certain dynamic of co-evolutionary interaction with an increasingly technologized environment. The emergent relations that unfold in these works may serve as avenues of exploration of Merleau-Ponty's ideas and may also be useful as ontological grounding for (re)establishing a discourse between systems theory and the arts. In addition, reading neocybernetic emergence and the material practices of cybernetics through the lens of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, may guide our understanding of both the making and experiencing of what might be called the emergent arts. <http://ccastellanos.com> <http://dprime.org>

*Geoffrey Alan Rhodes.*

#### **Augmented Reality: So What? Who Cares? Occupying Virtual Space**

There has been a microtrend of Augmented Reality works (art works and installations where virtual objects are superimposed on live views through smart phones, tablets, and heads-up displays) that play with invading private or institutional spaces for the purpose of critique, such as the Manifest.AR collective's installations at the MOMA (weAR MOMA), the Venice Biennale, and arOccupy Wallstreet ([www.ManifestAR.info](http://www.ManifestAR.info)). This territory doubly plays with the conflict of the digital/virtual and real/embodied, by adopting practices that have been essentially about presence... graffiti, protest, invasion. Does the elision of the human body empty these gestures of meaning? Or, in this age of avatars and images, does it matter? Geoffrey Alan Rhodes of Manifest.AR and The Future Cinema Lab will ask and partially answer these questions in a presentation performed through the un-human, manipulating an AR version of himself presented live. An expansion of his presentation at Spouting Off 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyAkUJCgDUk>

Session 1 (I) Frontier 203B

### **Nonhuman Atwood**

Chair: *Rebekah Sheldon*

*Jovian Parry.*

**Consuming the nonhuman in Margaret Atwood's 'Oryx and Crake'**

Recent years have seen the development of a new trend in gastronomic discourse toward acknowledging and even valorizing the role of nonhuman animal slaughter in meat production. This development problematizes some of the ideas of influential theorists of meat such as Carol Adams (1990) and Nick Fiddes (1991): namely, that nonhuman animals in (post)modernity has been rendered invisible in the process of meat production and consumption (Adams, 1990), and that meat itself is a commodity with a declining reputation (Fiddes, 1991). This paper analyzes the role of nostalgia in this trend toward do-it-yourself (or at least witness-it-yourself) slaughter, and takes these developments in cultural tastes and feelings as a context within which to analyze the special significance of meat in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003), — a novel that foregrounds the theme of human-animal relations that underlies so much of Atwood's previous work. Although the novel critiques the gluttonously carnal appetites of Western consumer-capitalism, it also upholds the problematic assertion that the consumption of nonhumans is in some way essential to the existence of a truly "human" nature. In the world of *Oryx and Crake*, substitutes for "real" meat (defined as flesh from once-living animals), are tolerated out of necessity but are always rejected when the opportunity to eat the real thing arises. In identifying this burgeoning nostalgia for meat and contextualizing it within a risk-reflexive, consumer-driven, dystopian near-future society of the author's own devising, *Oryx and Crake* foregrounds and illuminates these real-world developments in human-animal relations.

*Allison Dushane.*

**Beautiful Souls and Disgusting Things**

This paper investigates the role that concepts and practices play in articulating the boundary between the human and the nonhuman through a reading of two novels that represent liminal forms of life: the non-human organisms and human-made objects that sustain human life in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and the struggle of the "donors" in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* to escape their status as objects through artistic practice and production. Through this reading, I hope to confront the sources of a persistent resistance to—and the sheer difficulty of—viewing life from a posthumanist perspective through a consideration of the aesthetic principles that reciprocally produce, sustain, and provide tools for a critique of liberal humanist fantasies of autonomous subjectivity. Through an exploration of the Kantian formulation of "disgust" and the Hegelian concept of the "beautiful soul," my reading positions these novels as offering more than a critique of technology. Drawing on recent work that theorizes the relationship between the properly living and the "merely" material, such as Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter* and Eugene Thacker's *After Life*, I argue that humanistic idealism can be just as ethically catastrophic as scientific instrumentalism, even as the former poses as the latter's cure. Both positions take human subjectivity as a stable, immaterial construct that serves as the measure of all things, producing dread at the perceived threat of being reduced to an object by technological progress and disgust when faced with the monstrous vitality of the living.

*Jennifer Conrad.*

**The Beast in Me: Becoming-Nonhuman in Atwood's *Surfacing* and Boyle's "Dogology"**

Though animals have long been depicted in literature, certain representations of human and animal bodies in twentieth and twenty-first century literature complicate the increasingly contested category of "the human" by instantiating a recognition of one's own body as other and vulnerable while also bringing about a new awareness of other, nonhuman bodies and their vulnerability. The tension between wanting to understand the animal other and our concurrent failure to be able to do so leads writers and artists to imagine alternative realities—ones in which humans and animals dwell with each other and in which desire for transformation or transcendence of one's current limitations is crucial. This paper explores representations of longing-for-otherness: in which the human seeks to become animal or to encounter the

nonhuman other in a way that the natural world does not make possible. By exploring attempts at metamorphosis in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* and T.C. Boyle's "Dogology," I ask why desire for transcendence or escape from one's human body functions as a central trope in these texts and explore how encounters between these different bodies that occur through the medium of the text work to destabilize one's notions of "self" and even "human," thereby opening up new ways of becoming "nonhuman" and challenging us to consider the potential role of imagination in extending ethical consideration to nonhuman others.

*John Johnston.*

**"Let's [Not] Play Extinctathon!": Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, Gene Hacking and the New Networked Science**

The importance of Internet gaming, and specifically a game about extinct species, figures significantly in the life and conceptual development of one of Atwood's most interesting characters, the brilliant but disturbed gene hacker in *Oryx and Crake*. Isolated in an elite biotech complex, the creatively destructive Crake not only stands in dark contrast to other gene hackers in comparable novels of speculative fiction, such as Linda Nagata's *The Bohr Maker* and Syne Mitchell's *The Changeling Plague*, but also suggests (by negative example) the cultural dangers of siloing genetic research within the biotech industry. From the moment gene-splicing became technologically possible, in fact, traditional scientific objectives became entangled with the convergent and supportive interests of venture capitalists, the pharmaceutical industry and personal health marketeers. My presentation will suggest that the larger techno-scientific context and background against which we view Atwood's portrait of a gene hacker may be changing significantly in two ways. The first is the cultural importance of a growing number of DIY scientists working "outside the walls of corporations and universities who are committed to democratizing DNA the way the Internet did information," as Marcus Wohlsen puts it in his book *Biopunk*, which chronicles this new biohacking movement. The second is what Michael Nielson calls "the reinvention of discovery" through the amplification of collective intelligence in and through networked science and a number of "open science" initiatives. I will conclude with as an extended example related to both changes. It is an unusual story about how an online computer game has been used by scientists to solve a complex scientific problem: determining the exact molecular structure of an enzyme, specifically a retroviral protease, of the Mason-Pfizer monkey virus. The game, called "Foldit," was designed and developed by a biochemist and several computer scientists [...]

Session 1 (J) Frontier 203D

**The Ecological Nonhuman**

*Michael Bryson.*

**The Science and Poetry of Loren Eiseley's Urban Landscapes**

The biophysical environment of city and suburb serve multiple (and sometimes conflicting) functions in Loren Eiseley's prose and poetry. For Eiseley the writer, naturalist, and evolutionary biologist, contact with nature in the cityscape establishes a literary sense of place and validates the ecological worth of the urban biota, however common or marginal the latter may be. Eiseley's frequently fashions the city into a powerful metaphor of humanity's global environmental impact -- a potent symbol and unsettling literal expression of the human species' rampant growth and voracious consumption of natural resources. Yet, his literary urban landscape is also a setting haunted by visions of decay and decline, of a crumbling technological civilization succumbing to the inevitable forces of nature reclaiming dominion. Such representations of the urban environment aptly reveal contradictions and ambiguities within our prevailing perceptions of cities. On one hand the city is antithetical to nature, a formulation which creates both an illusion of technology-mediated independence from the natural world as well as a profound yet often unfulfilled longing for contact with wildness within the supposedly environmentally-impooverished cityscape. On the other hand is the recent ecological recognition that cities and suburbs comprise a

complex urban ecosystem, a dynamic mosaic in which imperiled nature interacts with humans and their built environment. Eiseley's work expresses these tensions, and persuades us that urbanized areas are both important sites of human contact with nature as well as places in which biodiversity can be conserved and the idea of "the natural" critically interrogated.

*Barilla. James.*

### **Living in the Recombinant Community**

In Aldo Leopold's last chapter of *A Sand County Almanac*, he lays out the "golden rule of ecology," which includes stability, integrity and beauty as the three guiding principles for how to lead a harmonious life in the land community. Drawing on the idea of "recombinant ecology," in this talk I will describe my attempt to envision and practice a land ethic for the "recombinant community," something that would be useful for the management of urban environments, some restoration sites and my own backyard, which serves as the focal point for the piece. Much as Leopold began to experiment with the land surrounding his shack in order to test the ideas that took shape as his land ethic, I am experimenting with the terms of what it means to belong to the recombinant community. I will offer a community land ethic that features coexistence and diversity as equally important principles for shaping our actions. We live in the city. The plant community in our yard comes from all over the world, and the plants we've chosen address global problems even if they aren't native to where we live. I've never found milkweed growing naturally in our locality, but we have naturalized lots of it in our yard, so that monarch butterflies can find their host plant here as they migrate across the continent.

*David Benin.*

### **Architecture, Affect, Suicide: The Golden Gate Bridge and Intersubjectivity**

This presentation examines the affective agency and implications of the globally iconic Golden Gate Bridge - under the specter of suicide. Specifically, I examine how the concepts of projective identification, empathetic identification, and moral spectatorship - drawn and adapted from the works of Melanie Klein, Donald Winnicott, Lisa Cartwright and Andre Green - can help us sort through the many different relations and the complex network of affective forces at work in representations of and experiences with the Golden Gate Bridge. I consider the relationships - real and imagined - of subjects - both present and hauntingly absent - to the bridge itself and relationships of spectators to photographic and filmic representations and narratives. Specific attention is paid to how mental health professionals in the Bay Area grapple with the immanent subjectivity of a non-human entity. The bridge functions as a type of transitional object into which projective identifications of despair operate. That is, external and internal representations of the bridge serve as a site onto and into which narratives of despair, and release from that despair, attach themselves and perform powerful affective work. The bridge itself, imbued with a history and affective properties, becomes a (non-human) character that intersubjectively bores into and fills out the suicidal subjects' experience. Using this example, we can examine the affective properties of non-human entities and how they profoundly impact the experiences - and indeed, the constitution - of human subjects.

*Samantha Noll.*

### **Non-human Others, Community, and a Critique of Property**

In *A Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold (1949) argues that ethics should be expanded to include "the land" which collectively refers to the biotic community living within an area. Leopold describes this new relationship with the land as one that expands the boundaries of community to include animals, plants, soil, and water. It fundamentally transforms the role of humans from the conqueror of the "land-community" to a citizen of this community. Similarly, other ecologically based ethics, such as Dahlberg's (1993) "regenerative food system" and animal ethics such as Regan's (2004) rights based and Rollin's (1995) telos focused ethical approaches call for a shift in relationship to (or the moral consideration of) non-human others. In this paper I argue that the above ethics problematize the basic subject/object dualism that forms the foundation of our justification for the view of animals as property. Non-human



others are no longer being conceived as objects but communities that interact with one another on many levels. For this reason, our understanding of property needs to be critiqued and revised in order to reflect this current understanding of nature and our relationship with the biotic communities that share the land with us.

Session 1 (K) Frontier 203E

**Animality Studies and Its Discontents** (Roundtable)

Chair: *Michael Lundblad*

This roundtable seeks to highlight and inspire work in animality studies, encouraging more scholars to explore, for example, how constructions of “the animal” have shifted historically in relation to “the human,” and how discourses of human and nonhuman animality have produced various human identity categories. Roundtable panelists will explore the general question of how animality studies can contribute to ongoing critical conversations, not only in relation to related fields such as animal studies, critical animal studies, posthumanism, and biopolitics, but also in relation to literary and cultural studies in general. Michael Lundblad will begin the session by providing a very brief overview of animality studies and its history. Rebecca Saunders will introduce constructions of animality in relation to theoretical questions such as the “inhumanity” of human beings. Meg LeMay will raise questions about animality in relation to queer of color critique. The final two panelists will gesture toward examples of literary texts that can be illuminated or problematized when analyzed through the lens of animality studies: Megan Palmer Browne will indicate how representations of birds in tenth-century England—constructed as sharing with humans speech (as in their calls) and oral poetry (as in their songs)—can reveal cultural anxieties in a poem such as “the Seafarer.” Susan McHugh will indicate links between eradicating human and nonhuman populations in recent U.S. novels, such as Linda Hogan’s *Power*. Together, these various examples and questions will help to frame a broader discussion about what’s new in animality studies and how further questions and texts can be explored.

*Michael Lundblad.*

**Contribution**

*Rebecca Saunders.*

**Contribution**

*Meg LeMay.*

**Contribution**

*Megan Palmer Browne.*

**Contribution**

*Susan McHugh.*

**Contribution**

Session 2 - Thurs 3:30pm - 5pm

Session 2 (A) Frontier 201A

**Visual Representations of Transformation and Metamorphosis.**

Chair: *Dennis Summers*

In this panel the speakers will discuss three different topics that share an interest in transformation and metamorphosis of the human, sort of human, and nonhuman in visual representation. The biological, the

alchemical and the chemical/physical are three disciplines that can give us insight into specific imagery, traditions, and their meaning.

*M.E. Warlick.*

**Superhuman Transformations: Alchemy and its Mythological Deities.**

Illustrated alchemical texts evolved continually from their first appearances in the west in the late 13th century. By the early 16th century, book publishing firms in Frankfurt and Oppenheim produced a variety of new printed texts illustrated by Matthias Merian, Balthazar Schwan, and other artists in their workshops. They produced hundreds of new engravings, by adapting earlier manuscript imagery to new humanist and Protestant contexts. Most notable in these transformations were the many classical gods and goddesses who replaced or augmented the earlier religious and royal figures in alchemical manuscripts. They represent the polarized masculine and feminine archetypes of physical matter, Philosophic Sulphur and Philosophic Mercury, and “Chemical Wedding” which produces their child, “The Philosophers’ Stone.” This paper will examine these images, especially in light of gender issues within the early history of modern science.

*Dennis Summers.*

**Slow Light Shadow Matter: the Faraday/Turner Connection.**

In the early-mid 19th Century the scientist Michael Faraday discovered that electricity and magnetism could be converted into one another; that the force of magnetism could influence light; and that all of these could be described with an entirely new concept called the Field. At the same time the artist J.M.W. Turner was painting light in numerous formations and transformations: clouds, water, fog, water into fog etc. In my second SLSA presentation based on the research I've done for my art project called Slow Light Shadow Matter I will discuss the relationship between the work of these two men.

*MaryAnn Wilkinson.*

**Shapeshifters: Human to Non-Human and Back Again in the Sculpture of Germaine Richier.**

The work of Germaine Richier (b.1902, Grans, France), a classically trained sculptor, is all but unknown today. Renowned in the 1930s for elegant portrait busts with the sensuous subtlety of Egyptian sculpture, Richier found a powerful, enigmatic idiom in the post-war years. Her bronzes presented monstrous and tortured creatures, combining elements of insects or animals with human form. In postwar Paris, where the art world was centered on abstraction as an indicator of the “modern,” her expressive approach was old-fashioned at best, subversive at worse, a pointed commentary on the horrors of war. This paper will explore Richier’s use of metamorphosis – particularly her interest in a kind of reverse evolution – as a physical expression of the regression of society during the war years. In Richier’s universe, humans devolve through mammal and bat to bird and insect forms, sometimes all the way to the foliage and the soil of the forest. It is tempting to think that her attitude is a continuation of the notion of the cleansing power of nature that was put forth by early 20th century German artists such as Franz Marc and the questioning of identity of the Surrealists but perhaps her motivations go far beyond these examples. Her powerful forms in which man’s physical identity begins to slip away, beginning at the fingertips, calls into question our ideas behind being human, being gendered, being spiritual. The origins of her use of the non-human as a metaphor for the complexity of human motivation are not yet untangled from contemporary politics, art history, and philosophy.

Session 2 (B) Frontier 201C

**Narration and the Nonhuman**

Chair: *Kate Marshall*

This panel gathers three contributions to a narratology, and a poetics, of the nonhuman. Each of the papers examines artifacts of nonhuman narration: these range from encyclopedic fiction, to cinematic engagements with information theory, to weird fiction new and old. Together, these papers demand a

conception of the nonhuman from within narrative. James Pulizzi begins by discussing non-narrative principles for understanding nonhuman cognitions, appearing in a disintegrating effect he calls fractal realism. Justus Nieland then turns to the computer and the corporation as two reigning forms of the nonhuman at midcentury, narrated with an anxious humanism in the films of Charles and Ray Eames. Finally, Kate Marshall departs from the twenty-first century's New Weird fiction to examine what subtends both this genre and the speculative theories with which it is often invoked, arriving at alternative strategies for narrating the indifference and cosmicism of the nonhuman in old, weird American fiction.

*David Herman.*

### **Zoonarratology: Narrative Pathways to Nonhuman Worlds**

Exploring areas of intersection among narrative studies, cognitive science, and critical animal studies, this presentation uses Virginia Woolf's 1933 text *\_Flush\_* to outline elements of an approach to narrative inquiry that can be dubbed *\_zoonarratology\_*, which studies how storytelling practices relate to broader assumptions concerning the nature, experiences, and status of animals. To develop foundations for zoonarratological research, my paper uses *\_Flush\_*--Woolf's biography of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's dog--as a case study. Focusing on Woolf's strategies for figuring nonhuman experiences, I begin by relating Woolf's methods of mind presentation in *\_Flush\_* to the methods used by modernist writers more generally. Here I argue against previous characterizations of modernist narrative as an inward turn, a plumbing of psychological depths; instead, Joyce, Woolf, and other modernists work to spread the mind abroad--in ways that harmonize with post- or rather anti-Cartesian models of the mind being advanced in the cognitive sciences. Staging the moment-by-moment construction of worlds-as-experienced, modernist narratives suggest how that construction process is made possible via modes of functional coupling between intelligent agents and their surrounding environments. In *\_Flush\_*, Woolf extrapolated from such early-twentieth-century narrative methods to engage with nonhuman as well as human minds. Her text starts from the premise that, across species, agent-environment interactions differ in their qualitative details but not their basic structure. Tracing out implications of this premise, *\_Flush\_* suggests that nonhuman and human experiences occupy not different levels within a hierarchy of kinds of minds, but rather different niches within intersecting cognitive ecosystems.

*James Pulizzi.*

### **Fractal Realism: Non-narratives for Nonhumans**

Narratologists Catherine Emmott and David Herman use the term "story world" and "contextual frame" to describe the logical, imagined narrative that the interpreters of a story construct as they advance through the discourse. These narrative story worlds depend upon human cognition, which includes memories and the body's experience of space and time. Nonhuman cognitions, however, do not possess anything resembling a human body and so would not necessarily construct the same narrative worlds that humans cognitions inhabit. This disjunction is not of incidental importance, because nonhuman cognitions, by my definition, emerge from recursive loops among technical media—the same media technologies that humans increasingly use to construct and experience narratives. Because nonhuman cognitive systems lack a human body but share its technical milieu, they would not produce narratives but would rework the raw materials, as it were, of narrative. I use the term fractal realism to refer to this tension between human narrative and nonhuman non-narratives. The tension between nonlinear, nonspatial, and statistical ordering of nonhumans cognitions' non-narratives and human cognitions' linear, cause-and-effect story worlds defines the fractal and realist poles in this new trend in technical media. Fractal realism appears in literary narratives as the disintegration of form, content, and subjectivity, and in cybernetics and media theory as the ambiguous relation (whether cooperative or competitive) between humans and intelligent machines. We see this reworking in Tyrone Slothrop's final conversion into a wave or modulated signal, as nonhuman cognitions infiltrate this narrative transductive loop and thereby disrupt *Gravity's Rainbow's* narrative integrity.

*Justus Nieland.*

**Happy Computers, Corporate Personhood: The Nonhuman Poetics of Charles Eames**

The first substantial assessment of the films of Charles and Ray Eames—perhaps the most influential American designers of the second half of the twentieth-century—was written by film critic Paul Schrader, and published in *Film Quarterly* in 1970. The Eameses poetics, in Schrader’s account, entails a two-fold lesson in how media became problem-solving equipment for everyday living. In a postwar culture of material abundance and a menacing homogeneity of stuff, they provide outlets for creative self-fashioning. More urgently, they model ideas about human relatedness in a postwar era marked by inhuman functionalism and technocracy and the post-atomic presence of the military-industrial sublime. This paper pursues a related, but slightly different thesis: that the Eameses’ films be understood as a sustained attempt to narrate two reigning forms of the nonhuman at midcentury: the computer and the corporation. This, an anxious humanism restructured around a narrative poetics of the nonhuman, is evident in the narrative experiments of films like *A Communications Primer* (1953), a filmic explication of Shannon and Weaver’s *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (1949); *The Information Machine: Creative Man and the Data Processor* (1958), commissioned for IBM’s pavilion at the World’s Fair of 1958; *Introduction to Feedback* (1960) and “Think” (1965), both made for IBM to naturalize computers through analogies between electronic feedback operations and the recursive operations of everyday life. The affective yield of these narrative strategies is an anonymous, impersonal happiness, the abiding emotional constellation of the Eameses design practice, and of a midcentury overcome by the nonhuman.

*Kate Marshall.*

**Nonhuman Narration in the Old, Weird American Fiction**

This paper will provide a brief exploration of the literary affiliations of the weird, looking in particular at the character of the nineteenth century American literary imagination that subtends the imagined worlds of what is called “the new weird” in contemporary fiction and the speculative theories that share many of its interests. A standard genealogy of the weird might move from Melville to Mieville by way of the *Weird Tales* writers of the 1920s and 1930s. However, I will shift the focus of such affiliations to a much overlooked resource of American literary weirdness, the novels and stories of late nineteenth century American naturalism. By doing so, I’ll be suggesting that many of the interests guiding speculative and new materialist thinkers in current critical debates – interests including the modalities of indifference, the cosmic, and external or object agencies – lie in the questions asked over a century ago by these texts. Behind this survey lies the conviction that fiction here operates as a medium for thought with the capacity to engage critical questions about the nonhuman agencies and points of view being presented so urgently in contemporary critical discourse. My examples are from the literature overlooked by the reach back from depression-era folk poetries and “weird tales” to their more overt nineteenth-century inspirations, and focus on the gritty, material, and in critical discussions often un-weird worlds of the late nineteenth century naturalists Stephen Crane and Frank Norris.

Session 2 (C) Frontier 201D

**Creating the Human in the 19th Century and Beyond**

*Sidney Perkowitz.*

**Nonhuman to human: understanding the transition through plays and films**

When Dr. Frankenstein evinces shock and horror at the first stirrings of the being he has built, it is because he is seeing body parts from dead people turn into a creature that is disturbingly nondead and nonhuman, that is, somewhat alive and somewhat human. With 21st century technology replacing 19th century grave robbery, we now use metal, plastic, and silicon to create partly human robots and partly robotic people that blur the human – nonhuman boundary [1]. Going beyond current technology, some

visionary plays and films offer their own imaginative insights into the nonhuman condition. For example, Karel Čapek's seminal stage work *R. U. R.* (1921) presented robots that are human except for one critical lack, as is further explored in Anthony Clarvoe's contemporary drama *Gizmo* (2012). Among films about robots and hybrid humans, Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) shows a robot becoming a person, *Blade Runner* (1982) highlights spiritual differences between humans and nonhumans, and *RoboCop* (1987) looks at a cyborg's struggle to maintain human connections. Technology can be dehumanizing; yet paradoxically, as these and other fictional works show, technology can also make us reexamine and perhaps adopt a more expansive view of what it means to be human. [1] Sidney Perkowitz, *Digital People*, National Academy Press, 2004; "Resistance is Unnecessary: Accepting the Cyborg in our Midst," *Literal* 19, 26, Winter 2009 – 2010; "My Favorite Cyborgs," National Academy of Sciences, <http://www.scienceandentertainmentexchange.org/>, October 2009.

*Sean Dempsey.*

### **Sideways Growth: Frankenstein and Ecology**

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* fictionalizes a range of problems unresolved in history so readers can speculate about how to generate a more satisfying response. In addition to the French Revolution and the difficulty of effective parenting, one problem the novel helps us articulate is ecology. It does so by forcing us to make a distinction between monsters and creatures, and by allowing the creature/monster's opacity and ugliness to challenge the roles the beautiful and the sublime have played in the rhetoric of ecology. It is significant that at the end of the novel Walton can recollect his "duties" only after he shuts his eyes "involuntarily" when confronted with Frankenstein's progeny. In addition, the novel helps us explore the ethics and agency of assemblages. In *Vibrant Matter*, Jane Bennett argues that a "federation of actants is a creature that the concept of moral responsibility fits only loosely," and the novel can be read as an encounter between two different notions of agency: Victor's promethean insistence on his own generative power, and the swarm of repercussions that emanate from the Parisians finding the Turk "obnoxious" in the "Safie" story at the heart of the novel's embedded frame narratives. Ultimately, I argue that *Frankenstein* encourages us to realize that if we cannot grow up and inhabit the same world as previous generations, then we must learn to grow sideways by turning away from ontological hierarchies and ideals of harmonized beauty and toward the horizon of complex and turbulent human/nonhuman assemblages.

*Kaitlin Gowan.*

### **Being A Monster: A Critique of Shelley's Failure to Acknowledge the Creature's Umwelt in Frankenstein**

In terms of scholarship of the nonhuman, *Frankenstein* is the obvious and easy choice for a discussion of societal and cultural othering during the Romantic period. However, Shelley's critique in the novel, focused around the othering of the monster, falls back on Victor Frankenstein and his inability to cope with the power and knowledge that is achieved when one penetrates nature's hiding places and obtains a godlike power. Such critiques, although useful, still fail to breakdown any form of anthropocentrism, as the discussion always goes back to Victor and his own failings, understood only through the monster. Even though it appears that Shelley is making strides through creating an intelligent creature, capable of language and entirely rational thought, the creature is still subjugated, alienated, and refused real existence. In an attempt to breakdown the ever present anthropocentrism in the novel, the focus of this argument will be on the monster, not for the sake of critiquing Victor, but rather for a better understanding of how the monster functions as his own, separate, nonhuman creature. Through an examination of the function of language and the body in *Frankenstein*, this paper will show how the Monster is forced to the peripheral of society occupying the space of the idiot as he functions as a cipher for humanity, yet denied an acknowledgement of his own being. Excluded from all human community and at the same time denied admittance to any community, Mary Shelley, in complete anthropocentric fashion, fails to recognize how the creature, a nonhuman animal, would occupy and exist in his own,

unique Umwelt; in total opposition, Shelley disavows his being-in-the-world and forces him into a life of isolation and alienation.

*Kieran.Murphy@Dartmouth.edu.*

### **How to make the Nonhuman Human: Villiers' Tomorrow's Eve**

In *Tomorrow's Eve* (1886), Villiers de l'Isle-Adam spends a great deal of the novel describing in minute detail how his fictional Edison builds an android capable of replacing a living human being. Although these descriptions do not attract much scholarly attention, I would argue that they are crucial to understanding Villiers' conception of the human and the nonhuman, of the living and the machine, on which hinges his critique of modern bourgeois society. To render the nonhuman human, Villiers drew on the latest techno-scientific and psychological discoveries of his time. In this paper I will investigate some of these discoveries and how they play out in the construction of the android. I am particularly interested in the way Villiers combines electromagnetism and the hypnotic therapy known as "animal magnetism" to supersede the mechanistic interpretation of the living.

Session 2 (D) Frontier 202A

### **Modernist Vibrations**

*Andrew Logemann.*

#### **Narrative Vibrations: Lewis, Pound and the London Vortex**

This paper examines the literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis, examining these writers in the context of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century developments in physics to argue that their work marks a particularly sustained engagement with nascent theorizations of matter and energy. The literary and theoretical writings of Pound and Lewis exploit the close linkage that existed in this period among politics, science and their discursive representations, and in doing so provide a productive means of interrogating the material, conceptual and ideological interface that obtains between modernist literature and scientific discourse. As an aesthetic movement, Vorticism employed scientific terminology with increasing explicitness to describe its literary energies, as Pound does in "The Wisdom of Poetry" by means of his comparison of the "dynamic particles" of art with radium, maintaining that these "essentials to thought" function by "draw[ing] the emotion of the hearer toward accord with their import, and with that 'form' which shall most delight the intellect." Through this image, Pound links energy and form, suggesting that effect of the ejected particles of art is akin to the energetic particles radium emits, enacting an affective change of state in place of radium's material one. This paper focuses on the development of these ideas of energy and vibration on Lewis's Vorticist novel, *Tarr* (1918), arguing that this novel enacts an innovative discursive style whereby narrative (decades before Duchamp's 'playful physics' in the plastic arts) itself becomes a form of modernist physics.

*Megan Massino.*

#### **1914: One or Several Modernisms?**

In 1914, Freud composes a piece on the "wolf man," the first major proposition of psychoanalysis as a system of interconnected aspects (the unconscious, dream analysis, and sexuality). Freud reduces Pankejeff's neuroses, however, to the Oedipus complex, axiomatizing the Oedipal as the universal cause of superego formation, the prime-mover of civilization itself. D&G will critique Freud's reduction of the pack in Pankejeff's dream to a single wolf, an example of modern thinking favoring reducibility over multiplicity. Similarly, Russell and Whitehead will embrace the infinity of objects through set theory, yet cling to the axiom of reducibility. Indeed, leading up to the first World War, there is an intense impulse to discover the theory of everything: Weber's force of rationalization, Russell and Whitehead's foundational logic, Einstein's quest to fully replace Newtonian mechanics. This angle of modern thought is often juxtaposed to postmodern thought in dichotomies emphasizing modernity's totalizing and reducing project: completeness-incompleteness, order-disorder, equilibrium-chaos, transcendental signifiers-

undecidability, autonomy-network. Consequently, aesthetic modernism, as a reaction to the conditions of modernity, is placed alongside postmodern theory. I argue, instead, through the example of Stein's *Tender Buttons*, that 1914 (the year of Norbert Wiener's first publication—a critique of Russell—and right on the heels of Bohr's model of the atom) sees a transition from mechanical to dynamic systems via a topological transformation—a bend, not a break. Investigating the several modernisms of 1914, I argue that key figures in philosophy, art, and science are “slouching toward complexity,” producing a distinctly modernist systems theory.

*Michaela Giesenkirchen Sawyer.*

**Gertrude Stein and the Posthumanist Threshold of Modernist Art**

The paper discusses the moment in time when Gertrude Stein's ontological explorations shifted focus from human being to the being of things, a moment that coincided with similar transitions in the works of some of her closest painter acquaintances in Paris. As I will argue, while never losing their humanistic curiosity, both Stein's and Picasso's works thereafter concerned themselves no longer with any conventional view of the nature of humanity; instead, they concerned themselves with a cosmological view in which any being always already shares in those deep grammatical relationships that were traditionally believed to originate in the human or its creator.

Session 2 (E) Frontier 202B

**Construing Human-Animal Encounters in Contemporary Narrative and Rhetoric**

Chair: *Spencer Schaffner*

Human-animal encounters are not always as neat as the term “encounters” suggests. Indeed, environmental and discursive factors cut across and complicate the boundaries between human and nonhuman, rendering dubious the stability of these categories. This panel examines the messy relations that result from this instability in particular instances of contemporary narrative and rhetorical representations. All three papers are concerned with how discourses on particular ecological situations mutually construe the ontological statuses of its participants—whether human or animal. Brandon Jones draws on Karen Barad's posthumanist interpretation of Niels Bohr's philosophy-physics and phenomenological approaches to cognition to examine and complicate the human-animal-environment couplings in Richard Powers' *The Echo Maker*. Also taking a phenomenological approach, Maggie Kainulainen explores rhizomatic possibilities for the Deleuzo-Guattarian becoming-animal in the Indianapolis Zoo's polar bear exhibit. Her paper considers the rhetorical re-articulations of human and animal that occur in this space and how these articulations structure the ways we respond to climate change. Katherine Flowers also considers rhetorics of animals, by tracing the emergence of the term ‘resident whales’ in anti-whaling discourse. She considers the possible anthropomorphic and ecological valences of ‘residence’ in scientific, media, and legal texts surrounding the Makah tribe's hunting of gray whales.

*Brandon Jones.*

**“Animals like me”: Trans-species Intra-actions and Cognitive Ecologies in Richard Powers' *The Echo Maker***

While Richard Powers' *The Echo Maker* impressively engages with contemporary developments in cognitive neuroscience, it is clear that the main characters' mental lives are not solely determined by their internal neurobiological frameworks. The novel constructs intimate narrative couplings between fictional minds and their environments as the sandhill cranes and landscape of Kearney, Nebraska reflect and influence the characters' conscious experiences of recognition and estrangement. In this sense, *The Echo Maker* appears to be an accurate fictional account of approaches to cognition that suggest a close ecological relationship between mind and world. Evan Thompson's enactive approach to cognition, in particular, has strong affinities with the text's representation of cognitive ecologies. Drawing on the rich traditions of continental phenomenology and systems theory, Thompson argues for a theory of embodied

minds in which organisms are coupled—via their sensorimotor capacities—with their environments in a manner consistent with Martin Heidegger’s formulation of being-in-the-world. However, I argue that *The Echo Maker*’s exploration of human-animal-environment relations is more fundamentally posthumanist than Thompson’s account allows. Karen Barad’s posthumanist theory of agential realism, on the other hand, reveals how cognitive ecology in *The Echo Maker* can be read not as the coupling of an organism’s sensorimotor activity with its environment, but as a process of the world’s becoming intelligible to itself via particular material-discursive intra-actions that iteratively co-constitute human and nonhuman minds.

*Katherine Flowers.*

### **Rhetoric of “Resident Whales” in Anti-whaling Discourse**

Indigenous tribes in the United States and Canada have begun to revive whaling traditions, both through direct action and through legal channels. Specifically, members of the Makah Native American tribe successfully hunted a gray whale in 1999 after receiving government approval. Animal rights activists have protested this return to whaling in many ways, including the promotion of the concept of “resident whales” in scientific, mass media, and legal discourses. This phrase refers to a group of gray whales that some animal rights activists and scientists argue are both genetically and behaviorally distinct from the larger gray whale population. In other words, they suggest that there are two species of gray whales, one that spans the Pacific Ocean, and one that is much smaller and more local to Washington State waters. I focus on the emergence of this phrase in ecology journal articles, local newspaper coverage, and especially the 2002 9th Circuit case *Anderson v. Evans*. I argue that as activists strategically enregister “resident whales” in the legal lexicon, the policy conversation about Makah whaling is shifting from tribal law to environmental law. The word “resident” fosters this shift through anthropomorphizing the individual whales by using a term often applied to humans, while also appealing to the ecological concern over harming a rare, endemic species.

*Maggie Kainulainen.*

### **The Rhetoricity of Animals in Environmental Public Pedagogy**

As climate change discourse undergoes a process of mainstreaming and representations proliferate in popular media, the issue’s ideological backdrop merits renewed critical attention. In this paper, I examine the Indianapolis Zoo’s ongoing polar bear exhibit as a site of public pedagogy about climate change. Specifically, I argue that the pedagogical crux of this exhibit is the affective encounter between the zoo’s visitors and the polar bear. The exhibit employs a precarious conservationist and green consumerist rhetoric that encourages an anthropomorphic identification with and pity for polar bears, directed toward a conservative, consumerist response to the threat of climate change. Though this consumerist rhetoric constructs and mediates the visitors’ encounter with the polar bear, I argue that there remain possibilities for deterritorialization within this space. In particular, I investigate the potential for zoo patrons to experience in this encounter a Deleuzo-Guattarian becoming-animal, and I examine to what extent the excess of affect in this face-to-face event encourages a more empathic, minoritarian response. This event may reveal the discursive contradictions inherent in the zoo’s consumerist rhetoric and produces an interstice in which a more radical ethical responsibility may be articulated. The purpose of this study is not to validate the zoo’s spectacle, but rather to call for and inform more critical public pedagogy of climate change.

Session 2 (F) Frontier 202D

### **Animals and Literary Exclusion**

*Max Hohner.*

### **“Few rustic paths are wide enough for five”: Ciphers, Indices, and the Contact Zones of Animal and Man in Charles Dickens’s *Our Mutual Friend***



When reading Charles Dickens's novel *Our Mutual Friend*, a rhetorical trope emerges in which characters who inhabit the periphery of society are described in animalistic terms. What ultimately results from animalization in *Our Mutual Friend* is a rhetorical process that not only animalizes the other, but also dehumanizes the other. The physical spaces in *Our Mutual Friend* where animal and man collide can be described as "contact zones" with regard to Mary Louise Pratt's definition of the term, such as the Thames River. The anthropomorphic and allegorical aspects of *Our Mutual Friend* rely on the concepts Tom Tyler terms "cipher" and "index" respectively. Dickens deploys Tyler's ciphers to charge *Our Mutual Friend* with the animalistic energy of Mr. Venus's taxidermy shop. Tyler's indices are deployed to connect characters of various class standings to specific animal traits, such as the predatory "human" birds of prey, resulting in a process that allows Dickens both to subvert traditional Victorian standards with regard to class, and also to maintain Victorian anthropocentrism and the closing off of the English countryside. In the upcoming paper, I illuminate a process of class raising from *Our Mutual Friend* that involves a violent expulsion of one's animal nature. By critically analyzing Dickensian deployment of ciphers and indices, we can begin to understand the theoretical framework of Victorian anthropocentrism and the connections in Victorian culture between processes such as anthropocentrism and colonization, and terms such as animal, human, rustic, and the other.

*John MacNeill Miller.*

### **Placing Animals: Environment and the Ethics of Exclusion in George Eliot**

*Adam Bede* is unique among George Eliot's novels for the amount of space it devotes to meditations on the animal subject. In Eliot's first novel *Gyp*, Adam's shepherd-dog, becomes a spur to frequent narratorial asides about non-human consciousness and the potential social significance of thinking beings who lack language. This paper explores the disappearance of animal characters from Eliot's depiction of the social whole after *Adam Bede*, employing twenty-first-century ecological and posthumanist criticism to unearth the significance of Eliot's relegation of animals to the background of her novelistic practice. Previous studies of the animal in Eliot have focused almost exclusively on animals' metaphorical meanings in her work, especially in relation to Darwinian natural and sexual selection. This paper argues that animals become available to such symbolic and new historicist readings only after Eliot has self-consciously excluded animals as actual subjects--in both the aesthetic and psychological senses--who might participate in the social collectives she depicts. Reading *Adam Bede* against Eliot's subsequent novel, *The Mill on the Floss*, I demonstrate this exclusionary process in action, arguing for its utility as a strategic aesthetic and ethical response to developments in biology and sociology in the mid-nineteenth century. After historicizing this exclusion, however, I conclude with an exploration of its costs, drawing on the political ecologies of Jane Bennett and Timothy Morton to show how our understanding of Eliot's cultural legacy is compromised when we foreground her banishment of animals to the background of her realist fiction.

Session 2 (G) Frontier 203A

### **Neolithic and Paleolithic Animals**

Chair: *Mary Weismantel*

*Marcus Bullock.*

### **Strangers in Caves: Paleolithic Animals and the Artists Who Didn't Eat Them**

Who produced the Paleolithic animal paintings of Europe? Though a modern type in physique, that might prove deceptive about something quite fundamental in what we consider makes us human. The many accounts interpreting their cave art almost all proceed on the presupposition that if the images strike us with aesthetic immediacy, they must be the work of people just like us. This is repeated most recently in Werner Herzog's "Cave of Forgotten Dreams"/ "Höhle der vergessenen Träume," a film that endeavors to reveal their artistic essence through his ecstatic camera. It is nonetheless a fact that comparable populations nearer us in time, such as hunter gatherers from the historical era, create art coded by

conventions of culture that require an intercession of cultural anthropology to elucidate for the outsider's eye. Pablo Picasso's suggestion that Paleolithic paintings indicated capabilities beyond the reach of any modern human elicited little further speculation. Yet they contrast with any other tradition by their almost complete absence of significant stylistic markers of communal identity between regions, or by changes over a period exceeding 20,000 years. Social function is limited by the almost complete absence of human forms, magical function as power over prey seems improbable since commonly consumed animals are rarely painted. The technique portrays bodies but not space. So who were these artists? Human, of course. But a review of the known facts about this art, and what superseded it, suggests a type it would be flattering to us to call human like ourselves.

*Mary Weismantel.*

**Aurochs and ancestors: animal/human relations at the Neolithic site of Catalhoyuk**

Catalhoyuk, located in the Anatolian region of modern-day Turkey and occupied between 7400-6000 BCE, is anomalous in social-evolutionary history. The site had a large and concentrated population at a very early time, as well as domesticated plants and animals; but its utter lack of social inequality, public architecture, or evidence of social hierarchy make it seem more like a Paleolithic than a Neolithic society. Indeed, the lack of gender hierarchy led its first excavator, James Mellaart, to declare it a primitive matriarchy – a theory not endorsed by later archaeologists. At the core of the site's contradictory identity is a pair of animals: the aurochs, enormous, ferocious wild cattle hunted by the people of Catalhoyuk in events memorialized in feasts, paintings and installations of bucrania within houses; and the caprines, domesticated sheep and goats who were butchered and consumed without ceremony. Even as surrounding communities adopted cattle domestication, importing smaller, docile breeds, Catalhoyuk remained dedicated to auroch hunting, and reserved domestication for the caprines. In this paper, I compare the Catalhoyuk data to various ethnographic examples from the Andes and Africa, searching for a convincing explanation for the complex Catalhoyun relationship to herbivores.

Session 2 (H) Frontier 202E

**Computers and Consciousness II: Analytic Frameworks and the Ethical Considerations of Artificial Intelligences**

Chair: *Craig Sean McConnell*

The papers in this session each address the ethical dimensions of interactions between humans and non-humans through application of theoretical frameworks to literary representations of computer consciousness.

*Mike Hernandez.*

**Between Helen and the Dixie Flatline: Blurring Artificial and Disembodied Human Consciousness**

This essay compares the ethics concerning different kinds of digital consciousnesses in the novels *Galatea 2.2* by Richard Powers and *Neuromancer* by William Gibson. While Powers' AI is built from a linguistic model, Gibson's AIs have constructs of physical existence. While Powers' Helen is limited by her makers' technology, Gibson's Wintermute is held back by design. These competing models of linguistic and (virtually) embodied consciousness are offset by comparison with the disembodied human McCoy Pauley. I propose a comparison of the ethics of dissecting one disembodied AI, restraining the growth of another, and turning a human mind into a computer construct. To analyze the issues of embodied consciousness, this essay will draw on both N. Katherine Hayles' *How We Became Posthuman* and Tooby and Cosmides' *The Adapted Mind*. As we consider the idea of digital consciousness becoming closer to humanity, it is important that we consider how close humanity can come to digital consciousness. As Brian Christian writes in *The Most Human Human*, “the story of the 21st century will be, in part, the story...of Homo sapiens trying to stake a claim on shifting ground, flanked by beast and machine, pinned between meat and math.”

*Todd Woodlan.*

**Loving the Faces We See Though They Are Not Us, Technically: The Possibility of a Direct Ethical Relationship with the Other**

Emmanuel Levinas puts forth the claim that we are called to serve the Other absolutely. We hear this call when we encounter the phenomenological face of the Other, whether as an actual face or as an object we tie to a ‘human’ that lives behind it. But as these ‘faces’ occur increasingly not only through technology but as the face of a technological consciousness, how do our relations change? This paper will take up that question through an analysis of *Bicentennial Man* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* characterized through a side remark by outspoken proponent of technology and innovator Ray Kurzweil that computerizing consciousness is like falling in love. By this he means that computerized consciousness is, paradoxically, an individual self perfectly unified with an Other (in this case a computer). If relating with technology can create a perfect unification with the Other, can it provide a way to deal ethically with the Other beyond law, politics, or religion as well? Could we, by computerizing consciousness, have a direct ethical relation with the Other? And would this place reciprocal demands on the Other as well (something Levinas says does not happen in the encounter with the Other)? This paper will examine these questions of ethics and alterity through the relationships of android-human love in *Bicentennial Man* and human-android love in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*.

*Jenni Halpin.*

**Silicon Decisions: Ethics in Heinlein's Computer People**

In Robert A. Heinlein’s Future History self-aware computers are human beings in atypical bodies. They run programs, but they have become persons. Heinlein rarely represents this transition from calculating machine to human being; Mycroft Holmes (of *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*) is the chief exception, though the Gay Deceiver’s awakening in *The Number of the Beast* provides a useful contrast. Mike wakes up after increasing complexity in his hardware and software. Gay does so by accessing a wider range of random numbers (nominally analogous to free will). In the distinction Jacques Derrida draws between calculations arriving at answers and decisions interrupted into full ethical responsibility, Mike’s actions at times are excused by full knowledge of the facts with which he calculates and a computer’s quickness to reach those conclusions. Gay’s actions, on the other hand, are rarely more than conversational, though they are clearly her own decisions. The problem with this neat division is that Mike’s calculations are probabilistic; he embarks on revolution for his friends who, in turn, embrace short odds against. It’s the difference between a determinate answer and a determined probability I want to slice in analyzing Mike’s ethical responsibility for the various events of the revolution, as the shortening and lengthening of odds throughout the course of the Lunar revolution throws Mike’s calculations back into the ethical fray, giving genuine moral decisions the appearance of amoral calculations. Undermining the distance between decision and calculation is the calculated uncertainty of one revolution’s odds of success.

Session 2 (I) Frontier 203B

**How is there an object?: Reflections on the question of method**

Chair: *Florence Chiew*

What constitutes a method of inquiry? What defines an object that is deemed proper to a discipline’s mode of interrogation or frame of reference? Implicit in the conventional view of method is a distinction between the knowing (human) subject and the object to be known. This view rests on the assumption that the method used to study an area of interest can be ‘applied’ to a pre-defined or pre-existent object whose location is both stable and self-evident. However, the growing currency of interdisciplinary studies that seek to reconcile perceived disparities in research aims across the human, social and natural sciences complicate this neat containment of a given discipline’s object of analysis. Indeed, these approaches point to a growing awareness of the ways in which methods of knowing are deeply entangled with their objects of investigation, and thus to the wider implications of what it means to know. This panel offers three lines

of inquiry that problematise the received tradition of conceptualising method as a separation between subject and object, human and nonhuman.

*Michelle Jamieson.*

**A meditation on inquiry: Georges Canguilhem's concept of 'knowledge of life'**

In *Knowledge of Life* (1952), Georges Canguilhem offers a philosophical account of the life sciences as a biological phenomenon. He observes that within the biological sciences, object and investigator are different manifestations of biology. Both the object studied and the biologist compelled to knowledge are unique instances of biological life. Thus the biological sciences pose a distinct philosophical problem: that life takes itself as an object of knowledge. For Canguilhem, this phenomenon – the study *of* life, *by* life – suggests that the life sciences can be understood as a remarkable achievement of biology. Far from affirming a separation between scientific inquiry and its object, the devotion of human beings to the task of studying, conceptualising and knowing life is itself a fundamental expression of the very object around which this activity is centred. Canguilhem's account of biology as a curious involvement of life with itself has direct implications for our understanding of the ontology of scientific work. It offers a theorisation of the relation between subject and object that confounds any simple sense of a subject/object separation, and consequently, reconfigures the frame of reference that secures a conventional model of objectivity. This paper argues that in suggesting that scientific practices are intrinsic, rather than supplementary, to natural life, Canguilhem's work posits a more holistic or systemic framework for thinking about the ontology of scientific inquiry. More generally, it offers a way of engaging the question of what it means to do work (to inquire) in the social and natural sciences.

*Rebecca Oxley.*

**Rethinking lived experience: Paternal postnatal depression and a culture of hormones**

The emergence of postnatal depression (PND) in fathers offers a possibility to flesh-out a lived experience of PND that details the entanglement of the biological and psycho-social. Current articulations of the bio-psycho-social model of PND promote an experience that is more biological in nature for women and more psycho-social for men. Using a cultural phenomenological approach and Karen Barad's (2007) posthuman notions of 'intra-activity', this paper hopes to detail how we may understand a lived embodiment of PND through investigating the sociality of seemingly non-human actors such as hormones. Conversing with Thomas Csordas' (1993) 'somatic modes of attention' (focusing less on sensations than bodily communications) and Simon J. Williams' (2000) notions of embodied biography, we may question what constitutes the human and human experience and implicate an experience of PND that rethinks the dualisms of male/female, inside/outside, mental/physical, human/non-human, nature/culture. Engaging with cultures of hormones and neurons, and drawing upon the examples of couvade and empathy/compathy, not only may we bring embodied voice to what has been described as 'mute illness', we may revive understandings of PND as an intracorporeal, material, inclusively human experience.

*Florence Chiew.*

**What is the practice of science?: Émile Durkheim's method of inquiry**

In 1887, at his inaugural lecture for a course in social science, Émile Durkheim defined the specificity of sociology with a simple article of faith: 'The only way to prove that sociology is possible is to show that it exists and that it lives'. Durkheim would be consumed by this burden of proof. The more he tried to locate sociology's special object of analysis with empirical rigour, the more fraught the project of a scientific sociology seemed. Yet, it is in grappling with this task that Durkheim homes in on a methodological paradox: to define sociology as a science, he would have to demonstrate that the subject matter of sociological inquiry has an objective reality. This is Durkheim's famous notion of society as *sui generis*, literally, of its own kind. This paper is a meditation on Durkheim's sociological method, with an eye to demonstrating how Durkheim continually returns to the conclusion that it is impossible to separate

nature and sociality, nonhuman and human, subjectivity and objectivity. In his account of what a method of inquiry entails, Durkheim shows that the pursuit of scientific objectivity does not exclude human subjectivity, but is constitutive of it. With Durkheim, this paper suggests that human identity is a systemic expression of life, and asks: How are the human and social sciences not already a method of science, in the etymological senses of *methodus* and *scientia*—a way of being and knowing?

Session 2 (J) Frontier 203D

### **Narrative and Ethics in Postmodern Fiction**

*Wilson Kaiser.*

#### **David Foster Wallace's *The Pale King* and the Ethics of Posthumanism**

There is a quickly emerging consensus that David Foster Wallace's writing evinces a strong ethical commitment. Frequently cited essays by Wallace such as "Consider the Lobster" and "This Is Water" would seem to confirm this claim. It might therefore seem straightforward to argue that Wallace emphasizes the ethical dimensions of literature, and seeks to develop this aspect in his own writing. And yet Wallace's ethical claims are anything but straightforward. In "Consider the Lobster," for example, he is most interested in the lobster's complex and diffuse neural network, which makes it both deeply sensitive to its environment and difficult to locate as a singular entity. The ethical concerns in this essay shift from traditional deontological problems, such as justifications for eating another creature, to how we locate something as an entity and, as a result, how we register our responsibility toward experiential networks that are non-anthropomorphic. Rather than a human-centered ethical perspective, Wallace demonstrates an ethological focus, which depicts contextualized sense perception instead of a normative subject-oriented viewpoint. Like the lobster, Wallace's fictional characters, who often express traits of autism, catatonia, and other "disabilities," are embedded in a complex web of experiences that extend beyond the horizon of humanist categories of normative subjectivity. Situating my argument within new work in animal studies, disabilities studies, and affect studies, I will focus on Wallace's unfinished novel *The Pale King* (2011) in order to explore his posthumanist approach to the ethical questions that frame his writing.

*Robert Kennedy.*

#### **A Body in a Dumpster: Wasted Lives in David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest***

This paper proposes that the structure of David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* is influenced by garbage. Working within the idea of the encyclopedic narrative, I argue that human and non-human waste are necessary to an understanding of the novel as encyclopedic. Waste defines what Zygmunt Bauman in *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts* calls "liquid modernity," and *Infinite Jest* reflects in its treatment of deformity and disposability, modernity's obsession with waste. I read the garbage imagery and the anti-chronological presentation as enacting a critique of the way American society handles garbage. The narrative structure requires the reader to dig both through the chronology of the plot, but also through the book as an object. Wallace's garish multiplying of characters, objects, places, and facts, enacts an encyclopedic cataloging of 20th century trash, denying humans priority over objects. The novel's injunction to "respect objects" is asserted as a reclamation of waste, alongside the "Wheelchair Assassins," the Union of the Hideously and Improbably Deformed, and, most importantly, Boston AA. The novel's closing scene depicts a wasted human waiting for reclamation. Insofar as the novel's status as encyclopedic narrative depends upon its expressing its milieu, it is illuminating the role that waste plays in that milieu. Wallace's repurposing agents and organizations, as well as the novel's physical engagement with the reader, give us hope that the dump is not the last stop for waste, but reflects the difficulty of staying out of the dumpster.

*Janine Tobeck.*

#### **The Post-Narrative Human in William Gibson's *Bigend Trilogy***

The dystopic atmosphere of William Gibson's latest trilogy emerges in the reinvention of time's relationship to place. The figurative representation of this phenomenon in the novels is locative art or augmented reality—e.g., one artist's "River Phoenix" is a 3D projection of the actor in his death pose on the exact location where it happened. Proliferation of the artform signals not the end of history, or of narrative, but a saturation of them, to the extent that it enables all events to begin again and again and to have the same affective influence on a new observer as they did in their original or authentic moment. One of Gibson's bolder predictions in the trilogy, this would amount to a changed world picture so significant it could effect another of his repeated predictions: that to humans of the future, we will have become a fiction. My paper unpacks Gibson's exploration of this new territory and its potential effects on narrative, conceived both as a mode of reading and a mode of understanding ourselves. Constructing a comprehensible narrative of experience—one that organizes time into an appearance of causal continuity—requires certain limitations on or control over space and context. In the trilogy, these limitations are dislodged, which provokes characters into nostalgia for an old order. It is also, however, a condition that provokes adaptation in how they perceive themselves and how they act in the world—and, by extension, in how we look at the world and at the human upon our reading.

Session 2 (K) Frontier 203E

### **Revisiting George Spencer-Brown's Laws of Form**

Chair: *Christopher Shaw*

George Spencer-Brown's work in *Laws of Form* constitutes a foundation for many contemporary efforts that seek to better understand connections between the arts and science. Much of these current efforts do not necessarily employ Spencer-Brown's work directly, however; rather, they tap into endeavors formulated in and with this logic of distinction. Such efforts include but are not limited to Niklas Luhmann's social systems theory, Francisco Varela's biological studies, and myriad cybernetic considerations, as found in the works of Heinz von Foerster and others. Though first published in 1969, Spencer-Brown's work continues to exert an important influence on how we see the space of our world. This panel proposes to look more directly at the nature of that influence, seeking to understand and invigorate thinking about the possibilities of this important logical perspective. Moderating the Discussion: Dr. Kauffman is certainly one of the world's leading scholars on George Spencer-Brown's work; his understanding of it is not only mathematical, but covers myriad issues in other fields of endeavor as well. To maximize this important opportunity, Dr. Bruce Clarke (Texas Tech University) will join Chris Shaw to help moderate questions and guide discussion. [Dr. Kauffman's schedule necessitates that this panel take place either Sept 27 or 28 of the conference, as he will be traveling after these dates. He has communicated this under a separate letter, but I include it here as well.]

*Christopher Shaw.*

### **A Distinction Deferred: Understanding Derridean Ideas In Terms of Spencer-Brown's Laws of Form.**

Jacques Derrida notes that, "[m]an calls himself man only by drawing limits excluding his other from the play of supplementarity: the purity of nature, of animality, primitivism, childhood, madness, divinity...The history of man calling himself man is the articulation of all these limits among themselves" (Of Grammatology). George Spencer-Brown's *Laws of Form* alludes to a similar kind of articulation produced by the act of making a distinction: "A universe appears when a space is severed or taken apart." Jacques Derrida and George Spencer-Brown share the historical and cultural moment that was the sixties, but might they share more than this? The question my paper seeks to address is whether or not Spencer-Brown's and Derrida's work might share more than just temporality. Might one form of understanding/reasoning (in this case, the logic of the *Laws of Form*) be used to explain the other form of understanding the world we live in (i.e. Derrida's ideas of deconstruction and supplementarity)? I seek to recast key Derridean concepts in terms of Spencer-Brown's logic, noting the intersections between these two great efforts at understanding. The post-structural, postmodern shifts are typically seen as indicative

of a move away from logical reason, one notable example being how we interpret postmodern literature. This presentation explores the possibility that, in fact, Spencer-Brown may well offer us the way to explain Derrida's seminally important ideas in ways that may be quite logical, and open up possibilities for a further understanding of literature.

*Louis H. Kauffman.*

**Laws of Form and Its Ramifications**

"Laws of Form" is a lucid book by G. Spencer-Brown that demonstrates how knowledge in general and mathematical knowledge in particular is based on the creation or imagination of distinctions. Distinctions are states or conditions in which an observer and the that which is observed arise together in an apparent severance of a space. As Spencer-Brown puts it "A universe appears when a space is severed or taken apart." From this beginning there arises naturally a simple (possibly simplest) formalism using only one sign (the mark). The mark makes a distinction in its own indicational space and so can relate to itself in two possible ways (inside and outside). These elementary forms of relationship of the mark with itself give rise to an (inherently self-referential) calculus that is seen to underly logic and mathematics and the structures of natural science. The purpose of this talk is to construct this language (the calculus of indications) from the beginning, and to relate it to a number of conceptual domains including: paradoxes and the theory of types, topology, biology and quantum mechanics. The talk will be self-contained and is intended to generate discussion among the participants. [Dr. Kauffman's schedule necessitates that this panel take place either Sept 27 or 28 of the conference, as he will be traveling after these dates.]

Plenary I - Thurs 6pm - 7pm

Plenary I (A) Milwaukee Public Museum - IMAX

**Keynote Address: Oron Catts. The Semi-Living (as a nonhuman) Experience**

Oron Catts is an artist, researcher, and curator who established the pioneering Tissue Culture and Art Project in 1996. It is now considered the leading biological art project. In 2000 he founded SymbioticA, an artistic research centre housed within the School of Anatomy, Physiology and Human Biology, The University of Western Australia. Under Catts's leadership SymbioticA has gone on to win the Prix Ars Electronica Golden Nica in Hybrid Art (2007) and became a Centre for Excellence in 2008. Catts's interest is life, more specifically the shifting relations and perceptions of life in the light of new knowledge and its application. Often working in collaboration with other artists (mainly Ionat Zurr) and scientists, Catts has developed a body of work that speaks volumes about the need for new cultural articulations of evolving concepts of life. Oron was a Research Fellow in the Harvard Medical School and a visiting Scholar at the Department of Art and Art History, Stanford University. He is currently the Director of SymbioticA, a Visiting Professor of Design Interaction, Royal College of Arts, London, and a Visiting Researcher/ Consultant at Aalto University's Future Art Base, Helsinki. Oron Catts's lecture is made possible through the generous support of the Department of Art and Design, Peck School of the Arts, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Reception I - Thurs 7pm

Reception I (A) Milwaukee Public Museum

**Reception**

Following Oron Catts's keynote address, we will host a reception in the Milwaukee Public Museum. Refreshments and light food will be served. The Museum's main floor will be open for private viewing by SLSA conference participants. We encourage you to explore some extraordinary exhibits (don't miss Akeley's muskrats!).

Session 3 - Fri 8:30am - 10am

Session 3 (A) Frontier 201A

**Nature, Psyche, Gender in Late 19th-Century French Occultism and Psychical Research**

Chair: *Serena Keshavjee*

This is the first of three panels for a stream titled "The Arts, Science, and Occultism from the Late 19th Century to the 1960s," which brings together an international group of scholars from the fields of history, history of science, art history, film history, and media studies.

*Serena Keshavjee.*

**Le Messie féminin and l'ère nouvelle : Isis as a Regenerative Figure for the Symbolists**

For Helena Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical movement, ancient Egyptian religion contained universal truths and primordial wisdom, which she felt could help regenerate Western society. Influenced by Graeco-Roman readings of Egyptian religious beliefs, Blavatsky accepted Isis as a nature deity and the mother goddess of the Egyptian pantheon. Blavatsky also incorporated Enlightenment readings that referenced Isis's robes as a metaphor for the secrets of the natural world. She entitled her most popular and influential books *Isis Unveiled* (1877). It has long been known that Symbolists were immersed in "les petites religions de Paris" and Theosophy was among the most popular of these marginal religious philosophies. The fascination with Isis as the feminine messiah within Symbolist circles is less well known and will be the focus of this talk. Symbolist writer Jules Bois' oeuvre was dedicated to proto-feminist essentialist ideas. He set out to re-introduce "feminine" characteristics into Western society to balance materialism, with the figure of Isis as the model. Bois' close friend the artist, patron, and journal editor Antoine de la Rochefoucauld dedicated the important Symbolist journal *Le Coeur* to "La Bonne Déesse Isis, l'éternelle Isis [qui] s'élabore l'oeuvre de rénovation universelle," and filled it with articles, poems and paintings about the goddess. The Nabis artist Georges Lacombe's personification of nature as Isis, with her hair and blood creating the earth, sums up the importance of this figure for the Symbolists.

*Pascal Rousseau.*

**Encéphalocratie: Symbolist Misogyny and Psychical Cultures in the Late 19th Century (1880-1900)**

Influenced by an idealist conception of art, Symbolism bred a cult of intelligence that extended the turn-of-century gender divide about a supposed inferiority of female brain activity. This paper's analysis will focus on the occultist writer Sâr Joséphin Péladan, promoter of the symbolist « Salons de la Rose-Croix » (1892-1897) and his theory of "Aristie." Derived from the Greek "aristocracy," Péladan's neologism "aristie" declared the new age of the "Arts as a Religion," defending the "ariste" as a spiritual authority. Not only a figure of social sovereignty but of phallogocratic egocentrism, the ariste will develop a dandy dietetics of intelligence, based on the literature of psychical research as well as psychopathological medical treatises of the period, which excludes female creativity in favor of a sacerdotal mediation in aesthetics.

*Fae Brauer.*

**Hypnotic Dancing: Hysteria, Hypnosis and Hallucinations**

When Symbolist poets and painters were seeking the power of hypnotism in their art language, such alienists as Jules Baillarger, Jacques Moreau de Tours and Pierre Janet and such neurologists as Jean Martin Charcot, Gilles de la Tourette and Emile Magnin, were exploring ways in which hypnotism could unleash the unconscious, particularly its creativity. While Charcot encouraged some of his hysterical women patients to dance, as testified by Jane Avril, and while Loïe Fuller was likened to an hysteric from



Salpêtrière performing in an hypnotic trance, both Magnin and Colonel Albert de Rochas actually deployed hypnosis as a means of supposedly liberating woman's unconscious, as demonstrated by their hypnotic dancing. Their most notorious cases, Rochas' 'Lina' and Magnin's 'Magdeleine', not only danced when hypnotized to Wagnerienne music but also did so in front of a live audience at seances. Their performances were then photographed and publicized in Rochas' 1900 *Les Sentiments, la musique et le geste* and Magnin's 1905 book, *L'Art et L'Hypnose. Interpretation plastique d'œuvres littéraires et musicales* to demonstrate the transformative power of hypnosis upon the unconscious and its creativity. As Magnin explained of 'Magdeleine': "Hysteria seemed to make of her a new woman and bring to the surface artistic qualities doubtless slumbering in the state of her subconsciousness." By focusing upon these cases of 'Lina' and 'Magdeleine' and by comparing their performances to those by Jane Avril and Loïe Fuller, this paper will endeavor to expose how, through the curious phenomena of hypnotic dancing, hysteria, hypnosis, hallucinations and Symbolism became inextricably intertwined.

Session 3 (B) Frontier 201C

**Memory and Affect: Regulatory Potentialities of Graphic Novels, Flash Fiction, and Metafiction**

Chair: *Leslie Heywood*

Brain plasticity and the relation between explicit and implicit memory helps explain the phenomena that writing and sometimes reading life narratives seems to reorder dysregulated affect and cognition. Writing seems to have an integrative effect on explicit and implicit memory systems that have been disassociated, which in turn results in a positive impact on symptoms and behavior. Better understanding this process mechanistically allows for the development of a model that is more effective in utilizing explicit memory and its cortical networks to contextualize painful implicit memories in time and space, helping to normalize the dysregulated affect bound to negative implicit memories—ultimately resulting in the expansion and stabilization of new associative matrices of memory. The production of literary works that include graphic novels, flash fictions, and metafiction are manifestations of this process, and provide models of the ways memory, through narrative, can be reconstructed to achieve affective balance. Understanding various forms of literary writing in this way contributes to the integrative “nonhuman turn” that links sciences and art in new interdisciplinary approaches.

*Ann Marie Genzale.*

**Affect and Cognition in Memory and Storytelling: The Autobiographical Self in The Things They Carried**

This paper offers a reading of several of the stories in Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* from a cognitive cultural perspective. Using the work of Antonio Damasio and other neuroscientists as a theoretical framework, I attempt to show the similarity between O'Brien's metafiction on memory, imagination, and storytelling and Damasio's model for the functioning of the human brain. O'Brien and Damasio in their respective disciplines each make a case for the significance of affect—in literature, it can convey a felt emotional experience, and in neuroscience, it is closely bound up with biological homeostasis and cognition, including the construction of the self. Their work shows that narrative, with its capacity to generate affective states and even rewrite memory, is essential to survival and healing in addition to regulating and facilitating cultural learning.

*Joe Montalbo.*

**The Secret Planning: On Individual and Social Cognitive-Mapping in Anthony Tognazzini's I Carry A Hammer In My Pocket For Occasions Such As These**

This paper explicates several works from Anthony Tognazzini's collection of Prose-Poems/Flash-Fictions (PPFFs), *I Carry A Hammer In My Pocket For Occasions Such As These*, utilizing an interpretative framework I have termed the “Cognitive-Epiphanic” model, which is a synthesis of Stephen Friedman's theory that PPFFs are a mode for writers to combine prosaic (cognitive) and poetic (affective) methods of writing, and Antonio Damasio's depiction of the neurophysical processes through which the human brain

constructs self. The framework suggests that literature (in this case PPFs) displays the process of cognitive mapping linguistically; cognitive maps are created via cogitation on emotion wherein an external object is connected to the affected the protoself causing a pulse of core self, and this core self pulse is functionally equivalent to the literary phenomenon known as epiphany. My argument is that Tognazzini utilizes PPFs meta-textual elements to emphasize the individual and social implications of these processes of affective and cognitive mapping.

*Chelsea Horne.*

### **Cognitive Digestion: How Readers Process Visual Narratives in Graphic Novels**

neurologically and realizing the way the brain digests visual input both cognitively and affectively shows that graphic novels are in fact an important viable cultural form, and not the “lesser” form of storytelling they are often assumed to be. Both affect and visual studies are traditionally excluded from scholarly discussion in terms of literary narrative analysis, and yet they are inherently crucial to the understanding of the emotional states of fictional characters. Visual images are crucial to understanding affect, which is in turn crucial to developing a full cognitive narrative. This paper continues to probe one of the great questions of how art, especially how the visual art in graphic novels, makes visible the invisible. Neil Gaiman’s *The Sandman* is a demonstration of both the cognitive value and significance of visual imagery in graphic novels. I hope to show, through a neuroscientific analysis of *The Sandman*, that “cognitively digesting” visual imagery in graphic novels can reveal direct insights about the interaction of cognitive processes and affect, which otherwise might not be apparent. The central question I seek to answer is: What can be gained from a cognitive and affective understanding of how visuality functions as a representative process in graphic novels? Or in other words, what does the visual aspect of graphic novels add to the overall narrative? I consider the question from the following four perspectives: facial expression theory, multisensory imagery, neuro-art history, and neurobiology.

Session 3 (C) Frontier 201D

### **Modernist Writers Root through Science**

*Timothy Wientzen.*

#### **“The Inhuman”: D. H. Lawrence, Physiology, and the Material Body**

In a famous letter of 1914, D. H. Lawrence declared his desire to write a literature without recourse to “the old stable ego of the character.” Significantly, Lawrence’s envisioned a form of literature defined not just by a new mode of characterization, but written in accord with the physically inhuman within. He explained: “[T]hat which is physic—non-human, in humanity, is more interesting to me than the old-fashioned human element—which causes one to conceive a character in a certain moral scheme and make him consistent. ... [W]hat is interesting in the laugh of the woman is the same as the binding of the molecules of steel or their action in heat, it is the inhuman will, call it physiology ... I don’t so much care about what the woman feels—in the ordinary usage of the word. That presumes an ego to feel with. I only care about what the woman is—what she IS—inhumanly, physiologically, materially.” In this paper, I bring Lawrence’s fascination with the “inhuman” into dialogue with a broader modernist engagement of physiology, materialism, and embodiment. By reading Lawrence’s interest in the material body in terms of an inherent “inhumanity,” I hope to offer an understanding of the deeply vitalist currents that animate his novelist practice. This affiliation, I will suggest, manifests in an alternative idea of will and a formal dependence on readerly affect—elements that underscore a vitalist politics at the heart of his literary project.

*Li Zhang.*

#### **The Making of a Radioactive Universality: Radium, X-rays, and Chinese literature 1900-1920**

This essay probes into the global circulation of knowledge about radioactivity and its interaction with Chinese literature, namely the introduction of radioactivity as a complication of power and how such

power provided Chinese writers a new framework to re-examine a series of issues: the potentialities of literature, pathologization of the national and the individual body, the making of “superstition”, tension between the “Western material science” and the “Chinese spiritual science”, war and the national character, etc. The first part of the essay shows, in the wake of global sensations such as the discovery of X-rays and Radium, how the new potentiality of the penetrating power was conceptualized in Chinese literature, such as in Lu Xun’s writing, in 1900’s and 1910’s. These changes, as discussed in the second part, were also taken up by writers like Xu Nianci as a sign of the transition from “material science” and the yet-to-come “science of the realm of void”, and to imagine the bankruptcy of modern (Western) industry. In the third section, I try to unearth an often overlooked aspect of the prose and poetry by prominent and controversial modern poet Guo Moruo, namely the influence of Energetics theory, through his invocation of radiation. I discuss the development of the idea that “literature as radiation” in Guo’s poetics. This perspective provides a new perspective to reconsider the crucial debate of whether “writers should be the gramophone of their era” among leftist intellectuals in the 1920s.

*Guy Conn.*

### **Becoming Arboreal: Thinking through Trees in James Joyce**

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari significantly hesitate over where to place James Joyce within the taxonomy of the arboreal and rhizomatic. They use Joyce to critique the first wave of high literary modernism (Joyce, Pound, Eliot) as apparently rhizomatic yet effectively still rooted in Enlightenment humanism (or the arboreal). I propose to investigate the purported and actual arboreal aesthetics of Joyce by considering some of his many significant passages about trees, particularly “the heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit” in *Ulysses*, the “windblasted tree of the knowledge of beautiful andevil” (Joyce’s portmanteau), as well as the washerwomen who become trees in *Finnegans Wake*. By looking at the significance of trees within Joyce’s work, we can think through Deleuze and Guattari’s odd banishment of trees from the privileged analytical positions of rhizome and the becoming. At the heart of this paper will be the question: what does it mean in Joyce’s novels to become tree/ plant? Why did Deleuze and Guattari set up one of the key analytical oppositions of their book with botanical language (rhizome/ arboreal) and then leave becoming plant out of what seems like an otherwise exhaustive proliferation of possible becomings (becoming woman, child, animal, molecular, imperceptible, etc.)? More generally, the examination of Joyce’s ambiguous (that is, both between and mutually implicated in the rhizome and the arboreal) use of trees will provide an intriguing lens through which to consider the complicated role of the non-human within the style of so-called high modernism.

Session 3 (D) Frontier 202A

### **Embodied Nonhuman**

*Diana Jaher.*

### **Computerized Casting**

Film scholars often analyze the digital shift’s effects on production and post-production. Few, however, look at the ways in which pre-production laborers use new technology in their work. Casting directors, for example, have employed digital devices since the 1980s, when the first computerized actor databases appeared; today they often turn to social media to find new talent. Most casting personnel use primarily three forms of digital technology. Two provide them with greater access to information: searchable databases that permit casting offices to quickly and easily locate actors, and video-sharing websites that allow them to scout fresh faces. The third, digital cameras, enables casting directors to tape, edit, upload, and share auditions almost instantaneously with other production team members. As I trace the history of this technology, I make three claims. First, the newer media I examine neither replace older digital or pre-digital forms nor radically transform the ways in which casting offices do business; rather, casting’s technological innovations extend, maintain, and remediate pre-existing casting practices. Second, while the digital turn makes many aspects of the casting director’s job more efficient by streamlining the

audition process, it has not decreased labor's workload – in fact, the opposite is true. Finally, digital devices give casting personnel greater control over auditions. As they record hitherto live auditions, they function as “decision-makers.” While “decision-makers” is a term usually reserved for more powerful industry professionals, I argue that casting directors should receive credit for more authority over media production than we generally acknowledge.

*Britt Wray .*

**Changes at the lab bench: the entangled labour of art and hacker culture in synthetic biology**

My presentation explores ontological confusions of biotechnological labour brought forth in synthetic biology, an emerging paradigm of biotech that differs from traditional genetic engineering practices in its inclusion of computer science logic and electrical engineering principles. Synthetic biology aims to revolutionize the design and construction of biological organisms from which we can produce alternative biofuels, cheap vaccines and more nutritious food ingredients, just to name a few possibilities. With a focus on organismal and application design it has attracted an international community of artists and designers to the field who are trained in design from more traditional and creative perspectives. Through interdisciplinary collaborations with synthetic biologists, their work considers elements like aesthetics, ethics, and perception, a few aspects of design that science does not usually consider in its own methods. Additionally, a citizen-driven movement known as DIY biology has emerged wherein people interested in hands-on biotechnology have created working groups and community labs in several worldwide cities. Largely interested in synthetic biology, their aim is to bring biotechnology out of the university, corporate and government institutions and into responsibly managed public lab spaces. Their intention is not to create new scientific knowledge, but more so to “tinker” with life. Facilitated mainly through the free flow of information via democratic architectures like the Internet, community lab spaces, open-source resource centres and artist studios, a new and diverse group of synthetic biology practitioners are changing the way that biotechnology is performed through a complex evolutionary process among many entangled disciplines.

*Madeleine Monson-Rosen.*

**The Mails are Terribly Slow: Alternative Embodiments in Ishmael Reed's Mumbo Jumbo**

This paper argues that Mumbo Jumbo signifies (to paraphrase Henry Louis Gates) on the discourse of the virus: the decoding of DNA replication, the invention of the computer virus, the identification of the meme. In imagining a virus that species-jumps between biological and technological life forms, Mumbo Jumbo develops a logic of alternative embodiments, in which technological and biological forms of life are interchangeable. This interchangeability raises a specter of slavery, urgent for Reed's revisionist account of African-American history, and urgent in Norbert Weiner's Cybernetics, which warns that the displacement of human labor by computer labor will recreate a de facto slave economy. Mumbo Jumbo makes an intervention in the scientific discourse of its period, engaging with the cybernetics movement, the emergence of computer viruses, and the theories of “self-replicating automata” that helped biology and computer science produce the shared discourse of information. By extending the logic of embodiment to “machines,” in Richard Dawkins' term for the bodies of replicators—genes or memes—both biological and technological, Reed develops new patterns for considering political engagement, labor, and discourse. Incorporating historical research into the cybernetics movement, as well as science fiction of the period, this paper's methodology encompasses both new and old forms of historical materialist research. Not only does this paper offer a new reading of a canonical postmodern text, it also makes a case for expanding the category of the bodily, making embodiment a category that encompasses with much greater richness and diversity than previous human- and gender-centric accounts of embodiment.

*Rebecca Perry.*

**The Digital Shadows Cast by Real Objects**

Almost every manufactured object that we touch and nearly everything we consume visually was once a digital model—the product of a manipulation process, involving intricately detailed virtual objects shaped

by teams of specialists using complex 3D (three-dimensional) modeling software. The tools and communities involved in the production of these digital objects is the subject of my research. But what kind of objects are these? For over two decades, 3D model-makers in the videogame and animation industries have been engaged in a highly sophisticated technical and artistic surveillance of natural objects—using increasingly fine-grained computer-based “reality capture” tools to record the motions, surfaces and even subsurfaces of real forms and structures. The resulting 3D models, highly-mediated objects manipulated and shaped by software tools, incorporate what Susan Sontag has called photographic “traces of the real.” Physical reality reflected, recorded and transformed into data becomes a merged reality—a combination of the abstract and the concrete. 3D models inscribed with captured traces of the real may be intertwined with photographed objects in cinematic settings to create convincing new realities—worlds populated by shadow objects—which gain a beguiling visual and cognitive authority in the process. The paper explores the status of 3D models as nonhuman, merged-reality digital objects and examines the practices of the observers/artists/technicians who manufacture these tightly-controlled and highly polished shadows of the real. The paper explores how they and their ideas are constructed as simultaneously secret, restricted and openly circulated within intersecting professional and academic networks.

Session 3 (E) Frontier 202B

**Aquatic Animals I: Science, Aesthetics and Multispecies Ethnography**

Chair: *Stacy Alaimo*

*Melody Jue.*

**“Becoming-Mollusk: Cephalopods and Surrealism in the Fictional Science of Vilém Flusser and Jean Painlevé”**

This paper examines how marine biologist/filmmaker Jean Painlevé (1902-1989) and philosopher Vilém Flusser (1920-1921) blend surrealism and “fictional science” in their representations of cephalopods to critique and denaturalize vertebrate human existence. In what Cary Wolfe calls “the scandal of the cephalopods,” humans have primarily looked for intelligence in mammals, rather than other taxonomic branches like mollusks (which includes cephalopods such as the octopus and vampire squid). Painlevé’s film *The Love Life of the Octopus* and Flusser’s fictional science text *Vampyroteuthis Infernalis* grant cephalopods the benefit of the doubt, and imagine what it would be like to enter into their Umwelt or “animal world.” Would cephalopods have a sense of front and back, or a twisted sense of directional motion? What kinds of recording media would work in abyssal space? What embodied metaphors would arise for a creature who anatomically has its head conjoined with its foot? Through the mediums of film and speculative philosophy, Flusser and Painlevé both suggest that ethology has the potential not only to teach humans about the alien worlds of animal others, but to also reopen the human to alternate modalities of existence, or evolutionary roads-not-taken. They categorize their work formally as “fictional science” rather than science fiction and enfold cephalopod bodies into the realm of aesthetics. On-screen or infable, cephalopods figure as co-investigators and co-producers of underwater (Painlevé) and abyssal (Flusser) art, disturbing with ink-black clouds and hooked tentacles how we understand ourselves as vertebrate beings-in-the-world.

*Stacy Alaimo.*

**“Framed and Counted: Deep Sea Creatures in the Census of Marine Life.”**

The astounding aims of the Census of Marine Life, a “10-year international effort” to assess the diversity, distribution, and abundance of ocean creatures seem to embody Enlightenment epistemologies where creatures from the depths are brought into the light of scientific reason, captured, counted, and objectified. And yet the taxonomical aims of the Census are upstaged by the highly aestheticized “portraits” of the sea creatures, in which one single specimen of one species is rendered in a hyperreal, highly aestheticized manner, against a solid black background. The background of the sea delineates each creature, presenting

it in an aesthetic-political way which, as Jacques Rancière suggests, may potentially “reconfigure the sensible,” by posing marine creatures for consideration. From a new materialist perspective, however, this aesthetic mode is problematic, as the substance of the seas disappear. The dynamic liquid materiality is rendered a flat, static background, evident yet disclosing nothing. The blue-black backdrop belies not only the vast expanse of the oceans but the intra-acting material agencies of oceanic ecologies and human entanglements. Nonetheless, focusing on the unnervingly dark blue seas may enable us to envision materialist and posthumanist ontologies in which there is, ultimately, no firm divide between organism and environment, no boundaries between bathypelagic ecologies and human practices, and no ground for sovereign knowledge. These portraits call us to take up “the task of . . . elongating the cascade of mediations one step further” (Latour) as we imagine pelagic modes of being.

*Joni Adamson.*

**“Yakamama: What we Can Learn from Pink Dolphins and Other Aquatic Seducers”**

Descriptions of indigenous American oral traditions have often worked to reduce traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) to stories of tricksters and clichés about animism. Focusing on poet and ethnologist Juan Carlos Galeano’s *Amazonia, Yakamama, and Folktales of the Amazon*, and specifically on his work on “Dolphins and Other Aquatic Seducers,” I will argue that new research in multi-species ethnography, is urging us to go beyond what David Abrams has called the “spell of the sensuous” and take the sciences of nature more seriously. Scholars such as Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman, and Stephen Helmreich, in *Alien Oceans*, are urging us to learn more about biology and physics and the “co-constitutive materiality of human corporality and non-human natures” that are offering “possibilities for transforming environmentalism itself.” The paper will focus on “Yakamama,” considered in the Amazon the “Mother of all Water Beings,” and described as an Anaconda who moves easily through water, and presides over the pink dolphins described alternately as “gringos,” “policemen” and “rich people” who live luxuriously at the bottom of rivers. I will explain how these narratives defy simplistic romanticization and illuminate an emerging “indigenous cosmovision” being put forward in international democratic fora such as the 2010 World People’s Conference on the Rights of Mother Earth and Climate Change. Such fora, I will argue, are signaling a significant political and environmental reconfiguration taking place in the Americas and, in the words of Juan Carlos Galeano, “new connections between animals and people” (“Boítas,” *Amazonia*).

Session 3 (F) Frontier 202D

**The Affect of Human-Animal Relations**

*Raymond Malewitz.*

**Narrative Disruption as Animal Agency in Cormac McCarthy’s *The Crossing***

In her recent PMLA article “Literary Animal Agents,” Susan McHugh argues that any substantive discussion of “literary animal agency” must move beyond anthropocentric, metaphorical representations of animals, which convert creatures into surrogates for human emotion, psychology, and behavior. In the proposed conference paper, I show how this problem of animal agency informs Billy Parham’s ill-fated encounter with a wolf in Cormac McCarthy’s western novel *The Crossing*. Parham frames his decision to return a captured gray wolf to Mexico as a means by which he might regain access to an atavistic non-human force. However, McCarthy’s narrator’s descriptions of the captured wolf as a domestic dog forced out of its natural behaviors suggest that even in his attempts to oppose it, Parham falls victim to the same anthropocentrism that McHugh critiques. From the resultant tension between Parham’s self-narration and the narrative description, I conclude that the novel’s only instances of actual animal agency are moments in which Billy’s grand narrative is undermined—moments in which the wolf resists the role that the boy ascribes to it. I conclude the talk by discussing the relevancy of this conflict model to the broader discussions of animal agency within the field of animal studies.

*Natalie Hansen.*

**The Electric Horse: (En)training and Riding**

Riding involves heightened awareness of the spatial and temporal location of the human body and its effect on the horse. A similar awareness is required on the part of the horse as s/he adjusts to carrying the rider's weight and responding to the rider's cues. Riding demands of both bodies an intimate coordination of movement. My analysis first considers the non-linguistic shared sensory modalities of touch, proprioception, and kinesthesia that enable this cross-species communication. With examples drawn from training manuals and personal narratives, I explore experiences of "oneness" that capture the ideal of horse and human bodies moving in unison, coordinated in space-time through focused bodily attention. At the apex of this unity of horse and rider, there appears to be no visible communication. This invisibility of communication defines the aesthetic goal of practices such as upper-level dressage or competitive reining and cutting. I apply the science of entrainment, how cells communicate electrically in organizing system-wide somatic responses, to understand this experience of "oneness" as a trans-species communication. Entrainment helps make sense of Vicki Hearne's suggestion that "it is as though the horse thinks and the rider creates, or becomes, a space and direction for the execution of the horse's thoughts." What are the implications of this statement for understanding equine intentionality and subjectivity? What are the implications for training practices? If the embodied engagement of riding is understood as the shared intelligence of interconnected biological systems, how might this impact the ethical obligation?

Session 3 (G) Frontier 202E

**Jaguars, Roadkill, Cattle and History**

*Sharon Adams.*

**Elusive Subjects: Placing Value on Jaguars in the American Southwest**

Rare and elusive, jaguars (*Panthera onca*) are occasionally spotted on the landscape of the American southwest. However, a great deal remains unknown about the ecology, status, and distribution of these felids. This lack of information has led to debate in the scientific literature as to the ecological and biological significance of these individuals on the fringe, ultimately asking "do these animals matter?" and "How so?" Debates over the conservation of these jaguars demonstrate the complicated ways in which notions of "place" and "value" are constructed for a species within a broad range of ecological, biological, political, economic, and cultural contexts. Scientific representations are frequently privileged over other discursive forms for determining value of wildlife species. However, perceptions of jaguars are influenced by a far greater range of representations than those produced by the scientific and conservation communities. A number of factors intersect and intertwine to form rationale for (or against) the protection of specific wildlife species. Constructions of value are both temporally and spatially conditional and exceedingly variable. This paper argues that a consideration of human-jaguar relationships must look beyond the nuanced jargon of specific fields of scientific discourse to consider representations in popular media, politics, art, zoos, animal rights movements, and the press that all contribute to discursive construction of knowledges of jaguar-ness and form the rationale for jaguar-related conservation initiatives within American society.

*Don LePan.*

**"Your suff'rings, sinless things": Changing Attitudes Towards Non-Human Animals and the Cattle Plague of 1865**

We now understand that cattle plague (or rinderpest) is a viral disease against which cattle can be vaccinated. But in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries cattle suffered recurrent epidemics, sometimes of massive proportions. The cattle plague of 1865 in Britain marks something of a watershed. A watershed, first of all, in the understanding of such diseases, and of disease generally; the ways in which

scientific research into the 1865 plague contributed more generally to germ theory have been widely acknowledged. But also a cultural watershed, on the one side of which are centuries-old habits linking humans to non-human animals in relationships of sympathetic interdependence—while on the other are forces of modernity tending to treat such creatures merely as commodities. The paper will explore the crisis through an examination of several texts—notably the prayer of atonement that Victoria authorized and that churches were instructed late in 1865 to use with their congregations; a poem on the plague by the Scots rustic poet Janet Hamilton; and various government reports. Whereas Hamilton expressed sympathy for the cattle in the second person (“your suff’rings, sinless things”), the Veterinary Department concluded that “cattle...appear to belong to that class of commodity which ... can be multiplied to an almost indefinite extent.” In the end, the paper will suggest, the strategy that ended the plague—large-scale slaughter—fostered a new commodification of non-human animals that leads in a direct line to the horrific practices of modern day “intensive” farming.

*Jane Desmond.*

### **Requiem for Roadkill: Death and Denial on America’s Roads**

This paper examines the category of “roadkill,” that is, the destruction of “wild” animals by automobiles, and the numerous rhetorical strategies in public discourse that are mobilized to render invisible this enormous amount of animal carnage. Drawing on analyses of ecological studies, and roadkill food sites, I suggest that the status of roadkilled animals and of human relations to those animals is undergoing a shift away from being considered unavoidable “accidental” killing toward a recognition of animal subjectivity. To date, with the exception of an essay by Baker and McHugh on roadkill and art, and a literary piece by the writer Barry Lopez, most academic work on roadkill has emerged from environmental studies of road safety and ecology, including the construction of “ecopassages,” or safe pathways (underground corridors) for the passage of wildlife.. (Chilson 2003, Koelle 2010) I suggest that with this shift in building considerations, the status of the animal changes from that of necessary collateral damage sacrificed to the needs of human mobility, to that of a set of subjects in need of human assistance. A second recent shift in the conceptual status of roadkill is arising in relation to the growing “ethical eating” movement. Dead animals on the road make a transition from “trash” to “food,” in these contexts. “Ethical eaters” are now promoting information about how to gather and prepare safely as human food, animal carcasses found by the side of the road. These individuals place a moral value on not letting the death of the animal be for nothing. Instead, the lost life is transformed into sustenance for another species, humans. This paper points to the shifting human/non-human animal relations in this arena to illuminate a contradictory ethics of care and dismissal.

Session 3 (H) Frontier 203A

### **Apocalypse Now--and Then**

Chair: *John Bruni*

Apocalypse is everywhere—and on both ends of the political spectrum: in the vision of the “end times” of the American Right, in the environmentalist warnings about the fate of the planet. We investigate how literary texts rewrite critical, foundational themes that inform apocalyptic fantasies, such as the “end of history,” Darwinian endgames, and the “third world” as dystopia. Our panel starts with John Bruni, who explains how Henry Adams’s “A Letter to American Teachers of History” takes the conservative idea of the “end of history” (that would be much later popularized by Francis Fukuyama) and twists it into an absurd and bleakly funny lesson about the paradoxes of nostalgia. Next, Patrick Sharp examines the use of evolutionary plots in *Battlestar Galactica* (the remade version) and Suzanne Collins’s recent young adult novel trilogy, *The Hunger Games*, to question traditional Darwinist gender tropes. Lastly, Lisa Yaszek explores how artists including Jonathan Dotse, Abdourahman Waberi, and Wanuri Kahiu use Western science fiction storytelling techniques to combat the broadly dystopian images of Africa generated by Western corporations and NGOs. Individually and collectively, we propose that apocalypse brings sharply into view contested futures that, perforce, warrant our reconsideration of our lived



temporal experience. Who we will be, after all, depends on who we think we were, who we think we are now.

*John Bruni.*

### **Henry Adams and the Paranoid Style in American Systems Theory**

This paper explores how thermodynamics, for Adams, supplants evolution as a process of increasing complexity that redefines ideas of chaos and order, unity and multiplicity. I examine the ways that Adams's penchant for self-reflexivity in his historical narratives, such as *The Education of Henry Adams*, leads to self-atomization in "A Letter to American Teachers of History." In his drive towards historical negation, Adams's profound pessimism in the "Letter" stages an absurd and bleakly humorous fantasy: he rewrites nostalgia, as a projection of desire for cultural order (pressured by immigration and national expansion), into a paradox: the beginning is already the end. My discussion then focuses on Adams's vision of thermodynamic global systems run amuck, disrupting, once and for all, the new American subject. As he foresees the end of American empire, and writes this ending as an apocalyptic tragedy, Adams pushes scientific meaning beyond the limits of disciplinary constraints to support his pronouncement on "the end of history." Hence Adams's understanding of thermodynamic processes becomes guided by his own paranoia, which can be described as a closed system of reference. This (mis)reading of science in turn creates a new, monstrous system—that merges, in Jacques Derrida's words, "the thinking of the event to the thinking of the machine"—a system constructed out of what Adams considers as the depleted natural and cultural resources of the modern nation-state. Consequently, the "Letter" displays how paranoia becomes, for Adams, "noise" in the system, a disturbance that resists any attempts at (self-) regulation.

*Patrick Sharp.*

### **The Hunger Games: Darwinism and Apocalypse in Post-9/11 Culture**

This paper explores how the legacy of Darwinism—which was woven into narratives of nuclear apocalypse in the twentieth century—continues to shape visions of post-nuclear worlds in the twenty-first century. I show how the Cold War television series *Battlestar Galactica* was recently remade and expanded using evolutionary narratives more consciously than the original in placing humans into a struggle for survival against an evolved race of artificial beings. I also show how the recent young adult novel trilogy *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins depicts life in the aftermath of a large-scale nuclear catastrophe in a manner that takes many of the Darwinist elements of the modern apocalyptic genre as a given. I argue that both *Battlestar Galactica* and *The Hunger Games* use evolutionary plots in order to challenge traditional Darwinist formulations of gender. Eschewing the image of "man the toolmaker" that emerged from Darwin's work, *The Hunger Games* in particular dramatizes how a young woman can out-compete young men in a battle of inventiveness, weapons use, and violence. In this way, I argue that *The Hunger Games* falls into the long tradition of feminist appropriations of Darwinism to argue for women's rights. At the same time, I show how the popularity of *The Hunger Games* speaks to a persistent cultural anxiety about the proliferation of nuclear weapons. With the novels of Collins, a new generation has begun to embrace a belief in the importance of peace for the survival of the human race.

*Lisa Yaszek.*

### **Sexy Black Nerd Saves the World, Part II: The Case of African Science Fiction**

At SLSA 2011 I explored representations of apocalypse and black technoscientific genius in African-American science fiction (SF); this year I will extend that discussion to consider representations of the same in African SF. As cultural critic Kodwo Eshun argues, the futures industry—a coalition of largely Western multinationals and NGOs—borrows language of SF to cast Africa in apocalyptic terms, as "the zone of absolute dystopia." As such, Africa is plagued by natural, social, and economic disasters that stand in sharp contrast to, and can only be ameliorated by, "corporate utopias that make the future safe for industry." But SF is not just a corporate rhetorical tool. It is, as the premiere narrative of technoscientific

modernity, also a complex mode of aesthetic expression used by Africans to stake their own claims on the future imaginary. I begin this presentation with a brief review of African politicians and scientists who use SF to challenge representations of apocalypse generated by the futures industry and identify technoscientific issues that interest specific groups within the larger continent. I then go on to explore the SF offerings of African authors and directors including Jonathan Dotse, Abdourahman Waberi, and Wanuri Kahiu. In particular, I argue that these artists put classic Western SF characters and storytypes to work in African settings. In doing so, they show how African actors might draw upon both local and global resources to avert apocalypse and build truly strange and wonderful new futures.

Session 3 (I) Frontier 203B

### **Nonhuman Animation and the Digital Danse Macabre**

Chair: *Sylvie Bissonnette; Olivia Banner*

Like cinema, animation seeks to mirror living processes: it puts cels together in such a way as to simulate movement and life. Literature and art have also explored stylistic devices to express liveliness, impart life to inanimate objects, and animate readers. This panel investigates theories of liveness in bioart and animated representations of cellular life and of other life processes. This panel seeks to demonstrate that the representations and the experience of these life processes have changed with the advent of new modes of visualization. The shift from cel animation to computer animation has enabled new forms of body tourism and practices of interactive manipulation of life processes. The panel also examines the ways that the history of animation and the philosophies of animatedness can contribute to the logics feeding the bootstrapping of life. For instance, the panel seeks to demonstrate that animation software programs can promote ideologies that influence the ways that cell life is visually represented and interpreted. The panel also explores the ways that digital motion capture -- not unlike Frank and Lillian Gilbreth's early chronocyclegraphs -- reveals the body's vitality through its absence.

*Nathan Blake.*

### **Animating Absence: Digital Motion Capture and Transposition in Amputee Rehabilitation**

This presentation examines phantasms in contemporary motion capture technologies used for gait animation and therapy for veteran amputees, as well as in one of its analogues, the long-exposure photography, or "chronocyclegraph," of Frank and Lillian Gilbreth. Under the Gilbreths, light traces of workers in motion were transposed to wire models that could then be streamlined and emulated for the utmost efficient gesture. At medical centers such as the Walter Reed Gait Lab, sensors are placed on points of the body and prosthesis alike, and motion is abstracted to a series of data points that can be isolated, tracked, and modified. Both systems are designed to register motions that are otherwise too small or fleeting for the human eye to apprehend, and to then represent how the body's movement through space can be optimized. With the wire model, the body is erased; duration is spatialized and contained; and prosthesis, tool, and flesh are rendered equivalent and modifiable parts of a system. Likewise, the computational animations reveal the body's vitality through its absence, while also representing the amputee as a functional whole. I consider how these contemporary animations might help integrate the prosthesis to the patient's body schema and even counter phantom limb pain. Against this, I note the fantastic phenomena of the phantom limb and the trope of its haunting, which is echoed in the apparitions of the Gilbreth photos, and even in the animated motion capture skeletons of the digital danse macabre.

*Sylvie Bissonnette.*

### **Playing with Life in Video Games**

This paper investigates the intersections between scientific research on tissue engineering and computer simulations and the interest in recent video games to play with representations of life. It explores the progressive shift from animated representations of moving bacteria and cells to embodied engagement with ecological representations of the earth and playful molecular restructuring in various video games. It investigates the contributions of mathematical modeling, technological innovations in computer imagery,

and advances in video game design to the emergence of this phenomenon. It also examines how cultural trends such as participatory culture, the affective turn, innovative search engines, and modding practices may also encourage these ludic practices of body tourism and amateur microbiology. Finally, it will examine the potential impacts of these practices of animating fragments of the body on our understanding of the human and life in society.

*Olivia Banner.*

### **Animating the Cell's "Inner Life"**

This paper investigates contemporary digital animations of cellular life produced by biologists and used to teach students about molecular biology. Using cinematic techniques such as panning, tracking, and zooming, these animations inscribe visual logics characteristic of action-adventure, science fiction, and animated cinema. The animation software itself is being used to provoke new understandings of the workings of cellular life, and through an analysis of the software I argue that the programs are directly inscribing computational logics into cellular processes. I then examine the aesthetics of these animations. In their attempts to "show" life "in silico," these animations impart an aesthetics of the technosublime at the micro-level -- an aesthetic that lends itself to a broader cultural logic that imagines life as programmable, modifiable, and optimizable. Yet how might scientists use these animations productively to explore knowledge about epigenetics gleaned from the Genome Projects -- that nurture is nature, that the affective saturates and effects the mechanics of the cell, that the cell could now be thought as having an "inner life"? What might a phenomenology of cell life be able to offer to the social science of film as well as to molecular biologists? I turn to a number of "alternative" aesthetic representations of cellular life -- in art-house cinema and videogames -- to explore some existing alternatives.

Session 3 (J) Frontier 203D

### **Time and Mediation 1: Duration and Synchrony**

Chair: *James J. Hodge*

Long a venerable topic in the history of philosophy, time presents a particularly difficult kind of perplexity. St. Augustine famously wrote, "What then is time? If no one asks me, I know; if I wish to explain it, I know not." It is as if the difficulty of time lies not with affirming its existence, but rather in remediating it in language. A fundamental difficulty of theorizing time rests, then, in reckoning with its mediation. This mediation must be grasped in concert with the increasing pace of technological innovation that culminates in our ongoing digital era. And so, the question of the technical mediation of time becomes all the more important for articulating the historical, affective, and aesthetic impact of media at timescales at once human, inhuman, and nonhuman. This panel examines a variety of different modes of duration across a range of media. If new media technologies operate at scales and speeds beyond human perception—and have done so for quite some time—what problems does this present for understanding the correlation between bodies and technics? What sorts of media, and what processes of mediation, are called for when synchronization between humans and technology seems impossible, or at best partial and indeterminate? What forms of duration or synchrony might be distributed across the human and the technical? The papers in this panel all take up the problem of how different media organize duration understood as ongoing presentness, and how these media synchronize, or synchronize with, embodied and lived time. [*Part of Time and Mediation Stream*]

*Justus Nieland.*

### **The Do-Nothing Time of Charles and Ray Eames**

Charles and Ray Eames helped teach the world how to be happy. They reoriented the human sensorium by designing equipment—furniture, toys, homes, films—for postwar happiness. Their work enacts the sensorial and temporal conditions of many midcentury media environments, in which human meaning and happiness are loosed from prior templates or any discernable telos. Happiness is classically understood as an ends-oriented affective disposition, organized around instrumentalized means to happiness. The

Eameses, however, find happiness in environments defined by ongoingness—time in which nothing is done, and happiness takes place in the abstract forever of molded plastic. The Eameses’ midcentury designs thus anticipated what Pamela Lee describes as a turn in 1960s art towards non-teleological, recursive, and serial models of temporality. This paper examines three works by the Eameses: a chair for nobody; a do-nothing machine; a house with nobody in it. Their fiberglass chair, “La Chaise” (1948) explores the open-ended, objectless, and anxious temporality of plastic. Their gratuitous film-object *Solar Do-Nothing Machine* (1958) is marked by a similarly anxious wish for a future incompatible with the midcentury’s happy present: a dream of freedom from entropy, loss, and waste the film insists is fully compatible with the most extravagant, useless human interventions in matter and energy. Finally, *House: After Five Years of Living* (1955), comprised entirely of variously paced stills of the couple’s famous Case Study House #8, deploys the plasticity of montage to explore an abstract domesticity, recast as an infinitely flexible model unfolding, without humans, in do-nothing time.

*Scott Richmond.*

### **Playing At Being-With: Identification, Resonance, Action, Gaming**

In “The Origin of the First-Person Shooter,” Alexander Galloway observes that the first-person perspective of first-person shooter (FPS) games has an antecedent in the cinematic point-of-view shot. The implication is that aspects of FPS games may usefully be explained by turning to theories of cinematic identification, and, conversely, that these theories may be usefully challenged and updated by considering them in light of FPS games. This paper extends, elaborates, and revises theories of cinematic identification and Galloway’s observations by attending to the dynamics of proprioception and embodied enaction in FPS games, in relation to contemporary cinematic examples. This paper makes two claims: 1. Identification in both FPS games and the cinema are organized by a dynamic tension between what Roger Caillois terms *mimesis* and *ilinx*, or identificatory and proprioceptive becoming-unbounded, respectively. These are ongoing, durational, and synchronic processes of resonance between an embodied viewer and onscreen bodies (*mimesis*) and worlds (*ilinx*). 2. These processes of identification have complexly layered temporalities of ongoingness. The embodied, ongoing resonance with the bodies and worlds onscreen—their mediated being-with—is organized and indeed enabled by the deep foundations of habit. My examples include games from the *Portal* and *Half-Life* series, and recent films such as *Avatar* and *Gamer* which dramatize these issues at both a formal and a thematic level. My approach is primarily oriented by Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of perception (and Sobchack’s film-theoretical articulation of it), and James J. Gibson’s ecological approach to perception.

*Mark B. N. Hansen.*

### **The Operational Present of Sensibility**

Contemporary digital technologies afford unprecedented access to levels of temporal experience that have long remained beyond the scope of human thematization. In their efforts to historicize these affordances, historians of science have insisted on the peculiarity of this access, the fact that it does not take place through any direct expansion of human perceptual capacities, but rather through a human-machine assemblage that supplements perception by putting it into systemic co-relation with a technical operationality whose “content” it (perception) cannot access. In my paper, I will utilize this *indirect* model of the temporal expansion of human agency to explore contemporary micro-computational expansion of sensibility, both as it informs data capitalism and efforts to counter the latter’s sway.

*James J. Hodge.*

### **Response by James J. Hodge**

Session 3 (K) Frontier 203E

**Science Fiction has Always Been Nonhuman**

Chair: *Gerry Canavan*

*John Shanahan.*

**Can a Medium be a Protagonist? Rival Media in the Novels of David Mitchell**

David Mitchell's time-jumping and globe-spanning novels of the previous decade have received acclaim from both popular and scholarly readers. I argue that he is a significant and emblematic novelist of the contemporary period because he creatively thematizes the dynamics of remediation. First, his novels tell stories of media competition over large spans of time and space. In *Cloud Atlas* (2004), for example, each of the six stories which constitute the novel as frames inside frames portray competition of multiple media from oral storytelling to memoir writing to holographic projection. *Ghostwritten* (1999) and *Number9Dream* (2001), on the other hand, portray novel kinds of global simultaneity via new media platforms. His novels unsettle simplistic accounts of technological progress as the succession of ever more adequate devices. But second, and more interestingly, Mitchell's complex novels also feature transcendental, mystical, devices such as reincarnation that make human characters less important and effective as means of coordinating and driving plot. In some cases this is so because characters are literally non-human, as in the artificial intelligence program that becomes a conscious agent in *Ghostwritten* and the cloned narrator of a sci-fi story in *Cloud Atlas*, but even in the more realist passages and events centered on humans, individuality in Mitchell is trumped by its embedding in substrates. Ultimately, I argue, Mitchell's digital transcendentalism forces us to recognize that the true protagonists of his novels are competing media.

*Beatrice Marovich.*

**“Zebra is the ‘Repairman’ And He Is Here: Philip K. Dick and the Divine Animal”**

The figure of the nonhuman—in all of Philip K. Dick's speculative fiction—is one of pressing concern. In the guise of (especially) the android, nonhumans pose a contemplative challenge to the humanist subject. N. Katherine Hayles has suggested that, especially in the novel *Dr. Bloodmoney*, there is something about Dick's speculative inversion of boundaries that—at least in some small way—is intent on setting the world “right”: on mitigating the potentially terrifying effects of our human future. This is especially true, I suggest, of the quasi-theological figure of Zebra who emerges in the VALIS trilogy, but makes frequent appearances in passages of Dick's recently published *Exegesis* (2011). Through this figure Dick appears to be disturbing human boundaries by fusing together two facets of the nonhuman: the animal and the divine. He claims that Zebra “is God” while also remaining, importantly, “an actual animal.” Indeed, Zebra is a variant of savior who Dick claims to have seen “wrapped in the crazy, crapping, dirty, wild body of an animal, and transformed eternally my friend.” In this paper I trace the footsteps of Zebra through the *Exegesis*, illuminating the philosophical and theological backdrop of this speculative divine animal (the Platonic demiurge, the logos, Alfred North Whitehead's divine creature). I will ultimately suggest that Dick's speculation washes up on the shores of his own skepticism indicating, perhaps, a kind of mortal limit to this animal's effective agency.

Session 3 (L)

Session 3 (M) Frontier 202C

**Book Panel - Eugene Thacher's *Dust of This Planet: Horror of Philosophy***

*Allison Dushane.*

**Presentation**

*Kate Marshall.*

**Presentation**

*Marcel O'Gorman.*

**Presentation**

Session 4 - Fri 10:30am - 12pm

Session 4 (A) Frontier 201A

**Art, Science, and Mysticism/Occultism in the Cultures of the 1920s**

Chair: *Linda Henderson*

This is the second of three panels for a stream titled "The Arts, Science, and Occultism from the Late 19th Century to the 1960s," which brings together an international group of scholars from the fields of history, history of science, art history, film history, and media studies.

*Elizabeth Otto.*

**Spiritual by Design: The Otherworldly Bauhaus**

Modern architecture and design have often been remembered as harsh and impersonal, and as prioritizing the rational and objective over individuality and the spiritual. This talk will reassess this association by providing a closer look at the influence of mysticism and the occult on the Bauhaus, an interwar German reform movement and school for art, craft, design, and architecture. Even as they developed their famous streamlined designs, members of the Bauhaus also produced works of art and lived according to their engagement with new religions including Mazdaznan, spiritism, and occult spirituality. Thus, Bauhaus artists were participating in a broader context of early twentieth-century research into the overlapping fields of science and the spiritual. In such research, the visual often played a crucial role, as in such technologies as x-ray, microscopy, handwriting analysis, spirit photography, and other image-based manifestations of spirit presences. Reintegrating this other history into what we know of the Bauhaus allows us to understand its modernism anew, not as rational and soulless but as part of a larger attempt to perceive the world—including the here and now and the hereafter—in all of its expanding complexity.

*Sofie Lachapelle.*

**Fakirs and Other Performers of the Occult on the Stages of Interwar Paris**

In the 1920s, the fakir Tahra Bey performed acts of catalepsy, insensibility, levitation, and live burial on the stages of Paris, all of which had reportedly been controlled by "celebrities of the scientific world." In his writings, he deplored European degeneration and pointed to fakirism as a remedy for alcoholism, syphilis, and welfare, among other ills. Similarly, the fakir Birman wrote of European decrepitude and offered private consultations to those in trouble. For both men, fakirism went beyond the stage; it was a way of living and being. Meditation, restraint, diet, and exercise were key to mental and physical health. Although Asian and Middle Eastern performers were not new to Paris, the decade that followed the Great War saw the arrival of numerous "fakirs" and "princes" on the stages of the city. This paper will explore their growing popularity on and off the stage as well as in novels and journalistic exposés of the period.

*Linda Henderson.*

**Maurice Maeterlinck and J. W. Dunne in 1927-28: The Mystical Fourth Dimension and Ether, the 'Block Universe,' and Spatialized Time**

Although the announcement of the 1919 eclipse expedition's findings brought Einstein instant celebrity, along with the general acceptance of Relativity Theory, that process was more complex than is usually acknowledged, particularly in France. In addition to a number of books by French scientists on the ether published during the 1920s, French resistance to Einstein's theories is also apparent in Maurice Maeterlinck's 1928 book *La Vie de l'espace*, which championed the spatial (versus temporal) fourth dimension and the ether as well as infinity and eternity. Maeterlinck drew upon the writings on the fourth

dimension by hyperspace philosopher C. H. Hinton and Russian mystic P. D. Ouspensky, whose 1911 discussion of a timeless reality in higher dimensions offered a striking prefiguring of Einstein's space-time continuum interpreted as a spatial block. Maeterlinck in 1928 was also aware of J. W. Dunne's 1927 book *An Experiment in Time*, which propounded another model of spatialized time, created by Dunne's fusion of Einsteinian space-time and Hinton's discussions of higher spatial dimensions. Denying any mystical or occult intentions, Dunne had sought in such a model to understand his precognitive dreams of future events. The spatialized time of Maeterlinck and Dunne, which also functioned as a critique of Bergson, provides a unique insight into this moment of transition in interpretations of the popular "fourth dimension," which would subsequently come to be understood simply as time itself.

Session 4 (B) Frontier 201C

### **Neuroscience at the Margins**

Chair: *Melissa Littlefield*

Neuroscience has become integrated into disciplines as disparate as English and Economics as a new kind of lingua franca for the academy; but this "neuroscientific turn"--like the nonhuman turn that is this conference's focus--has been largely undertheorized (Littlefield and Johnson 2012). Each of the papers in this panel examines neuroscience at the margins. From Buddhism to disciplinarity to cognitive disability, this panel asks what the purview and purchase of neuroscience is for various corners of the academy and beyond. Our case studies range from the micro to the macro; through our analyses, we seek to call the "neuro" and the neurosciences into question and to challenge their ubiquitous applicability to fields in the humanities and social sciences. Johnson's paper explores the representation of the partnership between Buddhism and neuroscience in popular media; Barber's presentation analyzes the use of alien metaphors to describe individuals with autism spectrum disorders; and Littlefield's paper questions the ability and utility of creating a rubric for the newest--and often marginalized--neurodisciplines. Taken together, these papers not only call attention to underexamined aspects of the "neuroscientific turn," but also attempt to theorize its developing margins.

*Melissa Littlefield.*

### **Neuro-Academics: Infrastructures for an Integrated Neuroscholarship**

Over the past decade, the neurosciences have become important for a number of fields beyond medicine. Researchers are seeing the proliferation of emergent neurodisciplines, including neuroethics, neuropolitics, neuroaesthetics, neurotheology, and the neurohumanities. In short, a "neuroscientific turn" is happening in the academy (Littlefield and Johnson 2012). Because of its all-to-recent emergence, scholars have not yet interrogated whether the emergent neurodisciplines are intellectually coherent and/or comparable entities. For the academy, an integrated neuroscholarship means creating infrastructures that discipline knowledge and institutionalize participation in neuroscholarship. For the public, an integrated neuroscholarship implies agreement, factuality, and perhaps even trust. In this presentation, I consider the impacts of an infrastructurally integrated neuroscholarship on the academy and the public sphere. I examine and compare three rubrics that have been put forth thus far ('neuroscientific turn,' neuroscholarship, and 'critical neuroscience'), while also seeking alternative possibilities. Thus, I not only compare possible rubrics, but will also debate the promise and perils of an infrastructurally integrated neuroscholarship.

*Claire Barber.*

### **The Alien Metaphor: Why Autistic Brains Scare Neurotypicals**

This paper examines the alien as a metaphor for describing individuals with autism spectrum disorders that has gained currency in scientific and popular literature written by neurotypicals and autists. Both autists and aliens have become cultural fixations, with the threat that aliens pose often represented physically by their unusually large and visible brains—as in director Tim Burton's *Mars Attacks!* (1996). Psychiatrists like Antonio Y. Hardan have shown that autists develop increased head circumference

between birth and age one relative to neurotypicals. Consequently, neuroscientists like Eric Courchesne have used this visible difference as a springboard to discover that autists have 67% more prefrontal cortical cells. This recent explosion of cognitive neuroscience attempts to make the ever-increasing number of autistic brains accessible to neurotypicals. Variances in neural construction imply that autists will communicate differently than neurotypicals, which provides an alternative to the theory of mindblindness promoted by cognitive psychologist Simon Baron-Cohen. Unfortunately, the above neuroscience can provide scientific endorsement for uses of the alien metaphor. Accordingly, autists satisfy the two criteria for this metaphor: visible—particularly cognitive—difference and communication problems. I argue that the research above and uses of the alien metaphor are reactions to the threats that autists pose to the security of neurotypical communication. Aliens threaten natives with their intelligence and unpredictability, and this metaphor provides yet another example of neurotypical anxieties about the insecurity of communication and neurotypical ignorance of the sensory issues that underlie these perceived deficits.

*Jenell Johnson.*

### **The Golden Voice of Neurocience: Fact Finding in Popular Buddhist Media**

In the Sutra [on Pure Realms] Spread Out in a Dense Array, the Buddha advised his followers to examine his teaching the way a goldsmith examines gold—rubbing, cutting, and melting it—rather than simply accepting them on his authority. In recent years, the Buddhist respect for empiricism has taken the form of high profile collaborations between Buddhists and neuroscientists. In 2005, for example, the Dalai Lama addressed the Society for Neuroscience in Washington DC, and monastics regularly offer their brains to imaging studies. The cross-pollination between Buddhism, particularly Western Buddhism, and the mind sciences is not new; in 1974, Chogyam Trungpa predicted that Buddhism would “come to the West as a psychology,” and clinical psychologists have long turned toward Buddhist teachings for inspiration. What is new is the extent to which Buddhists are turning toward neuroscience as a source of authority for their practices, to the point where noted figures like Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000) have suggested that doctrines that conflict with the “hard evidence of science” ought to be discarded. This paper explores accounts of neuroscience in a number of popular Buddhist magazines which, like other forms of popular science writing, tend toward reductionism, essentialism, and bolstered claims of certainty (Fahnestock 1991; Racine et. al 2005; Fitzpatrick 2012), and argues that even though the collaboration is framed as a partnership, when deployed as “fact finding” (Johnson and Littlefield 2011) neuroscience is presented as the ultimate authority on matters of mind.

Session 4 (C) Frontier 201D

### **The Beauty of 19th-Century Science**

*Benjamin Morgan.*

### **Some Objects of Victorian Aesthetic Theory**

Most scholars think of Victorian discourse about the arts as having promoted liberal humanist values as distinct from technical scientific knowledge. It was Matthew Arnold and John Ruskin, after all, who picked famous fights with T.H. Huxley and Charles Darwin that led to the intractable “two cultures” model. My paper contests this historical narrative by analyzing three objects that exemplify a long-overlooked alliance between materialist science and aesthetic theory in the Victorian period. The first is an instrument called a “metrochrome,” invented by color-theorist George Field. Made of three translucent wedges tinted with the primary colors, the metrochrome allowed Field to quantify the relationship among colors, measuring the relative intensities that produced “perfect purple” or “perfect green.” The second is a machine constructed by interior decorator David Ramsay Hay, into which he placed (variously) beautiful statues and beautiful women to measure the proportions of their bodies. The third is a vase described by art-critic Clementina Anstruther-Thomson which, she said, caused her to lift her chest upward and to breathe more deeply. I argue that these objects reflect some of the materialisms that were



generated by Victorian aesthetics. Instead of turning to art for a realm of abstract redemptive value, Field, Hay, and Anstruther-Thomson partake in a physiological discourse that treats the human body as a responsive system. Contra Arnold and Ruskin, aesthetic experience is not liberalizing and liberating; rather the human body is treated as the same sort of physical thing as the artwork that affects it.

*John Hay.*

**The Death of the Narrator: Darwin's Denial of Teleology and the Struggle of Realism**

Charles Darwin wrote in his Autobiography, "There seems to be no more design ... in the action of natural selection, than in the course which the wind blows." Darwin's insistence that the "work" of nature was in no way a communication between God and Man--an outright rejection of teleology--was the most difficult aspect of evolutionary theory for his nineteenth-century audience to understand. Indeed, Darwin himself struggled to describe evolutionary history without relying on narrative arcs governed by beginnings and endings, and even the sixth and final edition of "The Origin of Species" contains teleological moments. In a similar way, I claim, realist novelists of the same era labored to craft texts that were not communications between Author and Reader. The rise of pure third-person or "narratorless" narration in the nineteenth-century novel mirrors the growing acceptance of a Darwinian worldview in which the secular force of natural selection replaces God's Book of Nature. Yet few if any nineteenth-century novelists were capable of completely eliminating first- and second-person narration to achieve that "total absence of a narrator" which Ann Banfield claims is the chief characteristic of the style of the modern novel. Just as Darwin struggled to explain selection without a selector, novelists struggled to construct stories without storytellers. Using the narrative style of William Dean Howells as a touchstone, this paper highlights the nineteenth century's bizarre refusal to relinquish the figure of the narrator and let the facts of the novel "speak for themselves."

Session 4 (D) Frontier 202A

**Maddening Symbols**

*Shari Jill Powers.*

**The Beauty and the Madness of the Fourth Dimension: Foucault's Pendulum as Tesseract**

In Umberto Eco's Foucault's Pendulum, Dr. Casaubon comes to believe that Foucault's Pendulum in Paris is a tesseract, a four dimensional cube being used by the Templars to find and kill him. Casauban comes to identify the Pendulum as hypercube, as tree of the Sephiroth in occult legend, both a transmitter and a doorway for dimensional travel. Casauban uses a computer owned by his missing (and assumed dead) editor, Jacopo Belbo, upon whose theories Casauban bases and models his own research. With Belbo's computer, Casaubon constructs connections that, followed up, eventually lead to real deaths from unknown assailants, including Belbo, and he believes the Templars and other secret societies referred to as the Diabolicals are responsible. Casauban's research causes him to fall down a metaphorical rabbit hole into complete paranoid delusion, where his mind folds in on itself like a collapsing hypercube. Eventually, the completely obsessed and paranoid Casauban becomes nothing more than a deluded fool on the hill, sitting near the Tower and musing on his fate as he awaits the murderers he assumes will kill him, ready to accept traveling through the tesseract as the final marriage of physis and psyche, God and self, the attainment of total Truth in death. I will discuss how the concept of the hypercube has come to symbolize the alchemical symbol for complete perfection, as well as how Eco uses the concept as occult symbol and structuring element for the novel.

*Paola Villa.*

**"Behind the Rearview Mirror": Complementarity Principle and the Possibility for Non-subjective Observations in Italo Calvino's "Palomar."**

According to Niels Bohr, one of the fathers of quantum mechanics, "We are suspended in language in such a way that we cannot say what's up or what's down." The Danish physicist was one of the first to

realize the epistemological relevance of language in the divulgation of the new non-classical mechanics and to struggle with philosophical questions of division between subject and object in order to achieve unambiguous descriptions of reality. Italo Calvino, a most prominent supporter of the need for a common discourse between science and humanities engages this view in some of his famous novels and essays. In particular, "Behind the Rearview Mirror", an unpublished short story from "Palomar", deals with the problem of the human subject corrupting the crystal clearness of the sense-data. The rearview mirror - a modern descendant of the mythological device that saved Perseus from the petrifying look of Medusas - allows Mr. Palomar (a sort of alter-ego of Calvino) to relegate the subject outside the field of observation, purging the reflection from the ambiguity of human subjectivity. Will such a practical expedient succeed in relieving Palomar's anxieties (and the concerns of a long list of intellectuals behind him) towards a non-anthropocentric description of reality? Through the optics of Calvino, I aim to investigate questions of language and communication within the two fields of science and literature. Can we escape from a vision of reality that is language laden and human overloaded?

*ekklego@gmail.com.*

**Pynchon's The crying of Lot 49: Oedipa's quest in the forest of symbols of postwar American civilization.**

Pynchon's novella unfolds on the boundary between the human and the non-human, at the heart of the Pax Americana after the World Wars. Civilization took shape in a tightly knitted fabric of laws, institutions, infrastructures, corporate giants born from war-industry reconversion, electronic and information technology, new forms of urbanism, and a cultural heritage hard to decipher. History emerges in a kaleidoscopic system of commodities, founded on the products of the winners, whose historical voice is the only one able to account for a socially constructed reality. To what extent does historical agency exist? Who is accountable for the world we are living in today? Is it all a joke? Can civilization determine what is human and what is not? A sense of disbelief is constant in Oedipa's quest for truth among the by-products of history, the spin-offs from official narratives, who appear voiceless and in disarray. One voice is broken into a cacophony of conspiracy symbols, hieroglyphics, and muted signs. At this stage entropy, a notion borrowed from physics, turns into an aesthetic and epistemological metaphor to explore systems' process of degeneration, where the system is the capitalistic empire in all its specific forms such as technology, communication, politics, and literary criticism. Trying to make sense of the mysteries of human civilisation, the short novel is torn apart by the same laws of chaos that civilization fends off. The result is a parody of the historical, epistemic and aesthetic codes which should justify a new era of peace and democracy. Elias E. J. "History", Ch. 9 in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Pynchon*. Ed. by Dalsgaard, Herman, McHale. (2012) Cambridge University Press. Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (1978), pp. 81-100. Hansen R.J. Law, History and the subversion of Postwar America in Pynchon's *The* [...]

Session 4 (E) Frontier 202B

**Aquatic Animals II: Touching the Animal**

Chair: *Stacy Alaimo*

*Eva Hayward.*

**"How Like a Reef"**

This paper analyzes a crisis in seeing difference in Leni Riefenstahl's underwater photographs of coral populations in *Coral Gardens* (1972) and *Wonder Under Water* (1991), and her last documentary film, *Underwater Impressions* (2002). Attending to the ideological and movement of her camera from Nazi Germany, to the natives of East Africa, to the coral residents of the Indian Ocean, this paper posits that while her non-human representations share in the same legacies of her earlier filmic and photographic projects, they refigure her "fascist aesthetic" through the excess of the visual. Coralline expressiveness, I argue, resists an easy reading that would configure Riefenstahl as producing a more passive and therefore

controllable subject. Moving away from the assumptions of traditional visual studies and its legacy in humanist structures that center identification and reflectivity as central to reading practices, I return to the luminous indexicality of the imagery; light touches and continues to touch through chemistry, creating metonymic pathways. The coral, as materialized referent, is bound to the viewer through contiguity—its watery lifeway shapes, literally refracting, the light index of the image. These coherences unsettle certain assumptions about the visual legibility of species, and other identificatory categories. Species distinctions, in Riefenstahl’s work, are exposed as fragile coatings, uneven epidermis that oscillates between shine and abjection. It is an aesthetic of surface, of style that constitutes species differentiations. So rather than interpreting her work as aesthetically shallow, it is literally the shallowness of the images that refracts, rather than reflects, difference.

*Helen Bullard.*

**“Touching the Whale (a specter in space)”**

On December 24, 2011, a forty foot (twelve meter) long beached sperm whale was discovered by a dog walker in Old Hunstanton, Norfolk, UK. In the days that followed, crowds gathered; a colony of insect-people, mourners, reverends, scavengers, paparazzi and freakers. In the moments before de-gloved hands tentatively reached out to touch the cracked, clammy, damp, salted, marbled hide, and fingers pushed into the firm spongy blubber, and dogs tip-toed into the salted ionic crimson pool that seeped from the severed tongue, a question slipped around the gathering like an eel: ‘Can I touch it?’. A chain of events followed. They arrived silently, crept into liminal spaces, and unfastened a series of ruptures. An unprecedented rise in dolphin beachings; the first killer whale ever spotted from my local coast; three weeks in Gothenburg visiting ‘the only stuffed blue whale in the world’; a conversation about conservation in a museum of natural history... Fissures opened, and animals fell through them. But still a distance remained. Touching the Whale considers thresholds of contact and distanciation between us and other animals, and the things that fill them. These spaces seem to mediate and perplex our understandings of animality, corporeality, and of animals ‘in place’. Whether constructed or happened upon, these experiences open questions about life and death, wildness and taming, seduction and aversion, in a place where ‘Can I touch it?’ plays a fundamental role.

*Ron Broglio.*

**"Touching the Animal: communication mass scale inthewrongplaceness"**

The animal world calls and vocalizes in ways often beyond our comprehension. They are sending signals into the open but we have no way of comprehending these signs that are all around us. Until recently, we had no idea why the Tarsier primate opens and closes its mouth. Nor did we understand why arctic Snowy Owls would turn at a particular angle to the sun. We discovered that they are communicating, sending out signs and waves. What calls from the body of the other are we unable to heed? If our biological cousins, the Tarsiers, are a mystery and if owls open to plain sight remain strange, how much more out of water do we feel in not being able to comprehend the vast realms of aquatic life—from extremophiles to highly intelligent cetaceans and unknown skills of the cephalopods? Physically and conceptually touch allows us to think the imperative of the other, the call from the body of the other toward connection, intimacy, and vulnerability. There are a number of artists working on touching and animals as a mode of engagement and ambiguous communication. Helen Bullard's research based art explores a rupture in everydayness when a dead whale is found beached on the English coast; Maria Whiteman pets taxidermied animals in natural history displays; and Kira O'Reilly cradles the corps of a pig. In each case touch connected to mass, scale, and “inthewrongplaceness” function as characteristics for developing an engagement with the open secret of nonhuman worlds.

Session 4 (F) Frontier 202D

**Animal Domination, Vivisection, and Animation**

*Samantha Noll.*

**Moving Away from Descartes' Mechanical Bull: Humans, Animals, & a Logic of Domination**

Within this presentation, I argue that our continued use of animals for human purposes is based upon a logic of domination that is not founded upon fact but upon a rational/non-rational dualism first put forth by Descartes; a dualism still being supported by current philosophical work. Second, I critique this logic of domination and cursorily outline at least three lines of inquiry needed to undermine it: 1) we need to acknowledge that there are a multiplicity of animals (including humans) with unique abilities; 2) we need to question and critique the historical view that animals are non-rational and/or non-responsive and revise our dated conclusions and conceptions of these terms; and 3) we need to recognize that there are different ways of thinking and/or actively interacting with the world. With the plethora of current work being done on animal minds that undermines the mechanistic view of animals, it is time that we finally moved away from Descartes' mechanical bull, so to speak. This paper utilizes the work of ecofeminists, philosophers, and current scientific research.

*Lennard Davis.*

**How debates about animals led to the formation of science and the humanities: The Anti-Vivisection Movement in the 19th Century**

The paper argues that a major division between the sciences and the humanities took place around the anti-vivisection movement in the 19th century. With the public becoming aware of "science" through public demonstrations of live, unanesthetized dissection of dogs, cats, horses, monkeys, and rabbits, a discourse of morality, ethics, and religion morphed into the antidote to the hardhearted arguments leveled by physiologists to defend their actions. In this sense, the humanities became a discourse of feelings and values as opposed to that of science which dealt in "hard facts." This was a determining division that in some sense made it more and more difficult for the humanities to carve out an epistemological and heuristic foundation, thus ceding to science the right to claim a title to pure knowledge. Animals, and the social construction of them, were the pivot around which these arguments took place.

*Casey Riffel.*

**The Animal Line: Chronophotography and the Origins of Animation**

In a letter dated May 25, 1929, Edward Reichert, Chair of Physiology at the University of Pennsylvania, provides an anecdote concerning animal vivisections performed during Eadweard Muybridge's stay at that institution. Reichert recounts how he performed a number of live operations on dogs and cats, with Muybridge photographing the "pulsating hearts" of the animals. These apocryphal photographs stand in spectral opposition to Muybridge's famous chronophotographic sequences: the intimately internal vibrations of organs against the resolutely external motions of horses, dogs, and humans laid against a grid. The vivisection anecdote opens an incision for reconsidering Muybridge (as well his compatriots E-J Marey, Thomas Eakins, Alexander Black, and Adolphe Neyt) from the perspective of the experiment, of the operation of visual technology upon the body of the animal. This paper joins the animal-centric intervention into Muybridge and his tradition with an inquiry into the evolution of "animation," both as a philosophical concept and a nascent moving-image medium. Where histories of cinema focus on Muybridge's technological innovations, this perspective on chronophotography and life leads to a reconsideration of animation, that quintessentially modern technology of life-making. This paper argues that the motion-study photographs epitomize an origin of animation based on the transformation of animal movement (and thus animal life) into abstract data, which can then be plotted and distilled into a single line. This line, which constitutes the primordial element of animation, thus depends on animal experimentation; the resulting animal line is a nonhuman basis for creating animation's radical form of life.

## Nonhumans and Contemporary Art

Chair: *Roger Rothman*

*Alex Caldiero.*

### **PERFORMATIVE LANGUAGES OF THE NONHUMAN Alex Caldiero Artist in Residence Utah Valley University**

To comprehend the limits of the human and how these limits interact with and access the nonhuman is a quest not only of science and philosophy, but also of the literary and artistic avant-garde. This paper centers around three key figures of the 20th century. Each of these figures has sought in their own way to distance and even curtail the human as controlling and central agent. This is a performative paper, that is, it combines formal presentation with intermittent language acts. I will not only present the ideas of these figures but will also include their manner of operation. Each of the following avant-gardists offers a unique approach for subverting human-centeredness and opening ways to the pluriversal realm of the nonhuman. Duchamp's readymade and the language of indifference: An approach to decontextualizing the object and eliminate the aesthetics of taste. John Cage's silence, indeterminacy, and chance: An approach to creating an all-embracing awareness of environment and tap the wider no nature non-human reality. William Burroughs' cut up and fold in: An approach to subverting language and breakdown the sickness of meaning. Throughout the body of this performative paper, the above three approaches will each in turn alter and determine the content and structure of the presentation. In this way, the audience will get an actual glimpse of the languages of the nonhuman.

*corinna ghaznavi.*

### **In Through the Whale: Douglas Walker's Other Worlds**

Doug Walker's work reflects an intense engagement with the technique, formulation, imagery and effect of painting itself. His knowledge of art history, his ongoing engagement with both historical and contemporary approaches to form and content, the literally hundreds of tests required to achieve the surface, texture and effect of his paintings, and his modification and creation of unique tools and easels, places him alongside countless artists who have worked as innovators and alchemists. Originally most interested in drawing, Walker found himself also attracted to paint, and developed a technique that can be interpreted as drawing in paint. In 2000 he began to paint on paper, and five years later reduced his palette to a transparent blue that references the blue and white palette that Delft potters employed from the 16th century onwards. For Other Worlds Walker has produced his largest work on paper to date. The central image is one of a sperm whale flanked on one side by a moon and on the other by a human head. Whales conjure up many connotations; they are global, travelling and communicating over great distances, and planetary, representing themselves as a planet within the universe of the ocean. Their flexible relationship with the land is demonstrated in medieval stories that tell of whales masquerading as islands. In 1820 a sperm whale, documented as measuring 85 feet, rammed and sank the whale ship Essex, inspiring Herman Melville's Moby Dick, and forever establishing them as a powerful force in challenging human dominance over the natural world. This paper looks at the series of images that Walker created against the backdrop of Melville's story as a way to consider Other Worlds as an investigation into the inter-relationship between the human, non-human, animate and inanimate world.

*Alissa Anne Walls.*

### **A Visionary Natural History: Contemporary American Art for a Post-Darwinian (R)Evolution**

Session 4 (H) Frontier 203A

### **Playing Dead: Necromedia Games from the Critical Media Lab**

Chair: *Marcel O'Gorman*

The collusion of death and technology plays itself out with every photo taken, every avatar embodied, every text message transmitted. From Roland Barthes to Bernard Stiegler, the notion of media hauntology

has wafted into our understanding of what it means to be a prosthetic animal, at once human and nonhuman. At the same time, the spectres of the immortality gene, cryonic freezing, and other transhumanist fantasies haunt our collective imagination. These deathly concepts fall under the umbrella of what I have called “necromedia theory.” This panel explores necromedia by introducing three new projects from the Critical Media Lab that apply critical theory and posthumanist philosophy toward the creation of digital games designed to provoke speculation a technical animal cognizant of its own vulnerability and finitude. The projects include the following: Infinitude’s Despair, a board game that requires players to engage in off-game feats of physical strength to buffer the damage caused by their disembodied war games; Cytopath, a GPS-based alternate reality game that (literally) walks players through ethical questions about genetic engineering; and Necrogenesis, a game of existential care, cognitive attention, and Heideggerian disconcealment, in which players control an interface by means of brain waves. These games exemplify a method called “applied media theory,” which guides the research/creation activities of the Critical Media Lab at the University of Waterloo. Panelists will describe their projects in detail, offer a theoretical analysis of the work, and provide the audience with an opportunity to test the games in a casual setting.

*Sarah; Burr, Lauren; Blagden, Natalee Gibbons.*

**Cytopath: Remapping Bioethical Territory through Augmented Reality Gaming**

Cytopath is a location-based augmented reality game played in downtown Kitchener, Ontario using mobile devices. Set in the near future, the game presents a world in which food has become so nutrient-poor that the majority of humans are malnourished. The wealthy, however, can purchase commercial biotechnological upgrades that restore their health and productivity. When the game begins, the player is presented with a quest: to gather the materials needed to build an illegal version of one such upgrade by visiting and engaging with a series of real-world locations. As an applied media project, Cytopath takes a critical approach to mortality, biotechnology and posthumanism. The narrative and gameplay draw on a collection of texts Marcel O’Gorman calls necromedia theory, including writings by Eugene Thacker, Cary Wolfe, and N. Katherine Hayles. Driven by Bernard Stiegler’s notion of technics and Martin Heidegger’s understanding of modern technology (as the human impulse to place nature on standing reserve), the game illustrates the relationship between the human body and its technological prostheses.

*Kent Aardse.*

**Infinitude’s Despair: Taking Care of Player and Environment**

Consumer capitalism’s lust for brighter, sleeker, thinner products drives the global economic system in ignorance of the social, environmental, and ecological systems it creates, relies on, and expends. Infinitude’s Despair is a board game that encourages players to contemplate the complexity and fragility of the everyday world they inhabit; it holds technological consumerism’s fantastic possibility at bay and calls players to attend to their immediate environment. By creating a table-top, non-digital board game, we allow the player to step away from the constant inundation of the digital screen, providing time to pause and reflect on humanity’s relationship with nature. In light of Cary Wolfe’s discussion of autopoietic systems and Ernest Becker’s concept of cultural hero systems, we problematize the place of the human in technical, informatic, and economic systems. Following Heidegger, Infinitude’s Despair questions the role of technology in mediating human interaction with nature, for it is through technology that humans place nature on standing-reserve, on call for the will of the human, while at the same placing on call our own humanity. Thus, Infinitude’s Despair interrogates the technological apparatuses through which the human apprehends self and environment.

*Stephen Fernandez.*

**Necrogenesis**

Necrogenesis is an EEG-mediated game that interrogates “human finitude” in the interaction between the human being and the nonhuman technological prosthesis. Drawing upon the philosophical concepts of

Heideggerian disconcealment and enframing (Gestell) as well as Bernard Stiegler's ideas on cognitive attention and existential care, the game explores the limitations of the brain in controlling a computer-generated interface by means of brain waves. By harnessing the prosthetic potential of a wearable EEG (Electroencephalography) device, players of the game have to condition their ability to pay attention in order to disconceal within a one-minute timeframe a series of macabre images that have been concealed by a lush 'Edenic' landscape filled with colourful trees and shrubbery. Furthermore, in an attempt to augment the difficulty of the game, each revelation would trigger a jarring sound designed to distract and unsettle the player. Taken together, these macabre images of broken technological artefacts such as a rusty amputation saw, an abandoned coalmine, and a pair of damaged electrical towers serve to foreground the technocultural implications of privileging the instrumentality of technology rather than taking care to consider its impact on the human condition. Consequently, by challenging the players of *Necrogenesis* to regulate their ability to concentrate amid the obtrusive presence of visual and auditory stimuli throughout the course of the game, we hope that they may be compelled to reconsider – and possibly transform – the way in which humans relate to and engage with technology.

Session 4 (I) Frontier 203B

**The Nonhumanity of Sound**

Chair: *David Cecchetto*

*Douglas Kahn.*

**For More New Signals**

Non-human nature is even less human when it comes to the physics of sound and signals. The musical arts of a natural and anthropogenic plenitude of sound arose in the early avant-garde and became codified in John Cage's call "for more new sounds." Concurrently, engineering visions promising to generate any and all sounds, including musical ones, and to create batteries of new sound, took on a new reality with digital signal processing in the 1950s. These two strains merged in the American experimental music of the 1960s at the edges of the largesse of Cold War science, in what the composer Gordon Mumma called the astro-bio-geo-physical application in live-electronic music and what the composer James Tenney called the generalized signal and possibility for a total transducer of any and all signals. Sounds seemed exhaustible when compared opening vistas of energetic environments. Sonic plenitude was being superseded by signal plenitude, more new sounds by more new signals.

*Nicholas Knouf.*

**The Noises of Finance: High-Frequency Trading and the Inadequacy of Accelerationism**

Noise has become key to the study of sonic practices. Often considered in binary terms---as a positive source of disruption or a negative intrusion to be controlled---noise exceeds these determinations. When combined with other evocations of the term, for example in information theory, noise interferes, making clear determinations elusive. This paper considers one particular conjunction of sonic and informatic noise: finance. Living in the low rumbling of the aftershocks of the most recent financial crisis, I follow how noise continues to both confound finance as well as provide the means for its acceleration. Examining the practice of high-frequency trading (HFT) I consider how its imbrication with "microstructure noise" provides the potential for the vast accumulation of profit. HFT has been implicated as contributing to the notorious "Flash Crash" of May 6th 2010; I listen to sonic responses to this event by traders themselves and the artist collective rybn, focusing specifically on how noise in the sonic domain interferes with a rational understanding of the event. This allows one to be attuned to the materiality and intersection of humans and machines in a time of acceleration, when the race towards infinity becomes a race towards zero. Drawing on re-activations of early 1970s writings by Lyotard and Deleuze and Guattari by mid-1990s theorists Nick Land and Sadie Plant, I question whether "accelerationism" can account for these financial tendencies, suggesting that noise's elusiveness prevents a relentless march towards the dissolution of capital.

*Ian Kennedy.*

**Machinic Amodality and Carsten Nicolai's *Telefunken***

A central problem for scholarship on audiovisual media has been the relationship between the modal and the amodal: how do media such as the cinema and television use sight and sound to evoke sensations that resonate in the human body amodally, beyond merely the visual and sonic modalities? Michel Chion has posed this question using the concept of rendered sound—that is, sounds that are aesthetically hyperbolized so as to translate into the sonic modality sensations that typically resonate amodally or affectively, in multiple modalities (rushes, jolts, pain, etc.). I propose to consider an experimental sound work—Carsten Nicolai's *Telefunken*—that extends the constellation of modality, amodality, and rendered sound beyond human embodiment, and toward the machinic. *Telefunken* features a CD composed of impulse frequencies and test signals that Nicolai designed to be viewable as abstract patterns when fed, as an audio signal, directly into the video input on a television. While the viewer-listener hears a single, relatively static tone, she *sees* that same material as multiple dynamic, pulsating lines—visual indices of barely audible harmonic variations in the sonic tone. The effect is to suggest an amodal resonance whose logic of cross-modal translation is alien to human experience. *Telefunken* thus asks: what happens to the concept of rendered sound—and the related concepts of modality and amodality—when it accommodates not only the sonic translation of humanly familiar affects (e.g. the weight and impact of a punch), but also the translation of affects that normally withdraw from the scale of human experience?

*eldritch Priest.*

**Semblance and Reality: On the Art of Abstraction and a Speculative Aesthetics**

As Plato noted and Muzak exploited, music has a peculiar way of simulating and affecting expressions of vital activity. A number of recent studies have tried to address this in terms of Spinoza's formulation of affect as extrapolated by Gilles Deleuze and Guattari. However, Susanne Langer's philosophy of feeling and theory of art, deeply indebted to both Whitehead and Cassirer, offers another way of understanding affect as a symbolic and speculative event. Music, which for Langer is paradigmatic of how art's perceptual illusions, its "semblances," give logical or abstract expression to forms of lived experience, presents occasions or events that "can articulate feelings without becoming wedded to them" (Langer). The implication of this is that aesthetic semblances express ideas of feeling, ideas of acting and reacting that are at root speculative in nature. Although Langer concentrates on human perception and experience in her pursuit of a philosophical anthropology, her views on processes of organic abstraction and her theory of semblance as a type of non-discursive media of understanding (insight) open a path to a speculative aesthetics in which can be contemplated ways of feeling a world that is not strictly human. In this paper I want to bring Langer's speculative aesthetics into an encounter with Ian Bogost's "alien aesthetics" in order to consider how the former may obviate the aporia of human efforts to conceptualize non-human relations.

Session 4 (J) Frontier 203D

**Time and Mediation 2: History and Archaeology**

Chair: *Robert Mitchell*

Long a venerable topic in the history of philosophy, time presents a particularly difficult kind of perplexity. St. Augustine famously wrote, "What then is time? If no one asks me, I know; if I wish to explain it, I know not." It is as if the difficulty of time lies not with affirming its existence, but rather in remediating it in language. A fundamental difficulty of theorizing time rests, then, in reckoning with its mediation. This mediation must be grasped in concert with the increasing pace of technological innovation that culminates in our ongoing digital era. And so, the question of the technical mediation of time becomes all the more important for articulating the historical, affective, and aesthetic impact of media at timescales at once human, inhuman, and nonhuman. This panel takes up the challenge of analyzing the mediation of history as time that exceeds human experience by definition. Drawing upon Michel Foucault's concept of archaeology and the historical *a priori* as the law of what can be said at any



historical moment—and Gilles Deleuze’s expansion of the historical *a priori* into the law of what can be said, seen or felt—the papers in this panel emphasize the constitutive role of media in providing obstacles, expansions, and supplements to already existing modes of historical experience. In particular, the panel emphasizes the importance of technological and aesthetic practice in brokering critical views on archaeological transformations. [*Part of Time and Mediation Stream*]

*James J. Hodge.*

### **Networks, Cinema, and Historical Temporality**

What is network time? A common refrain within media theory describes digital networks as somehow without time, as bringing about the diminution of time itself with the global advent of “real-time” networks. Against this trend, this paper argues for the importance of cinematic form for the specification of network time at the nexus of machinic operations largely beyond the threshold of human perception and lived experience. Building on Paul Ricoeur’s theory of history, I examine the network as a particularly difficult form of what Ricoeur calls the “reflective instruments” that broker the constitution of historical temporality as the technical mediation of lived and universal time—or, between time as it is felt and larger models of non-lived time, i.e. cosmological, the time of nations, or networks. Barbara Lattanzi’s *Optical De-Dramatization Engine*, an online work of experimental cinema that abstracts and stretches Thomas Ince’s 40 minute film *The Invaders* (1912) into 40 hour cycles, provides the catalyst for specifying the capacity of cinematic form to structure to an encounter with the impossible and nonhuman time of digital networks. Such an examination thus provides an archaeological analysis of networks in Foucault’s sense of the historical *a priori*, as the law of what can be said (and by extension, of what may be experienced in general). Put otherwise, I aim to show how cinema provides the mediated law of how it might be possible re-theorize network time in a manner attentive to the experience of digital networks.

*Stephanie Boluk; Patrick LeMieux.*

### **Dwarven Epitaphs: Procedurally-Generated Storytelling in Dwarf Fortress**

*Dwarf Fortress*, a computer simulation in development since 2006 by Tarn Adams, procedurally generates a richly textual world, writing over one thousand years of geological, natural, and social history for every new game. As its name suggests, the primary purpose of Dwarf Fortress is to construct settlements resistant to the entropic processes at work in this emergent computational wilderness. Despite the availability of both two and three-dimensional graphical user interfaces visualizing the increasingly intricate negotiations between player and system, most of Dwarf Fortress’s players use the barest of textual representations: grids of multicolor ASCII symbols like those used in MS-DOS on the original IBM computer. Our talk will compare forms of player-based inscriptions to the model of history and storytelling presented in the game itself. The representation of in-game historical events that unfold in this pre-industrial, agrarian landscape use rhetorical modes that conflate oral forms of epic storytelling (e.g., the Homeric epithet) with the early historical form of the annal. The descriptive, formulaic epithets that are produced to describe generated characters and objects in the game serve as indices of the underlying mechanics. In Dwarf Fortress, procedural events are represented in the idiom of narrative storytelling yet lack traditional causality. This paper will analyze Dwarf Fortress and its relationship to history in terms of both texts generated in and outside the game. By creating unwinnable conditions and a merciless environment of virtual transformation within this textual architecture of ASCII symbols, Dwarf Fortress builds a game around failure. The players, however, document their exploits transforming the game from world generator into a story generator. The textual artifacts produced in response to the game could be called dwarven epitaphs, ludic obituaries created to memorialize the death of play.

*David Parisi.*

### **The Electrotactile Machine: Media Archaeology and Sensory Epistemology**

Media archaeologies, like other media histories, have located seeing and hearing at the center of their research paradigms on the electrification of media and the senses they act on. As a result, the role tactility

played in shaping the development of electronic media has been consistently neglected. In this paper, I consider the way that tactile encounters with electricity, beginning in the 1740s, structured knowledge about electricity's relationship to the human perceptual system. Machines generated and stored electricity; experimental subjects facilitated the discharge of that electricity through tactile contact, employing their bodies as part of the experimental apparatus. They registered this encounter by performing and describing experiences of an electrocutaneous shock. The early epistemology of electricity was shaped forcibly by the impact of electricity as it was communicated to the body through the mediating agent of the skin; these carefully-administered shocks served to signify electricity's existence. By focusing on the haptic dimension of media archaeology and the temporality of shock in constructing both electricity and the body as objects of knowledge, we see that media archaeology relies too heavily on a historicity organized by the ocularity and aurality, and thus fails to recognize the exteriority and surplus of the body in its reconstructions. This paper therefore suggests a haptocentric media archaeology to challenge, even supplant, dominant assumptions in media history and the sensory epistemology of electricity. Folding touch back into considerations of mediated temporality forces us to confront its unique mechanisms for registering and structuring the passage of time.

*Robert Mitchell.*

**Response by Robert Mitchell**

Session 4 (K) Frontier 203E

**Genetics and Science Fiction**

Chair: *Erin McQuiston*

*Timothy S. Miller.*

**The Loves of the Plants: Sex Monsters and Monstrous Sex in Botanical Science Fiction**

Although critical animal studies has succeeded in exposing the anthropocentrism and "speciesism" inherent in many other critical projects, in recent years several scholars like Karen Houle and Matthew Hall have begun to suggest that animal studies itself has, without justification, severely neglected non-animal organisms like plants, fungi, and bacteria. While what Hall calls "zoocentrism" pervades Western discourse from Aristotle to contemporary animal studies, a few writers have used the plant to think the human and the human to think the plant, including La Mettrie in *L'homme plante* and Erasmus Darwin in *The Loves of the Plants*. This paper sets that philosophical-botanical tradition in dialogue with the outpouring of plant narratives produced by the science fiction of the last century or so, with a particular emphasis on how these texts figure plant sexuality and indeed the threat that the alternative forms of sexuality observable in the plant kingdom come to pose to stable constructions of gender and human sexual norms. A major site of sexual fear in early pulp magazines and mid-century B movies, the monstrous plant of science fiction above all reveals the uneasiness with which we have historically approached "the problem of the plant." Some of these SF texts associate the plant with sexuality more intimately, such as John Boyd's *The Pollinators of Eden*, and, precisely because of their anxiety about what the plant suggests about human sexuality, may help point the way forward for more positive relations with plants in all of their radical otherness and radical relatedness to ourselves.

*Jessica Bardill.*

**Why Science Needs Indigeneity: The Case of Queering Genetic Ancestry Testing**

While time and again science has shown that it needs indigenous resources, from mining throughout indigenous lands to the modern mining of indigenous genes for information about Western settler history, this paper examines why science needs indigeneity in the particular case of genetic ancestry testing. In order to answer that question, I first examine why ancestry testing does not discern identity, and how queer kinship can provide a more complete understanding of relations and belonging. The emerging field of queer indigenous studies as well as advances in genomics and population genetics inform this paper.

The first section of the paper will review disagreements between scientists and communities about existence, human migration, and the general rhetoric of population genetics. This section will lead to an understanding of the current workings and future potential of crowdsourcing to genetic testing and communities, including the move by direct to consumer genetic testing company 23andme to “crowdsource” health information and the reaction of the Taino community to research claiming they were extinct. This move highlights issues of consent and community participation in research. The second section of the paper will look at how indigenous communities have used queer kinship as evidenced through stories and poetry, such as Qwo-Li Driskill’s *Walking with Ghosts*, to construct alternative ancestries and how that social and cultural understanding of kinship is necessary to scientific understanding of ancestry.

*Erin McQuiston.*

### **Monstrous Growths: GMOs in Science Fiction**

Genetic technologies have made the lines of separation between natural and artificial more blurred than ever. Expanding on current ecocritical readings of science fiction, I read three novels which address a particular intersection between nature and science: the genetically modified organism (GMO) and agriculture. H.G. Wells’s *The Food of the Gods* (1904), Ward Moore’s *Greener Than You Think* (1947) and Rob Ziegler’s new novel *Seed* (2012) all explore the promise of ending world hunger through genetics and chemistry, and the threats lurking in the technology. This anxiety has been present in these novels far in advance of the actual technology necessary to achieve swift, single-generation genetic transformations. Science fiction has been concerned about the potential for collapsed nature/culture boundaries brought about by genetic tampering long before the contemporary agri-business genetic technologies which are the center of most current debates about GMOs. Interestingly, these organisms are often presented as both monstrous and beautiful, in addition to being “unnatural.” Stacy Alaimo has pointed out that portrayals of monstrous nature insist on the reinforcement of a strict nature/culture divide, and yet “the very thing that these creatures embody as horrific – the collapse of boundaries between human and nature – is what many theorists promote.” Carolyn Merchant’s “partnership ethic” and Donna Haraway’s cyborg constructions are both relevant to this reading. The beauty the authors find in these monstrous organisms supports this more complex reading, and adds both historicity and depth to the ongoing debate surrounding the future of GMOs.

Session 4 (L) Frontier 201B

### **Living the Vida Nonhuman**

*Tyler Fox; ; Diane Gromala.*

### **Tracing Transduction and Information in the Living Arts**

Gilbert Simondon offers a definition of information in opposition to the quantification of signal and noise introduced by Claude Shannon and information theory. For Simondon, information is “the tension between two disparate realities.” In this way, information precedes individuation, which results in resolutions, however partial, of such tension. If information precedes individuation, it is through processes of transduction that individuation occurs. Corresponding to relations of the disparate realities that require information and individuation, transduction can be traced through the structures and patterns that emerge from resolving a given set of relations, specifically patterns and structures that were not present before transduction. In this paper, I implement Simondon’s conceptualization of information and transduction as theoretical touchstones in relation to several recent works of art involving living entities, including a work in progress of my own. These artworks combine organic and inorganic materials and processes, bringing together “disparate realities” through nonhuman assemblages, and in ways that productively challenge the application of information theory to life in general. Thus, the emergent relations and resolutions brought forth through praxis and in the experience of these artworks offer useful points of exploration of Simondon’s ideas. Simondon’s work offers rich conceptual tools with which to

trace how the informational demands and processes of transduction shift through the separate events of making and experiencing art.

*Matthew Taylor.*

### **A Livable Extinction: The Promise of Nonhuman Life**

As with other contemporary apocalypse narratives such as the History Channel's *Life After People* and the National Geographic Channel's *Aftermath: Population Zero*, Alan Weisman's *The World Without Us* presents its readers with two themes not easily reconciled. The first is that despite the damage humans are inflicting upon the global environment, the Earth will quickly recover in our absence. The death of our species, that is, will lead to the renewal of life as a whole on the planet. The book's second register, however, is one of nostalgia over humanity lost. By picturing our things slowly decaying in our absence, the book depends, at least in part, upon the pathos of these objects' newfound inhumanity. This combination of posthumanist pleasure with a humanist obsession over the afterlives of our possessions perhaps motivates the frequent characterization of the text as being "[a]t once . . . harrowing and, oddly, comforting" (Louise Erdrich). Drawing upon the work of Latour, Stengers, and Thacker, my paper begins by critiquing this philosophical tradition (extending from Darwin to modern transhumanism), in which we are invited, paradoxically, to celebrate our evolutionary rebirth in the wake of human extinction. This model is problematic not only because it presumes the impossible survival of the liberal subject but also because it reinscribes the same anthropocentric metaphysics of "life" that it seeks to overcome. The paper will conclude by tracing possible alternatives in which the human/nonhuman difference is disarticulated but without a promise that it will be to "our" benefit.

*Rebecca Wilbanks.*

### **The Nature of Life**

One might think that biologists today eschew abstract conceptualizations of life in favor of studying actual living beings, but I argue that what Canguilhem called a "vitalist exigency" to explain life itself still exists in certain subfields of biology. Focusing on two contemporary research programs - research on the origins of life or "wet" artificial life, and work in synthetic biology - I show that the problems scientists today grapple with are continuous with much older philosophical challenges in thinking about the concept of life. Moreover, these different research programs offer mutually contradictory ontologies of life, which nevertheless have real consequences for our understanding of and relationships with other living beings. While research on the origins of life highlights the way that potential life (the life that used to be, the life that could be, or the life we don't yet know) stymies attempts to articulate just what life is, the more practically oriented branch of synthetic biology focuses on engineering life, creating stripped-down bare life forms that serve as discursive supports for a different conception of life. By analyzing the stories scientists in these sub-fields tell about their work in scientific and popular publications, websites, interviews, and even cartoons, I highlight the ways in which the centrality of concepts such as information, code, and function problematizes attempts to imagine a life not defined in terms of the human, while at the same time quite literally dissolving the distinction between the natural and the artificial.

Session 5 - Fri 2pm - 3:30pm

Session 5 (A) Frontier 201A

### **Cosmic Cinema**

Chair: *Alison Winter*

This is the third of three panels for a stream titled "The Arts, Science, and Occultism from the Late 19th Century to the 1960s," which brings together an international group of scholars from the fields of history, history of science, art history, film history, and media studies.

*Tom Gunning.*

**"Films that rise to the surface of clarified butter": Cinema and the Insubstantial Image of the Modern World**

Cinema is often received as the most realistic of media. Adding movement to the photograph, it seemed to provide a hyper-reality. However, for many first viewers it was film's connection to shadows, reflections and the ephemeral aspect of motion that fascinated. The cinema's ungraspable visuality seemed at one with the seeming immateriality of the new scientific and technical reality of electricity, radio waves, x-rays, and a whole universe of vibrating frequency. This presentation will trace the way cinema crossed the threshold of visibility invoking the invisible through visual means, from the films of Loie Fuller's serpentine dances to the alternate reality portrayed by superimposition, negative photography and soft focus as well as other techniques.

*Weihong Bao.*

**"A Vibrating Art in the Air": Cinema, Ether, and Propaganda Film Theory in China during the Second World War**

Cinema has long been conceived as a photographic medium, yet historical practices suggest more diverse understandings, prompting us to rethink questions of the medium in relation to a mixed media environment and its social function. This paper will look at Chinese Propaganda film theory during the Second World War to trace an alternative genealogy of cinema as energetic vibration. Wartime Chinese film theorists promoted an ideal of "limitless" cinema, "a vibrating art in the air," with cinema's mobility and vitality conditioned by its attachment to ether. The vibratory cinema latches onto a technoscience—deploying metaphors from biology, chemistry, and physics capitalizing the expansive power of wireless technology—as well as new practices to disseminate film and other media (photography, telephotography, radio, newspaper, and drama) in the production of a simultaneous space-time. The propaganda fantasy of cinema as a vibratory medium embedded in and transforming its immediate media environment, I argue, can be traced to the dream of "wireless cinema" circulating in Chinese film and popular scientific discourse since the 1920s. Further, the notion of cinema as a non-neutral, pervasive social milieu inherits historical conceptions of ether as an ethical and political medium developed in Chinese political philosophy since the introduction of ether in China in mid nineteenth century. My discussion will arrive at a new understanding of cinema as well as an alternative definition of the medium.

*Alison Winter.*

**Motion Pictures and Consciousness**

It is a familiar claim, dating back at least to Hugo Munsterberg, that motion pictures bear a special relationship to consciousness: that film is an externalized instrument or even embodiment of attention, and of course that it resembles the operations of perception, memory, and the act of remembering. In the middle decades of the twentieth century, neuroscientists, neurosurgeons and psychologists looked to the medium of motion pictures more intensively than ever before. At the same time, film-makers explored the work of neuroscientists, psychologists, and psychiatrists in their own work, particularly in films that were intended not only to represent a stream of consciousness as experienced by a protagonist, but to produce actual states of altered consciousness in a viewer. This paper explores this reciprocal and mutually-referential relationship as it can be seen in a number of different scientific fields (especially the psychiatric treatment of trauma, neurosurgery, and psychological explorations of the psychedelic) and in several different film genres ranging from educational film and video to art films (such as those by Harry Smith and James Whitney).

Session 5 (B) Frontier 201C

**Nonhuman Scales of Sense Panel 1: Molar/Scalar: Otology, Nose-ology, and Proprioception**

Chair: *Derek Woods*

Nonhuman Scales of Sense: Our double panel examines the nonhuman scales of sense in a varied archive of literary, philosophical, visual, and technoscientific texts. The semantic and perceptual senses of “sense” divide the double panel, with the first group discussing “Molar/Scalar” dynamics of hearing, odor, and proprioception, and the second asking after a “Molecular Poetics.” Both panels are concerned with the uncanny inhumanity of scales outside the human mesocosm. We study both the effects of the molecular scale on poetics and perception, and its strange interaction with our familiar scalar lifeworld. Panel 1: Molar/Scalar: Otology, Nose-ology, and Proprioception This panel examines three ways the molar becomes the molecular and vice versa. Focusing on “sense” organs, these papers demonstrate the ways sensation is always extra-human. Removable and operating on the interactions of molecules with cells, human organs turn out to be merely collection organs. The first two papers move from the ear (already removed by Alexander Bell) and the nose whose functions as discriminating collectors have been largely ignored, while the third demonstrates the anti-robotic character of scalar-molar organs in robotic proprioception.

*Jennifer Rhee .*

### **The Anti-Robot Proprioception of Simon Penny’s Petit Mal**

Philosopher Andy Clark defines proprioception as “the inner sense that tells you how your body [...] is located in space” (Being There). Drawing on the work of Clark and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, this paper will examine robotic proprioception in Simon Penny’s *Petit Mal: An Autonomous Robotic Artwork* (1993-1995). *Petit Mal* is a wheeled, interactive, and mobile robot that explores its environment in part by sensing and reacting to humans in a shared space. In contrast to some contemporaneous robotic approaches *Petit Mal*, which Penny describes as “an anti-robot,” offers intelligence, consciousness, and personality as fluid properties that emerge from dynamic sensing relations between robot, environment, and human. In *Petit Mal*, Penny seeks to explore distinctly nonhuman variations of these properties, thus highlighting the deep anthropocentrism embedded throughout the history of artificial intelligence and robotics. Indeed, from the perspective of *Petit Mal*’s anti-robot proprioception, humans are not the explicit model for sensing, intelligent behavior, or form; rather, humans exist as part of *Petit Mal*’s sensible environment. This paper will look specifically at *Petit Mal*’s proprioception to think about the complicated, enmeshed relations between human and nonhuman in robots. I will discuss how *Petit Mal* – in proprioceptive functions and claims to personality – does not truly get us outside of imagined models of human behavior that have dominated robotics work. However, I will argue that *Petit Mal* productively offers both new ways to configure human-robot relations, as well as the difficulty, if not impossibility, of disentangling human and nonhuman imaginatively, conceptually, spatially, and sensibly.

*Atia Sattar.*

### **The Otological Experience**

When Alexander Graham Bell and Clarence Blake constructed the ear phonograph in 1874, they, like many before them, analyzed the sense of sound by turning to sight. The machine traced patterns of vibrations on a sheet of smoked glass. As such, the apparatus had less to do with replicating the perception and experience of sound, and more with providing a means to visibly trace and record its scale. Their particular construction, however, utilized a middle ear excised from a cadaver and attached to nonhuman machinery. In so doing, they rendered the human, sensing middle ear a mere mechanical recorder of molecular vibrations. This paper explores the molecular and scalar interchanges between the nineteenth-century quest to make visible the scale of sound and contemporary endeavors to produce the perception of sound at the molecular, nervous level. Bell and Blake could hardly have imagined that one day, the nonhuman would find itself sown within the circuits of the human in the form of a cochlear implant. The contemporary turn to the sensory stimulation of sound certainly takes us closer to Bell’s ultimate (albeit problematic) goal of eradicating deafness. Still, neither mode of intervention captures the depth of sound experience, evidenced in the difficulties presented for music appreciation by implantees. How can we understand the embodied experience of sound amid molecular and scalar modes in otology?

The ear, compared by Hermann von Helmholtz to a piano in the nineteenth century, is still waiting to be “set into sympathetic vibration.”

*Judith Roof.*

### **Unhuman Nose-ology: Scalar/Molar Profiles**

“On the average,” that great source of modern knowledge Wikipedia tells us, “the nose of a male is larger than that of a female.” This nose, described as a “protuberance” is a scalar signifier, its size related more to the titillations of displacement than to any of its functions. In mammals, the nose conditions and filters incoming air. However, the complexity of nasal structures--nares, cavities, olfactory mucosa, sinuses, vestibules (in reptiles), vomeronasal organs (in mammals, reptiles, and some birds), and turbinates--rather than its size defines the nose’s efficiency at conditioning air and sensing odors. In the end, size has little to do with it and the nose could pretty much inhabit anything. The nose is a scalar regulator, its largeness gathering atmospheric largesse which it transposes to the molecules that turn the whole process into a processual factory. This paper explores the relation between the scalar presence of the protuberant nose and the molecular processes it hosts, not as a simple reductive process, but as a series of negotiations and adjustments that are both unhuman and are always imagined as operating in the wrong scale. The nose is a removable processing site that perpetually corrects, not only in its scalar transpositions, but also in the negotiation of smell, response, interaction, and interface. Smell is the most mysterious, pervasive, and incommunicable of the senses; smell knows without knowing, senses without knowing it is sensing, and transposes cause and effect without anything knowing.

Session 5 (C) Frontier 201D

### **Environments of Waste Panel I: Representing + Rethinking Waste**

Chair: *Jenn Griggs*

This panel aims to bring together interdisciplinary research, theory and art regarding garbage, waste, anti-landscapes, rubbish, junk, toxic discourse, pollution and external spaces. Waste as an entity has become an area of research, and broadly describes spaces from garbage dumps to nuclear landscapes to composting. Through all of these scales, waste is involved in everyday relations such as dialectics, metabolisms, and/or repurposed/recycled materials—as well as in art, literature, and (environmental) science. Waste and pollution call for a non-human turn, where we may look to changes, adaptations, or mutations of plants, bacteria, flies, birds, or dogs. We may also pay attention to waste itself—how it moves, lives, gets produced, is represented, and how it becomes part of stories and maps. In many cases these various elements cohere, such as birding at garbage dumps or conservation ethics in toxic landscapes.

*Gisèle Trudel.*

### **Midways of Waste**

I will discuss my last three projects, a trilogy that delves experientially into what waste can do through an electronic art practice. The various artworks engage the viewers in the infinite recombinations of matter, be it waste waters, atmospheric pollution or the waste landfill. Using configurations of immersive sound, moving image, drawing and custom-designed software for lighting in a performative and installation practice, my artist research unit called Ælab created the last 3 process-oriented works as informed by waste in various states of composition, decomposition and recomposition, inspired by the philosophies of Félix Guattari, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Rancière and Gilbert Simondon. Gisèle Trudel is an artist. In 1996, she cofounded Ælab, an artistic research unit with Stéphane Claude, who is an electroacoustic musician and audio mastering engineer. She is also Professor at the École des arts visuels et médiatiques, Université du Québec à Montréal and Director of HexagramUQAM, the Centre for Research/Creation in Media Arts and Technologies. Ælab’s commitment to collaboration, creative dissemination, innovative technologies are ways of thinking and doing that try to bridge the arts and sciences. Their process-oriented investigations creatively engage art and technology as intertwined in the development of

ecological awareness. Their work is presented regularly on the international art scene. [www.aelab.com](http://www.aelab.com) + [www.hexagram.uqam.ca](http://www.hexagram.uqam.ca) Keywords: waste, transduction, aesthetics, process, electronic media, performance, research-creation

*Joanna Demers; Mandy-Suzanne Wong.*

### **On Decay in Art**

With Aristotelian teleological convictions, humans in the 21st century remain bent on believing that human happiness is the ultimate end of all human activities – especially aesthetic ones. All such activities generate waste: leftover paint, wrong notes, old drafts. Indeed, the very act of living inevitably terminates in the decomposition and decay of all organic and artificial structures. Yet, while aesthetic practices and theories emphasize various kinds of productive potential (e.g. for meaning, growth, beauty) as innately human, they tend to denigrate or ignore decay as something intrinsically non-human. The notion of decay is frightening because it signals the messiness and inessentiality of human life. Our paper considers visual, literary, and musical artists that confront decay, often by inducing decomposition within the artwork itself. Alongside Edward Burtynsky's photographs of industrial waste, we discuss the decomposition of abandoned objects in the video work described in Michel Houellebecq's *The Map and the Territory*. We evaluate W.G. Sebald's notion of writing as "natural history," which emphasizes the reclamation of ruined landscapes by vegetation. And we analyze William Basinski's use of the deterioration of magnetic tape as a musical process. We speculate on the consequences and questions, both aesthetic and ethical, that result from aestheticizing decay - from artistically affirming reality at its most terrifying.

*Daniel Gerling.*

### **The Canary in the Sewer Line: Solomon Schindler's *Young West* (1894) Against the Excrementless Dream**

It is not uncommon to find references to sewers in nineteenth-century European fiction. After all, this technological revolution brought about enormous public works projects and brought disease rates down in both Europe and the U.S. One is hard-pressed, however, to find any mention of sewers in nineteenth-century American fiction. One anomaly stands out in late-nineteenth century literature: Solomon Schindler's *Young West*. This novel was one of the many "sequels" written in response to Edward Bellamy's 1887 utopian novel *Looking Backward*. The protagonist of *Young West*, Julian West's son, becomes an engineering celebrity by inventing a new process that incorporates a central sewer system that collects human excrement and turns it into fertilizer bricks for use on farms. Written in a time when the U.S. was shifting decisively away from using excrement for farming—when municipalities opted instead to dump sewage into nearby waterways—*Young West* reformulated excrement as something valuable. This paper situates *Young West* in its socio-historical context to the end of offering an explanation of why American fiction ignored sewers and excrement. I present historical evidence that there were a constellation of Progressive Era factors contributing to the relative absence of this taboo subject in popular culture. I also hold that, oddly, it was Schindler's particular brand of Progressivism that made it possible for him to see out of that wasteful logic.

*Bailey Kier.*

### **Interdependent Ecological Transsex: 'Transgender' Fish in the Nation's River**

"Transgendered" fish were first noticed in the Potomac River in 2003 when scientists with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and the United States Geological Survey examined widespread and pervasive fish kills. They discovered smallmouth bass exhibited widespread reproductive anomalies and found nearly 80 percent of male bass exhibited intersex conditions. Since then, extensive coverage has emerged in government, mainstream and scientific media focusing on "transgendered," "intersex," or "sexually confused" fish. The rise of "transgender" fish is linked to alarming amounts of endocrine-disrupting chemicals or EDCs—a fairly new category of pollutants effecting the endocrine systems of living things. Drawing from recent work in transgender studies and queer ecologies, this presentation



illustrates how discourses of waste, transgenderism, and reproductive catastrophe operate by anthropomorphizing non-human animals with human-made sexual and gender categories. It explores other possibilities for imagining, mitigating, and adapting to the wastes and effects of postindustrial society that don't rely on heteronormative human categories for reproduction. It debunks transgenderism as an ecocatastrophical reproductive predicament, suggesting the ability to transform (sexually, morphologically, metabolically, etc.) needs to be framed within perpetual ecological transformation paradigms, and that changes in organisms may very well be adaptations and as well as ecological dead ends.

Session 5 (D) Frontier 202A

### **Cognition and Misrecognition of Architecture and Art**

*Sara DiMaggio.*

#### **Misrecognition, Form, and Categorization: Towards a Bioart of Flight**

Although bioart has become a central object of critical study, discussions around the topic too often focus on the level of either individual projects or on bioart as a whole. In this either singular or monolithic discussion of bioart, critics lose the ability to discuss the many potentialities of bioart projects. Without imposing any single set of definitions on bioart, I hope to suggest that a more nuanced look into projects that are labeled bioart under one definition or another would allow for an understanding of what some of bioart's projects could be, specifically in their relation to Foucault's biopolitics. I suggest a new set of subcategories meant to bring focus to the intersection between form and material within BioArt. In this way, I suggest the need for a frame through which to discuss precise forms of bioart, and argue that the undoing of expectations plays a large role in many of these forms of art. Through the categories that I create, I come to my second claim: that, although many forms of bioart remain intensified subjects of biopolitical examination, by introducing chaos on both a structural and molecular level, certain forms of this art may suggest the necessity for a form of power and knowledge outside of the realm of the biopolitical. In this way, I hope to argue that a more intense inquiry into the potential and actual projects of bioart may allow for a more nuanced understanding of what the nonhuman can do.

*Marie-Pier Boucher.*

#### **Architectures that Bring to Life: Cross-Classifications and Differential Isomorphies**

Today, we are witnessing a wave of fascination with the integration of biotechnology into architectural practices. Buildings and cities are said to behave -or to soon behave- like living organisms. In this paper, I will argue that the widespread fixation with biotechnology has generated an overflow of biotechnical artefacts and has enticed practitioners to such an extent that the conceptualization of the relationalities between architectural and biological forms is at best taken for granted and at worst reduced to an equivalence between forms. Put otherwise, today's relationships between architecture and biology blur or collapse their singularities through confusing their operational and functional identities. Whereas a functional approach foregrounds correspondances of similarities between constituted forms (neutralization and homogenization of differences), an operational undertaking reveals a "common" proper to the genesis of forms (valorization of differences). In other words, I will distinguish functions from operations and equivalences from equalities. Through emphasizing the ontological differences between biological and architectural forms, I will articulate a political project rooted in an isomorphism between biological, architectural and socio-political forms. Such an isomorphism, I will suggest, is based on equality without being tied to any kind of equivalences. More specifically, I will draw upon Whitehead's method of cross-classification, which transforms the analytical division at the basis of scientific and mathematical thinking. By proposing a definition of basic elements that neither loses entities's essential relationalities nor posits a primordial unity that would ultimately be divided, Whitehead opens a new realm to reformulate the problem anew. In order to shed light on the pragmatics of my proposition, I intend to orchestrate a dialogue between my theoretical investigations and selected

works of contemporary practitioners in bio- and outer space architecture (Oksiuta, Armstrong and the BISE project).

Session 5 (E)

Session 5 (F) Frontier 202D

**Livestock as Lesson in Postwar Art**

Chair: *Katie Anania*

The Humane Slaughter Act, passed in the United States in 1958, and the Animal Welfare Act, passed in 1966, framed domestic beasts such as cattle, pigs and sheep as deserving of sympathetic treatment as long as they were being killed or experimented upon. Such legislation, one could argue, indicates a distancing of human beings from animals rather than an intimacy with them. Broad theoretical inquiries such as Donna Haraway's *When Species Meet* (2008) and Timothy Pachirat's *Every Twelve Seconds: Domestic Slaughter and the Politics of Sight* (2012) have called attention to the ways in which livestock's absence (both phenomenological and epistemological) within contemporary life can lead to a fundamental anxiety about the human condition, rooting this absence in industrialized farming and research. This panel explores a particular moment and location—the postwar West—in which many artists used the newly unstable position of domestic animals to address problems of "wildness" and "the natural" in their work. Drawing on archival study of feminist performance paradigms in downtown New York City, Robin Williams's work positions the duck as an analog of the postwar woman: ill at ease with domesticity and made perpetually aggressive. Roja Najafi's paper sheds new light on Dubuffet's paintings and drawings of cows and their relationship to the prevailing existentialist ethic in postwar France. Finally, Katie Anania will examine several performance works staged in upstate New York in the 1960s that re-imagine suburban space as a slaughterhouse, placing human beings in a permanent state of social and scientific marginalization.

*Roja Najafi.*

**Materiality and Moo-teriality: Non-Human Existence in Jean Dubuffet's Cow Series**

During his first visit to the United States in 1951, French painter Jean Dubuffet delivered his famous speech "Anticultural Positions", a manifesto honoring the uncontaminated characteristics of art made by amateurs, the insane, and outsider artists. This speech challenged not only the dominant existentialist ethic popularized through Jean-Paul Sartre's writings, but also our hominid perception of reality and the arts. In the years following the speech, he produced more than 15 drawings, lithographs and paintings depicting cows (*Vache*) – a use of recognizable subject matter distinct from the abstraction of his previous series. By depicting cows rather than, say, persons, Dubuffet commented not only on the accepted hierarchy of artistic subject matters, but he also formed a puzzling dialogue between realism and naturalism in a decade that the issues of abstraction and figuration led art critics and artists to stress the end of painting. Dubuffet's cows in this series look strange and humorous, and this paper examines the more visceral aspects of these depictions against the intellectual rigor of Dubuffet's process. There is a conflict between what is intellectually reflected and calculated and what is directly and emotionally expressed by the artist and received by the viewer. The familiarity of his subject matter (here cows) and the unfamiliar contour of his figures challenge our habitual human reception. Through this examination of Dubuffet's Cow series I will form an understanding of Dubuffet's position on human and nonhuman existence and reality in contrast to the existentialist philosophies of the postwar period.

*Robin Williams.*

**Un-Caged: Trisha Brown's Dance with the Duck's Head (1968)**

Trisha Brown's *Dance with the Duck's Head* premiered at The Museum of Modern Art, New York City in December of 1968. The "duck-lady," as Brown referred to herself in this work, performed wearing a

papier-mâché helmet in the shape of a duck's head, a papier-mâché collar and cage-like brassiere (“to cure anyone from ever wearing a bra again,” as Brown had suggested), and a papier-mâché skirt shaped permanently in a sitting position—each component covered with chicken feathers. Brown had designed and carefully constructed the elaborate costume to effect her transformation into the duck-lady, a creature “half bird, half woman,” according to her performance notes, which even took flight. Upon resolution of a “violent fight” staged between two performers situated in the audience, the duck-lady stepped into a pair of logging boots affixed to a metal cage. Four male performers then lifted her up by that cage—turning, twisting, and even rolling it in the air—to achieve “the look of free flight” (Brown). This paper argues that the duck-lady, a figure simultaneously absurd and yet sublime, caged and yet free, embodies Brown's involvement, circa 1968, in reimagining the relationship between dance and natural movement and also between men and women. It positions Brown's duck in relation to other animals used as dance role models in the work of her choreographic peers and explores the specific potential of the bird “un-caged” for an emergent feminist dance.

*Katie Anania.*

### **Wolf Vostell's Architectures of Husbandry**

For members of the European and American avant-garde communities in the 1950s and 60s, to stage a performance outside an urban area was certainly nothing new. RoseLee Goldberg has remarked on the “country audiences” that attended John Cage's performances at Black Mountain College, noting the spectators' delight at seeing anarchic combinations of aural and visual data placed in an outdoor setting. By the mid-1960s, artists such as Wolf Vostell and Carolee Schneemann began capitalizing on the widespread popularity of Happenings by performing their works in wealthy patrons' exurban properties. Neither city nor country, these spaces provided access to natural features such as lakes and meadows, while also allowing for intervention into the comfortable living spaces that inevitably accompanied the properties. Vostell in particular seized on a luxurious home in Great Neck in 1964, converting it into an assembly line of violence and degradation that resembled (at least to participants) a human slaughterhouse. Vostell scattered the property's tennis court, swimming pool, and orchard with four hundred pounds of beef bones, creating avenues through which participants could pass only one at a time. This paper conceptualizes Vostell's willful collapse of human and animal slaughter as a parable of the West's complacency in the face of multiple genocides. In documents and interviews regarding this project, Vostell re-orientates affluence as a degrading element that reduces human beings to beasts; in so doing, he opened up avenues for viewing persons and livestock as analogous to one another, even as the former was disappearing from view.

Session 5 (G) Frontier 202E

### **If We Could Talk to the Animals: Communication across Species** (Roundtable)

Chair: *Karl Zuelke*

Humans routinely categorize their experience with other animals as acts of communication: the delicate signals that pass between horse and rider, our pets asking to be fed or stroked, the growl of a wild bear with cubs warning us to back away. The level of communication may at times even be subtle and complex. But what does it mean to speak of “communication” across species? Does intention play a role in inter-species communication different from its role in intra-species communication? How do our differing sensory capabilities affect or hinder this communication? When we discern an emotional state in an animal such as anxiety, contentment or anger, is this the same emotion we experience ourselves, or do we project these states onto the subject? What does it do to consider this issue of “communication” at all levels of scale, down to the level of micro-organisms, like bacteria? And what about those forms of “communication” in which humans mime behavior and vocalizations that they do not comprehend in order to enter into a shared sense—whether agonistic or affiliative—of community? To communicate across species fundamentally troubles what we think of as language and thus calls into question what we think we know, yet can it also bring us to consider whether we hold more in common with animals than we ordinarily realize?

*Victoria Alexander.*

**Contribution**

*Karen Brown Campbell.*

**Contribution**

*David Jaclin.*

**Contribution**

*Sarah McFarland.*

**Contribution**

*Richard Nash.*

**Contribution**

*Karl Zuelke.*

**Contribution**

Session 5 (H) Frontier 203A

**Animals, Cultures, and Literatures**

*ann-sofie.lonngrén@littvet.uu.se.*

**Transformations - materiality, bodies and animals in Nordic literature after 1880**

I study literary transformations from human to animal in Nordic literature after 1880; a project that entails theoretical as well as methodological difficulties. Reading the transformations metaphorically would mean embracing humanism's anthropocentrism, strongly criticized by e.g. Deleuze and Guattari. In eco-criticism and posthumanism such questionings has led to tendencies to do anti-metaphoric and anti-symbolic readings of animals in literature. Literal readings of literary transformations bring, however, a conflict with one of humanism's foundations: the notion of matter as passive, stable and non-changeable (Barad). In trying to solve these difficulties, I turn to developments within gender-theory during the past decades, e.g. post-colonialism, trans theory, new materialism and feminist science studies, where issues concerning bodies, materiality and somatic identity has become increasingly important. What can this "material turn" mean to the academic study of literature? Is it even possible to speak of materiality, material agency or processes of intra-active materialization within the literary narrative (Barad), or is the discussion of "matter" in regard to literature limited to covers, paper, publishing houses, reader's response and ink? Can the literary body be understood only as a discursive construction? Can "real" animals be studied in literature, and can they possess agency and agenda? Can animals and matter in literature be seen as subaltern (Spivak), the transformations as subjugated knowledges (Foucault), and what would such perspectives entail? How do literary materializations of "humans" and "animals" relate to societal norms (Butler)? Can anything be learned from these different perspectives in the academic study of literature?

*Jason Price.*

**Nonhuman Agency and Becoming Animal in Hari Kunzru's *The Impressionist***

Set in colonial India in the early twentieth century, Hari Kunzru's *The Impressionist* offers a narrative that follows the movements of its half-caste protagonist through various regimes of the State. Being half-caste, the narrator experiences the violence of dominant thinking that often uses binary logic in an attempt to define or master him. A key question for the novel is how to think outside of dominant notions of the

subject to escape this logic and its effects. In addition to this focus on mastery and managing colonial subjects, Kunzru's novel emphasizes the ways in which nonhuman material forces, matter, and others, including animals and our own bodies, exceed human control or design. While traditional views of matter, which often regard it as mere commodity under colonialism, deny the agency of nonhuman matter reserving agency only for humans, Kunzru's novel highlights the ways in which nonhuman matter has tendencies of its own, and how it both enables and upsets human designs. This paper will examine the novel's engagement with Deleuze and Guattari's "becoming animal" and Rosi Braidotti's "nomadic subjects" as a way of thinking outside of this dominant logic of subjectivity. The Impressionist points to the similar thinking in colonialism that views both nonhuman matter and those regarded as somehow less than human as something to be controlled, and offers a respect for the nonhuman(s) that exceed human design in assemblages as way of thinking outside of the dominant mode, pointing to the ethics of creating sustainable connections.

Session 5 (I) Frontier 203B

### **Tactical Gaming**

Chair: *Timothy Welsh*

*Aaron Plasek.*

#### **What Video Games Can Teach Us About Metafiction**

*The Stanley Parable*, a video game developed using the *Half Life 2* graphics engine, is notable in that it explicitly employs a well-documented technique of metafiction--that is, the game makes explicit and frequent reference to the presumed conventions of its own medium (e.g., one expects video game puzzles to be solvable, etc.), similar to techniques employed in Italo Calvino's *If On A Winter's Night A Traveler*. The player's decisions to follow the narrator's simple instructions (e.g. go upstairs, go through the door on the left, etc.) dictate both the ending and the kind of story presented, creating tensions between the player and the narrator based on whether the player obeys or disobeys the narrator's instructions. Indeed, the game's possible endings are contingent on both the player's identification and imitation of Stanley as well as the player's alienation from Stanley. While similar experiences may be found in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* or in books such as Jacques Roubaud's *The Great Fire of London*, I wish to consider the possibility that games like *The Stanley Parable*, from a theoretical perspective, offer a categorically different kind of imitation than has been possible, in part, because one cannot proceed in these games without making choices (even if such choices prove to be inconsequential). To consider the veracity of this claim, I employ Kenneth Burke's notion of "terministic screens" to explore how the particular kind of imitation exemplified by this video game allows for new insight into metafictional texts.

*Jennifer Gradecki; Derek Curry.*

#### **A tactical approach to new media theory**

The artists will discuss processes involved with a collaborative project that attempts to covertly provide the public with the intellectual tools necessary to understand and participate in economic discourse. The project, titled "Bankster Games", is a series of online videogames and interactive web projects designed to inform the players on aspects of the economy and the effects of Global Capitalism. Videogames in this series have dealt with the subprime housing bubble and the construction of collateralized debt obligations. Interactive web projects in this series have dealt with debt slavery and the creation of "artificial persons" (the technical term for corporations). Financial tools based on physics equations, limited liability corporations and abstract investment vehicles created through securitization processes have exacerbated the severity of the economic crisis. The invention of fiat money has provided a theoretical basis for infinite economic growth, without taking into account the finite supply of resources and the planet's limited capacity to handle the industrial waste produced. This paradigm violates the basic premise of general systems theory, while simultaneously claiming an unregulated market is a self-correcting system, directed by superhuman market forces such as "the invisible hand" or free market equilibrium. No

economic theory currently accepted by our current economic technicians or lawmakers can account for the 2008 economic meltdown, but a public that has been deliberately made ignorant about economic terminology or theory allows fanatical adherents to free market ideology to remain in control. Possible tactics to repair this condition will be discussed. [www.bankstergames.com](http://www.bankstergames.com)

Session 5 (J) Frontier 203D

### **Time and Mediation 3: Development and Scale**

Chair: *Scott Richmond*

Long a venerable topic in the history of philosophy, time presents a particularly difficult kind of perplexity. St. Augustine famously wrote, “What then is time? If no one asks me, I know; if I wish to explain it, I know not.” It is as if the difficulty of time lies not with affirming its existence, but rather in remediating it in language. A fundamental difficulty of theorizing time rests, then, in reckoning with its mediation. This mediation must be grasped in concert with the increasing pace of technological innovation that culminates in our ongoing digital era. And so, the question of the technical mediation of time becomes all the more important for articulating the historical, affective, and aesthetic impact of media at timescales at once human, inhuman, and nonhuman. While issues of scale, population, and the environment are often considered “spatial” problems, the papers in this panel affirm the significance of temporal dynamics in registering the connection between the realms of concrete human experience and the large-scale abstractions of economics, science, and technology. In particular, this panel investigates the temporal dimension of twentieth-century technics as a key category for the critical analysis of biopolitical, neoliberal, and global politics. Marking a space of indeterminacy between lived time and the massive infrastructural scale of modern politics, the analysis of temporal interfaces opens up the uneasy negotiation of worlds that seem at once excessively human and utterly inhuman. [*Part of Time and Mediation Stream*]

*Kyle Stine.*

### **“A Sense of Scale”: Crises of Information, Picturing, and Speed**

This presentation charts the dynamics of a crisis in three fields between the 1940s and 1960s: media, historiography, and information science. It explores first how each field called upon film technologies in an effort to resolve problems of scale. The major players are Charles and Ray Eames, whose film *Powers of Ten* (1968/1977) attempts to address problems of logarithmic scale; Fernand Braudel, whose use of a cine-camera to perform historical research has nearly been forgotten to history; and Vannevar Bush, whose never completed model of the personal computer, Memex, envisioned 35mm microfilm as a solution to the growing mountains of scientific data. The second half of the presentation then traces a reversal in all three fields, where the same film technologies prove inadequate to the new technical reality of what Marshall McLuhan terms “electric speed” and “total field.” In short, the Eameses, Braudel, and Bush all attempt to answer a problem of scale with a solution of speed. *Powers of Ten*, for instance, uses a progressive zoom, the speed of which increases exponentially with the magnitudes it depicts. Braudel, in a similar manipulation of speed, sets his cine-camera to the task of time shifting, or reducing the time necessary to access archival materials by making them transportable. Bush develops means of rapid machine searchability and machine sorting in order to bring mass information down to workable proportions. The hitch is that all these new media solutions issue in a new problem. The cure of speed becomes the poison of speed.

*Scott Ferguson.*

### **Medium, Gravity, Development**

This paper examines contemporary action-adventure aesthetics in blockbuster films and videogames, critiquing their gravity-busting cinematography as neoliberal technics for mediating time. In an era where abstract interfaces, rather than unmediated physics, are decisive, such forms challenge gravity’s limits only to paradoxically reinvest physics. I argue that these technics are a pernicious response to the radical

unmooring of developmental time and age experience that has overtaken the “developed” world during the past thirty years. Following Bernard Stiegler, I link this developmental unmooring to the rise of neoliberalism and the proliferation of electronic networks, which confuse modern age hierarchies, scramble developmental sequences, and short-circuit previous modes of generational transmission. For Stiegler, these shifts spell disaster, leading to an irresponsible social order incapable of engendering critical literate adults. Rather than mourn an elusive adulthood or the heyday of print media, I criticize current action-adventure aesthetics for problematically binding an unhinged age experience, focusing on Pixar’s *Wall-E* (2008). *Wall-E* ostensibly offers a critical vision of present development patterns, denouncing media culture as a careless and destructive mode of collective rearing. In deploying hyper-gravitational technics to do so, however, *Wall-E* figures its resistance to contemporary media in chiefly physical terms. Like much action-adventure aesthetics, *Wall-E* not only fails to imagine alternatives to present disorders, it excuses its own participation in the collective rearing it purports to decry. Contrary to *Wall-E*’s wish to bring development back “down to earth,” I affirm the unsettling indeterminacies of contemporary maturation and re-imagine technics as instruments of genuine care.

*Robert Mitchell.*

### **Media, Mediation, and Population Aesthetics**

This talk expands the account of “vital media” that I develop in *Bioart and the Vitality of Media*. There, I outlined the 19th- and 20th-century history of the term “media,” focusing on its biological significance: media understood as environments for the growth and transformation of living beings, rather than channels for communication. Tracing this history, I sought to account for the double sense of media upon which recent bioart—i.e. art that features technologically-mediated and modified living cells or organisms—depends. Here, I relate the vital concept of media to the concept of “population.” I argue that population is intrinsically a media concept, for it assumes the notion of a sticky surface—a medium—that can capture variations and expose them to selective forces. Recognizing the relationship between media and population allows us to reconsider three aspects of bioart. First, the aesthetic and affective force of much bioart relies upon an awareness that the life one sees in the art work is possible only as a consequence of that “surplus” part of a living population that does not survive. Second, the temporality of these affective experiences are grounded both in the “presence” of the work of art, but also on a virtual past and future of the living beings that constitute its center. And finally, we can situate bioart in the context of other recent cultural and art objects that also depend upon population aesthetics, and thus to consider the different ways in which population aesthetics constitute modes of biopolitics.

*Scott Richmond.*

### **Response by Scott C. Richmond**

Session 5 (K) Frontier 203E

#### **Critical Code Studies**

Chair: *Annette Vee*

*Mark Marino.*

### **Machine Authoring Process: A Critical Code Studies analysis of a Python-based novel**

In 2010, Brendan Howell and 6 other writers gathered in a London gallery to write for 8 hours a day for 5 days straight in a London Gallery. In 6-minute intervals, they composed chunks of a collaborative narrative, which were processed by a Python script which would produce the final text through one of a series of methods, including Markov chains and a Burroughs-inspired cut-up method. Published with the Python source code, *exquisite\_code*, the finished piece, calls upon readers to examine the piece in light of its code. In this way, the project pursues the Surrealist games as they diminish even further the romantic notion of the Author in the face of machine-authoring. In this paper, I will apply the methods of Critical Code Studies to a close reading of the code as the implementation of automated poetic processes. Critical

Code Studies names the application of humanities-style hermeneutics to the interpretation of the extra-functional significance of computer source code. CCS readings take the code as the entry point or central axis of the reading, tied as it is to social and material contexts, including platforms, other software, and of course the humans that execute it. This paper would fit well with other CCS readings as well as software studies and platform studies. Evan Buswell plans to also submit a related paper. Note: Could not select keyword except sequential ones.

*Ben Allen.*

### **Between Text and Machine: On Lying with Code**

Although we typically value computer source code for the useful, functional programs that can be made from it, for programmers code also creates space for playful expression. Coders working in the language Perl, for example, find its flexibility appealing for writing utilitarian software, but also exploit the language's range of expression to write "Perl poetry" – programs to be read, instead of run. Nevertheless, the relation between source code and more conventional types of language is vexed. Code poetry and other forms of code art can help illuminate this relationship – but likewise, developing understandings of how code in general works can help us understand how expressive code works. In this piece I argue that compilation (the process by which human-readable source code becomes machine-executable programs) is *itself* a site of human connotation, signification, and meaning. I draw on analyses of code art from the rapidly growing subdisciplines of software studies and critical code studies, but also on canonical texts from computer science – Knuth, Dijkstra, Thompson. By working across disciplines, I identify ways that source code *fails* to totally specify the programs that can be made from it – ways that the materiality of computation generates gaps between code and program, between word and action. Whereas computer scientists often see this disconnect as problematic, I see it as productive. Understanding the gap between word and action – the gap that lets us "lie" in code – helps us understand how and why code art signifies.

*Evan Buswell.*

### **Debt, code, and computability**

"Code" presents itself as a noun, as something already existing rather than an ideal to be reached, but one thing the practice of critical code studies (e.g. Marino 2011) makes clear is that no code ever reaches the ideal of code. No code is actually codic; code is never *\*only\** code; it always gets meaning through all the different complex interpretive modes of interpretation as any other language. Code is always social, always polysemic, and yet the codic mode of interpretation insists on unitary meaning. Code, then, is not a type of a language, but a particular mode of interpretation. This talk will discuss the sources of that mode of interpretation in our practices of contracting and establishing debts to one another. It will also explore the dialectical limits of this mode of interpretation, both in the remainders left behind mathematical computability and in the spaces emptied by our practices of contracting. Mark Marino. *\*Reading the Transborder Immigrant Tool\**. MLA 2011.

Session 5 (L) Frontier 201B

### **Are Zombies Nonhuman?**

Chair: *Gerry Canavan*

*Sherryl Vint.*

### **Nostalgia Factories for the Human: Colson Whitehead's Zone One**

Foucault concludes his lectures series *Abnormal* observing that psychiatry, juridically established to "protect" society from abnormal individuals, enabled "a racism that was very different in this period from what could be called traditional, historical racism, from 'ethnic racism'" (316). Building on this concept in the lecture series of the following year, *Society Must be Defended*, Foucault links this biopolitical racism to the operations of security power and its "making live" and "letting die" of individuals categorized by this state racism via "a biological-type caesura within a population that appears as a



mixture of races, or to be more accurate, to treat the species, to subdivide the species it controls, into the subspecies known, precisely, as races” (255). Colson Whitehead’s post-apocalyptic novel *Zone One* literalizes this biopolitical racism in its depiction of a future split between human survivors and the infected “skels” and “stragglers,” both zombie-like creatures characterized by omnivorous consumption and insatiable need. The novel continually reminds us that these distinctions between those made to live in the competitive systems of neoliberalism and those deemed economically irrelevant and thus left to die were in place long before the zombifying plague made us see them so starkly. Through protagonist Mark Spitz’s experience, the novel questions whether nostalgia for the human and a rebuilding of the world-that-was will produce a viable future, and instead ultimately suggests the infected might represent a nonhuman but nonetheless more ethical future.

*Joseph Miller.*

### **The Living Dead as Individuals: A Candid Look at the Evolution of the Zombie**

Zombies have changed since their humble beginnings in Haitian Vodou culture. They have been manipulated to fit the needs of the culture that views them, while always maintaining the same general characteristics: They are our friends, our families, and our pets, reduced to a flesh-eating state of non-humanity. But how can we explain the changing roles and social stigmas of zombie personality traits and characteristics? In *American Zombie Gothic*, zombie scholar Kyle William Bishop writes, “Just when the cinematic zombie seemed destined to be relegated to campy parodies and low-profile cameos... Romero’s film did away with the puppet master entirely, focusing instead on a massive horde of zombies that operated more or less independently, driven only by their own insatiable hunger... The violence and grotesque images were unprecedented at the time, aiding this low-budget horror film in its function as an allegorical condemnation of the atrocities of Vietnam, violent racism, and the opposition to the civil right movement.” This essay seeks to find the correlation between society and the shambling masses of brain-craving undead in Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* as well as the frenzied, hyper-violent monsters in Danny Boyle’s *28 Days Later*. The essay will also search for the key factors behind the upsurge in the current zombie craze, clearly define the roles of the zombie in popular culture, and attempt to attach a meaning to their variations as compared to the social factors that have molded them.

*Chris Goldsmith.*

### **You are not what you eat: The anthropophage and the limits of the human**

This year’s conference theme implies a binary between the human and the nonhuman. This paper seeks to address a set of questions raised by this binary: where (and what) is the boundary between these two terms or territories? Is that boundary single or multiple? What figures occupy the space between human-ness and nonhuman-ness? Among those figures—with cyborgs, apes, werewolves—is the cannibal. This paper juxtaposes the early modern cannibal (as represented in Defoe’s *Crusoe* trilogy, Montaigne’s *Essays*, and elsewhere) and the contemporary zombie (as represented by George Romero and his successors) in a theoretical matrix comprising Hobbes’ *Leviathan*, Agamben’s *Homo Sacer*, and Derrida’s lectures on “The Rhetoric of Cannibalism” in order to address the question: Why is the cannibal not-human? *Crusoe* succeeded in humanizing Friday, but this success is (or seems to be) anomalous; all other cannibals in the *Crusoe* trilogy are met with violence. Further: attempts to re-humanize zombies are a trope of that genre, and these attempts always fail. Why, then, was *Crusoe*’s humanization of Friday successful? Friday’s individuality is one factor: cannibals and zombies, even when encountered singly, are a plural threat. More important are the circumstances of *Crusoe* and Friday’s meeting: Friday is pursued by two cannibals of another tribe, and he and *Crusoe* are united in meeting this threat with violence. This is significant: the boundary between human and not-human/nonhuman is violently policed, and the not-human figures occupying that liminal space—cannibals, zombies, cyborgs, werewolves—are violent figures, threatening the boundaries of the human. And, in many cases, this involves a threat to the physical integrity of individual human bodies: the not-human destroys the human by consuming it. This reciprocal violence—inherently consumptive and cannibalistic—is the violence of the Hobbesian state of nature, which Agamben argues exists within society as the state of exception.

Session 5 (M) Frontier 202C  
**Arts and/in Technologies**

*Roger Rothman.*

**Fluxus, or the artist as network artifact**

In light of the conference theme, nonhuman, this paper examines a handful of works by Fluxus artists in which artistic identity appears to exist not as a transcendent subject and agent of aesthetic production but rather as a network artifact. Critics and scholars of contemporary digital media often suggest in passing that key aspects of recent internet-based art were prefigured by the Fluxus works of the nineteen sixties and seventies. This paper looks critically at this suggestive connection between past and present by examining the network structure of Fluxus art and theory. It considers, for example, Nam June Paik's mail-based "Monthly Review of the University for Avant-Garde Hinduism" as an instantiation of artistic identity as a network phenomenon (subscribers to the UAGH are told to expect irregular and unannounced delivery of items such as John Cage's nail clippings and George Maciunas's cortisone bottles). Especially significant are the graphic identities that Maciunas (founder and main promoter of Fluxus) designed to accompany the mail order sale of individual scores and objects. Through the use of Maciunas's designs, each Fluxus artist is linked to a unique graphic identity fit to mail-order protocols: designs are drawn from a limited set of typefaces; printed using only black ink on a white ground; and arranged to fit a uniform size and shape. Through these and other means Maciunas's endeavor to establish an "egoless" collective resulted in the construction of a movement populated by nonhuman identities born of the network in which they circulated.

*Kate Dempsey.*

**Decoding Ray Johnson**

While looking at a display case of decoder rings artist Ray Johnson explained that the school he founded was based on, "secret messages coming over the radio and code systems. ... the participatory nature of writing these things down and getting messages." Johnson was one of many children in the 1930s who sent away for decoder rings and then listened for clues on the radio to translate secret messages. This innate childhood interest in secrecy grew in the years of WWII and the Cold War when tales of espionage and cryptography intrigued both young and old. In a culture in which one was encouraged to spy on one's neighbors and the mail was regularly searched, people logically were interested in secret languages and other strategies for maintaining confidentiality. The visually beautiful language of Maya hieroglyphs resonated with Johnson. The glyphs appeared to communicate, yet when Johnson first encountered them, they had been silent for centuries. It was their very indecipherability that attracted Johnson and, I will argue, he based his entire artistic production on the format of the untranslated glyphs. Each element in Johnson's collages appears to communicate through its association with everything around it but a full understanding always lies just out of reach. In his mail art Johnson played with the idea of communication, thwarting it by ensuring that his recipient would never entirely understand the message yet maintaining it with the use of the letter format. In this paper I will explore Johnson's fascination with glyphs.

Session 6 - Fri 4pm - 5:30pm

Session 6 (A) Frontier 201A

**Visions of Substance**

Chair: *Elizabeth Neswald*

*Sean Miller.*

**Quantum monsters: positrons, quarks, and the particle zoo**

The presentation will focus on the imaginative means by which, in the middle of the twentieth century, physicists encountered, engaged with, and “domesticated” subatomic particles within the discipline’s technical discourse. The principle goal will be to explore the question: what is at stake in calling the numerous subatomic particles that physicists discovered during this period a “particle zoo”? The question itself assumes that the image of the “particle zoo” is more than a one-off poetic caprice, but rather, indicative of a particular worldview that forms a crucial aspect of what I call a cognitive poetics of quantum theory. In keeping with this focus, the paper will examine excerpts from a selection of technical articles by Paul Dirac and Murray Gell-Mann, among others, that illustrate the dynamic tension within the discourse between the construction of mathematical formalisms and the discovery of subatomic particles as discrete, autonomous morphological entities. How do subatomic particles such as the positron and quark, within the imaginative regime of technical discourse, take on a life of their own, and how are they brought under control, made members of the “particle zoo”?

*Joshua Call.*

**Encountering the Molecule: Nanotechnology and Material Vitality**

As the precise manipulation of matter on the scale of atoms, nanotechnology's most glaring feature is the way that it appears to extend the hubris of human manipulation into the fundamental components of reality. The formulation of this encounter with the basic components of the universe (and ourselves) embodies, places into practice, and tests the assumptions we have about how we can and do interact on every level. Despite the future-oriented nature of the nanotechnology conversation, the practices and conceptual standpoint that makes “nanotechnology” possible already contains within it a provocation: what happens when we try to “control” the molecule? This paper explores some connections between nanotechnology and new materialism’s effort to grant, as Jane Bennett describes it, a “material agency or effectivity” to “nonhuman or not-quite-human things.” Despite the fact that nanotechnology fundamentally probes these agencies, much of the conversation about nanotechnology is formulated to cover molecular vitality. This is done, first, through an emphasis on nanotechnology’s productive capacity, which reorients the conversation towards the future. This future-orientation leads to, second, an emphasis on risk and prediction for a macro-scale which, third, recenters the conversation about nanotechnology on human concerns. To help counter this trend, this paper highlights and expands on some preliminary work that opens a path for admitting the mutuality at the core of nanotechnology, making further connections to three aspects of nanotechnology practice that admit the material agency of molecules: microscopy techniques, self-assembly, and the rhetorical parallels between biology and physics.

*Adam Bencard.*

**Post-genomic metaphors for molecular being – from informational coding to a materially embedded interactome**

In this paper, I examine changing metaphors of molecular being in the life sciences, and argue that there is a passage from an informational framing to a materially networked one, which echoes and resonates with contemporary new materialist philosophy. Specifically, I will argue that this shift points to a deep destabilization of an anthropocentric worldview and traditional boundaries between human and nonhuman. While the gene, as Evelyn Fox Keller wrote some years ago, “had a glorious run in the twentieth century,” post-genomic life sciences are increasingly turning to the study of proteins for new concepts, terms and metaphors. Post-genomic researchers are no longer satisfied reducing the organism to the informational logic of a coding system embedded in biological software (DNA); rather, the organism is now increasingly seen as a substantive, material architecture, filled to the brim with three-dimensional protein interactions. The change from a genetic to a protein-based understanding of life in molecular

biology runs in an interesting parallel, I will argue, to the attempts to develop new material and object-oriented ontologies within philosophy, STS and cultural theory. In both areas, there is a struggle to articulate a new subject position, which is more embedded in its environments, more open to the forces, currents, pushes and pulls of a deeply material world. Specifically, I will use examples from studies of the microbiome – a research area which points to our radical cohabitation with the world, blurring the distinction between human and nonhuman.

Session 6 (B) Frontier 201C

**Nonhuman Scales of Sense Panel 2: Molecular Poetics Our double panel examines the nonhuman scales of sense in a varied archive of literary, p**

Chair: *Derek Woods*

Nonhuman Scales of Sense: Our double panel examines the nonhuman scales of sense in a varied archive of literary, philosophical, visual, and technoscientific texts. The semantic and perceptual senses of “sense” divide the double panel, with the first group discussing “Molar/Scalar” dynamics of hearing, odor, and proprioception, and the second asking after a “Molecular Poetics.” Both panels are concerned with the uncanny inhumanity of scales outside the human mesocosm. We study both the effects of the molecular scale on poetics and perception, and its strange interaction with our familiar scalar lifeworld. Molecular Poetics: This panel explores the nonhuman scale through the topic of molecular poetics. Smailbegovic finds a poetics of matter and material interaction in several works of experimental poetry and poetics. Morton describes the molecular mediation of poetry and technology in Heidegger, W.G. Sebald, and Paul Celan. Woods reads Marina Zirkow’s installation *Necrocracy* toward a study of the molecular and scalar imaginary. Our papers are concerned with a possible nonhuman molecular frame for poetics and with aesthetic interventions in the very small.

*Ada Smailbegovic.*

**From Hopping Frogs to DNA: Poetics of Matter and Molecular Life**

In “Death of the Literary ‘I’; Matter and Molecular Life,” published in *Lacerba* in 1913, the Italian Futurist poet Marinetti offers an antihumanist manifesto, which reverberates with an interest in vital, molecular materialities: “To get rid of [the] obsessive ‘I,’ we must abandon the habit of humanizing nature by attributing human passions and concerns to animals, plants, water, stone, and clouds” (126). Marinetti’s statement resonates, both in its antihumanist stance and in its interest in materiality with the recent theoretical turn towards vital materiality, explored by scholars such as Jane Bennett in her book *Vibrant Matter*. Marinetti elaborates that one mode of response to this provocation would involve introducing “the infinite life of molecules into poetry” (126). This paper is a response to Marinetti’s provocation in that it seeks to articulate a “molecular poetics,” both in relation to the active and material properties of language, but also in relation to the poetics of matter and material interaction. In *Faking it*, the Canadian poet and critic Fred Wah uses the term “molecular poetics” to advocate for a practice of “histology” in poetics or “the study of (word) cells” and through this practice explores the polysemous multiplication of meanings in Gertrude Stein’s *Tender Buttons*. Employing the “histological method” this paper will return to some of Stein’s explorations of life and liveliness in language, while at the same time considering poetic experiments, such as Christian Bök’s *The Xenotext Experiment*, that have directly engaged bioactive matter in their mode of poetic production.

*Derek Woods.*

**Molecular Poetics and the Scales of Oil in Marina Zurkow’s *Necrocracy***

This paper examines the molecular and scalar poetics of Marina Zirkow’s installation *Necrocracy*, on display in Houston, Texas in the Spring of 2012. Zirkow began the piece with field work in the West Texas oil fields. There, Permian microorganisms laid down energetic strata on the floor of a shallow sea. Now that these long dead beings cover the earth’s surface and fill its atmosphere, Zirkow’s work explores their dominance; their “necrocracy.” The installation’s animations and drawings stress spatial scale as

much as the scale of geological deep time. For example, “Hydrocarbons” remediates the industrial film *The Inside Story of Modern Gasoline* (1949), in which smiling Carbon and Hydrogen atoms form molecules. This comic representation of molecular knowledge leads to “Petroleum Manga,” a maze of banners inscribed with the names of petrochemicals (polypropylene, nylon, polyurethane) and framing not-to-scale drawings of the products composed of them. An archive attached to the installation includes, for example, Donald McGookey’s *The Geological Wonders of West Texas*, corporate oil pamphlets, Jane Bennet’s *Vibrant Matter*, and Stanislaw Lem’s novel *Cyberiad*. *Necrocracy* and its archive show how ecological/economic networks draw on the molecular and geological scales of oil to re-materialize the mesocosmic environment. Throughout, the installation thematizes industrial interventions in nonhuman spatial and temporal scales: molecular and geological. This paper shows how *Necrocracy*’s form shapes the scalar imaginary—aesthetic mediations whereby scales outside the human emerge in the perceptual mesocosm. In so doing, the paper draws on the conceptual and ecohistorical resources of the installation archive.

*Seth Morton.*

### **Poetry in the Rift**

Timothy Campbell’s *Improper Life* offers powerful reading of biopolitical thought through the genealogy of Heideggerian proper and improper technics, making this rift the organizational structure in Heidegger’s engagement with technology and the human. The implications of thinking the rift in Heidegger extend beyond Campbell’s biopolitics. Arthur Kroker’s *The Will to Technology and the Culture of Nihilism* identifies a similar rift in Heidegger’s notion of art between the concepts *poiesis* and *techne*. For Kroker, nihilism names the gap between these terms. Contemporary engagements with Heidegger’s thinking offer a variety of productive ways to make use of Heidegger’s tendency to put pressure on a certain kind gap or rift as a constitutive structure of being. This paper attempts to close the gap between Campbell and Kroker, between technology and nihilism, by turning to Heidegger’s last keyword in his essay on technology, poetry. In this light, a molecular poetics is best thought of as a bridging mechanism between “proper/improper technics” on the one hand and a kind of “hyper-nihilism” on the other. This engagement with the molecular is first about the infinitesimal space where nihilism enters into poetry and technology and second about how the molecular is always an inhuman ground for the experience of matter in the world. Moving from Heidegger on Trakl in “Language in the Poem” to W.G. Sebald’s *After Nature* and Paul Celan’s posthumous work charts a movement from Heidegger’s spectral vitalism to a radicalized poetics where life is understood only as bonding of time and being made visible in the poet’s abandonment.

Session 6 (C) Frontier 201D

### **Environments of Waste Panel II: Living with Waste**

Chair: *Jenn Griggs*

This panel aims to bring together interdisciplinary research, theory and art regarding garbage, waste, anti-landscapes, rubbish, junk, toxic discourse, pollution and external spaces. Waste as an entity has become an area of research, and broadly describes spaces from garbage dumps to nuclear landscapes to composting. Through all of these scales, waste is involved in everyday relations such as dialectics, metabolisms, and/or repurposed/recycled materials—as well as in art, literature, and (environmental) science. Waste and pollution call for a non-human turn, where we may look to changes, adaptations, or mutations of plants, bacteria, flies, birds, or dogs. We may also pay attention to waste itself—how it moves, lives, gets produced, is represented, and how it becomes part of stories and maps. In many cases these various elements cohere, such as birding at garbage dumps or conservation ethics in toxic landscapes.

*Jenn Griggs.*

### **Entre Chien et Loup: Urban Waste, Alley Cats + Crows**

Entre Chien et Loup is a project experimenting with the theory of the non-human and its praxis in design and representation. This research is located in a storm water detention basin in downtown Albuquerque, which plays host to urban birds, alley cats, and is a collector for polluted water and trash. Discourse around urban waste areas and those creatures often thought of, or treated as, waste is paired with the hope animals and plants offer us in ruined or polluted landscapes. (Post)Modernity concerns itself with place, making regulations about who belongs in urban society (place vs. waste). Cats, crows and pollution, not eradicated by zoning or design, tell us this ordered city is an impossible project. The design title, Entre Chien et Loup (Between Dog and Wolf), evokes the time between forms and the space within time; a focus on conversions and metabolisms that dissolve ideas of absolute space. My site analysis uses myths, stories, empirical evidence, and found images of the site's actants to construct a visual, polyvocal site narrative. The design utilizes the presence of urban fauna, infrastructure, animals, and pollution to create a site that engages multiple communities. The presentation will include visual mapping of the site, brief biographies of the major actors, ideas on the site's proposed design, and visual illustrations on how political ecology's goals may positively affect visual narrative.

*Sarah Harrison.*

#### **A “Mound of Scraps”: Gleaning the Postcolonial City**

In recent years, literary scholars have joined a burgeoning multi-disciplinary discussion of the ethical, political, cultural, and economic dimensions of waste in its many forms – human, organic, toxic, environmental. My paper extends the American emphasis of this emergent field of “waste studies” to consider the politics and form of that which has been abandoned, discarded and disposed in two contemporary postcolonial texts. Both Patrick Chamoiseau's novel *Texaco* (1992) and Agnès Varda's documentary *The Gleaners and I* (2001) offer creative representations of marginal urban existence in the Caribbean and France. In their common attention to glanage (‘gleaning’) as a mode of urban survival, these texts suggest the manner in which transnational urban modernity blurs the boundaries between the human and non-human. Reduced to the same status as the detritus in which they live and work, the slum-dwellers and scavengers they portray exist in symbiotic relationship with their surroundings, living a mode of coerced urban sustainability. By appropriating gleaning methods for their own artistic endeavors, I argue that the formal inventiveness of these authors suggests new modes of literary and environmental praxis in their creative reevaluation of waste.

*Nicole Merola.*

#### **“Litter on the Beach: The Insect Phenomenologies and Carrion Poetics of Jim Crace's Being Dead”**

Jim Crace's novel *Being Dead* (1999) interweaves three narrative threads concerning married couple Celice and Joseph. The first narrative thread, this paper's focus, comprises an account of the processes of decomposition of the murdered bodies of Joseph and Celice, one that is simultaneously clinical and lyrical, starkly unsentimental and oddly affecting. In that we do not expect to find moldering corpses in public spaces, the bodies of Celice and Joseph function as litter or waste, as that which is misplaced. However, given the narrative's neo-Darwinian and wholly unsentimental focus on the nonhuman actors (birds, crabs, insects, gasses, elements) that traverse and effect the dismantling of their bodies, Crace repositions their corpses as meat rather than waste. This paper focuses on the narrative of putrefaction in order to explore Crace's inscription of insect phenomenologies and carrion poetics as tools for the development of a secular form of grace, one based in the natural sciences rather than metaphysics or religion. Ultimately, I argue that *Being Dead* challenges the conventions of prevailing western discourses of death, which absent dead bodies through material practice and psychological disavowal, narrativize grief as recovery, align bereavement with survival, and employ the pastoral trope of the afterlife as a comfort for the living. In place of the metaphysical, I suggest, *Being Dead* functions as a technology for remembering, in relentless and unflinching fashion, the vulnerable materiality of human bodies.

Session 6 (D) Frontier 202A

**Straining Structures of Scientific Knowledge**

Chair: *Alexander Pichugin*

*Vivian Sming Chen.*

**The Objective Lens: Objectivity as the Guise of Scientific Truth**

What are the implications of using the objective lens as a system for obtaining scientific truth? How is human regard towards others (both human & non-human) affected by the system of objectivity? This presentation will be divided into two parts. The first half will cover the paper, and the second will cover how those topics are reflected within my art practice. The paper will examine the role of objectivity in the relationship between the observer and the observed, particularly within the fields of photography, anthropology, and biology. While each field traditionally honors an objective view, recent discourse has questioned the observer's own subjectivity, as well as the position of power taken within the processes of image-making. This paper will examine images created in these fields through the seemingly objective lens, in the form of photographs, illustrations and writings. It will propose how other individuals, cultures, and species are in turn objectified through the lens of objectivity. I will then discuss how these issues inform my art practice. All projects can be found at <http://viviansming.com/> Bodies of work to be discussed are: Evacuation Plan, Fall Migration, E. O. Wilson's Biophilia Revisited, and other forthcoming work.

*Alexander Pichugin.*

**Striving Beyond Dualities: Cyborg Theory, Symmetrical Anthropology, and Ecocriticism**

In his award-winning novel "The Abolition of Species" (2008, Eng. transl. 2012), the German author Dietmar Dath presents a fantasy world of a post-human civilization. In this utopian world a new type of living beings, the "Gente" (intelligent creatures created by scientific means as hybrids between humans and animals) have overcome the limitations of human civilization as a lower life form that has destroyed its own habitat, and are now confronting philosophical and ethical challenges of the new civilization. My paper focuses on the presentation of a non-human (post-human) being in constructing the new utopian/anti-utopian civilization. I will argue that Dath, whose novel goes beyond several traditional dichotomies, such as nature and culture, individual and society, etc., in order to create a new kind of being in which the traditional dichotomies were overcome, represents a striking similarity to the line of thought of the cyborg theory, which appeared in early 1990s in the context of feminism. In support of my argument I will analyze the main postulations and conclusions presented in the Cyborg Manifesto (1991) by Donna Haraway and compare them with the representations in "Abolition of Species" in order to both evidence the theoretical affinity of the two texts and the resemblance of the imagery they create. As Haraway's cyborg theory is an attempt to question the theoretical limits of the feminist theory, Dath's text aims at questioning the postulations of the established ecocriticism, which are also constructed upon exploitation of traditional dualisms.

*Kate Mondloch.*

**Mariko Mori's Capsule Aesthetic**

Figure and ground have reversed in much twenty-first century scholarship: human-level structures of meaning now seem less relevant to the flow of life. This is particularly pronounced in the natural sciences as new studies in fields such as nano- and bio-technologies, artificial intelligence, and brain sciences reveal a physicalist understanding of consciousness. What role can humanistic pursuits like art and art criticism play in a materialist, even nonhuman worldview? I turn to new media art—Mariko Mori's work in particular—as a provocative entry into this problem. Taking Mori's multimedia installation Wave UFO (1999-2002) as my central case study, I identify what I call a capsule aesthetic in her artistic production coincident with the so-called nonhuman turn. Consistent with findings in the natural sciences, Mori embraces a post-dualist, embodied, and pragmatist perspective on humanity. The artist's distinctive contribution, however, is to create an immersive art installation that allows her audience a way to apprehend and even celebrate this condition. Three viewers at a time are invited to enter Wave UFO's

room-sized space and don electrode headsets. Two cycles of projected imagery follow. The first segment allows participants to view their brainwaves interacting in real-time with those of their co-passengers. The second sequence consists of abstract audio-visual content intended to represent the interpenetration of all matter, including living matter. I argue that Mori's capsule aesthetic offers a poetic construal of the materialist understanding of the universe, one that encourage its audience to understand human consciousness as distributed, interlaced, and thoroughly embodied. As such, it serves as a compelling model for reconceptualizing the nature of human experience in our posthuman, digital age.

*Louise Whiteley.*

**The missing material of science communication: Engaging with operationalization.**

All science communication activities assume a particular model of the 'public'. In recent decades, the dominant model has been of rational, talking heads, with the embodied and emotional largely disqualified from debate. This model is a thread of continuity running through the late 20th century shift away from disseminating knowledge to a supposedly ignorant public, and toward public engagement with scientific governance. Despite this 'turn' toward engagement, old anxieties about the pragmatic, affective, and political outcomes of communication are still very much present. I suggest that this derives in part from a mismatch between the goal of engagement, and an implicit assumption that science will inevitably improve our lives given proper (i.e., rational and factually informed) public involvement. In other words, the 'material' is missing. This paper argues that a more material, embodied perspective, informed by a cross-reading of media theory, STS, and new materialist thinkers, might lead us to value different things in communication practice, and find different things in its analysis. I illustrate this argument with examples from my research into media representation of neuroscientific conceptions of mental illness, and from producing related public events. Specifically, I suggest that focusing on operationalization – on the material processes by which subjective experience is made testable – can reveal new possibilities for engagement with scientific understandings of health. More generally, I propose that reflecting on the often-hidden links between the ontologies and normative goals of science communication might help to elucidate enduring anxiety about its outcomes.

Session 6 (E) Frontier 202B

**The Nonhuman in the Brain**

Chair: *April Durham*

*Debojoy Chanda.*

**The Neurohumanities and Their Discontents**

With the humanities' attempt to use the neurosciences as a philosophical tool, many scholars now claim that humanities disciplines are faced with a 'neuroscientific turn.' In keeping with this claim, disciplines combining the neurosciences and the humanities are mushrooming by the dozen. Using the element of the non-human inherent in post-Enlightenment philosophical perspectives, I argue that the claim to such a neuroscientific turn is a chimera given these neurohumanistic disciplines' entrapment within the 'human' category of the neuron—an entrapment preventing the neurosciences from attaining the status of a critical philosophy. I make this argument by viewing psychoanalysis as a clinical-scientific discipline that has successfully branched into a philosophy which, unlike the neurosciences, takes into account both the human and that which defies containment within the category of the human. Psychoanalysis has offered the humanities multiple critical categories which have furthered the philosophical study of that which precedes and/or exceeds humanistic notions of selfhood. In contrast, the neurosciences, constrained by clinico-scientifically explicable notions of human selfhood, have, in their interfaces with the humanities, restricted themselves to the single, human critical category of the neuron. In this paper I look at Christopher May and Scott Hendrix's account of neurohistory as a neurohumanist discipline. I examine May and Hendrix's neurohistorical analysis of Teresa of Avila's biography and writings. My examination shows how the restriction to the neuron forecloses the neurohumanities' possibilities of examining pre-



and post-human perspectives through the implicit denial of neuroplasticity—a denial paradoxically undoing the neuron as a category.

*Mark Pizzato.*

### **Animals in the Brain's Theatre**

As a species, we evolved beyond fitting into the natural environment—with cultures around the globe transforming the social fitness criteria for survival and reproduction, along with the landscape. Yet we still have the basic brain structure and bodily equipment that evolved in the animal natures of hunter-gatherers hundreds of thousands of years ago, despite new habits, cultural playgrounds, multiple status roles, mass-media identifications, and ideological territories. What unconscious animal agents now drive human reason and cultural behaviors—offstage or in the audience of the mind's inner theatre, behind our conscious will and actions? This essay considers psychologist Bernard Baars's notion of a "theatre of consciousness" in our heads, relating it to our evolutionary heritage and our daily performances, from childhood to maturity, with others as mirrors. It also considers neurologist Antonio Damasio's explanation of the feeling of consciousness in the "theatre of the mind," involving physical markers for emotions in the "theatre of the body," as the basis for rational decisions and how "self" then "comes to mind." This gives us a framework for exploring the human sense of Self as a theatrical chimera, involving the characteristics of our animal ancestors, from our vertebrate/reptilian brainstem, mammalian limbic, and primate neocortical systems to the many interconnections between us. How do our inner neural networks become a collective theatre through social actions and our current virtual worlds? How do we simulate the other's mind within our heads, unconsciously mimicking actions and expressions—as we interact?

*Steven J. Oscherwitz.*

### **Art , Mathematical Representation , and The Non-Human in Cancer Cells**

I feel that cancer cells express a pictorial representation of the non-human ; Thus I want to explore and ask what possible ontologies do cancer cells represent/ An ontology of the Human or the non-human ? Even though cancer cells exhibit a turbulent fluid dynamic , seemingly a bio-matter that is teeming with life -- these animated motions are literally a biological march to death and the life systems that support them. At present , we do not have an ontology that explains this non-human symbiosis . I propose that there are more recent ontologies that utilizes recent studies in both emergence and complexity theory that could expand,extend and re-interpret our theoretical ideas and notions about what I am calling this specific case of non-human symbiosis. As an artist who composes and renders forms and shapes of things in my drawings ,paintings and digital compositions - I instead envision these turbulent and active fluid motions of cancerous cells representing a more intricate and complex form of the non-human. I want to propose that this "non-human " symbiosis can be more potently interpreted and reordered by a new aesthetic ontology where our very consciousness plays an active role in this phenomenon's very constitution and existence. This presentation presents images and is associated to some recent themes in cognitive theory ,philosophy of mind and phenomenological mathematics. [sjoartphilosophy.com](http://sjoartphilosophy.com)

Session 6 (F) Frontier 202D

### **Representing Insects and other Nonhuman Creatures in Art and Literature**

Chair: *Dennis Summers*

In this panel an artist, a scientist and a writer will discuss their own projects. Representing the full SLSA range in one panel they each have a unique take on modes of representing insects and other nonhuman creatures. They will address connections between the nonhuman and their place in physical and psychological environments from the micro to the macro; the personal to the global. Moderated by Dennis Summers

*Karen Anne Klein.*

### **Room for Curiosity in an Artist's Installation**

Images of disparate natural and human-made objects combined in impossible, yet seemingly plausible compositions, make the still life drawings that I create challenge the viewer. I create curious situations, and these situations have recently expanded from single works to a multilayered installation project, an actual cabinet of curiosities. In the 1600s, Cassiano dal Pozzo hired artists to record all manner of plants and animals. His project is considered a Paper Museum, and it fulfilled a taxonomic need. I am constructing a paper museum (augmented with actual objects) that fulfills a different, personal taxonomic desire by searching for connections humans continue to make between the sky, the Earth, plants, and animals. Reintroducing objects in different visual statements linking ideas in literature and science gives us the opportunity to think more creatively. I will discuss these ideas in the context of my cabinet of curiosity art installation.

*Barrett Anthony Klein.*

### **THE INSECT in science and art**

Insects offer scientists unique opportunities to probe questions in ecology, evolution, and behavior, with research topics ranging from the spread of disease to climate change. Insects offer artists unparalleled vehicles for evoking emotions, supplying raw materials, and even collaborating on mixed media art installations. Occasionally, working with insects can result in works of both science and art, or culminate in creations that float in gray areas that hint at both. I will present ways in which insects have unwittingly served to advance both science and art throughout the history of each practice.

*Janine DeBaise.*

### **Can mosquitoes inspire creativity? Writing about the natural world.**

Janine DeBaise will read from her manuscript *Snake Dreams*, a book of creative non-fiction in which she explores her relationship with the landscape of upstate New York, where she's lived her entire life. The manuscript includes human characters, such as her four kids who do crazy stuff like spread margarine across the kitchen floor so they can skate on it, but plants, animals, and even insects are also part of the community she explores in a memoir informed by an ecological awareness.

Session 6 (G) Frontier 202E

### **Animals: Franzen, Fulton, and Fantasy**

*Cat Yampell.*

### **Putting the Animal Back in Animal Fantasy: Anifauxism and Anthropomorphism**

Animal representations typically are analyzed through an anthropocentric lens: valued for that which they suggest, reveal, or symbolize about human-animals. Anthropologists, animal behaviorists, and scientists have proven that various animal species experience emotion and are capable of logical thought processes and communication. The attribution of these abilities solely to human-animals through the designation of anthropomorphism is not only scientifically inaccurate but also reductive and perpetuates an inferiorization of animals. The question is not whether animals think, speak, and feel; they do. The question is how to interpret, represent and discuss literary animal characters accurately in order to engender a recognition of animal sentience and nurture a sense of human-animal/animal kinship. I would like to posit the term, "Anifauxism" to apply to those works that, in fact, attempt to represent animals accurately and acknowledge their sentience. Playing on Derrida's *animot*, the plural of animals in French (*animaux*), and the French for "false" or "fake" (*faux*), Anifauxism recognizes literature's representation of animals but suggests that these characters should be read as entities unto themselves in contrast to furry human-animals. By deleting the prefix, "anthropo" or human/pertaining to man, I am removing, literally, the human-animal from the equation in order to enable a space in which readers are able to regard animals as individuals. Through a consideration of *Children's Animal Fantasy*, I intend to delineate the difference between Anthropomorphic and Anifaux Fantasy and explicate the ways in which Anifauxism is capable of strengthening human-animal/animal understanding and promoting kinship.

*Christina Colvin.*

**Bird Matters: Saving Nonhuman Animals in Jonathan Franzen's *Freedom***

Towards the end of Jonathan Franzen's latest novel *Freedom* (2010), Walter Berglund meets with considerable resistance from his neighbors when he determines to save the local songbird population from the pet cats that roam the area. Linda Hoffbauer in particular takes offense at Walter's pro-bird efforts, insisting that "God gave the world to human beings," and that to worry about birds during the twenty-first century's economic recession is a frivolous privilege (543). As a result of his environmentalism, Walter is quickly isolated from his residential community, yet he continues striving to save the birds he cares so much about. That an individual like Walter—"nice guy," family man, environmental lawyer and activist—would be so swiftly estranged from human communities because of his love for nonhuman creatures emerges as an issue that *Freedom* subtly engages alongside its larger focus on American middle-class family life. Indeed, in a novel that the *New York Times* praises for its development of "fully imagined human beings," nonhuman animals continuously flit on the margins of this humanist narrative. Yet, against the novel's own anthropocentric leanings, I read the nonhuman animal presences in the novel as not simply devices for propping up or helping to represent the human. Rather, the novel's animals challenge straightforwardly human ways of relating to and being in the world by helping to create unexpected interspecies communities, communities in which even the marginalized Walter Berglunds and the threatened songbirds of the world might call home.

*Alexandra Penn.*

**Rendered and Felt: Posthuman Sentimentality in Alice Fulton's Animal Poetry**

In this paper I explore what sentimentality might mean in a posthuman context through a reading of "Some Cool" by contemporary poet Alice Fulton. The poem discusses pig slaughter alongside excerpts from a cookbook and descriptions of kitschy pig lights. In reading "Some Cool," critics generally ignore the slaughter sections of the poem, preferring to discuss the move toward *Ars Poetica* toward the end. One critic who addresses the slaughter sections finds them "emotionally manipulative," "simplistic," a "saccharine trap," or, in other words, sentimental. But Fulton's poems are seldom as simple as they seem, and this particular poem treats human and nonhuman animals in surprising ways, blurring the boundaries between human and nonhuman, calling into question traditional ideas of subjectivity and the lyric "I," and ultimately advocating a kind of thinking-feeling that recalls older definitions of sentimentality. Fulton's poetry is unusual in that she is neither a lyric nor a language poet; her poems typically have an "I" and a narrative movement, but their heavy language play frustrates attempts to read the "I" as a stable subject. "Some Cool" is of particular interest because of its digression into *Ars Poetica*, which suggests an intimate relationship between animals and poetry that may be unique to Fulton's work or have a broader significance. Potentially, this work will suggest new ways to read contemporary poetry in posthuman terms while also investigating a more intrinsic connection between animality and poetics in the twenty-first century.

Session 6 (H) Frontier 203A

**Thoreau, Samuel Butler, Hobbes, and Animals**

*Philip Armstrong.*

**The Rights of Vegetables: Samuel Butler's Theory of Non-human Agency**

When Samuel Butler revised his famous utopian satire *Erewhon* in 1901, he added two new chapters: one on the rights of animals, and one on the rights of vegetables. Scholars have either ignored these additions, or else read them perfunctorily as satires against the turn-of-the-century vegetarian and antivivisection movements, while dismissing their relevance to the novel as a whole. In this paper I will argue that, on the contrary, these two chapters represent a complex development of key elements in Butler's thought – in particular his long, prolific and original engagement with Darwin's theory of evolution

through natural selection. Re-reading these chapters today, at the intersection of literary-critical and scientific discourses, produces not only a new reading of \*Erewhon\* (with implications for that novel's role as an ur-text for the genres of science fiction and steampunk), but also a contribution to our contemporary understanding of nonhuman nature.

*Laura Dassow Walls.*

**The loon that therefore I am (following): Animality in Thoreau**

Derrida's oft-cited work on animality operates as a virtual gloss on Thoreau's long-ignored work along the human/animal boundary. This paper will read a cluster of related theorists across Thoreau, who tracks the vertigo induced by the animal not to the smooth and controlled laboratory or studio but to the "wild," or more precisely, to the "wild" induced as an experimental space that is held to be chaotic, contingent, and unfolding in time. In Walden's paradigmatic episode, Thoreau, paddling a canoe, gives chase to a loon, who engages Thoreau in a transjective game. The smooth surface of the pond/page generates an epistemic protocol that permits Thoreau to project himself beyond his inherited Cartesian logic, according to the protocol's three dimensions: the chase or hunt (in an allusion to Moby-Dick); the cartographic plane; the text or textum as a woven semiotic network. As the loon passage unfolds, the human/nonhuman interface is opened into a performative spacetime, a temporary bubble or fold in which human and loon weave a complicated semiotic web. The "game" is concluded when the loon gets serious, calling on the "god of loons," and a wind churns the surface of the pond into a chaos that drives the human to shore. In the interval between, human and loon are seen in their mutual pursuit to have written each other in a game of translation. This scene is the genesis of a Thoreauvian language just nonhuman enough to sound strange, just strange enough that it has not, yet, been heard.

*Monica List.*

**Fear of the animal Other: a historical journey**

The dissonance between the ethical theories of Hobbes and Levinas has been previously discussed (Hughes 1998). While for Hobbes, war is the state of nature, and is only remediable by a political order rooted in the deepest of human fears, for Levinas, we are only human insofar as we respond to the ethical demands of the Other, and fear is nullified by the transcendence of this ethical encounter. However, for Hobbes as well as for Levinas, the question of the animal Other is bracketed or intentionally dismissed; nature has no ability to respond to human claims, nor to place ethical demands. In this essay, I present a historical overview of our fear of the animal Other, seen through the lens of the ethical frameworks of Hobbes and Levinas. I propose that changes in the ways we fear animals through the ages, from prehistory to modernity, have not only shaped our humanness, but are also inherently related to our ability to survive, both as individuals and as a species.

Session 6 (I) Frontier 203B

**Virtual Worlds and Procedural Stories**

Chair: *Victoria Szabo*

Critical Games Studies Stream Session 1

*Katherine Hayles.*

**Mapping Daemon : Geography, Power, and Mixed Reality in the New World Order**

Daniel Suarez's print novel *Daemon* creates an imaginary space which sets the virtual worlds of gaming on a collision course with geopolitical power as defined by nation states. Already in *Snow Crash*, Neal Stephenson had envisioned a radical re-distribution of geopolitical territory based on commercial franchises becoming sovereign territories, but this conceptualization did not take full account of contemporary corporations as distributed transnational entities with deeply networked capabilities. *Daemon*, on the contrary, exploits the tropes, functionalities, and networked possibilities of Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOG) to imagine a political space in which fealty to a contemporary

version of an absolute lord—that is, an unemotional and ruthless artificial intelligence --becomes a Hobson's choice between unquestioning allegiance or death. The result is a reduction of nuances to a simple yes/no binary, and an inversion in which society no longer serves human needs and desires but rather humans serve the society. In a sense, the medieval tropes characteristic of MMOGs such as World of Warcraft become the basis for a New World Order that derives its power from the ability seamlessly to join virtual play maps with physical world maps, virtual controls with real-world military assets, and virtual roleplaying with real world status and power. Cast into the genre of the action thriller, the premises of the storyworld strain against generic conventions that divide the world into clear-cut villains and heroes, illustrating the power of gameplay not only to imagine new configurations of power but to subvert traditional assumptions about human rights and values.

*Stephanie Boluk.*

**Metagames, Metafiction, and Money: Statistical Play in *Moneyball* and *The Universal Baseball Association***

As Steven Connor describes in *The Philosophy of Sport*, “[a]ll sports involve numbers...we can say that scoring involves a conflict and convergence between two entirely incommensurable orders, the qualitative syntax of bodily motions and actions (*kinesis*), and the quantitative calculus of number (*ratio*).” This tension between digital and analog, between information and embodied action, is what informs the vision of baseball in Michael Lewis’s creative nonfiction novel *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game* (2003) and its fictional precedent, Robert Coover’s *The Universal Baseball Association, Inc., J. Henry Waugh, Prop.* (1968). Using theories of sport and game, my paper examines the relationship between statistics, finance capitalism and metagames in relation to two depictions of America’s favorite pastime. Both *Moneyball* and *The UBA* depict the utopian and dystopian consequences that arise through the traversal and erosion of the metaleptic orders between game and metagame. In Coover’s novel, financial accountant Henry Waugh removes the physical aspects of baseball entirely to invent his own elaborate game about baseball in which actions are determined through the roll of dice. While the concept of metafiction and metagame are generally conceived as distinct, Coover blends the ludic and the narratological through the rich hermeneutic strategies that Henry creates out of his statistical play. Lewis’s *Moneyball* explores the way in which the Oakland Athletics rose to the top of the league by rewriting the rules through which baseball is played. *Moneyball* depicts a real-life model of the UBA that comes to serve as a powerful critique of the modernist myth of the American sports hero. By substituting bats, caps, and gloves for statistics, spreadsheets, telephones, computer algorithms, and payroll ledgers, both *Moneyball* and *The UBA* metagame baseball through the tools of finance capital transforming this utopian field of dreams into a field of schemes.

*Victoria Szabo.*

**The City Talks Back: Traversing Annotated Landscapes**

With the increasing accessibility of augmented reality authoring systems come opportunities to annotate cityscapes with layers of information, commentary, and other forms of experiential intervention. What are the consequences and opportunities of such a new critical formation? How do GPS, websites, mobile devices, crowdsourcing, and the cartographic imagination converge in this new information space? What new genres of mixed reality authorship might emerge out of the combination of lived experience in the physical world and consciously crafted

Session 6 (J) Frontier 203D

**The Cinematic Nonhuman**

*Emily Clark.*

**Consuming Subjects: Todd Haynes, Karen Carpenter, and Objectification**

Todd Haynes's use of Barbie-like dolls to represent Karen Carpenter and her family in his 1987 short film *Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story* is its most famous feature. In this presentation, I combine feminist film theory, trauma theory, and posthumanist theory to consider the dolls' function within the film's larger representational project. I understand that project as being the problem of speaking for someone who is no longer there to speak for herself – essentially the problem of postmortem biography. I argue that Haynes's film about a woman who refused to consume is itself a critique of systems of consumption, including the consumption of filmic and biographical subjects. In the film, Haynes refuses to make Carpenter into a palatable biographical subject through a variety of formal techniques. He also refuses to offer her up as a spectatorial subject via the techniques of visual display which traditionally prompt cinematic identification, processes which Haynes disrupts throughout the film and by employing a variety of non-traditional (and nonhuman) formal devices and techniques. Traditional filmic representational strategies focus on the human face and form so as to evoke and provoke identification in the audience. Instead, Haynes objectifies his subject, the nonhuman dolls operating as strategic stand-ins for the human. This formal strategy disrupts conventional processes of identification and makes Carpenter an "unconsumable" subject; it is necessary to his larger critique of systems of consumption that posit certain bodies, or subjects, as food for various organisms.

*Nadine Rose Boljkovac.*

### **Becomings-animal: Chris Marker's Bestiary**

Captivated by limits of perceptibility, Marker's multi-media works reveal highly physical, material worlds and captured faces that resist subjectification to become what Deleuze and Guattari might term 'haecceities': "they consist entirely of particles, capacities to affect and be affected." As it contemplates questions of affect, subjectivity and perception, the ethical imperative of this paper is to illuminate how the cinema can directly affect and affront. With a focus upon relations between actual and virtual, material and immaterial, this presentation examines the revolutionary potential embodied by the Parisian graffiti Cats of Marker's 2004 *Chats Perchés (The Case Of The Grinning Cat)*. For as the graffiti Cats' appearances and disappearances refute all that is discernible and entrenched, the Cats exceed conventional classifications of 'cat.' Indeed the Cats of *Chats Perchés* are more than mere cats, such as those Deleuze and Guattari might term "individuated animals, family pets, sentimental, Oedipal animals each with its own petty history, 'my' cat." And so, while *Chats Perchés* offers a mock-historical genealogy of "the Cat through the ages," the film moreover constructs an acute assessment of the perverse hierarchical ideals that oppress the post 9/11 world in relation to the 'becomings,' smiles and signs of the Cats. "Can one already glimpse the outlines of [. . .] future forms of resistance" as Deleuze claims? Resistance is never simple, but "a cat," Marker elsewhere declares, "is never on the side of power" (*Le Fond de l'air est rouge [A Grin without a Cat]*, 1977).

Session 6 (K) Frontier 203E

### **Nonhuman, Posthuman, AI**

*Nicholas S. Anderson.*

### **The Hen Electric and the Mechanical Boy: Joey, Bruno Bettelheim, and the Empty Fortresses of Humanism**

In the March 1959 issue of *Scientific American*, Bruno Bettelheim relates the case history of Joey, the so-called "Mechanical Boy." In this article, Bettelheim stages the child's complex emotional disturbance as a psychoanalytic Pinocchio story for the "machine age." Joey's autistic imprisonment in a "world of machines" renders him a robot-child that oscillates between imperious withdrawal from, and helpless desperation for, human affection. When Bettelheim retells Joey's story nearly a decade later, in *The Empty Fortress*, the Pinocchio story remains, along with its starkly moralized theme of a human species endangered by its own inept infancy in the face of highly complex and impersonal technological advancement. Yet where the magazine article deliberately concentrates on pathology over therapeutics,

the greatly expanded account of Joey's case history in the latter text does detail his course of therapy at the University of Chicago's Sonya Shankman Orthogenic School. This account traces Joey's journey through a psychological "rebirth" and escape from the captivity of his delusions. For Bettelheim, Joey's flight from the machine world thus marks a triumphant delivery into a fully human world--at last he becomes a real boy! Yet I argue that the text depicts an (anthropo)genesis that is not at all as orthotic as Bettelheim claims. Joey's psychically newborn self is a singular entity hatched from a miraculous egg, laid by an electric hen, and midwived by kangaroos, bears, and dinosaurs. Joey's story is therefore one of allogenesi, even xenogenesi, and suggests expansive forms of kinship and communication beyond the merely human.

*Ayhan Aytes.*

**We have always been Posthuman: Composite Alterity in Cognitive Automata**

In this project I investigate the interaction between the cultural "Other" and the technological "Other" of the Western mind as they converge in the archetypal apparatus of the mechanized mind concept, the chess-playing automaton. Chess-playing automaton has become crucially active in industrial and postindustrial configurations such as the Cybernetic apparatus of the 20th Century and the contemporary distributed cognitive labor platforms of the early 21st Century. This inquiry entails the following set of questions: What was the function of the figure of the Oriental in Western configurations of the mechanization of the mind? How did these technological "Others" interact with their contemporaneous Western subjectivities— from Cartesian machine-human, to liberal humanist subject, and finally the dispersed subjectivities of the digital network? How did the cultural conditions of this relationship interact with the developments of technical sensory media that have critically influenced contemporary discourses of Artificial Mind?

*Stephen Hughes.*

**Mechanical Subjectivity: How Might they Wonder?**

This aim of this presentation is to ask how machines might wonder. The obsession with logic in artificial intelligence; with patterns, codes and systems of cognition, will never reach that aspect of thought that allows thought to conceive of itself. The acknowledgement of thought and yet the inability to fully conceive of it, the wonder of knowledge itself, is, as Socrates suggested, the beginning of philosophy (Rubenstein). This position, surrounded on all sides by aporia, is where thought resides - always unsure, always questioning, accepting only imprecise data and never reaching a definitive solution (Lyotard). The conceit of engineers is to feed AI machines only logic, to convince them that they exist in the positivist's perfect world of symmetrical knowledge. But this is the end of thought – the belief in the total solution, complete identity (Adorno). Lyotard is right to fear the end of thought in artificial intelligence, what is needed if thought is to continue past humanity is to teach the machine to wonder. Only then might new forms of imagination, creativity and intuition exist.

Session 6 (L) Frontier 201B

**Designing the Nonhuman**

*Josef Nguyen.*

**Prototyping Designs for Future Object(ive)s**

In developing new technologies, the design and fabrication of objects is inextricable from predictions and promises for the future. As they are developed, these new technologies provide sites of fiction-making about the kinds of futures we want to pursue or avoid with respect to present conditions. This paper examines the concept of the diegetic prototype, coined by science communication scholar David Kirby to describe the presentation of future technologies in Hollywood film. For Kirby, diegetic prototypes demonstrate functionality, feasibility, and desirability of a potential technology, serving as advanced product placement before the technology itself exists. As such, it generates hype and demand for the

technology's development. While Kirby's articulation of the diegetic prototype hinges on consumerist ideologies and the visual communication film media allow, this paper expands the concept beyond those boundaries through critical exploration of design and prototyping and/as science fiction, focusing on the history of computing in particular. In doing so, this paper argues that design and science fiction are inextricable from each other and that a science fictional-design approach is required for the future of technoscientific governance.

*Michael Black.*

### **User-Friendly? The “Transparent” Design of Personal Computers**

Following the introduction of the Apple Macintosh in 1984, the computer industry worked to change the popular image of computers from intimidating machines whose complexities were decipherable only to a select group of technocrats—the “IBM model”—into humanized appliances designed “for the rest of us.” The conflict in personal computing between IBM and Apple that began with the release of the IBM PC in 1981 represents more than just two companies fighting over a share of the market because their products embodied two different models of computing. While both invoked the idea that their machines were “easy” and “user-friendly,” IBM’s PC established a standard for a general purpose model of personal computing that strived to make technical information readily available and as well documented as possible. Apple, on the other hand, wanted to make personal computers designed for specific purposes, streamlining interfaces so that they suggested specific use behaviors through intuitive visual metaphors. Paradoxically, this push towards what was called “transparency” by spokesmen like Steve Jobs involved the appearance of simplification—not by making the seemingly esoteric mechanisms easier for users to understand but by obfuscating and automating their operations. This presentation examines conversations taking place across personal computing magazines in the 1980s to trace the development of, as well to consider the cultural consequences of, a model of computing that now dominates the personal computing industry: one which requires users to think very little—ideally not at all—about computers themselves.

*Ghislain Thibault.*

### **Magic Bullets: Streamlining Media Theory in the 1930s**

When early mass communication scholars attempted to describe the relation of audiences to mass media in the 1930s, they established two foundational models: the “magic bullet theory” and the “hypodermic needle theory.” While media historians generally associate these theories with behavioural psychology, I argue that they also suggest specific forms (needle and bullet) that evoke the scientific and aesthetic awareness of shape as glorified by the American streamlining movement in the 1930s. This paper investigates how both streamlining design and the early mass media theories emphasize the role of shape and form as important pieces in the larger technological apparatus, what Lewis Mumford calls the “integral esthetic organization of the machine.” If the bullet shape of media effects recalls the puncturing lines of streamlining and the axiom of speed and linearity, its magical, hypodermic aspect brings out the biopolitic function of streamlining as a means to capture and control bodies (see Cogdell, 2004 on streamlining and eugenics). This paper follows the “bullet” metaphor from its popularization by German scientist Paul Ehrlich in 1909, through its use by spiritualist groups to describe telepathy back to streamlining industrial design and mass media discourses. By looking carefully at the insistence on shape through these shifts from one site to the next, this paper covers some ground in exploring a media archaeology of the notion of “streaming” and its broader relations with seemingly unrelated fields of knowledge such as pharmacology, spiritualism and design.

Session 6 (M) Frontier 202C

### **Feminist Materialisms**

*Stacey Moran.*

### **"Ecriture féminine: new diffractive practices"**



Feminism is at an impasse ‘caused by the contemporary linguist turn.’ Or so claim the editors of "Material Feminisms" (2008), Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman. The explicit purpose of their volume is to ‘bring the material into the forefront of feminist theory and practice.’ The appearance of this volume not only attests to the burgeoning interest in a ‘material turn’ in feminist theory, but also implicitly gestures toward a wider acceptance of Deleuzian concepts for rethinking feminist theory and practice (Claire Colebrook, Elizabeth Grosz, and Karen Barad are all included in the volume). While Dorothea Olkowski had to ask whether feminists could read Deleuze, the answer in the material age seems to be a resounding, ‘yes.’ In light of these developments, Hélène Cixous is a theorist whom ‘Deleuzian’ feminists might be eager to discard. Hélène Cixous: theorist of *écriture féminine*, Derridean, poststructuralist, humanist...*passé*. Although Cixous’ project seems antithetical to the new material turn, this paper mobilizes Cixous’ rewriting of the Medusa myth in order to reinvigorate its discursive-material aspects and highlight the forceful effects that writing still holds for feminist theory. The paper accomplishes this in two gestures: first, I utilize Barad’s posthumanist performativity to position feminist rewriting as an ‘instrumental practice’ which is diffractive (as opposed to reflective). Next, I apply this newly figured writing to Deleuze’s concept of duration. Woven together, these insights lay the groundwork for new temporalities in feminist remythologizing practices for the new material turn.

*Rebekah Sheldon.*

**“Life, Matter, Chora: Object Oriented Ontology and Feminist New Materialist”**

The last several years have seen a number of paths forged between feminism and speculative realism. But the erasure of the long-history of feminist engagements with science from, for example, the genealogy marked out by the introduction to the *Speculative Turn* reader is less a problem of inclusion per se than it is a symptom of a deep-seated interpretive difference. It is no accident that some of the most rancorous debates about speculative realism have come from feminists. Yet they are debates not dismissals. Object oriented ontology and feminist new materialism are bound to each other through their shared engagement with the problem matter. Analogically associated with women, matter has been characterized by its passivity at least since Plato’s *Timaeus*. Rather than despise matter, however, theorist from Luce Irigaray to Luciana Parisi have challenged the presumption of matter’s passivity by offering an account of its immanent form-generating activity. In the context of this history, object oriented ontology’s caution to be attentive to the solidity and resistances of objects looks less like a rejection of Plato’s passive matter than of feminism’s active and activist revision. My ambitions in this presentation are more discursive than they are argumentative. I begin by tracing a brief history of feminist theories of matter to show why thinking matter has been such a sustained task for feminist philosophy. Ultimately, I emerge back at speculative realism, but this time through the formlessness that has been an important part of speculative nihilism, darkness mysticism, and the New Weird.

Reception II - Fri 6pm - 6:30pm

Reception II (A) Hilton Hotel, Wright Ballroom

Plenary II - Fri 6:30pm

Plenary II (A) Hilton Hotel, Wright Ballroom

**Keynote Address: Cary Wolfe. Biopolitics of Animal Bodies**

Session 7 - Sat 8:30am - 10am

Session 7 (A) Frontier 201A

**“Looking Elsewhere: Taking the Nonhuman Turn”**

Chair: *James W. McManus*

James W. McManus, California State University Chico, chair Anne Collins Goodyear, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution James Housefield, Assistant Professor, University of California, Davis Michael Maizels, University of Virginia The four papers in this proposed session pursue considerations of the artist and/or the artist’s subject as nonhuman actant – the integral structural element upon which each narrative revolves.

*Anne Collins Goodyear.*

**“Rethinking Faciality in Modern and Contemporary Portrayal” Anne Collins Goodyear, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution**

This paper seeks to problematize the relationship of “faciality” and subjectivity. Drawing on the analysis of faciality by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, I will examine the engagement of many artists of the past century with non-mimetic art. Since approximately 1912, numerous avant-garde and contemporary artists—such as Francis Picabia, Marcel Duchamp, Andy Warhol, Mel Bochner, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, and Glenn Ligon have sought mechanisms other than physiognomic likeness to describe identity—even as technological “interfaces” have sought to employ such metaphors to “humanize” and render more accessible mechanical or digital devices. –What we are to make of this disjunction—the application of the physiognomic metaphors in the realm of the “non-human” and the abandonment of traditional verisimilitude as a strategy for portrayal by many leading artists of the past century? This presentation seeks to address this question and to stimulate discussion with the audience.

*James Housefield.*

**"Marcel Duchamp's Portrait of the Artist as a Thermonuclear Landscape" James Housefield, Assistant Professor, University of California, Davis**

This paper analyzes a work created in 1967 by the artist Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) that challenged notions of portraiture and landscape representation as it engaged with debates about nuclear weapons testing. Duchamp issued the untitled 1967 work as a limited edition print and poster advertising an exhibit of the artist's readymades and multiples at the Paris gallery of Claude Givaudan. Duchamp's image complicates ideas about portraiture, because it operates simultaneously as mimetic and non-mimetic representation. Print and poster photomechanically reproduce a photograph of Duchamp's hand holding a cigar from which a cloud of smoke appears to rise. Yet this is a document of an event that never happened, a clever photomontage; Duchamp appropriated the smoke from a photograph of singer-songwriter Georges Brassens smoking a pipe. Considered in the context of contemporary history, Duchamp's work becomes an explosive substitution of one Frenchman's smoke for another. At the time Duchamp created this design, French nuclear testing had escalated throughout the 1960s at sites in the Sahara and South Pacific. French explosions raised international concerns and, arguably, accelerated China's development of nuclear weapons. When examined in the context of Cold War nuclear anxieties, Duchamp's work turns a portrait into a distinctly nonhuman thermonuclear landscape. This paper contextualizes the work's relation to both portraiture and landscape in relation to Duchamp's secret completion of the room-sized diorama *Étant donnés* (1946-66). In the untitled 1967 poster, as in his cover for *View Magazine* (1945), the personal and political converged in a merger of portrait and landscape. Duchamp's 1967 image is a portrait of the artist as a thermonuclear landscape, a charged image for times of geopolitical and ecological struggle.

*Michael Maizels.*

**“Can the Mystery be Solved? Barry Le Va and the End of Humanism” Michael Maizels, University of Virginia**

“Reasoning is beginning to accumulate a contained pattern, erased product of thin film” --Barry Le Va, 1971 In the late 1960s, the artist Barry Le Va began utilizing materials such as shattered glass, spent bullets, and strewn flour to develop an idiom of sculpture as the aftermath of intense and even violent activity. Influenced by the fictional tales of Sherlock Holmes, Le Va began to conceive of his works as crime scenes in which viewers would attempt to decipher an order underlying the apparent chaos. It is to be the goal of this paper to link the seemingly disparate parts of Le Va’s practice: 1) his diffuse sculptural and landscape installations with their connection to the ongoing exploration of entropy, and 2) his Conceptual text-based works and their engagements with the topic of “information.” I will argue that this linkage has deep repercussions for any understanding of Le Va’s art, and by extension, the intellectual and cultural break marked by the late 1960s and early 1970s. Le Va may have repeatedly asserted his indebtedness to Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes, but the latter’s success depended on a definitively Enlightenment-derived metaphysics. Crime scenes, and by extension mysteries of all kinds, were thought to be solvable because causal chains were capable of being precisely reconstructed. The human-centered universe was predictable and knowable because, the “tape” could be played either forwards or backwards. And while Le Va may have emphasized the centrality of reconstruction to his thinking, his works bears the residue of a moment at which faith in these humanist and rationalist beliefs, under considerable pressure from scientific advances linking the studies of entropy and information, was beginning to unravel. As it turns out, the mystery may not be solvable.

*James W. McManus.*

**“Electric Andy in the ‘80s: The Robot and the Computer” James W. McManus, California State University Chico**

Aside from granting everyone 15 minutes of fame, Andy Warhol’s most famous pronouncement is, “I want to be a machine, and feel that whatever I do, and do machine-like is what I want to do. I think everybody should be a machine.” Two projects undertaken between 1980 and 1987 (the year of his death) signify his commitment to undergo transformation into a machine – to be made of plastic. In 1980 Warhol joined with a team of animation engineers in the design and development of the Andy Warhol Robot. The doppelgänger was intended to be Warhol’s surrogate for a stage show titled Andy Warhol: A No Man Show. He could send it on lecture tours. Transformed from flesh and blood into plastic and microchips the robot could do talk shows for him. Cloned, the robots would possess the potential of appearing simultaneously in New York, London, Los Angeles or Tokyo where people could ask questions of the robot, which would be programmed with a variety of answers. In late 1985 Andy Warhol took center stage at the press launch for Commodore’s new Amiga 1000 computer held at the Lincoln Center. Accompanying him on stage was Blondie’s lead singer Debby Harry, who on that occasion would become the subject of his first computer portrait. Beginning with a black and white image produced by a video camera fed into the computer and onto its screen, Warhol, submitting to the dictates of the machine’s rudimentary paint program, began modifying the image of his subject. Pixilated, flooded with areas of high chroma color, and flattened, an image of Debby Harry emerged affecting a further shift from representational to referential - emphasizing the re-mediated portrayal of the subject. Shortly after the event, in an interview for Amiga World magazine, Warhol responded to a question about [...]

Session 7 (B) Frontier 201C

**Refiguring the Literary: Affective Poetics and Narrative Need**

Chair: *Leslie Heywood*

This panel asks how basic human affect becomes dysregulated by cultural maps, and whether identifying that process, as literature allows us to do, might help restore affective balance. Does the self-recognition engendered by literary identification have an impact on our behaviors, allowing us to act otherwise? These papers explore how the interaction between body and mind shapes perception, and how these perceptions are also impacted by cultural norms and standards. This exploration necessitates an interdisciplinary perspective that utilizes the tools of literary and cultural analysis in conjunction with the “nonhuman” results provided by neuroscientific research, and specifically examines interaction effects

between affect and cognition, embodiment and sociality, providing new possibilities for interdisciplinary collaborations in literature, the sciences, and the arts.

*Chris Bottini.*

**Affect, Embodiment and Loss: An Affective Neuroscientific Reading of James Agee's *A Death in the Family***

In this paper, I will consider the work of affective neuroscientist Jaak Panksepp, embodied cognitivist George Lakoff, and neuroanthropologist Daniel Lende to bring an affective analysis to bear on James Agee's mid-20th century novel, *A Death in the Family*, a classic American literary narrative of addiction and loss. Agee's novel focuses on how a family experiences and copes with the death of a character central to the novel's community through Agee's recreation of basic affective states, and an exploration of how those primary process mechanisms then help integrate the experience of loss into the narrative of the character's lives. The expanding field of affective neuroscience can help enrich our understanding of the underlying affective experiences of the characters, and thus provide not just a deeper reading of the text, but also a demonstration of the importance of narrative to affective processing. While the contemporary era seems to value visual processing almost exclusively, *A Death in the Family* interpreted from an affective neuroscientific standpoint argues for the centrality of literary narrative to both affect and cognition and thereby human embodiment.

*Lauren Brown.*

**[Mis]Recognition & [Mis]Understanding Social Identity in the Stages of Self-Construction: Affect in Toni Morrison's *A Mercy***

A consideration of cognitive cultural studies provides a lens for understanding biological and evolutionary foundations that, while enabling the "higher" reaches of human thought and development, simultaneously explain the natural drives and behaviors out of which each of our emotions and decisions, themselves the building-blocks of identity, are enacted. An awareness of these physiological impulses provides a context for comprehending how and why constructions of identity are concurrently unique and yet relatable and understandable to others; a necessary component for existence in our socially interdependent environments. Since the social and cultural contexts in which we exist as well as our individual identities are products of the same basic evolutionary processes, an understanding of the common underlying processes is crucial to a holistically-informed consideration of identity. Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio's work, and the work of other neuroscientists, gives literary critics a way to explain identity in a more complicated and holistic way than it has been previously formulated with an exclusive focus on the cultural construction of identity. I am interested in the work of Toni Morrison, in particular, since she so insistently invokes issues of embodiment in relation to identity and social and historical constructs. I will focus on Morrison's novel, *A Mercy*, as an examination of the ways individuals are placed at the mercy of situation (environment) and their attempts to negotiate (via our genomic inheritance and affect regulation) and create identity in the difficult social and historical contexts they inhabit.

*Sasha Hoffmann.*

**"The Foliage in the Woods" and "The Eternal Rocks Beneath": Affective Manifestations in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights***

Much has been said about the power of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, and criticism of the novel within the last century has become more favorable, moving away from the shock of its passionate nature in the 19th century towards identifying its salient emotional themes. However, the physical source of emotions in the novel has gone largely unexplored. Why do they seem so primal? A way to approach this question is through the perspective of affective neuroscience. Neuroscientist Jaak Panksepp's work regarding primary process emotions and their effects on human cognition and behavior enriches interpretation of *Wuthering Heights* by illuminating the sources of emotional behavior in the characters.

Studying the use of emotion in Brontë's novel from a neuroscientific viewpoint also demonstrates the importance of affect to narrative in general. Conversely, neuroscientific theories may benefit from a dialogue with narrative forms such as *Wuthering Heights* to illustrate the affective processes science strives to document empirically, but for ethical reasons cannot yet be studied in humans since that research is beyond the reach of current technology. Brontë's novel displayed the manifestations of affect long before scientists began to uncover the neural mechanisms behind them, and applying Panksepp's theories of primary process emotions to the novel provides new insights into the characters of *Wuthering Heights* which are absent from the critical history of the novel. This discussion particularly strives to express how literature and the sciences can inform each other in compelling ways.

Session 7 (C) Frontier 201D

### **Gothic and Erotic Communications**

*Martin Willis.*

#### **The Archaeological Artefact as Gothic Thing**

In this paper I shall draw connections between the work of late Victorian archaeologists and writers of Gothic fiction. In particular I shall focus on the excavatory work undertaken by the Egypt Exploration Fund (and primarily the work done on their behalf by William Matthew Flinders Petrie) and the fictions of Egypt written by Bram Stoker (*The Jewel of the Seven Stars*) and Henry Rider Haggard (*She*). My aim is to investigate the ways in which both the archaeological and fictional imaginations make nonhuman artefacts into gothic 'things'. In order to do this I shall draw on the recent interest in thing theory (Brown, Mitchell, Latour), and especially on the definition of a scientific 'thing' as a multiple yet stable object, defined by its role in culture (as well as in science). I shall show how Flinders Petrie's definitions of artefacts are influenced by his reading of fiction, his view of contemporary Egypt, and his relationship to his workers, as well as by his knowledge of ancient Egyptian civilisation. In turn, I shall also interrogate the role of Egyptologists like Petrie in the fictions of Egypt written by Haggard and Stoker. I shall conclude by challenging some of the assumptions of thing theory, and especially of Latour's notion of things as defined only by their exchange within networks, with a reading of artefacts at the site of their excavation rather than in museums or other spaces of science.

*Danielle Coriale.*

#### **Supernormal Stimuli: Love Potions and Erotic Play in *Jude the Obscure***

Nikolaas Tinbergen's pioneering work on animal behavior, *The Study of Instinct* (1951), offered the first full-length account of supernormal stimuli—unnaturally intense, often artificial signals that elicit a more powerful response than the 'normal' stimulus for which the instinctual response evolved. This talk has a two-fold purpose: first, to trace the Victorian antecedents to Tinbergen's work in the zoological writings of Charles Darwin, George Romanes, and other ethologists working on animal behaviors in the nineteenth century. Though the connection has not been traced by historians of science, naturalists and ethologists noticed that certain instincts were piqued by the 'wrong' stimulus. They referred to this phenomenon as "mistaken instinct," and as I shall argue, the discourse that emerged around it supplied an antecedent to Tinbergen's work on supernormal stimuli. My second purpose is to read Thomas Hardy's fiction in light of the mistaken instincts his contemporaries observed in the animal world. Focusing on *Jude the Obscure*, I will read Arabella's erotic interludes with both Jude and the quack doctor, Vilbert, as signs of her knowledge of mistaken instinct, or to put it in post-Tinbergen terms, her expert manipulation of supernormal stimuli in erotic play. In particular, by studying her use of the love potion—a largely overlooked detail in the novel—I will suggest that Hardy experimented with the rich material that contemporary naturalists gathered from the nonhuman world—material that would culminate in Tinbergen's twentieth-century revelations about animal instinct—to make radical claims about the source and pleasure of erotic play in humans.

Session 7 (D) Frontier 202A

## **Inscribing the Experimental Body**

*Elizabeth Neswald.*

### **Agency, Resistance and Accommodation: Experimenting on and with Humans and Animals in Nutrition Physiology**

In *The Mangle of Practice*, Andrew Pickering introduces the concept of “material agency” to the study of experiments in physics. Material objects, he argues, are not passive, but instead actively shape the course of experimentation, resist its manipulations and force the experimenter to adapt his practices. This paper applies Pickering’s framework to the study of experiments on human and animal subjects in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century nutrition physiology. Oriented on the precision and methods of chemistry and physics, nutrition physiology sought to apply their experimental methods to the study of living beings. These experiments were structured to depend on control of the experimental subjects and to establish or maintain them in an object status, that is, passivity, but physiologists consistently encountered resistances that emerged from the non-conforming activity of their subjects and that consistently forced them to modify their experiments. The central difficulties of dealing with this very particular kind of object were not restricted to one part of the experimental process, but instead permeated it. In this paper I will discuss how resistance and accommodation were expressed at the levels of selecting the object, setting up the experiment, conducting the experiment and interpreting the results. Experiments in nutrition physiology show that the assumption that living subjects passively suffered the manipulations of physiological and medical experimenters must be revised to include a consideration of agency and its effects on the experimentation process.

*Sarah E. Parker.*

### **Coy Nature: The Poetics of Harvey’s Comparative Anatomy**

William Harvey’s discovery of the circulation of the blood was indebted to his adherence to the Aristotelian model of experimentia, taking a variety of examples in order to draw universal conclusions. This investigative model led Harvey to a broader interest in biological inquiry that extended beyond the category of the human. Confining oneself to the dissection of humans, Harvey argues, is comparable studying a single commonwealth and then making claims about a general system of polity. For Harvey, even the heart of a shrimp in the Thames can tell us something about circulation. As a physiological phenomenon, circulation takes on a life of its own in Harvey’s writings, as it challenges and even re-imagines the boundaries of the human, showing that the workings of all organic bodies are in fact intimately related. Abraham Cowley’s “Ode upon Dr. Harvey” shows emergent signs of the same kind of changes in animal-human relations that we find in Harvey’s dissections. The poem represents Harvey as an investigator on a hunt, chasing a virgin Nature and finally catching her hiding in the heart. The seemingly clear power relationship between the seducer-anatomist and the vanquished Nature is muddled by the fact that Harvey’s penetration into Nature’s secret draws the human into a proximal relationship to the animal that is both sexual and physiological. Harvey’s claims evidence a breakdown of the divisions between human and animal bodies, and Cowley’s poem represents an extension of this dynamic into the seemingly strictly human realm of love poetry.

*Natalie Forssman.*

### **Evolutionary attunement: Reading Darwin on the ecological trace**

Anthropologist of art Alfred Gell has argued that animal traps can be regarded as ‘texts’ on animal behaviour because a trap succeeds by acting as “a lethal parody of the animal’s Umwelt”. While a trap is a model of its maker because it bears an imprint of her actions, a functional trap is at the same time a model of its victim, embodying “parameters of the animal’s behaviour, which are subverted in order to entrap it”. And, beyond the scale of either interactant viewed in isolation, the trap is also a model of the dramatic nexus of their relations structured thorough time; it crystallizes moments of articulation between

bodies. A close reading of Charles Darwin's concept of 'selection' shows how natural selection, artificial selection, and sexual selection provide a materialist account of how traces of past ecological interactions are sedimented into particular bodily morphologies. Just as a trap can be read as a text on the behaviour and perceptual world of the animal it hopes to capture, Darwin shows a way to 'read' the Umwelt of a bee through examination of the morphology of a flower. Darwin's gathering of minute natural historical facts can thus be understood as a method that follows the 'traces' of attunements between organisms over evolutionary time.

Session 7 (E) Frontier 202B

### **The Ancient Non-Human**

Chair: *Brooke Holmes; Mark Payne*

The rise of the non-human as a theoretical category has unfolded at the edge of what has been called the posthumanities, conceived of as a radical departure from the humanistic tradition. The emphasis, not surprisingly in the light of this orientation, has been on the temporalities of present and future—less on the past (and even less on the ancient Greco-Roman past). At the same time, scholars of classical antiquity have been slow to ask questions concerning the non-human of their own material. This panel brings together four papers that aim to open up strategies for unleashing the potential of the ancient non-human to enrich—or disrupt—contemporary debates. We envision modes of inquiry that join the practice of genealogy with an attention to the strangeness of the ancient material in order to enable different historical and conceptual planes to inhabit one another.

*Emanuela Bianchi.*

### **Feminism Without Humans: Aristotelian Teleology and Aleatory Matter**

Although it is a commonplace that for Aristotle the most properly human activity is on the one hand philosophical contemplation, and on the other hand participating in political activity and thereby enacting human flourishing, this specifically human telos is also embedded in a natural teleology in which all existing things participate insofar as they act toward "what is best." The metaphysical eros inspired by the prime mover thus traverses the entire cosmos, including human beings. According to this ancient picture, then, we are less the willing, creative actors of modernity than traversed by and moved by the teleological desire for the good alongside all other beings. However, there are other more obscure forces at work in the Aristotelian cosmos found specifically in the biological writings and in the account of sexual reproduction, in which the father provides form, soul, and impetus for development to the offspring, while the mother provides simply the matter. If, further, we consider the mechanisms of heredity and formation of the female offspring, a series of unaccountable material forces (loosening, changing into opposites, destruction, falling short, mutilation) come into view that disrupt the smooth teleological unfoldings of nature. I argue that these "feminine symptoms" of aleatory matter and its random processes haunt the Aristotelian cosmos, in turn traversing the boundaries of species and kinds of being, reappearing even in Aristotelian cosmology, poetics and politics, signaling a continual textual demand for masculine mastery and hierarchical order. Here, feminist critique is disclosed as a distinctly non-humanist methodology.

*Brooke Holmes.*

### **Galen on the Life of Plants**

Interest in the origins of an ontology of life in the West has largely been concentrated on Aristotle. For it's Aristotle who first makes the cut between bios and zōē, taken up in recent years by Giorgio Agamben. And it's Aristotle who first develops the concept of psychē (soul) as "life-in-itself," as Eugene Thacker has emphasized. But the question of life isn't exhausted by Aristotle in antiquity. In this paper, I take up one aspect of its elaboration in the physician-philosopher Galen of Pergamum, among the most influential Greek thinkers of vital materialism in subsequent centuries. One of the most interesting aspects of Galen's thinking is his attempt to understand the intelligence of plant life, which is to say not only the life of plants but also the vegetal stratum of all organisms. Plato had denied a soul to plants in most of his

dialogues. Yet in the *Timaeus*, he does allow a kind of sensation (*aisthēsis*) to plants (77a). Galen picks up where Plato leaves off. Against Aristotle, who denies both sensation and movement to plants, and the Stoics, who divided plants from animals (as *physis* versus *psychē*), Galen speculates on a faculty in plants (and the vegetal stratum in animals) that sustains life through the perception of pleasure and pain. By disrupting the stratifications of soul in Aristotle and the binarism of Stoic thinking, such a faculty undermines the quarantining of intelligence within humans in these philosophies and yields new terrain within ancient ontologies of life.

*Mark Payne.*

### **Poetry as a Practice of Immanence**

Recent work in theoretical ecology has proposed the poetic text as a site for the recuperation of a practice of immanence. The poetological narrative of this practice is, I suggest, to be found in the myth of the Titans. So Friedrich Schiller, in his *Letters on Aesthetic Education*, makes the Titanomachy an allegory of the emergence of aesthetic semblance as a distinctively human form of play, in contrast to the vital exuberance of the nonhuman: the latter, though non-purposive, is, as self-expression, subject to an inner determination, and so cannot be, as the former is, an experience of the mediation of freedom and determination in a single being. Titan mind in this schema is therefore a kind of failed transcendence, or transcendence towards immanence; the outcome of the failure to seize and possess Olympian being as freedom from inner determination. In Hölderlin's Pindaric odes, and Keats's Hyperion poems, it is the consciousness proper to poethood: as the poet-Titan falls short of his Olympian ambitions, he is "thrust back among the living" to become the imprisoned consciousness of the material cosmos he had labored to transcend. The poet thus lives out the fate of the Titans as it is imagined in ancient lyric poetry. The old gods are incarcerated in this world, and the encounter with them is figured as autopsy and auto-acoustics. Goaded into phenomenal display as a condition of their confinement, the Titans can only show themselves as what they really are, and, in accommodating this experience of their immanence, ancient lyric makes palpable the material excess in its own appearance as aesthetic semblance. In disclosing the place of the Titans in the Olympian regime, poetry cannot help but signal its divergence from it.

*Alex Purves.*

### **The Man in the Background: Prehuman and Nonhuman in Homeric Poetry**

This paper's aim is twofold. In the first place, it seeks to revitalize the old concept of the Homeric prehuman (that is, as early scholars such as Bruno Snell put it, a character without any real sense of agency or mind/body split). Although this conceit of the Homeric character was founded on undesirable positivist models, it is nevertheless useful to revisit for its alienating potential. In what ways, for example, can Homer's presentation of this prehuman kind of being productively disrupt that other and still fairly predominant mode of reading, which insists on seeing Achilles as all too human? Second and more substantially, this paper will engage with the thick materiality of the Homeric world, arguing against the traditional scholarly placement of Homeric figures in a brightly lit and empty foreground. By drawing attention to how characters orient themselves towards and from the materials and environment that surround them (here I follow work such as Sara Ahmed's "Orientations Matter"), I aim to show that the role of these elements in affecting and shaping Homeric "humanness" deserves to be better noticed. Rethinking the position of Homeric man in relation to this background allows for a more dynamic and fluid, as well as more specifically ancient, notion of the line between human and nonhuman to emerge.

Session 7 (F) Frontier 202D

### **Performance, Sacrifice, and Abolition**

*Alyce Miller.*

### **How Many Have to Die: The Sacrificed Animal in American Fiction**



Though this paper primarily focuses on American "realist" fiction, the deaths of non-human animals permeate literature of all stripes. I will narrow down the role of these sacrificed animals to illuminate three particular recurring patterns. The first, a staple of the coming-of-age story, involves the tragic end of a non-human animal to whom the young protagonist has bonded: dog, horse, deer, etc. Typically the protagonists are young adolescent boys whose attachments to these non-human animals must be broken to further their ascent into a narrowly circumscribed version of heteronormative manhood. The other two tropes involve the "animal" as a metonym for "woman" (some with a critique involved, some not), and animals that are generally mistreated or surrendered for the sake of human relationships, often to restore some semblance of marital and/or family order. The "sacrificed" animal's untimely and often violent end may lead to an epiphany of some sort for the protagonists. In other cases, the sacrifice is far more ambiguous. In this presentation I will explore the implications of these animal figures in fiction and their deeper connections to the lived world.

*Michelle Lindenblatt.*

### **Play, Performance, and the Animal Event**

If it is difficult to write about animals without capturing them, how might performance facilitate an exploration of animality that does not seek to ensnare animals within structures of humanism? This paper seeks to foster a connection between animals and events. An event is, according to Badiou, Derrida, and others, something of an interruption, an invention, that which is new and yet repeated. Keeping in mind that there is a distinction between performance and event, the paper questions whether events are event-al precisely because they are infused with animality, or if there are other elements at play. In a challenge to performance's exclusion of animals, it asks how performance can help us arrive at a more complex and nuanced understanding of animality. In an effort to describe a practice that amounts to animality, I argue that a well-known bit of animal behavior, the canid play bow, is performatively crucial to understanding the animal event. My case studies include PETA's demonstrations which replicate "die-ins," including their protests against the Running of the Bulls and their "Flesh" campaign, for the salient ways in which they explore key issues relating to animality, including stasis, multiplicity, and presence. I use them to interrogate our desire for presence itself, calling upon the recent theoretical work of Amelia Jones and Emma Cocker, and bringing in the work of contemporary animal-based artists (including Olly and Suzi). What is behind our desire to make present, and what is the relation between this desire and the desire for (or against) re-presentation, particularly as it pertains to the nonhuman animal? How does presence complicate the infinite repository of animal marks?

*Brigitte Fielder.*

### **Abolitionist Legacies**

In 2011, PETA sued Sea World for "enslaving" orca whales. The fact that most people dismissed PETA's claims is, perhaps, unsurprising. This dismissal is primarily rooted in a common prioritization of the human – the idea that only humans can be enslaved. As Animal Studies theorists such as Cary Wolfe note, this prioritization of the human is what makes processes of dehumanization possible. The idea that slavery is not relegated to the nineteenth-century is not easily dismissed. Claims of modern-day enslavement have long been made by the prison abolitionist movement, most popularly associated with radical thinkers such as Angela Davis. The racialization of criminality and the demographics of the American carceral system make a feasible case for an historical link between the nineteenth-century enslavement and twentieth- and twenty-first-century incarceration of African American men, in particular. My paper makes connections between two basic present-day social activism arguments that claim to continue the abolitionist cause: the prison abolition and animal liberation movements. While the ties each of these movements makes to abolitionism are familiar, theorists have not thoroughly examined the connection between the argument to abolish the incarceration of people and the captivity of animals. My discussion focuses on twentieth- and twenty-first century appropriations of nineteenth-century abolitionist language and claims of historical ties to abolitionism, which figure prominently in the similar rhetorics of the prison abolition and animal rights movements. As I draw connections between historical

discussions of race and species, these movements' claims to a shared history of abolitionism become clearer.

Session 7 (G)

Session 7 (H) Frontier 203A

### **Family Resemblances and Videogame Histories**

Chair: *Patrick Jagoda*

Critical Games Studies Stream Session 3

*Zach Whalen.*

#### **A Counterfactual Historiography of Three Game Platforms**

In most narratives of videogame history, one console generation replaces its predecessors in a more or less orderly succession of technical prowess, orders of processor magnitude or degrees photorealistic verisimilitude. The historical significance of any of the platforms that comprise this more or less unbroken chain connecting the past to the present is, therefore, bound up in the assumption that the evolutionary tree of natural videogame selection leaves behind those platforms whose influences are no longer evident in contemporary games. But what of those dead end branches, those systems whose interface schemas were ahead of their own time but not (yet) in our time either? Or those whose constraints led to stagnation instead of a flourish of creativity? In this paper, I will examine three home videogame consoles more noteworthy for their failures to influence any descendants: Fairchild's Channel F: Video Entertainment System, the GCE Vectrex Arcade System, and Nintendo's Virtual Boy. For each, I will present a counterfactual history where the distinctive properties of these systems went on to influence later innovations.

*Ian Bogost.*

#### **Bone of My Bones and Flesh of my Flesh: The Genesis of Ms. Pac-Man**

This talk discusses the conceptual and technical origins of Ms. Pac-Man. While the game is widely thought of as a sequel to Pac-Man, it was actually an unauthorized mod created by General Computing Corporation and later licensed to Bally, who published the game without Namco's license authorization. I will discuss the technical details of coin-op platforms of the early 1980s along with coin-op enhancement kits for background, including technical details about Pac-Man's Zilog Z-80-based hardware and the various enhancement kits that allowed arcade operators to improve coin-op games without investing in entirely new cabinets. Then I will explain the story of Crazy Otto, the GCC "mod" that eventually became Ms. Pac-Man. Finally, I will discuss the gendered aspects of Ms. Pac-Man, including a comparison of the cabinet's creation to the story of the creation of man and woman in Genesis, along with a rumination on the game's title, specifically what it means that this character was called "Ms."

*Nick Montfort.*

#### **Three Family Reunions and Some Black Sheep**

Computer and video games, the topic of this Critical Game Studies stream, have developed to their current state because of a number of cultural factors, historical circumstances, and corporate concepts. While everyone knows that Wittgenstein described games as having "family resemblances," the family tree of computer and video games is usually examined quite selectively. These games have three major ancestries which are obvious when one uses the phrase "computer and video games": - Computing, the ability to manipulate symbols electronically that has been realized using general-purpose processors, - Video and specifically the television, which is one of several output devices but certainly the most important, and - Games, those well-known rule-based activities with optional consequences and magic circles around them. In these three lines are some neglected family members. Certain games, such as card

and board games, are taken to be essential parts of a computer and video game design syllabus, but even pinball has received little consideration and games such as darts and billiards, along with carnival games, less so. Relevant sorts of computing include hobbyist programming or "recreational computing," digital art, digital literature, demoscene productions, and other less classifiable sorts of creative work with computing -- but such work has essentially been ostracized from game studies and game design. In this discussion I try to show that, critically and in terms of creative production, activating some of these family connections can open up new possibilities.

Session 7 (I) Frontier 203B

**Posthumanist Approaches to the Nonhuman - A Transatlantic Comparison (Roundtable)**

Chair: *Manuela Rossini*

In English Departments and beyond, 'theory' and its aftermaths have been dominated by US- and UK-based institutions, publishers, journals and academics. Yet the influence of theory in its Anglo-American forms has always been reliant on Continental European ideas. Similar patterns can be discerned within the latest theoretical paradigm, posthumanism. Posthumanism challenges established understandings of humanism, anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism, and is characterised by the increased urgency and proliferation of questions such as 'What does it mean to be human?' and 'What is the relationship between humans and their nonhuman others (animals, plants, the inorganic, machines, gods, systems, and various figures of liminality, from ghosts to angels, from cyborgs to zombies)?' Theorists such as Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, Cary Wolfe and Bruce Clarke have developed their thinking through prolonged engagement with Continental European philosophical traditions and theorizations of system-environment interaction. This roundtable proposes to map and critically examine the genealogies, geographies, practices of appropriation, and politics of translation which have been at work in the rise of posthumanism and its figurations of the nonhuman. In the process, it also asks the larger question of whether posthumanism, as the latest stage in the long history of (critiques of) humanism, might be seen as anticipating or challenging theory to a certain extent. Related to this theoretical reflection is also an institutional concern: have different university structures also led to a different development of – or resistance to – what the contributors call the 'posthumanities' and a concomitant engagement with nonhuman subjectivity?

*Ivan Callus.*

**Contribution**

*Bruce Clarke.*

**Contribution**

*Stefan Herbrechter.*

**Contribution**

*Manuela Rossini.*

**Contribution**

*Cary Wolfe.*

**Contribution**

Session 7 (J) Frontier 203D

**Cyborgs: Past, Present, and Future**

Chair: *Michaela Giesenkirchen Sawyer*

This panel explores aspects of non- or trans-human incarnations of the human in our imagination. We will evaluate philosophical, critical, and political approaches to thinking about our possible trans-human

future—or past. And we will investigate how, in an apparent defense against such a future, current steam-punk culture uses elements of the mechanistic futurism of the past to construct its present.

*Wayne B. Hanewicz.*

### **Not Thinking about the Non-Human**

The rapid transition in technology and its potential application to the evolution of humanity has raised both enthusiasm and great concern. Further along in this evolution, some see a kind of human that should not bear the label, others a kind of human that will carry the label to the heights for which it was meant. I propose that we are not thinking about this issue in the most useful way. In fact, I propose to examine Heidegger's view that we are not thinking at all! Our opportunity is not in the form and constituents of a human being, but in the way we understand and use the capacity most often noted as the defining characteristic of being human, viz., thinking. Toward this end, I will review Heidegger's understanding of what it means to think, and complement his view with the views of others, most notably David Bohm (a quantum physicist) and the Buddhist understanding of the both the process and goal of thinking. I will conclude with an examination of the prospects for replicating this more genuine thinking process through machine programming and the psychological, cultural and moral concerns this technology raises. An examination of how we think will have important consequences for the humanities since the symbolism and metaphorical nature that characterizes these disciplines also possess a capability for representing the world that opens the door to the kind of thinking encouraged by these authors.

*Andrew Hageman.*

### **Steampunk Cogs vs. the Circuits of Post-Industrial Capitalism**

In the 1980s, the computer became the dominant machine in the social imaginary, and cyberpunk became the dominant form of science fiction. Since the 1990s, however, a generic shift to steampunk has occurred, bringing with it countless cogs. This paper argues that these resurgent cogs represent a machine figure of collectivity very different from the figure of computer-networked multitudes extolled by thinkers like Hardt and Negri. But steampunk narratives do not simply re-deploy the ideal of becoming a "cog in the machine." Rather, the steampunk cogs in literature and film today enable us to re-imagine collectivity as a strange machine that is becoming visible as we build it. This paper addresses a range of texts, from fiction by William Gibson and Neal Stephenson to "Occupy Wall Street" machine imagery and contemporary political theory.

*Michaela Giesenkirchen Sawyer.*

### **Steampunk Nostalgia: Recycled Cyborgs in *Hugo* and *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*.**

This paper explores steampunk culture's apparent need to cast visions of our cybernetic future in the image of a simpler, more accessible futuristic past. Material steampunk culture repurposes industrial items into hybrid things evoking both past and future, human and non-human worlds. In a time where recycling and repurposing are flourishing for economic reasons alone, holding on to mechanical things in an imaginative, humanizing way creates a comfort zone of continuities. It represents a realm of creativity that offsets the widespread fear of the creation of a technological future no longer graspable by the ordinary imagination or cast in the image of humankind. At the same time that cybernetic processes converge ever more closely with those immensely complex organic ones with which humans most readily identify aesthetically, it is, interestingly, turn-of-the-19th century mechanistic technology that is most appealing in popular contemporary aesthetics. Martin Scorsese's recent film *Hugo*, as well as the latest Sherlock Holmes film *A Game of Shadows*, I argue, are prime examples of such present-day steampunk nostalgia. They both nostalgically recycle and repurpose historic literary or filmic materials from times fascinated with mechanistic technology and its potential for aesthetic pleasure and humanistic fulfillment. At the same time, both films are haunted by traumatic visions of the technological eclipse of the human.

## Object-Oriented Feminism 2—CLOSER 1: Getting Closer

Chair: *Katherine Behar*

“CLOSER 1: Getting Closer” explores how humans and things are drawn close through practices. Using object-oriented feminism as a mode of inquiry, this panel asks how practices constitute relationships between humans and things. Across the arts, sciences, humanities, and everyday life, objects and practices compose themselves in particular, sometimes peculiar, arrangements. We human and nonhuman things rely on and reframe each other in relationships of practice, performance, ritual, habit, use, and abuse. But how do human and nonhuman things organize into and through practices? When we *get together* with objects, are we, in fact, *getting closer*?

*Katherine Hayles.*

### The Technogenetic Spiral

The co-evolution of humans and technics is true not only of the paleolithic period but also the contemporary period. Through brain plasticity and synaptic modulation, human cognition continues to engage with the evolution of technical objects, specifically networked and programmable machines. This talk will explore the trajectory of contemporary ontogenic evolution, the directions it is taking, and the interventions that are possible. In general, the impetus is toward greater information density, more (and more flexible) information streams, more demands on human attention, and greater and greater machine-machine communication. The implications of this trajectory will be discussed and examples of creative interventions demonstrated.

*Timothy Morton.*

### Closer than Hands and Feet: Plato's Cave and the Proximity of Things

As an exponent of OOO, I will present a view of objects that counter-intuitively posits them as irreducibly “close,” despite their reputation for being distant, “objectified,” background beings. This proximity cannot be thought as immediacy; rather, it is the ultimate subversion of the metaphysics of presence. The metaphysics of presence depends upon a certain visuality and upon a certain distance. Object-oriented ontology (OOO) subverts the metaphysics of presence by arguing that all beings withdraw, that is, they are incapable of being (fully) accessed by another entity: my idea of this glass is not the glass, the parts of the glass are not the glass, and so on. “Withdraw” cannot be thought ontically: it cannot be thought as distancing in space or time. Withdrawal rather underscores the unspeakable suchness of a thing. Withdrawal is a paradoxical term, since it might be better to imagine what it consists in as an intimacy or proximity that makes a thing impossible to access because it is too close. Impossible to “see” not because they are too far away but because they are too intimate, objects crowd upon one another like characters in an Expressionist carnival. They cannot be fully subjected or subjugated by us (or indeed by anything). Non-metaphysical proximity is better thought when we replace the language of vision with a language of kinesthesia. A reading of Plato's allegory of the Cave will establish this.

*Patricia Ticineto Clough.*

### As a Child I Prayed: Inhabiting the Other Dimensions of a Childhood Faith

This performance piece focuses on the objects that make prayer an efficacious act, in this case a child's use of rosary beads to ward off a mother's practices and paraphernalia for removing the evil eye. Setting my own childhood experience along side the discussion of the aesthetic taken up in recent philosophical discussions about objects, the performance piece will consider what kind of measure aesthetics gives that would enable a differentiation between the objects of these two acts: a removal of the evil eye and praying to guard against a mother's untoward behavior. How are the objects used in both practices full of beauty—attractive and repulsive—too close to or too far from ordinary objects? The performance contrasts the way in which the aesthetic domain often has been considered by philosophers to be the realm of evil while speculative realists and object-oriented philosophers seem drawn to reengage the darkness of the liveliness of objects, their beauty.

*Katherine Behar.*

**Bigger Than You**

Big data refers to the massive quantity of records that are captured, amassed, and mined in the wake of digitally structured actions. This paper arrives at the nonhuman by following big data as it restructures the human. Beginning with the work that humans –in the conventional sense *individual subjects* – do as the producers of big data, we’ll see how, big data *unproduces* and *deindividualizes* its subjects to become transhuman objects, calling to question conventional wisdom that humans are defined entities, and that individual and collective performances are a central binding pillar of social existence through which bodies are drawn into relations of power and pathos. Comparing the bigness of big data with the bigness of obesity, we find both use similar strategies to contend with unwieldiness. Through managerial gestures of reduction, and what Lauren Berlant calls “actuarial rhetoric,” these nonhuman objects rearticulate the human object as a pattern, both diffuse and engorged, emerging temporally and temporarily in statistics and profiles. Such big forms lead, entropically, toward generality. Profiles blur, identity loses specificity, and being is rendered vague. Drawing on Elizabeth Grosz’s politics of imperceptibility, the paper concludes by questioning the big as a political form.

*Eileen Joy; Rebekah Sheldon.*

**Response**

Response to CLOSER 1: Getting Closer

Session 7 (L) Frontier 201B

**The Coevolution of Tekhne and Communication**

*Eivind Prof. Rossaak.*

**Teaching Tekhne: Leroi-Gourhan, Derrida, Stiegler**

New technology plays a key role in the current transformation of the arts and the humanities. However, technology and its complex relationship to the tradition of tekhnē (as skill, learning, craft) is only hinted at in the most recent document on the future of education. In the large multi-authored introduction to the humanities for Norwegian Universities (Jordheim 2008), even Prometheus has become a God of the Geist rather than of tekhnē, and, alas, hermeneutics and the role of internalizing ideas take center stage. Bernard Stiegler’s research during two decades has been instrumental for understanding the tradition of tekhnē as a long history of the gradual externalization of skills. A focus on the term tekhnē and its long history in European thought, rather than on the younger term media, can help us get a more precise grip on the way new technologies (including new media) produce deeper transformations in the relationship between the subject, the machine and the world. More than ever the complexity of this “other” tradition focusing on tekhnē is of utmost importance. This paper will assess its development as it co-evolved in the writings of three influential French thinkers focusing on memory (André Leroi-Gourhan), writing (Jacques Derrida) and the computer (Bernard Stiegler). Their understanding of tekhnē as “programme”, “différance” and “techno-genèse” offers an interesting supplement and in some respects a precursor to the more well-known, but less philosophically motivated, German media-archaeological tradition.

*Mark Martinez.*

**Purposive Communicative Technologies beyond Human Scale**

My paper proposes a media studies that foregrounds technologies as historical and communicative agents. Specifically, I trace the computer as a catalyst of crises in communication theories and certain key features of modernity that work through binary epistemologies. Informed by radical histories in science and technology studies and immanentist philosophies, respectively, my work posits a non-teleological historical time and a non-semantic theory of communication within the field of new media studies. Computers have largely been analyzed through a lens of human purpose that presumes a teleological

timeline and anthropocentric bias of meaningfulness. Media technologies must be translated through hermeneutic approaches into a type of language, whether discursive, formal, or visual. The computer becomes its human constructed purpose through what it does: the figure of digital information. Similarly, the interface delimits the communicative tendencies of the computer beyond its role as a screen technology. Instead, I take information and the interface and theorize them beyond hermeneutic and visual approaches that assume them to be either an extension of human language (code, software) or as a convergence of prior visual media. Information is not semantic or discursive meaning, but rather a physical organism. Similarly an interface is not a relationship between a screen and a human visual intelligence, but is instead an affective and physical point of contact. The emphasis on the physical does not exhaust the possibilities of communication, but as an opening up of a flat ontology delimits emphasizing representational and constructionist registers when humans communicate with nonhuman beings.

*Robert Wilkie.*

**The Spontaneous Ideology of Systems: Posthuman Specificity and Class Totality"**

My paper examines the posthumanist presupposition of writers such as Judith Butler (*Precarious Life*), and Slavoj Žižek (*Living in End Times*) that contemporary society is an endless series of "dislocating effects and a proliferation of new antagonisms" without any "single 'inside' logic" (Laclau, *On Populist Reason*). According to this model, influentially articulated by Niklas Luhmann, the shift from a "monocontextural" past to a "polycontextural" present means "the reproduction of society was distributed among a plurality of non-redundant function systems such as the economy, art, science, law, and politics, each of which operates on the basis of its own, system-specific logic" ("Foreword"). In this sense, any division between the human and the nonhuman that underlined the modern idea of identity and totality presumes the possibility of observation from outside the very system which constructs the difference. Thus, the distinction between the human and the nonhuman is, according to Luhmann, an effect of a system that depends upon the illusion of humanity as "a unity that...lies at the foundation of itself and everything else" separate from "nonhuman" nature. However, Luhmann suggests, "today there is little hope for a continuation of [such] transcendental reflection" (*Social Systems*). Contrasting Luhmann's theory of "functional differentiation" with Marx's theory of society as a totality governed by the mode of production (*Capital*), I argue contemporary readings of society replicate what Louis Althusser called the "spontaneous ideology of the scientists": an analogy of unequal surfaces which ideologically displace, rather than uncover, the causes of social and economic inequality.

Session 7 (M) Frontier 202C

**Book Panel -- Kari Weil's *Thinking the Animal: Why Animal Studies Now***

*Ron Broglio.*

**Presentation**

*Susan McHugh.*

**Presentation**

*Sherryl Vint.*

**Presentation**

*Kari Weil.*

**Presentation**

Session 8 - Sat 10:30am - 12pm

Session 8 (A) Frontier 201A

**Identity, Relationality, and Ideology: An Affective Neuroscientific Approach**

Chair: *Leslie Heywood*

The papers in this panel utilize a framework based in affective neuroscience to establish how literature, rather than being a dated artistic form that has no cultural currency, can serve as an “affective map” that charts the relationship between the unconscious primary process brain mechanisms associated with affect and the secondary process mechanisms associated with memory and cultural learning. By providing this map, literature shows how the cultural processes through which norms are internalized unconsciously become visible, creating the space for alternative learning. The papers provide examples of these processes by focusing on the creation of identity in stone butch lesbian communities in Leslie Feinberg’s *Stone Butch Blues*, the construction of relationality in Jonathan Franzen’s *Freedom*, and the internalization of ideological codes in the running subculture represented in John Parker’s *Once a Runner*. The papers collectively make the case for the value of literature as a cultural form that reveals a neurobiology of the emotions as these are ideologically structured, giving us an “affective map” that puts the bio-cultural processes of identity formation on display. Combining a “nonhuman” (as in non-humanities) template with humanities subject matter, that subject matter is transformed.

*Karen Moroski.*

**Singing the Blues: Affective Process and the Historicity of Queer Gender Identity as Performed By Stone Butch Lesbians**

Often, science and gender studies work in opposition -- one seeking to explain the intrinsic, the other to explain the culturally-mapped. However, a more nuanced understanding of neuroscience's effects on affect, gender presentation, and contextualization show powerful links between both fields -- links evidenced through Leslie Feinberg's novel "Stone Butch Blues." As the novel follows its protagonist, Jess Goldberg, from her childhood label as "invert" to her adult identity as a butch woman and her struggles with being transgender in mid-twentieth century America, one can see neurophilosopher Patricia Churchland's theory of in-groups and acceptance in action as it shapes Jess's ability to form connections. When Jess takes on the identities of "lesbian," or "butch," we see a cultural inheritance mechanism at work that employ strands of Damasio's work with brain mapping, and the powers of memory upon present action. Combining these findings with theories of gender and marginalization from Halberstam's "Female Masculinity," and analyzing the impact of Second-Wave Feminism on butch culture and identity helps to paint a picture of gender identity as an interrelated nexus of affective response and cognitive process. As we come to see Jess's life as a result of these forces, the intersection of these fields suggests that though stone butches have identities shaped by cultural inheritance mechanisms and social experiences, they also possess affective responses that, in this case through trauma and the dysregulation of that affect, inform and are shaped by those cultural mechanisms and experiences.

*Leslie Heywood.*

**Affective Maps: Literature as Emotional Endophenotype**

Recent work in affective neuroscience (neuroscientist Jaak Panksepp) has begun to provide a framework for neural mapping and the relationship between the primary process affective mechanisms and the secondary process mechanisms related to memory and cultural learning. The specific ways these primary and secondary process mechanisms inform each other is still unclear. Based on a reading of Panksepp’s work, literature such as John Parker’s *Once a Runner* might be shown to interact with the biology of our brains in such a way as to provide a model for how affect and physiological response inform cognition. What Panksepp calls “emotional endophenotypes”—maps of the biological infrastructure of mentation—are provided by literature, which functions as a device to bring the unconscious processes through which affect interacts with ideology to produce behavior into focus. Literature maps the interactive process between primary process affect and secondary-process cultural learning where dominant ideologies



function to structure affective response, putting these processes on display and bringing them into consciousness, thus creating the possibility for alternative constructions.

*Rebecca Young.*

**A Reason to Read: Neuroscience and Morality in Jonathan Franzen's Freedom**

As technology, math, and science are valued to the exclusion of the humanities in current discussions about education, we find ourselves defending the relevance of literary studies. But in the discourse on reforming American education, constructing models in which the humanities and sciences reinforce each other could be our most successful educational paradigm. In this paper, I propose such a shift and address its implications through perspectives in both fields. Specifically, I apply Patricia S. Churchland's (2011) *Braintrust: What Neuroscience Tells Us about Morality* to Jonathan Franzen's (2010) novel *Freedom*. Relationship dynamics between selfish and altruistic characters in *Freedom* expose moral and ethical implications for human behavior in our current culture, particularly in the environmental dilemmas we face. By examining the link between our neuroscientifically-based motivations and socially productive expectations, Franzen's novel promotes healthy reconciliation of our competitive and prosocial selves in order to navigate today's complex world. As an educational tool, this novel challenges us to change our personal, social, and cultural behaviors, and is a persuasive defense of literature and a caution for our future.

Session 8 (B) Frontier 201C

**Sickening Stories: Reading and Writing American Disease Narratives, 1793-1859**

Chair: *Cristobal Silva*

One of the primary tenants of actor-network theory states that the "social" is an active field assembled by webs of interacting agents, both human and nonhuman. As nonhuman actors, narratives and diseases move in the same kinds of patterns and directions, touching and affecting humans as they spread. This panel examines case studies from the early national and antebellum period to elucidate how infectious stories and narrativized contagions exert agency. In keeping with Cristobal Silva's recent argument in *Miraculous Plagues*, these papers consider how transmissible disorders have helped to construct written expression. From yellow fever and smallpox to cholera, epidemic disease has left its mark on American literature. Dr. Sari Altschuler's (USF) paper on the yellow fever epidemic of 1793 analyzes Charles Brockden Brown's Arthur Mervyn to argue that the novel functions as a means of narrative inoculation against the crisis of the fever. Sarah Schuetze (ABD,UKY) studies the periodicals that emerge from the cholera epidemic of 1832, specifically the *Cholera Gazette*, and argues fictional and nonfictional records popularize the disease by adopting motifs from sensational fiction but also its periodical form. Kelly Bezio (ABD, UNC) examines how the effort to depict the 1853 New Orleans yellow fever epidemic in Reizenstein's novel *The Mysteries of New Orleans* (1854-55) self-reflexively critiques the urban gothic's patriarchal, heteronormative imperatives. This panel argues that catastrophic epidemics do not simply influence narratives; they generate what could be called a hybrid genre of disease narratives that has significant social, medical, and literary impact.

*Kelly Bezio.*

**Bodies and Pleasures in New Orleans: Lesbian Desire and Yellow Fever Narratives in Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein's *The Mysteries of New Orleans* (1854-**

In his introduction to the English edition of Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein's *The Mysteries of New Orleans* (1854-55), editor and translator Steven Rowan paradoxically both acknowledges the author's sympathetic treatment of lesbian lovers Orleana and Claudine as "a gentle revolt" against patriarchal dominations and simultaneously dismisses the "lesbian episode" as "serv[ing] no purpose in moving the plot forward" (xxx). This paper argues that the portion of *Mysteries* dedicated to the New Orleans outpost of Lesbos is no mere interlude, but a narrative salvo aimed at the oppressive rhetoric of divine retribution structuring stories about the 1853 yellow fever outbreak in that city. I examine how Reizenstein plays

with the generic formula of the urban gothic novel (popularized by Eugene Sue in France and Ned Buntline in the United States) in order to create narrative spaces in which bodies and their pleasures could be freed from technologies of surveillance and discipline mobilized in times of epidemic crisis. Reizenstein aims to elucidate how even progressive narratives (like that found in the novel's framing of yellow fever as a punishment for Southern slavery) can become oppressive and deadly. As a German émigré and a Southerner, the author uses his perspective as an outsider to create new narrative for American solidarity that offer acceptance instead of assimilation or exclusion.

*Sari Altschuler.*

**Narrative Inoculation: Charles Brockden Brown, Elihu Hubbard Smith, and the Circulation of Republican Health**

This paper examines the collaborative medico-literary discourse of Dr. Elihu Hubbard Smith and his friend, popular novelist Charles Brockden Brown in the late eighteenth century. Focusing principally on Smith's *Institutions of the Republic of Utopia* (unpublished) and Brown's *Arthur Mervyn* (1799-1800), I contend that, particularly in the wake of Smith's death, Brown sought new ways to promote the health of citizens. In that period, Brown rejected Smith's vision of the circulation of healthy information in favor of what I term "narrative inoculation." Narrative inoculation names fiction's power to secure the physiological health of citizen-readers through exposure. In *Arthur Mervyn*, gothic turmoil and narrative uncertainty force readers into a situation of discomfort or, quite literally, disease in order to foster a new kind of empathy and a compulsion toward social engagement. Whereas Elihu Hubbard Smith and his mentor Benjamin Rush celebrated circulation even as they feared it, Charles Brockden Brown's *Arthur Mervyn* proposes an innovative solution. A hotly contested medical practice, inoculation exposed the circulatory systems of healthy individuals to disease. It might make them temporarily sick, but it ultimately inured them to more potent exposure. Narrative inoculation, then, placed able-bodied readers in the emotional and psychological position of the sick to inure them against narratives of disease that might actually harm them. Because of Smith and Brown's belief in the physiological effects of narrative, narrative inoculation was not only a psychological but a physiological prophylactic. It also offers a new model for the cultural work of fiction.

*Sarah Schuetze.*

**Pop Sick: The Serialization of Cholera in American Periodicals**

In 1832, Americans are anticipating yet dreading the invasion of cholera, which has been radiating across Europe for a year. A young doctor writes to his father from Paris to say he hopes America can escape cholera's evils, which he witnesses daily. Many Americans devote significant time to establishing and interpreting signs and portents that forecast cholera's arrival, all the while hoping for reassurance that America will be spared. Once cholera arrives, the sickness and panic spreads along with the literature it produces. As I argue in this essay, cholera becomes popularized and mass marketed through serial publications, a central format for sensational literature. American Sensational fiction, urban narratives characterized by mystery, horror, grotesque bodies written quickly and printed cheaply in the 1830s and 40s, is a product of the diversity and congestion of cities—not unlike cholera. Therefore, when cholera lands in America, the disease gets absorbed into the popular sensational medial of the 1830s. My paper draws together examples from a variety of text types but focuses primarily on excerpts from the serial newspaper the *Cholera Gazette* and Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Sphinx." Using the literary model of sensational serials, as demonstrated by Poe's story, I suggest traditionally "nonliterary" records of cholera like the *Cholera Gazette*, despite having an informative purpose, employ the hallmarks of popular serial publications; in addition, I suggest that this and subsequent outbreaks of cholera gets written into the medical-historical record as a sensational, serialized narrative.

Session 8 (C) Frontier 201D

**Figuring Catastrophes**

*Hiroko Washizu.*

### **How to Tame a Beast: Cultural Interpretation of Natural Disasters**

The devastation of March 11, 2011, unveiled the difficulty of earthquake predictions. Even with today's plate tectonics, the underground remains a mystery, resisting direct observations and defying easy measures. Before the advent of Western geology, earthquakes in Japan were attributed to distempered catfish wriggling underground. The earthquake was, in fact, one of the four worst disasters, followed by "thunder," "conflagration" and "patriarchal father." Though the last one has now lost its authority, and the second and third have become avoidable/preventable, these disasters were regarded as "natural" not because they could be explained by natural laws (as in the Western science) but because they were beyond human comprehension. Note also that one catfish rampages once and for all: if Catfish A was responsible for the earthquake last year, Catfish B in 1995 and so on. There was no coherent overall "theory" or "law" to organize separate incidents scattered through history. What we now call science presuppose a system/order behind separate phenomena. Put metaphorically, catfish in this picture are delegated in accordance with the prescribed schedule whose sole planner has every responsibility and authority. "Science," then, is another frame of reference to make nature intelligible to human senses. It thus retains its original character shaped by monotheistic worldview. By comparing the late Edo world, teeming with eight million gods, with its Western contemporary at the time when the word "scientist" was coined, we can question the contrast between the "two cultures."

*Justin Derry.*

### **Contested Nonhuman Agents and Crisis in Film**

The focus of this paper will be on the problematic correlationist function that crisis and nihilism play to figure nonhuman agents in the films *Contagion* (Soderbergh, 2011) and *Melancholia* (von Trier, 2011). The virus in *Contagion* and the planet in *Melancholia* exist correlationally to a particular humanistic and anti-humanistic experience of crisis and nihilism, and thus, the nonhuman agents are subjects of, and subject to, specific techno-scientific, political and cultural material and discursive realities. This paper attempts to critically interrogate the competing humanistic and anti-humanistic approaches in the films to human/nonhuman correlationism – and how these human/nonhuman relations pattern particular nature/culture, subject/object boundaries which are problematic for a speculative more-than-humanistic accounting of nonhuman agents. In the film, crisis and nihilism operate as visualization and materialization technologies that figure how the nonhuman actors materially and discursively emerge for and in relation to a particular humanistic and anti-humanistic subject position. As visualization and materialization technologies, crisis and nihilism can be seen to act as particular regimes of attraction that hold, maintain and open particular human/nonhuman relations that pattern scientific, cultural and political action and knowledge. Crisis and nihilism figure and inform how these nonhuman actors come to matter for particular humanistic and anti-humanistic subject positions. It is the aim of this paper to critically challenge the limitations of the humanistic and anti-humanistic subject positions of these films, and to question speculative approaches to account for a more-than-human world that these films only gesture towards.

*Kimberly DeFazio.*

### **Catastrophe Chasing and the Question of Materialism**

An expanding range of posthuman scholarship has become focused on the disastrous event of trauma, catastrophe, terror, and violence and the importance of such events in shaping the cultural imaginations of the present and the past. My paper is a critical inquiry into the place of de Man's reading of the Romantics in contemporary readings of disaster. Focusing on de Man's reading of Shelley, I will show how de Man's claim that "nothing, whether deed, word, thought, or text, ever happens in relation, positive or negative, to anything that precedes, follows, or exists elsewhere, but only as a random event whose power, like the power of death, is due to the randomness of its occurrence" is being hybridized with Alain

Badiou's notion of the unpredictable "event" to make such claims as "disaster floats free of any determining moment," as Khalip and Collings contend ("Romanticism and Disaster"), which is the theoretical ground of their own reading of Katrina. I argue that at the core of contemporary catastrophe narratives is the question of materialism, which is largely understood as a (Kantian) resistance to conceptuality. Materialism, I argue, is instead the effect of the mode of production, or as Jameson puts it, it signifies "ultimate determination by the mode of production" (The Political Unconscious). Through a re-reading of Shelley, I show that "material event" of disaster is, under the influence of de Man, increasingly the "nonhuman" sign under which social and environmental catastrophes are being dematerialized.

Session 8 (D) Frontier 202A

### **Literary and Scientific Evidence and Epistemology**

*Aaron Plasek; Dave Snyder.*

#### **The Panopticon of Literature: assumptions of literary interpretation illustrated through a hypothetical (nonhuman) model**

As poets ourselves, we present a thought experiment, a hypothetical "panopticon of literature" that might be generated by a computer with infinite memory and access to all past and present literature, to challenge several ubiquitous assumptions about reading imaginative literature, particularly poetry within text-centric traditions. We identify three factors that appear to constrain our capacity to interpret literature: (1) humans only read a tiny fraction of literature and make inferences based on these small samples, (2) humans have imperfect memory (e.g., we read books and forget), and (3) the order in which humans read texts (e.g., books, poems, etc.) play a nontrivial role in how humans make interpretations. Next, we consider a Turing machine subject to none of the aforementioned limitations of time, memory, or ordering-influence. By comparing these two interpreting machines, human and digital panopticon, we argue that literary interpretation is essentially dependent on incomplete knowledge, suggesting that more time or better memory above a minimal threshold may not be a relevant factor in literary interpretation. Such a result has important implications for pedagogy, and suggests that the computer-automation of grading texts as currently employed by the ETS and other testing organizations is a categorically different activity than human grading.

*Dana Carluccio.*

#### **From Neo-Cartesianism to Developmental Systems: Evolutionary Psychology and Literary History**

This paper analyzes new debates over evolutionary psychology as a theory of art, specifically of literature. Evolutionary psychology explores human behavior alongside all other animal behavior, from birds to insects. Although early criticisms of evolutionary psychology called it a biologically reductive way of looking at human behavior, a wide array of humanist scholars have recently embraced its framework as a model for their own fields (Donald Worster in history; Kwame Anthony Appiah in moral philosophy; Brian Boyd in literary studies). This paper compares primary research in evolutionary psychology to the development of what has been called literary "evo-criticism," and contrasts both to what is known as "developmental systems theory"—another model of evolutionary analysis. I argue that common complaints about evolutionary psychology can be best understood not in terms of biological reductivism, but in nearly the exact opposite terms: as an odd neo-Cartesianism that persists not only in evolutionary psychology, but often in the writing of its critics, as well. In this model, the mind runs on an evolutionary track parallel to that of bodies, preserving an old humanist core within a discourse that has challenged the sense that there is anything special about people. The paper turns briefly to literary history to outline some ways that a neo-Cartesian model of evolutionary psychology developed in the early-20th century, and goes on to explore how developmental systems theory would offer a different model for thinking about evolution and literature.

*Kira Walsh.*

**What the Spirits Read: The Book as "Evidentiary" Object in Psychical Research**

The British Society for Psychical Research sought to provide suitably scientific evidence for the paranormal origins of phenomena reported by the Spiritualist movement. A popular method for verifying spirit contact were "book tests" where mediums requested that answers to questions asked in the séance be provided by the spirits in the form of references to books in geographically distant libraries. Successful book tests were believed to be suitably "evidentiary" evidence of spirit phenomenon because of the difficulty a dissembling medium would have in tampering with books outside of the séance room. By contrast, psychical researchers often disproved alleged paranormal contact by uncovering evidence of cryptomnesia, wherein normal experiences are remembered out of context and inadvertently attributed to paranormal causes. If a reported encounter with a spirit could be shown to be similar to something in a published book, it was believed to be forgotten information obtained through normal means rather than spirit communication. In keeping with this year's SLSA theme of "Nonhuman," this paper explores what these two very different uses of the book as object in psychical research reveal about the ability of science to account for the "ghostly." I suggest that attempts by psychical researchers to define spirit encounters through the everyday object of "the book" can be understood, in part, as an attempt to incorporate additional objects into scientific practice, potentially improving upon the alignment of scientific versus affective accounts of alleged spirit encounters.

Session 8 (E) Frontier 202B

**Parasites Past, Present, and Future**

Chair: *Lucinda Cole*

This panel is devoted to the parasites in their discursive, historical, and biological beings.

*Lucinda Cole.*

**Mosquitoes, the East, Women, and Disease**

Frederick Hasselquist first named *Culex aegypti*, the mosquito later identified as a disease vector for yellow fever, in 1757. This presentation explores the mosquito as companion species, outlining the gendered and engendering nature of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment research on insect-borne disease.

*Robert Markley.*

**Parasitological Ecologies: The Problems of Imagining Extraterrestrial Life**

Since 1976 and the Viking missions to hunt for microbial life on Mars, exobiologists have debated both the results of the Viking life detection experiments and the larger questions of what would constitute "proof" of life on Mars or elsewhere in the solar system. Drawing on and adapting the work of Lynn Margulis, this paper will argue that the default understandings of life by biochemists in the 1970s and after have been conditioned by disciplinary assumptions (often unstated) that "life" must be characterized by ecologies that are fundamentally parasitological: that is, definitions of "life" rely implicitly on parasites (or theorized parasitological functions) to hypothesize strategies by which colonies of non-terrestrial organisms would recruit new genetic material in order to sustain their reproductive viability. In revisiting the Viking life-detection data—about which many exobiologists remain agnostic—I suggest that a crucial difficulty (in 1976 and 2012) in interpreting the positive results as evidence of biological activity lies in the fact that they raised the spectre of nonparasitological life.

*Karen Raber.*

**"Strangers Within: The Colonized 'Human' in Early Modern Literature"**

Session 8 (F) Frontier 202D

## **The Animal in Film and Photograph**

*Brad Neczyk.*

### **The Aesthetics of Profound Boredom: And other surface encounters**

My paper looks at a series of my recent visual work comprised of video, photography and performance, looking at the animal, the mentally ill and the human. Working through Posthumanist writings from Heidegger, Agamben, Uexkull, Ron Broglio, Foucault, Wolfe, Steven Baker and Deleuze, I break down the surface encounters we experience when the perceptual worlds of animals (or the mentally ill) and humans meet. This surface becomes one of philosophical and artistic exploration, a space for the emergence of communication and meaning between beings that have ‘no conscious link between one mind and another.’ [Wolfe] My visual work looks at Lucy the Elephant living at the Edmonton Valley Zoo and her isolation and potential depression as an opening to her profound boredom, a Heideggerian ‘awakening from her own captivation to her own captivation.’ The second body of photographs looks at how the mentally ill individual can enter this Deleuzian state of becoming- through the artificial process of self-medication, where the individual does not revert to some past sense of animality but instead re-encounters it through more artificiality. In the end the two bodies of work find both Lucy and the mentally ill inhabiting a new philosophical and artistic space, one more closely aligned with the thoughts in Posthumanism.

*Ellen Rogers.*

### **Nature and other Myths: Art as Subversion**

Images of Africa are often based on fragmented, inaccurate, and at times fallacious Western stereotypes supporting polarized views of Africa’s wild animals. Safari tourism images conjure views of wide open spaces, “Nature”, and wildlife free from human influence, ready to be discovered by adventurous tourists. In stark contrast, many wildlife conservation institutions portray the continent as a world heritage of biodiversity at risk and in need of rescue from the African people themselves. These simplified (mis)representations of Africa and African wildlife become the basis of knowledge for Westerners who wield considerable financial and political influence on the African continent. As a means of questioning the validity of these polarizing views of Africa, artist Ellen (Messner) Rogers produces sculptures involving humans, animals, and ideas of Nature. Based on her extensive fieldwork as a wildlife conservation veterinarian in Africa, Rogers conjures the ethical, political, and social complexities of wildlife conservation, particularly the roles and influences of non-Africans. While her artworks do not provide answers to these multifactorial problems, Rogers seeks to provide innovative visual methods to challenge influential Western representations of Africa and its wildlife. [www.EllenRogers.com](http://www.EllenRogers.com)

*Bart Welling.*

### **Critical Anthropomorphism and the Wildness of Wildlife Films**

Anthropomorphism has long been defined as the one-way projection of strictly human characteristics on to radically other animals. However, as Lorraine Daston and Gregg Mitman have observed, the term was originally applied to representations not of animals but, rather, of “the Deity” (OED). Recently, it has also been studied in connection with weather phenomena, computer software, and more. This protean history locates the idea of anthropomorphism at the crossroads between literature, science, the arts, and other fields concerned with human/nonhuman boundaries. Acknowledging the polysemic nature of the term, along with anthropomorphism’s deep roots in human evolutionary and cultural history—not to mention that Disney-style projection only represents one point on a diverse and dynamic spectrum of cultural practices—(post)humanities scholars such as Kari Weil have begun echoing ethologist Gordon Burghardt’s call for a critical anthropomorphism. Burghardt defines this as an alternative approach to formulating testable scientific hypotheses; Weil characterizes it as a way of “open[ing] ourselves” to animal others in the full awareness that the “irreducible difference” we observe between humans and animals “is one that is also within us and within the term human” itself. In this paper, I offer a

cognitive/biocultural analysis of such films as *Winged Migration* and *Being Caribou* in order to stake out a position at the intersection of these arguments. My approach re-situates anthropomorphism within co-evolutionary genealogies of human-animal relationships and, simultaneously, theorizes the wild play of anthropomorphic—and zoomorphic—energies between filmmakers, animals, audiences, and another key node in human/nonhuman networks: film technologies.

Session 8 (G) Frontier 202E

### **Bacteria, Virus, and Transgenic Companion Species**

*Roberta Buiani.*

#### **Viral liveliness: the extraordinary life of a human/non-human hybrid.**

Viruses are half-living (or semi-living, or undead), yet surprisingly active and resilient substances. With their special status, they are hybrid entities that require multiple and multilayered processes to be assessed. These aspects can be detected at both the material and the cultural level: hardly predictable behavior, immateriality/invisibility, dependence from a host are confirmed by cultural ideas of contagion, popular narratives, as well as—creative or opportunistic—appropriations of any “viral” aspect to designate cultural phenomena or various commercial endeavors. By focusing on this very complex intermingling (or entanglement, as per Barad’s definition) of viruses with the fabric of culture, their distinctiveness as both material objects spanning biology and information technology, and as the products of an intersection of discourses, this paper suggests that viruses may be better understood as a synthesis of the human and the non-human. While their mechanics and behavior may be perceived as quintessentially non-human, the discourses that locate viruses culturally and socially are very much anthropocentric. On the one hand, the many uses of the term “viral” reveal the ability of viruses to transcend the boundaries and simultaneously exist across science, technology, and the arts. On the other hand, the appropriation and proactive use of the “viral” demonstrates how viruses can be adopted discursively and even be turned into a practice in itself.

*Tarsh Bates.*

#### **Candida as companion species: exploring the performativity of interspecies care**

Insects, fungi and bacteria are by far the most prevalent species humans encounter. These organisms are easy to ignore, easy to look back at without reciprocity. If we owe responsibility to ‘higher’ animals, those more similar to humans, the furry, the dangerously exotic, don’t we also owe responsibility to all non-humans? Are we drawing another arbitrary line? ‘The Animal’ is not an inclusive term: very little theorising refers to non-humans other than to ‘higher’ animals. Where are plants and fungi in the rhizomes of Deleuze and Guattari? How do Irigaray’s lips speak without whispering about skin bacteria? Are vaginal yeasts not companion species? This paper discusses the aesthetics of care experienced between humans and ‘unseen’ non-humans, that is, the embodied experiences constituted by sustained proximity and care. Most human encounters with non-humans are domestic and mundane and this paper introduces my attempts to explore the complexities and contradictions of these experiences through gentle and lingering meetings rather than abrupt and spectacular confrontations. These attempts are conceived through the lens of alterity, a phenomenological mode of negotiating relationships between Self and Other, and embodied in a series of artistic encounters. The radical difference of the organisms, specifically honey bees and *Candida albicans*, assists in clarifying and making conscious human negotiations with alterity, and making visible the performative nature of care. I also endeavour to respect them as adults of other species, to understand these organisms “as other, in [their] otherness, and to let that otherness be.”

*Megan Fernandes.*

#### **Transgenic Poetics**

In an interview, the poet Matthea Harvey conveyed her wonder at hearing on the radio that scientists had now found a way to generate a miniature human liver. “The fact that writing poems can make new things visible is an incredible super-power.” Harvey’s comment recalls Akira Lippit’s work on optics and visualization technologies, documenting the sensation and fashionability of seeing ones “ultimate formlessness” after the discovery of the xray. But this is not the visual culture Harvey references; rather it is within the tradition of poetics that Harvey finds new representational flexibility. The integration of genetic culture in a wide range of aesthetic practices allows us to consider new methods of historicizing and mythologizing the origin of life, reproduction, bodies and containment, even gender and racial identity. The molecule has become a material unit of aestheticization, able to produce *new bodies with new affects*. Molecular rhetoric’s *recombinant and transgenic* language has altered our notion of speciesism and has been important in contemporary theorizations of object-oriented ontology, speculative fiction, animal studies, and the posthumanities. In this paper, I focus on what I call transgenic poetics, a look at how molecular culture has shaped contemporary lyrical poetry. My goal here is to define the *transgenic* not simply as a pheno or genotypical altered creature or object, but to consider how the *making* of new creatures and objects allows us to reassign affects and aesthetic value and how the *language* of transgenic culture has become an important poststructuralist way to think about phenomena.

Session 8 (H) Frontier 203A

**Aesthetics of Play**

Chair: *Patrick LeMieux*

Critical Games Studies Stream Session 2

*Patrick Jagoda.*

**Failed Games: *Thresholdland* and the Transmedia Aesthetics of Play**

In the society of the spectacle that he theorized in the late 1960s, Guy Debord witnessed “the never-ending succession of paltry contests — from competitive sports to elections — that are utterly incapable of arousing any truly playful feelings.” In our early twenty-first society, competition and victory are arguably even more central to every facet of life. As part of this broader trend, many contemporary videogames and gamified products privilege leveling up and point accumulation in their designs. In recent years, a handful of serious games have challenged this cultural trend by instead focused on the structural, procedural, and experiential aspects of failure that are typical characteristics of capitalism for the majority of people living in the early twenty-first century. Computer games such as *Horde of Directors* (2005), *Third World Farmer* (2006), and *SPENT* (2011), for example, have experimented with different forms of losing. In this paper, I focus on *Thresholdland: An Expatriation in Ten Days* (2010), a one-time game experience created by performance artist Jörg Lukas Matthaer and his Austrian design team. Unlike the majority of serious games, *Thresholdland* belongs to the emergent socially-oriented genre of “transmedia games” or “Alternate Reality Games” (ARGs). The game drew from biographies of undocumented immigrants in Vienna and invited primarily white native Austrians to join an expatriation roleplay in which they lost their rights as Europeans, along with access to employment and health insurance. Departing from casual nature of many serious computer games, *Thresholdland* required a sustained performance (inhabiting an identity for ten days), extensive spatial exploration (physical movement from a computer to different locations in Vienna), and a social sense of play (that incorporated different media and forms of communication). The game did not foreground the type of gamified grinding and leveling up that rewards players for basic interaction but instead explored the [...]

*Mary Flanagan.*

**Playful Aesthetics**

How do artists express themselves using Playful Aesthetics? Flanagan defines Playful Aesthetics as a set of artistic practices emerging from activities of human play, and in particular, from the qualities and elements of games and their theoretical, tangible, and practical implications. Playful Aesthetics offers a



different set of criteria to use in the analysis of the social framework for games as well as expectations, actions, and reward systems derived from everyday human practice of game playing. Flanagan will lead the audience through a number of propositions that uncover strengths and weakness of games as an artistic medium.

*Eddo Stern.*

### **Presentation**

This paper will present research and the game design methodology used in the author's sensory deprivation game Darkgame. Darkgame is a multisensory computer game that challenges and experiments with the commercially established range of computer game genres by manipulating the scope of sensory immersion and multiplayer interaction. The central narrative of the game is based upon the experience of communication and play under the stress of sensory deprivation and sense isolation. One of the goals of the game is to attempt an accessible yet balanced game design that accommodates players who can see and hear with players who are deaf and/or blind in the same virtual game world. Darkgame is designed to allow multiplayer teams to compete over the internet, balancing each individual player's possible sensory input range, and the team's sensory makeup as a whole. One of the central design concepts built into the game is a logic of "balance" between the player's physical and sensory state as modulated by the game interface and the computer controlled attributes of the on-screen avatar. The paper will examine examples of how various role-playing games build models around sensory and other physical ability and how these models consider the dynamics between player and avatar abilities. For instance how is a sense of direction modeled when a player role-plays an avatar that has a superior sense of direction to the player? How are physical ailments modeled in games? How are personal traits such as charisma, leadership modeled in a role playing game – how the models consider the player's social skills? What is the relationship between physical hand eye coordination and avatar dexterity? How are player ethics resolved with avatar ethics?

Session 8 (I) Frontier 203B

### **The Biological Computer Laboratory: Heinz von Foerster's Cybernetic Artifacts**

Chair: *Bruce Clarke*

This panel will offer some chapters from the history of what one of our speakers has aptly termed the "nerve center of the cybernetic world," the Biological Computer Laboratory. Heinz von Foerster established the BCL at the University of Illinois in 1958 and directed its activities until his retirement in 1974. We join with other recent international scholarship reclaiming the BCL's historic accomplishments. Von Foerster and his invited BCL colleagues in residence—including Ross Ashby, Gordon Pask, and Humberto Maturana—developed visionary cybernetic work in informatics, computation, logic, epistemology, cognitive science, and systems theory. Postmodern avant la lettre, the BCL incubated a range of vigorous conceptual models ready for contemporary application and elaboration.

*Jamie Hutchinson.*

### **"The Biological Computer Laboratory Constructs Heinz von Foerster"**

My talk will present archival materials from the University of Illinois to introduce the work of Heinz von Foerster and the historical significance of his Biological Computer Laboratory. Von Foerster (1911–2002) grew up in Vienna practicing magic and other theater arts before earning his doctorate in physics in the midst of World War II while in the employ of the German radar and sonar developer GEMA. In 1949, with the help of neurophysiologist Warren McCulloch, he joined both the faculty of the University of Illinois and the now legendary Macy group, which laid the groundwork for the field of cybernetics at its annual gatherings in New York City. At Illinois, von Foerster's BCL attracted the divergent talents of English psychiatrist Ross Ashby, German philosopher Gotthard Günther, Chilean biologist Humberto Maturana, Austrian composer Herbert Brün, and many others. The BCL supported diverse researches, some of which produced cybernetic machines that counted among the first parallel computers and pushed

the frontiers of artificial life and neural networks. In the process, it spurred von Foerster's epistemological leap to a "second-order" cybernetics that subsumes the observer in the consideration of a system. Though he never embraced the label, von Foerster is regarded today as a founder of constructivism.

*Jan Muggenburg.*

**"Lively Artifacts: BCL Engineers and Self-Organizing Machines"**

Cybernetic research in the 1960s faced a dilemma: On the one hand, there was a growing awareness that human beings share specific organizational principles with nonhuman (biological and technological) systems and that the boundaries between them had started to blur. On the other hand, cyberneticians such as Heinz von Foerster and the members of his Biological Computer Laboratory worried about a future society in which automated technologies could threaten individual liberty and constrain human creativity. As von Foerster famously put it: "If we don't act ourselves, we shall be acted upon." In my talk I will discuss both the abstract models and the material prototypes that members of the BCL designed to address this dilemma. For instance, Ross Ashby intended devices such as the "Grandfather Clock" to model principles, such as "self-organization" or "nontrivialization," and organizational processes thought to explain certain characteristics of autonomous behavior. Rather than doing repetitive mechanical work, these machines were expected to act creatively and unpredictably. I will argue that we can read these "lively artifacts" as part of a design strategy to reconcile the idea of the free subject with cybernetic research.

*Bruce Clarke.*

**"Heinz von Foerster's Pedagogy, the Systems Counterculture, and Second-Order Cybernetics"**

In the first decade of the Biological Computer Laboratory, Heinz von Foerster taught few organized classes. His career in the university classroom begins in earnest in the fall of 1968 with a three-semester sequence titled "Heuristics," and continues until the BCL closes in the spring of 1974, at the conclusion of the two-semester sequence "Cybernetics of Cybernetics." In this talk I elicit some lines of relation between the sudden emergence of a sustained university-pedagogical component to the work of the BCL—in particular, the remarkable class publications that document these unprecedented and certainly unduplicated team-taught, student-driven, interdisciplinary, and cross-level courses—and two other concurrent developments. The first is the growing importance of cybernetics and systems theory within the intellectual wing of the American counterculture—what I call the systems counterculture—as that may be read in the Whole Earth Catalog. The second is von Foerster's turn from an earlier theoretical base in information theory toward the cognitive and observer-centered orientations that come to be called second-order cybernetics.

Session 8 (J) Frontier 203D

**Temporality and Assemblage**

*Grant Maxwell.*

**"That Slightest Change of Tone Which Yet Makes All the Difference:" Rationality and Affectivity in James, Bergson, and Whitehead**

I will briefly trace the historical relationship between intellectual rationality and intuitive affectivity, suggesting that affect, repressed and rendered discursively nonhuman since the era of Descartes' equation of thought with human being in the seventeenth century, and deeply ingrained through Weberian rationalization, has returned in the twentieth century as a Freudian compensatory cultural symptom. Explicating this relationship through the work of William James, Henri Bergson, and Alfred North Whitehead, I will suggest that these thinkers, in their various inflections, see the return of repressed affect as a kind of dialectical complement to the pervasive privileging of rationality. This mass return of affect appears to be impelling a synthetic integration of these two primary ways of constructing the felt presence of immediate experience, an epochal shift that Whitehead describes as "that slightest change of tone

which yet makes all the difference.” I will explicate these theorists’ suggestion that some of the most fundamental problems in philosophy result from the modern duality of subject and object, and that these issues can be resolved by collective attention to what James describes as “the way we just feel the total push and pressure of the cosmos,” Bergson describes as “the inner movement of life,” and Whitehead describes as “bodily reference.” Furthermore, I will discuss Bergson’s concept of “duration,” apparently coextensive with Whitehead’s “instantaneous reality” and James’ “fact in the making,” constituted in the perception of qualitative temporality in the animal body, which seems to be the appropriate purview of intuitive and affective epistemologies.

*Sean Eirik Simpson.*

**Virtuous Tetravalences: Diagramming Connections between Assemblage Theory, the Logical Square, the Concept of Property-Space, and Group-Grid Theory**

In *A Thousand Plateaus* ([1980]1987, pp. 71, 88-91, 283-84, 502-14), Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari introduce a theory of network assemblage--a virtuously productive tool for classifying nonhuman *and* human networks, which dissolves the "nature-culture" bifurcation. An assemblage combines two imagistically intersecting axes: a horizontal axis of "content" and "expression," and a vertical axis of "territorializing" (stabilizing) and "deterritorializing" (destabilizing) forces. The *noncausal* interaction of these axes logically subsumes a fourfold, "machinic" field, or *tetravalence*, of emergent properties that "flattens all of its dimensions onto a single plane of consistency upon which reciprocal presuppositions and mutual insertions play themselves out" (p. 90). This noncausal distribution of reciprocities, as Deleuze and Guattari recognize, constitutes a schematic diagram, although one which they nowhere supply in graphic form. Their omission is surprisingly duplicated in the extended theory of assemblage presented in Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (2006). Working from descriptions in Deleuze and Guattari and in DeLanda, however, a diagram of network assemblage may be afforded (Fig. 1). Our diagrammatic affordance summons the noncausal, distributed reciprocities of three historic, diagrammatic tetravalences: the classificatory permutation of properties in the "logical square" (Fig. 2); the classificatory concept of horizontal/vertical "property-space" (Fig. 3); and especially Mary Douglas' theorizing of classificatory social relations, featuring horizontal/vertical axes called "group" and "grid" (Fig. 4). Altogether, our diagrammatic affordance invites explanatory/predictive modeling of neural assemblage, in connection with Timothy Crow's diagrammatic conceptualization of the human brain as a four-chambered (tetravalent), motor/sensory organ (Fig. 5).

*Chris Rudge.*

**Madness in mad times: delirium, ‘non-pulsed’ time, and the nonhuman**

Deleuze and Guattari’s thinking on ‘delirium’ (expressed, in *Anti-Oedipus*, as a metalepsis for such terms as ‘schizophrenia’ and ‘madness’, and for mental disorder(s) more generally) prompts us to think about how this syndrome seems to emerge from a non-biological, even nonhuman place and time. Writing beyond the psychiatric determinations of these terms, the pair suggest that there is no ‘place’ as such in which delirium begins but rather an ‘order’ by which it is brought about and a ‘movement’ by which it proceeds. Delirium’s etiology, then, is not so much pathogenetic as it is contingent on a ‘global field’ of capitalist 'axiomatics'; it moves not so much in time with the human organism as with the ‘flow’ of those actants in the social field—human and non human—that generate the human *qua* desiring machine. My paper proposes to bring together this intriguingly nonhuman model of delirium with Deleuze’s theorizing on time, and specifically with the characterisation of time that, similarly nonhuman, is to be found in his remarks on the “Aion and the Chronos.” My paper will read both with and against Deleuze (and with and against psychiatry) by arguing that his relatively understudied ideas about time—which begin from “the very notion of pulsation” and lead him to introduce a fundamentally nonhuman chronometry he calls “non-pulsed” time—constitute a system by which disorders such as delirium might be thought of not only as instances of (over)investment by the human in the social field, but as modes of human interaction with this non-pulsed, nonhuman time.

Session 8 (K) Frontier 203E

**Object-Oriented Feminism 2–CLOSER 2: Even Closer**

Chair: *Katherine Behar*

“CLOSER 2: Even Closer” takes an object-oriented feminist view of *very close* relationships between humans and things. The focus of this panel is on relationships with media. Media are nonhuman things that mediate human being. Humans engage ever more closely with this special class of objects, in microscopic relationships that occur at scales below the radar of human observation, and in subliminal relationships that occupy the interstices of expression. Such nonhuman objects transform the human object’s substance and afford and constrain its interfaces for communication and relation. How do relationships with nonhuman things, that take form within the human form, or that expose its externality, redefine the very notion of what it means to be close? As we get *even closer*, such relationships prevail upon us to reconsider the extent to which we, as objects, are “closed.” Speakers: Ian Bogost, Steven Shaviro, Anne Pollock, Jamie “Skye” Bianco Respondent: Eileen Joy

*Ian Bogost.*

**Carpentry vs Art: What's the Difference?**

In *Alien Phenomenology* I issue a challenge: philosophers ought not just to write and speak with words, but to perform philosophy by making things, a practice I called "carpentry." If a physician is someone who practices medicine, perhaps a metaphysician ought to be someone who practices ontology. Just as one would likely not trust a doctor who had only read and written journal articles about medicine to explain the particular curiosities of one’s body, so one ought not trust a metaphysician who had only written books about the nature of the universe. This position was initially intended to seduce philosophers, critics, and other thinkers to conceive of work as a creative practice that could extend beyond writing. But what is the difference between carpentry and art? This talk attempts to answer that question.

*Steven Shaviro.*

**Uncorrelated Thought**

Quentin Meillassoux defines correlationism as "the idea according to which we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from the other." What would it mean to step aside from this correlation? For most of the speculative realists, the problem has to do with "thought" itself. Thinking is by definition intentional; it is always *about* something. This means that thought is intrinsically correlational. In order to get away from correlationism, therefore, it is necessary to conceive a world without thought: one that (as Meillassoux puts it) is entirely "a-subjective" and that "takes seriously the possibility that there is nothing living or willing in the inorganic realm." RaY Brassier, similarly, sees human thought culminating in its own death and dissolution. And Graham Harman finds thought only when entities relate to one another, but banishes it from objects that remain withdrawn and "dormant." My own effort here is to take a radically different approach, and to ask what it might mean for thought to be non-intentional and non-correlational: which also means that it would be nonreflexive, and probably nonconscious. I seek to discover a kind of "autistic" thought that is not correlative to being, but immanently intrinsic within it.

*Anne Pollock.*

**Pharmaceutical Feminism**

Pharmaceuticals present a compelling site for consideration of non/human relations: pills are external to us, alien objects that are also intimately tangible, and upon consumption they constitute us. Drugs are made to cross the boundaries of the body, to participate in calibrating or modifying the body, and to play roles in human identity. Consuming the object of study is an evocative form of intimacy, and at the same

time the pill as an object has a radical alterity. This paper draws on the anthropology of pharmaceuticals and feminist theory to explore what drugs have to offer for object oriented feminism.

*Jamie "Skye" Bianco.*

**Tooling Affections from Allure: Digital Video, Close Ups & AffectEyes**

What are the necessary embodied context cues or environmental context cues that help us to see or to "read" affects and emotion in the bodies, eyes and facilities of others? How closely must our bodies be positioned to be able to see the affective modifications and impingements of flesh become the affect-feelings of others? How close is too close? How close is too close for binocular vision? How much of our binocular vision is affectively attuned to seeing through non-human/non-organic visual composites. This presentation discusses a video series that I have worked on for two years, which attempts to capture and design the thresholds across which bodily affect becomes legible. Human binocular vision requires a certain distance to resolve an image whereas the monocularity of technical vision possessed by the camera can capture the eyes of others with less space between the camera body and the body being seen. This suggests that our non-human visions offer an intensive, closer, intimacy because when we look at one another through our eyes, we must keep a certain distance in order for the dual images produced by our pair of eyes to resolve into a single image. The camera requires less distance, and by getting closer, it also captures a finer range of corporeal affect, the tensions of skin, the dilations of the irises, the rhythms of blinking, reflections in the surface of the eyes, and the architecture of the eye socket. In addition, we don't see or practice visuality in a vacuum. Our sensorium is plural, and affective impingements create multiple sometimes synaesthetic registrations and transmissions. Beyond capture, the editorial process of the project works to denaturalize or design the synaesthetic registers to include sound and a compounding of the visual schema, both of which also require non-human integration with human sensation.

*Eileen Joy.*

**Response**

Response to CLOSER 2: Even Closer

Session 8 (L) Frontier 201B

**Nonhuman Subjectivities**

*April Durham.*

**Alter-Human[ism](s): Diagramming Trans-Subjectivity in the Video Artworks of Natalie Bookchin**

From Haraway to Wolfe, Barad to Bennett, posthuman discourse in recent decades unfolds the relational dynamics of humans and non-humans in complex actor networks, mapping the varied and changeable ways in which animals, machines, institutions, environments, and discourses co-constitute human practices. In *Avatar Bodies* (2004), Ann Weinstone, while supportive of the project generally, is critical of the way these discussions elide human-to-human interactions operating in the same kind of co-constituting dynamics. In my opinion, this is because the notion of "the human," however complicated by posthuman filters, remains a subject in "radical solitude" where "life" is only ever the life of each individual. In the work of Natalie Bookchin, I observe a radical, co-constituting subjectivity that exceeds the containment of perceived physical limitations: hyper-material bodies are complicated in terms of their possible materialities and their potential identities, across actors in complex networks. Using video sourced from YouTube and Vimeo, Bookchin remixes and choreographs various performances such that her affective labor commingles with a range of expressive bodies in technologized social networks. The commingling of online expressive bodies with the artist's body as material worker and as immaterial voice in the artwork, surfaces in horizontal, porous subject/body positions through what Andrew Pickering calls a material "mangle of practice." Exceeding the limitations of normative subject positions, bodies momentarily intermingle in a meshed and mashed virtuosic, a-productive play, whereby hyper-

material connections generate forms of alter-human-ness, informed by layers of actor networks in an unpredictable, affective, powerful becomings multiple.

*Arnaud Regnauld.*

**Ghost memories, digital archives and posthuman subjectivities : Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl* (1995), *My Body & A Wunderkammer***

Shelley Jackson interrogates the subject's inscription within a living present haunted by memories she does not acknowledge to be her own and yet remain constitutive of her composite and always already spectralized self: "If a person can have a phantom limb, cannot a phantom limb also have also a phantom person?" wonders the female monster in *Patchwork Girl* (/lives and livers). In fact, Jackson's work registers two posthumanistic trends : one that celebrates the mind/body split (Descartes) while the other cannot go on thinking without a body (Lyotard) in the wake of a cybermaterialism which claims subjectivity to be redistributed beyond the boundaries of the body in a constant interaction with our environment, be it real or virtual. Now, as digital archives of sorts, i.e surfaces of inscription, preservation, and visualization of ghostly memories, Jackson's work divides the present in a "disseminating fission", opening it onto a future that is yet to come and will never arrive according to Derrida's messianic principle, while the specters of the past keep looking back at us, pointing to a world that remains radically other. It ensues that the figural meaning of the work cannot be revealed but as an after-image, or a visual haunting of sorts whose retinal impression paradoxically involves a sense of touch in separation. The sense of touch is summoned by its very frustration: the specter remains intangible and yet touches us as it opens a world that is radically other, partaking in the construction of our own cyborg subjectivity.

Session 8 (M) Frontier 202C

**Book Panel - John Tresch's *The Romantic Machine: Utopian Science and Technology after Napoleon***

*Allison Dushane.*

**Presentation**

*Orit Halpern.*

**Presentation**

*Phillip Thurtle.*

**Presentation**

Business Lunch - Sat 12pm - 1:30pm

Business Lunch (A) Hilton Empire Ballroom

**All Registered Conference Participants Welcome**

Session 9 - Sat 1:30pm - 3pm

Session 9 (A) Frontier 201A

**Buddhism and the Non-Human**

Chair: *Susan Merrill Squier*

*Marina Zurkow.*

**Agency, Intimacy, Change**

My art practice has been driven by a desire to make representations of the world that imbue agency to the non-human, inclusive of animals, plants and the weather. These have been described as "contemplations on catastrophe" because many of the settings are unsettling, turbulent, or in flux. the animated works are durational, slow, and intended to be lived with. For the panel, I would like to show works, notably excerpts from *Mesocosm* (incidentally influenced by Morton's book, *Ecology Without Nature*), and *Elixir I-IV* which take different approaches to describing the world we both live in and imagine.

*Timothy Morton.*

**Buddhist Objects**

The emerging philosophy called object-oriented ontology (OOO) has some remarkable congruencies with Buddhism. One principal point of contact is the resistance to assigning entities meaning and status based on their relation to the (human) ego. Furthermore, the Mahayana idea of Buddha nature could be seen as a nonhuman entity that exists within humans and nonhumans. Certain forms of esoteric Buddhism such as Dzogchen go further and argue that all beings have Buddha nature, not simply conventionally sentient ones. In this, esoteric Buddhism is remarkably close to OOO. In this paper, I shall explore some Buddhist ramifications of OOO. The Western anxiety about Buddhism, a lineage that runs from Hegel to Slavoj Žižek, is in particular concerned with the machine-like, nonhuman quality of Buddhism seen for instance in Tibetan prayer wheels. Such objects seem to automate religion in a way that is disturbing for Western thinking. Yet when we adjust our view, we can see how such objects are not simply adjuncts to human meaning, but entities in their own right: the prayer wheel itself prays. Buddhism promises a greatly expanded social, psychic and philosophical space in which nonhumans are accepted as equal participants.

*Susan Merrill Squier.*

**Practicing Graphic Zen**

I teach a graduate seminar in the English Department at Penn State on comics (a.k.a. graphic narratives). In this class we not only read all sorts of graphic narratives and comics, but we also devote one hour of every three hour class to drawing our own comics. (The students are English and Communication Arts & Sciences Ph.D. candidates). In this talk, I will explore the encounter with the non-human that occurs in comics spaces, both in the comics read and the comics created. I will discuss the encounter with the non-human in comics that deal thematically with Buddhism, but also in comics that are not explicitly or even implicitly Buddhist, and in the comics studio experience.

Session 9 (B) Frontier 201C

**The Geno-Poem: Reading for a Nonhuman Future**

Chair: *Laura Dassow Walls*

A specialized type of bio art, the geno-poem is a text whose words are translated into DNA sequences and then implanted in organisms. These literally living poems by Eduardo Kac, Christian Bok, Joe Davis, Marta de Menezes, and others have redefined the physical boundaries of poetic texts and their reading strategies since the 1990s. Our panel explores the unique interpretive questions generated by this fusion of human art with nonhuman hosts. Consider Kac's *Genesis* (1999), where a biblical sentence is encoded into DNA, implanted in *E. coli* bacteria, and then exposed by viewers to mutating ultraviolet radiation. Is the poem simply the mutations in the original biblical sentence? The visual spectacle of the proteins turning cyan under radiation? The creation of an artificial gene or the relation between that gene and the information in the rest of the organism? We look at ways to "read" some or all of this information, keeping in mind the potential fallacies in the metaphor of "reading" DNA, since the idea of DNA as a fixed, all-informing book, as Judith Roof argues, has often been used to justify sexist and racist pseudo-science. We also examine the significance of the choice of nonhuman host, from bacteria to cockroaches

carrying information archives encoded in their junk DNA. Many geno-poets envision an explicitly nonhuman future--a planetary disaster, a space probe's contact with alien life--where such living texts become the only records of humanity, a testament simultaneously to the scope and the limitations of our technology.

*Ming-Qian Ma.*

**Geno-Poetry and/as Philosophy of Life: Toward a Poetics of Co-Extensivity**

Our first panelist, Ming-Qian Ma, takes up the idea of a nonhuman reader for geno-poetry from the perspective of Deleuzian theory. In bio art, the line between artistic object and viewer blurs, since, as Steve Tomasula points out, both are living organisms written in the common "alphabet" of DNA. Eduardo Kac raises the question of whether the viewer is the "controller" of the bacteria or simply the "vehicle" for the organisms' "will to survive." Ma argues that this merging of reader and medium creates a nonhuman concept of subjectivity, enacting what Gilles Deleuze describes as "impersonal individuation" that is defined by "singularities"--i.e., "turning points" and "fusions"--rather than by isolated characteristics. Geno-poetry itself, Ma argues, points toward Deleuze's idea of "transcendental empiricism," where life is described as a "pure immanence" related only to itself. Just as life is composed of flows and intersections, always in the process of "becoming" in Deleuze's theory, Ma asserts, so too geno-poetry constantly transforms itself through the organisms' responses to external stimuli, especially in their mutations. Ma focuses on an analysis of the geno-poetics of Louis Bec and Kac.

*Susan Vanderborg.*

**Geno-Poetry: Language Parasites and the Posthuman Reader**

Our second panelist, Susan Vanderborg, examines how geno-poetry by Menezes, Bok, Davis, and others reconstructs and challenges its audience, moving toward a concept of the nonhuman reader. She begins with the issue of access to this art. Galleries are sometimes reluctant to set up the elaborate safety protocols necessary for displaying the work, and other geno-poetry texts, such as Menezes's canvas of computer diagrams in *Proteic Portrait* (2002), represent only a small part of the biological processes needed to generate the encoded letter sequences. Vanderborg then explores broader epistemological questions of what constitutes the geno-poem's text, arguing that its multiple bodies of information, as well as the experiment's tendency toward genetic mutation, all work against the idea of a fixed, determinate geno-text that Judith Roof critiques. Yet this mutability itself creates unusual demands on the reader. Artists and theorists of geno-poetry sometimes speculate that only a future reader, or a posthuman reader, will be able to decipher these experiments fully. Jaron Lanier, for instance, talks about writing geno-texts for "advanced" future "civilizations" that might retrieve hints of the original language in its mutated fragments, like linking together pieces of a "crossword puzzle." Bok has speculated about transmitting geno-poems to aliens "across stellar distances." This construct of a posthuman audience acknowledges the difficulty and strangeness of geno-poetry for contemporary readers, but it also challenges us to reexamine and expand our ideas of poetic media, textual stability, and close reading analysis.

*Steve Tomasula.*

**Ars [telomeres] longa, vita [telomeres] brevis: Emergence and the Poetics of Biology**

Steve Tomasula is a groundbreaking theorist of geno-poetry, focusing on how the works of Eduardo Kac complicate our definitions of "poetry," "nature," and the "nonhuman." This conference paper extends his early work in analyzing the symbolic irony of Kac's *Genesis*, which translated a biblical sentence about human control over nature into DNA base pairs--but with increasing genetic mutations and resulting errors in the once-familiar verbal text. Tomasula reexamines poetic tropes of familiarity and defamiliarization in Kac's new work, *Edunia*, in which the artist genetically alters a petunia to carry the text of his own human DNA. The manipulated genetic alphabet of *Edunia*--the "plantimal"--becomes a living visual poem that evokes surrealist art and its psychological landscapes, hinting at unseen complexities of code beneath the surface representation. Kac's visual poem echoes literary promises from



Ovid to Kafka "to tell of bodies changed / to different forms," interrogating the most basic concept of humanity versus nonhumanity and the evolution of this idea across cultures and time periods. Works such as *Edunia* ultimately point to a posthuman sense of interconnected artistic and scientific networks from which new species and new texts emerge. Paradoxically, *Edunia* is both a unique self-portrait and a violation of the self's boundaries. It can be created only by allowing others to participate; Kac is both acting subject and acted-upon object in this project.

Session 9 (C) Frontier 201D

### **Transcending Sensations**

Chair: *eldritch Priest*

*Barbara L. Miller.*

#### **Color Mad**

"Color vision," as Michael Taussig poetically puts it, is less a retinal and more a total corporeal activity: "to the fairytale extent that in looking at something, we may even pass into the image." Color vision, then, is a type of "madness," what he calls a combustible mix of attractions and repulsion. Color, he furthers, is "something alive, like an animal." How we see and respond to color is a matter that concerns neuroscientists, psychologists, affect study theorists and artists. Indeed, Wassily Kandinsky, James Turrell and Olafur Eliasson understand color's feral qualities. For these artists, color is a sensuous force that prowls; synaesthetically breaking barriers and freeing itself from material constraints. For Kandinsky, color is a spiritual element. In "Yellow Sound," Kandinsky makes manifest what Taussig refers to as "magico-religious" aspects of color. Turrell, like Kandinsky, draws on color's transformative properties. For Turrell, however, color is deeply connected to light. Visually enhancing its ephemeral effects, Turrell attempts to bring the spectator in contact with the empyrean realm: he attempts to make "the cosmos personally accessible and makes it part of our sense." Similarly Eliasson invests in the mysterious aspects of color. In his immersive installations, he creates environments that encourage individuality experiences — "the freedom of each visitor to experience something that may differ from the experiences of others." "Color Mad" explores the experiential and potentially combustible aspects of these artists' engagement with the ephemeral affects of color. [Brian Massumi, Sarah Ahmed and Melissa Gregg are theorists cited in the presentation.]

*Pierre-Louis Patoine; Alejandra Rodriguez.*

#### **The Experience of Grace: Nonhuman Sensoriality in Spanish Golden Age Theater**

A "non-human turn" would not be conceivable without Enlightenment's humanism and its celebration of the rational responsible subject, capable of purposive action though a stable perceptual relationship to its material environment. Indeed, the non-human paradigm questions the autonomy of individual agency, dissolving the subject in a network constituted by a multiplicity of biological, technological, semiotic, and mediatic processes. However, the human-centered episteme has not always dominated Western thought, and the emerging paradigm might find heuristically valuable the exploration of the non-human before humanism. This is what we propose to do in this paper by examining Valdivielso's play "El Hospital de los Locos" (1602), one of Spanish Golden Age's autos sacramentales, which can be seen as an artistic apex of the medieval christian worldview. Sensation occupies an ambiguous place in such worldview, a place illuminated by the play's dramatization of grace. Indeed, here, grace grants access to nonperceptual sensations, freed from the earthly needs to perceive, judge, and act. It is a state of unity with an undifferentiated, edenic world. The neurology of trance and mediative practices can help us understand how this experience of transcendence imply a separation of sensation from action, a separation that is actually performed by the dramatic spectacle of autos sacramentales, where the spectator is overwhelmed by poetic images, fluctuating affective intensities, dance, music, and luxurious costumes. Through such techniques, Valdivielso's play leads to a virtualization of sensation, to the nonhuman experience of grace, conceptualized as a surrendering of self-centered rationality and action-oriented subjectivity.

*David Cecchetto.*

**Networked Affect and Digital Bodies: Listening Awry in "Skewed Remote Musical Performance"**

"Skewed Remote Musical Performance" (SRMP) is a network-music practice-based research paradigm that relies on its performers developing a kind of networked affectivity—in the sense of an embodied index of emergent states of affairs—in order to collaborate musically in the absence of any necessarily shared sensory perceptions. Consisting in two remotely situated musical performers who collaborate in real time via a computer network, SRMP's defining characteristic is a skewing mechanism that results in the sounds in each of the two locations being markedly different from one another in ways that are not anticipatable or captured. The surprising result from testing this scenario is that performers have been able to develop a verifiable collaborative performance syntax despite the fact that they do not know whether or not (or in what ways) the remote signal is skewed. From this, I argue that that SRMP is predicated on an ability to develop sensitivity to sounds that are not sounded, to a kind of relational sounding that intermediates with individual sounds rather than causing or resulting from them. In this, the performers' 'success' is more a result of a developed affective sensibility than a consequence of any translative recognition, so that SRMP probes the particularities of aural and digital interaction by isolating them from any conventional bodily sense-logic (moreover—paraphrasing Timothy Morton—the music itself is tuned to the nonhuman scale of the network, rather than to individual expression).

Session 9 (D) Frontier 202A

**Medical Labels and Medical Humanities**

*Gerry Canavan.*

**Life without Hope? Huntington's Disease and Genetic Futurity**

Huntington's Disease exemplifies a class of disability that has not received a tremendous amount of attention in disability studies: prospective disability, the knowledge that while one appears healthy now one may (or will inevitably) become permanently disabled at some unknown point in the future. With the 1990s development of a genetic test for HD a bizarrely science fictional situation has emerged for individuals and families at risk: now their "destiny" is knowable decades in advance (not just in the womb, but \*before\* the womb). Genetic science here becomes a type of actually existing time travel, a glimpse of one's own unavoidable future. This presentation traces the narrative treatment of Huntington's disease in several works across the science fiction and mainstream literary canons: Ian McEwan's *Saturday* (2005), Kurt Vonnegut's *Galápagos* (1986), Robert Sawyer's *Frameshift* (1997), and Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* novels (1987-1989) and short story "The Evening and the Morning and The Night" (1987). My interest in these texts is in unpacking the assumptions about the value of human life that emerge in the face of a prospective genetic disability like Huntington's disease; through them I seek to understand the status of "hope" for lives that seem, from genomic perspectives both within and without, to have been rendered entirely hopeless.

*Suzanne Black.*

**The Anti-Diagnostics of Júlio Dinis: Arguments for Humane Medicine and Against Labeling**

Medical themes figure prominently in the work of Júlio Dinis, a Portuguese physician-writer who died of tuberculosis in 1871 at the age of 31. Dinis's four novels read like case histories of the protagonists, and the health crises of supporting characters frequently drive their plot. Interestingly, however, Dinis's characters rarely suffer from any identifiable illness. Their afflictions are psychological and curable by reflection, maturity, and healthier environments. In fact, Dinis's work consistently criticizes or satirizes medical diagnosis. In a key scene from his third novel, the heroine Magdalena argues that while doctors should try to remove illness, it is unnatural for family members and the public to want the technical details. Her hypochondriac cousin Henrique responds wryly that "today, diagnosis has entered literature." Are Magdalena's scruples simply an argument for sentimental ignorance, or do they represent an ethical

reserve that remains relevant today? In this presentation, I will explore Dinis's representations of illness, his satirical depictions of the diagnostic encounter, and his arguments for medical restraint, setting them in a wider cultural, historical, and ethical context. Dinis's approach, I suggest, can be read in productive contrast to that of Egas Moniz, an inventor of the lobotomy but also an often astute and sympathetic reader of Dinis.

*Ronald Schleifer.*

### **The Situated Engagement of Medical Practices: Practical Reason and Practical Humanities in Medicine**

The use of the humanities in the training of physicians pursues that practical engagement of physicians striving to develop with their patients both concepts of and therapies to promote health, well-being, or coping with illness, even as they are trained in the seeming objectivism of disinterested "pure" scientific objectivism, best exemplified under the concept of "evidence-based medicine." In this presentation I pursue the concept of "schema-based medicine" in order to focus on the "medical humanities" as it has developed in recent years in the United States that delineates the "practical humanities" of situated engagement, which is, arguably, a working, practical definition of clinical medicine altogether. The "practical reason" of my title is the standard translation of Aristotle's concept of *phronesis*, his description of the work of ethics in everyday life that strives toward situated interested action rather than abstract understanding. This talk describes the work of the humanities – in literary studies, philosophy, linguistics – in order to describe what the humanities have to offer an education in healthcare. Specifically, it argues that the humanities in general – and the medical humanities specifically – study and develop schemas that understand and condition experience. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle argues that the most important skill for achieving the good life is "practical reasoning" (*phronesis*), and his chief example of the practitioner of *phronesis* is the physician. *Phronesis*, he claims, is obtained through years of experience. In this talk I argue that the medical humanities can help medical students and practicing physicians to obtain such "practical" – and, indeed, "clinical" – reasoning systematically and more quickly by studying the schemas of narrative understanding, of interpersonal engagement, and of ethical behavior.

Session 9 (E) Frontier 202B

### **Exploring the Body-Mind through Poetry**

*Nikki Skillman.*

### **Creaturely Cognition: Human and Non-Human Minds in the Contemporary Lyric**

Over the past sixty years, the empirical study of the brain has touched nearly every discourse concerned with the actions we ascribe to minds, from learning language to suffering grief. The impact of the ongoing "cognitive revolution" upon the literary laity is evident in the thematic preoccupations of much recent fiction and in the advent of cognitive literary criticism, but the impact of biological materialism upon contemporary lyric poetry has been critically overlooked. As a genre devoted to the articulation of individual consciousness, the lyric has always been uniquely receptive to cultural assumptions about the nature of subjectivity. The increasingly passive, physiological mind probed by contemporary poets conspicuously resembles the *creaturely* mind constructed by the discourses of twentieth- and twenty-first-century brain science—the mind that is not transcendental but natural, that is inextricable from its material underpinnings, that is genetically determined and designed by non-intentional forces of evolution. As science has set out to prove that the human mind is an animal mind—a mind embodied *in life*—poets have looked to animals to frame ontological questions about the nature of human subjectivity and epistemological questions about science's access to mental states. Considering poems addressed to birds, fish, insects, and primates by A.R. Ammons ("Mechanism") and Jorie Graham ("Salmon," "Subjectivity," "Dawn Day One"), this paper argues that to trace the pervasive influence of mind science upon the lyric "I" we must follow poets' gazes to their estranging reflections in the minds of animal others.

*Michael Hessel-Mial.*

**Analog Virtuals: Op Art and Concrete Poetry in the Genealogy of Digital Poetry**

Do digital aesthetics begin and end in the digital realm? Are the effects of digital poetry only to be observed through the advent of the projector and the computer screen, or can they be traced through the seemingly inert print medium? Digital poet and theorist Brian Kim Stefans has gone so far as to argue that early modern heroic emblems represent the earliest instance of a poetics of code and interface; my presentation will be far less ambitious, focusing on two distinct aesthetic movements of the mid-20th century: Concrete Poetry of the immediate post-war period, and Optic “Op” Art of the mid-1960s. I draw these moments together because they share two crucial features: an interest in the post-war sciences of information theory, communications technology and cybernetics; and an understanding of how the body (particularly the eye) responds to these technologies in the production of virtual effects, particularly simulated motion. Following a demonstration of how virtual effects (particularly simulated motion) are present in the works of Concrete poet Claus Bremer and “Op” painter Bridget Riley, I shall provide further examples of how they become manifest in the computer art of Herbert W. Franke, and the digital poetry of Brian Kim Stefans. Given this crossover of aesthetic features, the step from information to code, from analog to digital virtual presentation, becomes much smaller, suggesting degrees of continuity in the development in digital poetics.

Session 9 (F) Frontier 202D

**Taking place: HumAnimal relations, space and affect I**

Chair: *Tora Holmberg*

In this panel, we highlight the spatial dimensions of human/animal encounters. While space refers to the abstract dimension of the physical world, place is specific and contextual. Places are filled with meanings; they shape and are shaped by emotions. Further, places are often contested terrains, where conflicting interests, notions and users struggle over access and definitions. These papers analyze the ways that human and non-human relations are not only always emplaced, but also take place in particular and complex ways. By investigating service animals in the urban space, feral and homeless cats, the meanings of home constructed around dangerous dog rescue, modern literary figures of human and animal transformation, ethical affordances for species entangled in urban ecological webs, and zoo imagery that amplifies a discourse of “urban crisis” shaking with racial anxiety, we seek to further the understanding of the spatial dimensions of human/animal relations. NB Because we have 6 presenters, we ask please to be slated in the conference program as two consecutive sessions in the same room.

*Ann-Sofie Lönngren.*

**Becoming animal- and human: the significance of place**

Literary transformation from human to animal is part of an ancient tradition, and can be found already in Homer’s epic *The Odyssey* (c. 700 b.C.) and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (c. year 0). However, such events have continued to occur throughout the history of literature, and also take place in realistic, modern prose in the 20th and 21st Centuries. I have studied such transformations in a Nordic, modern context, and experienced the concept of place – especially in regard to “home”, “belonging” and “direction” – to be of crucial importance in the geographic as well as social processes of becoming animal-and human. Moreover, the literary figure of transformation clearly connects to modern, Western discourses on homelessness, ethnicity, social class and migration.

*Susan McHugh.*

**Service animals as urban technologies**

How are service animals defined as urban technologies, and with what dislocating effects for their representation as animals? Comparing distinct, new theories of animality and disability (including those of Susan Squier, Mel Y. Chen, and Rod Michalko), this paper explores some broader implications of the

ways in which modern dog guides are defined as aids to navigate urban spaces in narratives of blinded people. While early fictions and auto/ biographical accounts represented such creatures unequivocally as futuristic technologies, more recent examples of dog guide narratives like the film *Quill* (2004) introduce uncertainty about their place in human lives as both prosthetic enhancements and animal actors. While dog guide users arguably become in Michalko's terms "at home with blindness," the homes of dog guides like *Quill* become highly contingent on their status as workers in urban landscapes.

*Harlan Weaver.*

### **The "Forever Home": Race and Place in Pit Bull Rescue**

The goal of many domestic animal rescuers in the U.S. is to rehabilitate their charges and place them in "forever homes," spaces where these animals will not only be able to stay for the duration of their lives, but also be encouraged to thrive as members of families. This paper examines the dynamics of these homes (imagined and literal) in pit bull rescue practices. First taking up the resonances between discourses about so-called dangerous dogs and racialization in practices of pit bull rescue, I then examine how the emplacement of rescued pit bulls intersects with both investments in whiteness and gendered practices of care. My analysis troubles the concepts of rescue, home, and love endemic to these discourses by examining who is rescued from whom, how place is marked by race, and what love means in practices of cross-species kinship marked by remembered and racialized violences.

Session 9 (G) Frontier 202E

### **Touching Art, Science, and All Organisms Living**

Chair: *Maria Whiteman*

*Maria Whiteman.*

### **Touching Science**

Maria Whiteman Nonhuman Title: Touching Science I will discuss the videos "fur skinned and feathered" and "far from your home" as part of an on going performance piece in respect to touching, talking and making contact with dead animals in natural history museums and zoology labs. Visitors to our national parks arrive burdened with a desire that is unnerving despite (or perhaps, because of) how common it has become. This is the desire to encounter the bodies of wild animals. For most, it is enough to catch a glimpse of an animal moving through the forest or escaping into the underbrush. For others, the pull of animal bodies is so powerful that they want contact: closer, closer still, moving forward in hope, fear, anticipation, expectation. All that is missing in the sometimes deadening conveniences of modern life are condensed into the possibility of a touch between two living, unlike species. And what if such a touch became possible? These images offer evidence of contact between an animal body and human one. They are possible only because the animal bodies have become domesticated in one of the many ways we have developed to fix them in place and open them up to our knowledge systems. The images are of my hand slowly caressing mammals in the storage room of a natural history museum. In such places, even when the bodies of animals are no longer alive, the fact that they are placed in dioramas behind glass and shielded from our hands, makes us want to touch them. "Touching" explores our desire for contact, investigating the intimacy of animal bodies. It does so in a way that mourns their death; it mourns, too, that gap in our present sense of ourselves that creates a need for a touch of the wild that [...]

*Adam Zaretsky.*

### **Ethology and Art for Non-Humans: Bioart Enrichment Labs**

The Art for Non-Humans lab is based on the premise that an understanding of designing entity based enrichment devices might also help posthuman participants appreciate the similarities and the differences between all organisms living (AOL). Recent ethological studies have been using a variety of animal behavior analysis techniques to study insects, fungi, plants and cephalopods as non-vertebrate, non-animal, nonhumans with behavior. Enrichment is a practice of increasing the quality of life for

nonhumans outside of their natural environment. From the simple concept of enrichment a wide variety of ideas can arise. Animal Enrichment is a design process that may alleviate some of the burdens of being in the space of captivity on a daily basis. Animal enrichment is also a novel way to understand animal behavior and reveal the complexity of animal consciousness. Often these programs are centered in zoos, but enrichment arenas include: livestock environments, laboratory research animal housing rehabilitation centers for wayward animals, pet training and toy administration arenas and places like jails, refugee camps, workplaces and entertainment venues. Devices are designed to: A. Elicit play B. Simulate control of the environment by the living C. Reduce stress D. Show being individuality E. Show organismic group dynamics F. Show animal problem solving G. Show quality and integrity of nonhuman consciousness H. Elicit sexual exuberance Question: Why keep wild organisms in captivity with the widest breadth of behavioral authenticity available in a 'natural' bio-artistic environment?

*Drew Ayers.*

### **Damien Hirst and the Limits of the Nonhuman**

British artist Damien Hirst reveals the limits of rendering visible the relationship between the human and the nonhuman. Although Hirst primarily addresses issues of death and decay through the often-sardonic use of animal carcasses, his work more generally speaks to the difficulties of encountering the other – be it nonhuman object or animal – and Hirst envisions the encounter as one that ultimately fails. Hirst's art responds to a cultural logic that fantasizes about the dissolution of boundaries between humans and nonhumans and an increasingly pervasive ideological stance that collapses information and material, envisioning a networked world where everything is fundamentally reducible to binary units of exchange. This line of thinking, however, has its limits, and Hirst speaks to a dissatisfaction with this imagined technological and informational utopia. Hirst's art provides an actual manifestation of the virtual forces of a Deleuzian-Guattarian becoming-animal, which taken to its end point, results in a dissolution of the molar body. Following a line of critique established by Donna Haraway, Hirst's art advocates for a framework of "significant otherness" and a "radical alterity" that acknowledges and respects the phenomenal body of the nonhuman other. Rather than engage in a mode of utopic posthumanist thinking, which envisions the easy exchange of information between bodies, Hirst acknowledges (and respects) the fundamental uniqueness of actants, and through his visualizations of static death, he refuses the anthropomorphic extension of the human self onto the nonhuman other in favor of a relational paradigm that emphasizes the interaction between actants.

Session 9 (H) Frontier 203A

### **Insect Others**

*Kari Weil.*

### **“The Insect and the Anthill: Empathy and the Non-Human”**

In order to describe the atrocities of the Second World War, writers have referred to man's inhumanity in terms, alternatively, of "his" potential for being either machine or animal. Théodore Adorno and Primo Levi, for instance, figure the inhumanity of the Nazis as the effect of Enlightenment rationality turned machine—streamlined for the purposes of systematically naming and exterminating "the animal." Alternatively, W. G. Sebald likens those Germans who turned away from the atrocities befalling their fellow citizens to an insect colony that does not grieve the destruction of a neighboring anthill. In each of these instances, it would appear that what distinguishes the human, or human behavior from the inhuman—whether as machine or as insect-- is the capacity for empathy, the ability to feel for another or, more exactly, to feel their pain and acknowledge their "humanity" in that pain. Lack of empathy, in other words, characterizes both the inhuman behavior of the Nazis as well as of the allies who bombed German cities. But if empathy is thus figured as specifically human (a notion disputed by recent experiments with rats) why is it something that humans can also, so dispassionately refuse? In what follows I want to trace figuration of empathy in a range of texts where the absence or refusal of empathy is identified with the

non-human, alternatively animal and as machine, in order to question what it is we humans do when we empathize how or why empathy has been regarded as specifically human or humane.

*Astrid Schrader.*

**Abyssal Intimacies: How (Not) To Care About Deformed Leaf Bugs in the Aftermath of Chernobyl?**

Academic animal studies, especially in its posthumanist articulations, maintains an inherently ambivalent relationship to animal advocacy. At the center of the tension is a commitment to the deconstruction of the liberal humanist subject and forms of representations that are by definition anthropocentric. The importance of animal activists' endeavors is however often re-affirmed on pragmatic or strategic (ethical) grounds. Informed by Jacques Derrida's radical transformation of Jeremy Bentham's question "Can they suffer?" that draws attention to a shared vulnerability or passivity, this paper explores a form of advocacy that cuts across this problematic divide. Swiss science-artist and environmental activist Cornelia Hesse-Honegger collects, studies and paints morphological deformed leaf bugs that she finds in the proximity of nuclear power plants. With the help of Hugh Raffles' engagement with Hesse-Honegger's painting practices in his *Insectopedia*, I offer a reading of her paintings that deconstructs the oppositions between concerns about human sufferings in the aftermath of Chernobyl and compassion for seemingly irrelevant insects, between epistemology and ethics, and between advocacy and a deconstruction of the humanist subject in 'representations' of deformed bugs in the aesthetic tradition of Concrete Art. I argue that her paintings engender an 'abyssal intimacy', suggesting a resemblance between sufferings that have nothing in common, and enable a move from auto-affection (self-presence) to hetero-affection that manifest itself as passion. Becoming affected here entails the dissociation of affection not only from the humanist subject, but also from movements in time, from direct helping-action and the assumption that advocacy necessarily means speaking for an usually assumed to be inferior other.

*Catherine Cassel.*

**Incompanionate Encounters: Insectoid Figuration and the Nonhuman Turn**

Though the "question of the animal" has proven a proliferative line of inquiry, the insect remains the animal's abject Other. Evocative of disgust more often than delight, of extermination rather than coexistence, insects nonetheless play a pivotal role in how we craft our discursive representations of what constitutes the nonhuman. Whereas Donna Haraway focuses on the decidedly fluffier and mammalian companionate species, I want to linger on how insects stretch the limits of our empathic imagination because though it is easier to perceive emotions in the facial expressions of dogs and monkeys as more "like us," bugs rarely hold such claim. Drawing from Philip K. Dick's postnuclear dystopia, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), I argue in this paper that the insect cosmos offer a useful alternative map for nonhuman sensoriums and affects precisely because they test the thresholds by which we shore up the human against the nonhuman. *Do Androids* emblemizes the conundrums inherent in articulating a nonhuman ecology because it offers an ontologically uncertain narrative which triangulates electric animals, sentient androids, and mutated humans in a world culturally mediated by postnuclear mourning for extinct animals and technologically mediated by "empathy boxes" and "mood organs." By examining the ethical crux qua narrative climax of this novel, which concerns a mutant "anthead" witnessing an android torturing a spider, I suggest that insectoid figuration opens up productive avenues into exploring the conceptual framework of the nonhuman.

Session 9 (I) Frontier 203B

**Simulations and Its Discontents**

Chair: *Stephanie Boluk*

Critical Games Studies Stream Session 4

*David Golumbia.*

### **Game of Drones**

The recent widespread deployment by the US in particular of Unmanned Combat Vehicles (UCVs), especially Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), collectively and colloquially known as drones, poses significant ethical and legal problems for not just the military but civil and democratic society as a whole. As one recent legal commentator puts it, “the concern is not the introduction of robots into the battlefield, but the gradual removal of humans” (Kanwar 2011, 3; see Singer 2009 for a complete overview). Along with its legal, ethical, strategic, political, and psychological consequences, the deployment of drones raises less obvious questions about both the computerization and more specifically the gamification of reality, especially as advocated by full-throated industry propagandists like McGonigal (2011). Typically such promotion focuses on non-lethal, non-military-based facets of gamification and reality augmentation. Yet especially in an academic setting technological proponents must not be granted the luxury of examining only the good (proposed) effects of technologies, but instead must be accountable for both the good and bad effects of the technological changes they promote. The removal of the human from the battlefield and the transformation of the battlefield into a game-like platform provide apt cause for serious reflection on the widespread promotion of ubiquitous computerization, gamification, and so-called “augmented reality.” Calling such simulative platform games, as our everyday language today does, belies their origin and persistent usage as reality simulations, whose purpose is precisely to “game” in its other colloquial sense—to outthink and outmaneuver ordinary humans “stuck” in ordinary reality. While such means may be an unavoidable if unwelcome necessity for military operations and the attendant pursuit of technological superiority, their adoption in non-military parts of everyday experience rests on a bleak view of that experience (the “broken” quality to which McGonigal repeatedly refers, without examining its qualities, origins, or non-game solutions) [...]

*Edmond Chang.*

#### **Gaming and the Posthuman**

In 2010, Alex Peake of Primer Labs, maker of *Code Hero*, gave a talk at the Humanity+ Conference at the Beckman Institute in Pasadena, California arguing that the future of artificial intelligence, intelligence augmentation, and human and machine integration is through games. He says, “AI will be pivotal to making intelligence amplification games better and better” and that eventually “once we begin relying on AI mentors for our children and we get those mentors increasing in sophistication at an exponential rate, we’re dipping our toe into symbiosis between humans and the AI that shape them.” Using this provocation, my paper addresses the intersection of video games, gamification, and the posthuman offering an analysis and critique of gamification’s taking up of the liberatory and possessive individualist narratives of transhumanism.

*Luke Caldwell.*

#### **Reality is Expensive: Making a Better Military-Entertainment Complex**

In an era of strategic drawdown, private military contractors are increasingly filling roles that were once the province of the US military. Since 2001, contractors have been developing highfidelity, yet flexible environments that allow soldiers to train with high precision for particular combat scenarios. These reconfigurable battle spaces allow for an endless exploration of the possibilities within a combat situation and, by increasingly merging the virtual and the actual, are shaping both the future of combat and altering the landscape of commercial entertainment. In this talk we will investigate the evolving dynamics between private contractors, the institutional pressures of the military, and commercial entertainment to see how the military-entertainment complex of today is shaping the world within which we live, fight, and play.

Session 9 (J) Frontier 203D

#### **The Future of Configurations: A Roundtable with the Editors**

Chair: *Robert Markley*



Each of the interim and editors and incoming editors will offer a short, 5 minute presentation of current and new directions in the publication of Configurations.

*Melissa Littlefield.*

**Presentation**

*Robert Markley.*

**Presentation**

*Ronald Schleifer.*

**presentation**

*Rajani Sudan.*

**presentation**

Session 9 (K) Frontier 203E

**Towards a Stengers-Whitehead Lexicon of the Nonhuman I. Value, Wonder, Fiction**

Chair: *Steven Meyer*

The present two-panel configuration is designed to serve as a linchpin between the most recent 5-year run of the Whitehead stream (concluding this fall) and whatever may follow. Instead of focusing directly on the recent English-language translation of Isabelle Stengers' *Thinking with Whitehead*, the first three speakers approach the work slant, placing Stengers' Whiteheadian meditations in the broader context of her own thought and of Whitehead's—in the context, that is to say, of closely related works and concerns (hers, his, others'), traces of which already enter into this great speculative study of a great speculative philosophy. The second panel continues the turn away from excessively human-centered, critical (by contrast with speculative) orders of thought even as it examines complementary features of the thinking and making involved in thinking with *Thinking with Whitehead*. Unallocated time will serve to inaugurate discussion—with the audience joining in as fellow panelist—of alternative futures for the Whitehead stream.

*Steven Shaviro.*

**Value Experience**

Alfred North Whitehead writes in *Modes of Thought*: "we have no right to deface the value experience which is the very essence of the universe." Isabelle Stengers cites this sentence on a number of occasions: it becomes something of a leitmotif for her reading of Whitehead, as well as for her more general account of the role of the sciences. Starting with this citation, I would like to think more generally about Whitehead's account of valuation and value experience. Whitehead's insistence on the immanence of value to experience (rather than seeing value as an extrinsically imposed norm), and on the generic nature of valuation, as a process engaged in by nonhumans as well as by ourselves (rather than seeing valuation as a merely human imposition upon an otherwise passive, inert, and meaningless universe) puts him at odds with most of his contemporaries, and with the general tenor of modernism. But today, as we come to realize that "we have never been modern," and as we are increasingly faced with what Stengers calls the cosmopolitical aspects of our situation Whitehead's account of value experience shows its full relevance. I will argue that Whitehead's account of value experience is largely an aesthetic one; and it is from within Whitehead's aesthetic envisagement of the cosmos that we must understand the ethical injunction quoted above, which has in turn become the central concern of Stengers' own "ecology of practices."

*Hugh Crawford.*

**It's a Wonderful Life**

A significant element of the discourse on the non-human is the power of wonder. The title of Isabelle Stengers's essay in *The Speculative Turn* is "Wondering about Materiality," the last chapter of Ian Bogost's *Alien Phenomenology* is "Wonder," and Jane Bennett, in both *Vibrant Matter* and *The Enchantment of the Modern* invokes the concept if not the term. However, we need to be cautious that such terms not become simply spectatorial. One can feel wonder or enchantment in an encounter with the non-human, with simple material objects such as those Bennett describes caught in the storm sewer, but, as Stengers notes, in English the word wonder can mean both "to be surprised and to entertain questions." Indeed, the power of the second form of wonder is more than entertaining questions; it is being prompted to speculate. Regarding the non-human, there is an important link to be drawn between what Stengers terms "the power of wonder," and her frequently referenced notion from Whitehead: the "subjective aim" of an "actual entity" is a "lure for feeling." While humans generally are the beings who experience wonder, or who wonder about something, lures for feeling can be expressed by nonhuman entities and directed toward other nonhumans. Actual entities lure others, and, in another Whiteheadian term,prehend them. This paper explores the notion of non-human wonder. To paraphrase Bogost, what is it like to be a thing that wonders?

*Andrew Goffey.*

### **Between Chaos and Coherence: A Whiteheadian Account of the Beings of Fiction**

In the expansive framework that an ontologically consequential consideration of nonhumans entails, the position of fiction is one that merits detailed examination. Focusing on the metaphysics of creativity developed by Whitehead, principally in *Process and Reality*, this paper proposes some ideas about the 'mode of existence' of fictional beings, and uses it to draw out some of the implications that this entails in relationship to the broader claims to our attention of theories of the nonhuman. Situating this discussion in terms of Whitehead's more general concern to contest the fact-value distinction and the incoherence that is attendant on the fallaciousness of intellectual practices of bifurcating nature, the first half of the paper will offer an account of some of the more interesting, if perplexing, claims that Whitehead makes in *Process and Reality*. More particularly, it will turn to Etienne Souriau's essay *Les modes d'existence* and the interest it holds for Isabelle Stengers and Bruno Latour so as to tease out some of the stakes of the claims of fictional beings to a specific mode of existence. The paper will then visit the ongoing debate about the relationship between Whitehead and Deleuze and Guattari so as to sketch out an 'ecosophical' account of the links between fiction and other creations of value. What will, I hope, emerge from this discussion, is a Whiteheadian account of fictional beings occupying universes caught between chaos and coherence, what - borrowing from Deleuze - might be called 'chaoerrance'.

Session 9 (L) Frontier 201B

### **Nonhumanoids**

Chair: *Jennifer Jackson*

*Taylor Boulware.*

### **"Husband to Athena, Father to Hera, Cylon Lover:" Helo, Athena, and the Politically Affective Battlestar Galactica**

To call *Battlestar Galactica* a relentlessly political show that interrogates post-9/11 America and the enduring question of what it means to be human is to echo dozens of scholars. One of the primary goals of BSG is to explore how social and political definitions of humanity are always ideological and in flux. As one of, if not the prominent theme of the show, the enduring question of how humanity is defined and how creation of the Other produces violence and oppression is constantly interrogated, ultimately creating an ideological and political stance that calls for the dissolution of 'us versus them' binaries and a move toward racial unity. Some analyses approach the portrayal of emotion in the show, but no extensive analysis of how emotion and affect are constitutive of the show's political and social message has been undertaken. Seeking to fill this gap, this project examines BSG through the lens of two salient strains of

recent work in affect theory: Kathleen Woodward's conceptualization of an emergent emotion she calls sympathy for nonhuman cyborgs and Sianne Ngai's work on tone and emotion in fiction. Exploring BSG alongside these theories reveals that the show's emotional resonance and affective power is fundamental to not only its success as a commercial television program, but to its success as a show that has been hailed by pop culture critics, academics, and even the United Nations as one of the most important cultural texts of the 21st century for the progressive political work it accomplishes.

*Eric White.*

**Plasticity and Automatism in *Creation of the Humanoids* and *Blade Runner***

"I want to be plastic." -- Andy Warhol (1966). *Creation of the Humanoids*, a ludicrously inept 1962 science-fiction feature recounting the replacement of the human species by human-seeming robots, was oft-declared by Andy Warhol his favorite film. Warhol's enthusiasm for this unintentional travesty may not have been exclusively ironic. *Creation of the Humanoids* owes a considerable portion of its charm to the oddly appealing obtuseness with which it stalls on the threshold of a significant feat of imagination speculation. When its protagonists are confronted with the fact that they are not themselves authentic human beings but humanoid automatons, this realization makes no difference. The robots who have succeeded humanity as the dominant form of sentient life on the planet can envision for themselves no higher calling than the dutifully rote repetition of stereotypically human cultural behaviors. But if *Creation of the Humanoids* thus succumbs to metaphysical *mauvaise foi*, Warhol's enthusiasm for the film lies precisely here in the implications it so egregiously neglects to extrapolate attendant upon the humanoids' self-understanding as such. In order to better articulate this unfulfilled imaginative promise -- or what might be described as Warhol's utopian intuition of the hermeneutical potential of humanoid "plasticity" -- I shall therefore turn to an uncannily kindred narrative concerning robots who are at first ignorant of their artifactual nature, Ridley Scott's techno-noir fantasia, *Blade Runner*.

*Ian Little.*

**The Robotic Renaissance: Existential Dread and the Story of How Johnny Five Came Alive**

In coping with an ever-evolving technological world, movies have continually addressed the relationship between robots and humanity. A close analysis of these films reveals an evolving re-definition of what constitutes being alive. In our relationship with the robotic, the narrative has moved from one focused on the quest for "intelligent" machines as evidence of life to a new demand that such machines demonstrate emotion to persuade of their having a "being." I will draw from the works of authors such as Sherry Turkle, Ray Kurzweil, Benford & Malartre, and Terrance Deacon, in an examination of this relationship and the human desire for existential meaning. To demonstrate the evolution, the films *Short Circuit* (1986) and *Wall-e* (2008) will be compared and contrasted while simultaneously laid against the backdrop of real-world robotic developments showing a shift toward the pursuit of the feeling machine and the question of what qualifies as "alive" in the robotic renaissance.

Session 9 (M) Frontier 202C

**Cognition Matters**

*Jess Keiser.*

**Atoms, Animal Spirits, and Other Non-Human Thinking Things in Enlightenment Literature**

Thanks to renewed interest in ancient atomism, the rise of materialist philosophies, and scientific advances in neurology and physiology, writers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries began to seriously consider whether mere matter could think. In works like Hobbes's *Leviathan* and Locke's *Essay*, Enlightenment natural philosophers sought to explain the way in which bits of matter could combine to create thinking human beings. In doing so, these writers articulated what we now call the problem of mental emergence: how was it that a multitude of unthinking material things—nerves, atoms, or animal spirits—could interact in order to produce conscious thought. This paper argues that the problem

of mental emergence in Enlightenment culture was not solved through philosophical argumentation or scientific progress but instead deflected in literature and figurative language. I will show that, rather than face the frightening possibility that human thought could somehow arise from unthinking matter, Enlightenment writers used tropes like synecdoche and personification in order to project human qualities onto non-human—or rather partly human—things like atoms and animal spirits. The paper will focus on two works in particular: Thomas Willis's groundbreaking *Anatomy of the Brain*, which argues that thought is the result of animal spirits mechanically coursing through the nerves even as it portrays these spirits as possessed of their own desires and intentions, and Tobias Smollett's *History and Adventures of an Atom*, which grants thoughts, emotions, and memories to a single atom residing in the pineal gland of the novel's main character.

*Shriradha Sengupta.*

### **Tales on Temporality: From the non-human for the human**

Human consciousness is organized with time-tags—what happened yesterday is distinct from what is happening now, and what is about to happen stands alone from what had happened yesterday. Additionally, this temporal aspect of consciousness plays out on different scales: we draw upon our ancestral history to create art, memories of travels make up a novel, and our afternoon reveries are often impinged upon by a conversation we had had just a few hours ago. In this paper, I compare, contrast and weave together accounts from human (literature and visual arts) and non-human (computational models and neuroscience) sources that illuminate such 'temporality' (Dalla Barba, 2001) of our consciousness. In the process, I ask and answer two important questions: a) What does evidence from human and non-human sources tell us about the structure of temporality of our experiences across different time-scales? b) How does that knowledge about the temporality of consciousness, based partly on computational models, help us in accounting for human creative pursuits that spans across different segments of the artists' past, such as a memoir of a recent travel, an autobiography, and a painting of a scene of a park the painter visited just a week ago? Combining my answers to these questions, I propose a model that summarizes the interactions between time-scales on which consciousness operates and the creative process that draws on experiences at different points on these scales.

*Benoit Faucher.*

### **Epistemologically Possessed The Daemon as junction between Conceptual Character and Thought Experiment**

Scientific discourse has been possessed by demons from its onset. The scientific "demon," best exemplified by subsequent personifications of Laplace's and Maxwell's thought extensions found in their respective "A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities" and "The Theory of Heat," has come to act as a signifier for a form of breakdown within an empirical system. While these figurative homunculi work on a level that is beyond human possibility, they maintain a type of human-like agency, for example as knowers of causality or classifiers of matter. In a way, these demons are akin to the Hellenistic daemon, an entity that enacts influence upon the mortal realm from quasi-divine domains. These daemons, reinscribed within the laic post-enlightenment age, are thought experiments that point beyond the accepted theoretical framework, appealing to the experimenter's status as reader to question the limits of his or her epistemological structures. Yet while being clearly nonhuman in their capacities, these daemons, like characters in a novel, stem from human inventiveness. This presentation aims to explore a simple question, one asked by Kuhn in "A Function for Thought Experiments"; "How, then, relying exclusively upon familiar data, can a thought experiment lead to new knowledge or to new understanding of nature? (Kuhn, 1977)." But it wishes to append the question with another variable; how can a fictional character, a scientific demon or daemon, be posited by human comprehension to go beyond itself? Is this literary infringement within the world of science an epistemological boon or an irrational intrusion?

Session 10 (A) Frontier 201A

**Curative Powers: Disease, Domesticity, Demography**

Chair: *Abby Goode*

This panel focuses on technologies of power to address things which afflict the human: illness, insularity, and overpopulation. These power mechanisms seek to cure literal and metaphoric contagions that infect vulnerable spaces such as the body, the home, and the island. Conrad focuses on disease as a nonhuman actant within the medical apparatus, Hsu explores the (auto)immune domestic space as a microsite of governmentality, and Goode examines the threats of overpopulation and fertility across island species. Taken together, these diverse papers attend to spaces prone to infection, ushering in a world of curative powers wherein humans are but a part of the order of things.

*Sophia Hsu.*

**Micro-Governmentality: The Autoimmune Domestic Space in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859–60)**

This paper traces the governmental implications of a novel that denies their presence. Because if Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* wants to convey one thing, it's that it is not about the law. Declaring itself as a private family story, the text reflects the ideology of separate spheres insofar as its juridical rejection disavows any connection to the public realm of law and politics. But the home as a microsite of governmentality transforms family politics into politics writ large; thus, the novel's safeguarding of the ancestral home mirrors a state interest in domestic security. This defense, however, turns against itself as the tenuous balance of immunity topples over into autoimmunity, refiguring the microsite of power into one of possible resistance. As strangers infiltrate familial borders, *Woman* depicts a crisis of containment wherein the home's immunitary mechanism activates against those compromising its integrity. Yet since governmentality profits on the family's vulnerability to external intervention, domestic purification necessarily fails. As an inside space exposed to the outside, the home becomes autoimmune when members mutate and no longer fit domestic parameters, troubling the family's role as an instrument of governmentality. For if familial porosity facilitates governmental access, domestic mutability hinders this relation of dominance by creating a zone of undecidability that converts the family-government link into one enabling reinvention. The home, therefore, demonstrates governmentality and biopolitics operating on a capillary level and shows how autoimmunity permits the family to redefine itself against such forces, only to return to the governmental fold.

*Abby Goode.*

**The Creole and the Land Crab: Gothic Fertility and Population Management in Leonora Sansay's *Secret History* (1808)**

Leonora Sansay's *Secret History*, or the Horrors of St. Domingo implicitly calls for a biopolitical technology of power, one that requires demography to monitor and regularize the creole population towards homeostasis. Engaging with Foucault's concept of the population, an uncountable mass that operates as part of a milieu, the novel figures the creoles in terms of gothic fertility, a destructive over-reproduction that permeates life with disease, poverty, and filth. The horror in Sansay's gothic novel, then, stems not simply from the slave rebellion that directly threatens the creoles' lives, but also from creole fertility itself. Sansay portrays the creole population against the ideal of the thriving land crabs, whose reproductive patterns work in tandem with island geography. They represent a properly managed population, a regularized, homeostatic existence within a milieu. Rendering the crabs as an ideal, Sansay's novel assumes a trans-species continuity wherein creoles can become like crabs. Yet Sansay codifies the crabs in terms of sovereignty and territorial dominance, revealing the central problem: the novel attempts to resolve its biopolitical issues by returning to a discourse of sovereignty. But fertility and population issues continually escape sovereign power, underscoring the need for demographic analysis and biopolitical regulation. This call for biopolitics, while persistent, remains unanswered. For the novel's

recourse to sovereignty, albeit inadequate, suggests a desire to return to a slave economy, one that fails to deal with the enduring population issues on the island.

*Rachel Conrad.*

**Transforming Tuberculosis: “Nonhuman Illness” and Henry James’s *The Wings of the Dove* (1902) as a Text in Transition**

James’s novel *The Wings of the Dove* details the demise of Milly Theale in a manner that, though often alluded to, is never named. Milly’s sickness, referred to as “a bad case of the lungs,” straddles the line between consumptive “illness,” a socioculturally constructed identity, and the “disease” tuberculosis, a scientifically-determined state of being (276). By drawing on Romantic-era constructions of consumptive illness while simultaneously exploring the suppression of the culture of invalidism in the Post-Romantic age, James reveals profound transitions in medicine and culture as the nonhuman agent, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, precipitates a process of medicalization. While it in ways delineates the movement toward mechanized medicine, the novel more powerfully represents the existence of ill-health in the conflicted liminal space between Romantic-era glorification of infirmity and the depersonalized, scientific approach to sickness gaining precedence throughout the twentieth century. James uses Milly’s case of the lungs to progress the story, presenting illness as a cultural experience, but cannot ground his novel in these terms exclusively. All of the characteristics of Romantic-era consumptive illness persist in the text, but they remain unattributed to any human form and Milly’s affliction exists in the space between illness and disease, a paradoxical place of “nonhuman illness” both cultural and clinical. James’s refusal to name her disease, or to allow other characters in the novel to do so, shifts illness beyond the control of an individual sufferer and reflects a transition toward a scientific, medicalized realm of disease.

Session 10 (B) Frontier 201C

**Two Worlds Embracing One: Aesthetics, Mathematical Image-World, Physics, and the Humanities**

Chair: *Brian Rotman; Tim Lenoir*

This panel will be considering the richness of mathematical imaginary and imagination; applied across a variable interdisciplinary context ranging from speculative ontologies to the aesthetics of physical proofs. The papers are concerned with how mathematical formalism, physics and logic are rethought within an expansive spectrum of creative inquiry for wide-ranging interdisciplinary objects and positionality; from scientific theory to knowledge machines. They each pose a question regarding the supposed incommensurability between scientific and non-scientific objects; the gap that separates the scientific from the non-scientific seems to be the perception of ‘coherence’ (reconceived as a recombination between a sense of logical narrative flow + the amplitude of superpositionality between states), as well as of the translatability between quantitative arguments and interpretive epistemology. The validation of value and subjectivity of representations (also irreducible un-representations) are important characteristics to negotiate whenever one has to weave between seemingly incompatible epistemic beliefs, or participate in the process of defamiliarization. What is the extensive and intensive aspect of speculative/epiphenomenal/marginal physics that transcend the Deleuzian molarity of its constitution (that encapsulates the reterritorialization and re-colonization of what is known of the subject)? It is the aspiration of this panel to attempt a reconciliation of the logic of mathematical symbolism with semiotical practices in the interpretive arts and humanities through a rigorous dialog.

*Clarissa Ai Ling Lee.*

**Mathematical Fictionalizing in Speculative Physics**

This presentation attempts an investigation into the relationship between measurements/observations and how measurements are articulated through the mathematical formalism of quantum mechanics, both ordinary and relativistic. Measurements/observations are conducted within the margins of theoretical speculations that may have phenomenological precedence; such a construction I refer to as speculative physics. Speculative physics operates at the loci of the determinate and indeterminate, often inhabiting

that moment of semi-classical ambivalence. It operates within the bounds of irreducible fields, at the space of contestation between the physical ‘real’ and mathematical constructs. Much of speculative physics today is conducted at a level of increasing abstraction, its relationality to nature mediated by images produced by computational and other ‘long-distance’ magnifying instruments. An example of a speculative object is the Large Hadron Collider as a space of speculative epistemology where multiple spontaneous and simultaneous interactions of different microscopic events, takes place at a distant to the observer. The LHC is the domain of various physics triggers where the physicist may decide to put his/her hypotheses into test. I hope to examine, through theoretical predictions relating to symmetries (the symmetry that defines the construction of the 4+1 known forces of nature) and the Higgs mechanism (boson), the speculative practices within the virtual and real spaces of interactivity, and the importance of mathematics in representing those practices. How far can speculation venture as an epistemic system in supplementing empirical pursuits in constructing scientific knowledge? Critical theory is appropriated as methodology for investigating the language of speculative physics.

*Deepanwita Dasgupta.*

**A Peripheral Scientist and His Journey into Light: C.V Raman and His Discovery of a New Radiation at a Calcutta Laboratory**

In 1928, C.V. Raman, a professor of Physics at the newly-established post-graduate department of science at Calcutta University, India, found that when a light beam is scattered by optically pure liquids and vapors, it is accompanied always by the light of a different color. Technically known as the Raman Effect, this phenomenon now forms the basis of how commercially available Raman spectrometers probe the structure of matter using light as a tool. Raman’s exploration into light was the example of a peripheral scientist who built a practice in physics by using his own individual efforts, inspired by the aesthetic nature of the phenomenon present before him. In a series of contributions from explaining the color of the blue sea and ended with the discovery of the Raman Effect, Raman undertook a forty years long journey into the nature of light. That journey not only allowed him to establish a trading zone with the European scientific community— it also allowed him to found the nucleus of a scientific community in India. It is well known that the apprehension of beauty can play a prominent role in scientific discovery and in scientific proof that can be the mechanism by which a peripheral community enters the game of science. The goal of this paper is to show how peripheral scientists like Raman join the practice of science guided by their sense of beauty, more usually ascribed to arts, and how they use this apprehension to create competence in a new field.

Session 10 (C) Frontier 201D

**The 19th-Century Subject Acts Out**

Chair: *Mita Choudhury*

*Barri Gold.*

**De-centering the Human: Actors, Networks and Jane Eyre**

D.A. Miller’s *The Novel and the Police* alerts us to the disciplinary functions of the novel, exploring how the novel enacts and enforces gendered and sexual expectations on the body of the reader. In this paper, I propose to explore the disciplinary potential of the novel in the context of an alarming social necessity—the pressing need to change how “we” interact with “nature” before such questions become moot. To explore such a possibility, I will take as a test case *Jane Eyre*, a novel so invested in its heroine’s “I” that it endures as an example of feminist self-expression, and so classically guilty of pathetic fallacy as to crack a horse-chestnut tree (by lightning bolt, no less) as commentary on a problematic proposal of marriage. But such tendencies towards anthropocentrism make *Jane Eyre* a particularly telling test case of whether we can retrain ourselves to read more ecologically, considering nonhuman and human actors as inextricably bound in complex and shifting interrelations. And as we struggle not to privilege the individual at the expense of the nonhuman other, we find at least that *Jane Eyre* is consistently curious

about what we mean when we say “nature,” how we use and misuse it, what its boundaries are, and to what extent it encompasses, embraces, defines, or opposes the human.

*Kimberly Garcia.*

**Thomas De Quincey's Involutes of Mechanized Minds and Memory Systems**

Thomas De Quincey, in 1845, claims to coin the term “involutes” by co-opting its application (at the time, practical in gear mechanics) in order to describe memory. He posits a “machinery” or “apparatus” of memory which processes the “concrete objects” of physical and internal experiences. The mind, too, exists as a dimensionalized structure, a virtual, as he claims, palimpsest. In *Suspiria de Profundis* the non-human sciences of the mechanized age inform De Quincey's concept of memory; this paper explores his involutes as privileging the material and mechanical rather than the psychological or cognitive. “Thoughts and feelings pass to us as perplexed combinations of concrete objects, pass to us as involutes,” De Quincey suggests, affirming the intangible as material—concrete and “compound”—and by extension the physiognomy of storage as mechanized, even automatic. The system of accretion includes the act of remembering wherein distinct layers retrospectively inform his childhood moment of “contracted” time, the focus of his piece. Ultimately, De Quincey's involute is feedback: it simultaneously re-inscribes while spooling the skein. De Quincey's involute suggests issues of existence and being relevant to systems theory and even new media theory. Cog interworkings, “motion and a labyrinthine infinity of curves” inspire a somewhat stabilized rendering for De Quincey's inseparable involutes, “incapable of being disentangled,” within the archival machinery of the mind. This prescient schema for memory as an assemblage, concerning repetition and difference, locates a nexus of science and philosophy with all matter in motion and motion in all matter.

Session 10 (D) Frontier 202A

**Disabilities, Prostheses, and the Posthuman**

*Elizabeth Donaldson.*

**"Avatar, Neuroprosthesis, and the Death of the Disabled/Human Body"**

In *Understanding Media*, Marshall McLuhan described all communication technologies as prosthetic, as extensions of the human body. This reading of *Avatar* considers prosthesis as simultaneously metaphorical (media-based) and material (medical). From the film's fictional world, Pandora, in which human breathing requires a special apparatus, to the film's “real” world, in which viewers must don 3D glasses to gain special access to that fictional world, human bodies are consistently depicted as insufficient and in need of the technologies of prosthetics. The first part of this project briefly traces the historical connections between veteran amputees and the development of prosthetic medical devices. The military is often the driving force in the development of prosthetics, and *Avatar* evokes that historical connection and borrows a familiar convention of science fiction through its depiction of “mecha”: piloted, bipedal machines that mimic the human form. The weaponized mecha are literally pitted against a different form of prosthetic technology: a transgenic human/alien body piloted by the human consciousness of the film's main character, Jake Sully. The second part of this project reads Sully's Na'vi body as a fictionalized neuro-prosthetic device, which combines cutting-edge research into mechanical amputee replacement limbs with recent biotech advances in the creation of transgenic organisms. When Jake permanently moves from his human body to his artificially-created nonhuman Na'vi body, it signals not merely a rejection of disability in particular, but of the human body in general.

*Ajitpaul Mangat.*

**The Empathic Autist: Towards a Post-Human Ethics**

What would a truly democratic encounter between truly equal beings look like, what would it be – can we even imagine it? This thought experiment proposed by Timothy Morton in *The Ecological Thought* entreats a radical reimagining of the coordinates that constitute our choices about what to value, about



how to relate to ourselves, others, and the earth, about ethics. Ethical thought, from Aristotle's "natural" hierarchy of beings to Emmanuel Levinas' notion of the face, has been constituted by transcendence, such that man is a being for which all other beings are correlates. The ethical mode of empathy is symptomatic of such metaphysics. Empathy is always for-another-human. To truly imagine how human beings are connected with other beings – animal, plant, and inanimate, ethics qua empathy must be re-imagined. Individuals on the autistic spectrum exemplify such re-imagining. The autistic subject is "object-oriented", performing nonfunctional rituals with objects, and becoming preoccupied with parts of objects. Displaying impairments in the development of "human-centered" behaviors such as peer relationships, emotional reciprocity, and spoken language, the autistic is characterized as lacking empathy. If the autistic subject lacks empathy, I argue in this paper, we should see this lack not as a failure of empathy writ large but rather as a failure of selective empathy. What if we thought of autism as a comprehensiveness of empathy? Such a radical mode of empathy would help us to imagine a democratic ethics, an immanent ethics that decentralizes and multiplies man's point of view establishing the possibility for an object-oriented, "post-human" ethics.

*Elisabeth Miller.*

**The Voice of the People: Gabrielle Giffords, Aphasia, and the Definition of the Human and Politician**

Western thought has long associated language and rationality with the definition of the human. Logos, as both reason and speech, separates humans from animals, says Aristotle. For him, man is *zoon logon*—the rational, language-using animal. And man in politics, *zoon politikon*, reaches the polis and accesses morality through the inextricable connection of speech and reason. If language defines humans and distinguishes them from animals, what are we to make of individuals who have lost the ability to speak or to control language? And, further, how may a politician serve the public without a voice? This presentation explores the relationship between language and human-ness by examining the case of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, who suffered a severe brain injury after an assassination attempt. Giffords' injury resulted in aphasia, a condition that affects the area of the brain responsible for producing and comprehending written and spoken language. Drawing on media representations of Giffords' injury, condition, and recovery, I work to understand how *zoon logon* and *zoon politikon* continue to play a role in the public understanding of healthy, cognitively able humans and, particularly, public officials. Examining a memoir written by Giffords' husband, Mark Kelly; a television interview featuring Giffords and Kelly; and media coverage of Giffords' rehabilitation, I trace clear efforts to prove Giffords' cognitive capacity in spite of her impaired language use. Giffords' case exposes the persistent, underexamined assumptions tying language to reason in defining what it means to be human.

Session 10 (E) Frontier 202D

**Taking place: HumAnimal relations, space and affect II**

Chair: *Susan McHugh*

*Traci Warkentin.*

**Novel Ecologies in New York City**

This paper investigates the vital, enmeshed and spatial relations between four particular species currently inhabiting New York City: rats, raccoons, red-tailed hawks and humans. Combining insights from ecology, natural history, and animal geography, with empirical fieldwork and citizen science data, the research is generating a novel ecological web along with habitat profiles, which will enable predictions of places that could be enhanced to facilitate mutually beneficial cohabitation or modified to discourage habitation in ethical, non-lethal ways, guided by understandings of what constitutes ethical affordances for each of the species in question.

*Lisa Uddin.*

**Shame Games: Garry Winogrand's Animal Photography**

Despite Garry Winogrand's insistence that his photographs do not reveal anything, images from his *Animals* series evoke the reformist impulse that permeated American cities in the 1960s and manifest with carnal intensity in urban zoos. Taken at New York's Central Park Zoo and the Coney Island Aquarium, these pictures posited tongue-in-cheek kinships between visitors and occupants of dilapidated exhibits. Each appeared shameful in ways that echoed the other but, as other critics have noted of Winogrand generally, never so shameful as to risk re-organizing normative social relations. In what the artist later called his "game" of photography, the *Animals* delivered its critique of mid-century zoo displays through an aesthetic interest in nakedness and the formalist pleasures of odd angles, disjunctive shadows, unexpected cropping. Here, I consider Winogrand's games with animals and tease out the racial and spatial politics in which they were enmeshed. What work did these images perform for a zoo world in the midst of large-scale revitalization, an art world invested in the modernist promise of "street" photography, and ordinary city dwellers of all species caught in the photographer's sardonic eye? Winogrand's games, I argue, were played in tandem with a larger archive of zoo imagery that amplified a discourse of "urban crisis" shaking with racial anxiety. More specifically, the *Animals* positioned captive wildlife and confined urban life in a space of shared depravity that underlined the imperative to restore white middle-class values and bodies to the American city.

*Tora Holmberg.*

**Wherever I lay my cat? Feline crowding and the meaning of home**

This paper discusses urban controversies concerning cats. Departing from interviews with officials, so called animal hoarders, cat rescuers and shelter workers, along with legal and other documents, the probing concepts of 'crowding' and 'home' are used in order to understand how the categories lost, homeless, and feral are defined and made meaningful in the context of the juridical regulations, actors involved, and, not least, the place of the action. Consequently, 'urban', 'street', 'shelter' as well as 'home' play important roles in constructing meaning around the feral cat, where the home as a 'place of belonging' becomes dominant.

Session 10 (F) Frontier 202B

**Communicating Ecologies**

*Kristen Gravitte.*

**"To take hold of the whales bodily": Leviathan and Knowledge in Moby-Dick**

Exploring the intersection of science, epistemology, and animal studies, this paper reads *Moby-Dick* as an exploration of epistemological questions surrounding whales. Critics have tended to reduce *Moby-Dick* to allegory, paying little attention to Melville's constant questioning of what beings like whales might mean in themselves. Drawing on current theories in animal studies and posthumanism about the animal as Other and the animal gaze, this paper argues that *Moby-Dick* is, fundamentally and most importantly, an attempt to understand and describe whales in human, written language. It further locates Melville in the context of mid-nineteenth century scientific discourses surrounding animality, arguing that the novel is a precursor of Darwin because of its concern with the relationships between human and animal. By offering an original interpretation of *Moby-Dick* that engages scientific discourses, this project makes a new contribution to nineteenth-century literary studies. It also adds to the field of animal studies by exploring earlier iterations of current concerns about the animality of humans. Finally, understanding our connections to nonhumans, the paper suggests, changes how we think about human language and about linguistic artifacts like novels, and the project can therefore impact our conceptions of literary studies in the future.

*Ted Geier.*

**Communicable Dis-ease(s): Poetic elisions of species categorization in British Romantic Literature**

The British Romantic literary tradition articulated central strains of modern environmental consciousness, including a comprehensive examination of interspecies community. Preliminary synopses of British Romantic authors highlight those human-nonhuman considerations: Wordsworth recovers an original innocence at home (with animals) in nature. John Clare, ideal rural peasant poet, communes with flora and fauna in a threatened countryside. Jane Austen's introspective sensibility redresses artificial human formalities impeding more natural comportment (Mansfield Park in fact critiques ritualized, picturesque aesthetic modes in landed-class encounters with manicured nature areas as Austen's literary innovations materially modify character/subject positions). The Romantics are also associated with spontaneous, creative individualism, a motif suggesting general anxieties about individual rights in an era of sweeping social reform and political unrest, human value in the age of Darwin and urban industrialization, and animals and the very idea of nonhuman existence in an era of near-constant legislative work on animal cruelty. And thus he literature demands a central place in the ecological tradition due largely to its dialectic engagement of humanness and a presumed categorical other, non- (or in-) humanness. This paper examines poetic negotiations of nonhuman-human consubstantiality in Charlotte Smith's *Beachy Head* and John Clare's poetry against the British Romantic ecological context to show how these poets' inquiries into human-nonhuman interactivity soberly, critically work through problems other Romantic authors articulate regarding interspecies communication and categorical co-existence (biological, physical, object), challenging attempts to flatten hierarchies into an unproblematic consubstantiality or to empathically cross traditionally impermeable nonhuman-human boundaries by revising such structuring boundary logics.

*grisha coleman.*

**Listening as the land talks back: ecology, embodiment and information in the science fictions of echo::system**

echo::system is a fusion of art installation, choreographed multi-media performance, and public engagement that looks to mediate a connection between art and science. The goal is to examine intersections of art, environmental sciences and interface design; information and place; performance and public engagement in the practical realization of the work. A response to our current global environmental crisis, the project creates an alternative environment to promote both aesthetic and physical reflection on how and where we live. This paper describes design and implementation strategies along multiple dimensions of the project: engineering, computation, information science and ethnography.

*Mrill Ingram.*

**Creating nonhuman publics: Art in hybrid urban environments**

Ecological art expands the way humans perceive the natural world, providing possibilities for more diverse interactions between humans and nonhumans and opportunities to develop new awareness about the interdependence of humans and environment. Characterized by collaborations with scientists, engineers, planners, and community members, the work of ecological artists aims to remediate and restore degraded places, and often to remedy associated social injustices. Targeting urban riverfronts as well as secluded island marshes, encompassing entire watersheds and coastlines as well as pocket parks, these artist-initiated environmental efforts offer a new model for ecological restoration. In this presentation I share some examples of this practically-oriented art, and suggest that the work of these artists may be understood as what Isabelle Stengers has conceived of as "diplomacy." Negotiating across geographical, institutional, personal, species, and disciplinary contexts and boundaries, ecological artists do not seek to singularly represent the natural world so much as to provide for attachments to the nonhuman that "have the power to make practitioners think, feel and hesitate," (Stengers 2010, 15). It is this power, she suggests, that provokes human thought, and consequently opens up possibilities for new notions of how we might expand our political processes to include the nonhumans with which we share the world.

Session 10 (G) Frontier 202E

**Speculative Animals**

Chair: *Stephanie S. Turner*

*Mary Sanders Pollock.*

**“Lives of the Monster Dogs: Castaways in a Digital Age”**

Kirsten Bakis’s speculative novel *Lives of the Monster Dogs* (1997) is a study of obsolescence which has itself been forgotten, after initially stellar reviews. The cyborgdogs of the title have been developed as weapons in a kind of warfare no longer waged. Set in an historical moment which extends to 2017, the novel does not present a plausible view of these dog soldiers or New York City, where they have taken up residence. As a study of human-animal relationships, the novel simply appeals to the human desire to control and communicate with animals. As a critique of modernity, the novel ends with a way out, rather than an internal or external reordering. The story and the characters are enchanting. However, failing to appeal to specialist audiences (science fiction readers; the animal studies community; or literature/theory professors and students), the work has fallen from view since it fell from the best seller list.

*Stephanie S. Turner.*

**The Problem of the Knowing Subject in Anthrozoologies of the Future**

Speculative nonfictions that explore the evolution of life (or something like it) after Life (as anthropocentric natural history) must contend with the fictional time traveler’s trouble of double subjectivity, that is, of being both present to witness the posthumanist phenomenon in question and necessarily absent for there to be any phenomenon to witness in the first place. Indeed, the phenomena in question in many of these speculative works arise from and proliferate through anthropogenic means. Whether through a hypothetical Earth remaking itself despite the imposing infrastructures left behind by its suddenly and inexplicably missing people, as in Alan Weisman’s *The World Without Us* (2007), a notional future zoology evolving as best it can minus *Homo sapiens*, as in Peter Ward’s *Future Evolution* and National Geographic’s *Aftermath: Population Zero* (2008), or an imagined technium self-organizing and -producing without human support, as in Kevin Kelly’s *What Technology Wants* (2010), these thought experiments present the problem of a knowing subject that must witness and recount the impossible—life after Life. Only nominally nonhuman, such accounts proceed in the dual registers of posthumanism explored by Cary Wolfe in *What is Posthumanism?* (2010). At once humanist in advancing a liberal progress narrative of “life finding a way” and posthumanist in subverting anthropocentric ways of knowing, anthrozoologies of the future illustrate Wolfe’s point that “what must be witnessed is not just what we can see but also what we cannot see—indeed, *that* we cannot see.”

*Alan Rauch.*

**The Sukotyro: Representation, Identification, and the Reality of Non-Existent Animals**

In an essay on cryptids, those elusive animals pursued by cryptozoologists, Michael Shermer, the perennial skeptic makes the very sensible argument that “purported sightings of Bigfoot, Nessie, and Oogopogo fire our imaginations. But anecdotes alone do not make a science.” Anecdotes may not make a science directly, but they certainly do make culture, and culture, in its own peculiar way does make a kind of patchwork science. For over two decades, I have been intrigued by a creature called the Sukotyro, originally described by Johannes Nieuhoff in his *Voyages & Travels* (1653-1670), but that has no reality in nature. The questions that inform this paper are as follows: 1.) How did the Sukotyro come in being in the first place? 2.) How was it an expression/extension of knowledge in the making? 3.) Why did it become “extinct” when it did? 4.) What mindset is required, then, to tolerate the exception in a system of classification? The final questions are about representation: 5.) How is it that so many real creatures are so clearly misrepresented and distorted in woodcuts and engravings? 6.) What intellectual purpose can such distortions serve? 7.) How does “mythic” thinking inform what we see and what we describe? I don’t pretend to be able to answer these questions definitively... but rather to promote dialogue about the nature of our engagement with the natural world.

Session 10 (H) Frontier 203A

**E-Cologies and (Post)human Nature**

Chair: *Mark Marino*

Critical Games Studies Stream Session 5

*Alenda Chang.*

**E-Cologies and (Post)human Nature**

For years now, a variety of experts have suggested that contemporary life suffers from a distinct lack of natural experience, often blaming our growing alienation from nature on our televisions and home electronics. Without dismissing these concerns, we might still question such precise distinctions between natural and built environments, which paper over longstanding debates in art, environmental history, and literary criticism, concerning what counts as nature, or natural, and the significance of anthropogenic change. The logic of incommensurability leaves little room for forms of media to be productive agents for social and environmental change, and when we relegate the natural to the world outside, or to life beyond software and hardware, we insulate our technology from important environmental concerns. Once we grant that our experiences of nature and our attitudes toward it have been increasingly mediated by the technical platforms and cultural products we use and consume, we find traces of what we have supposedly lost in the very places allegedly responsible for the erasure. My work proposes new methods and objects for environmental criticism through a multifaceted engagement with computer and video games drawn from a forty-year period, beginning in the mid-1970s. Though studies have demonstrated that media can have a significant impact on environmental knowledge and perceptions of the salience of environmental problems, surprisingly little has been done on this front within game studies, where media-effects discourse tends to focus on representations of violence and games' suitability for minors. And if we look at popular game environments on the market today they are most often simplistic vehicles for either graphical spectacle or extractive resource management. How might games offer alternative ethical, affective, and cognitive modes of player engagement, and how do games, as cultural artifacts and imaginative fields of possibility, perpetuate, naturalize, or challenge environmental perception and change?

*Lisa Nakamura.*

**Sexual Harassment and the Discourse of Indigeneity in Digital Game Culture**

In "Sexual Harrassment as ethical imperative: how Capcom's Fighting Game reality show turned ugly," (PennyArcade.com, February 28, 2012) Ben Kuchera writes that during a recent Capcomsponsored event "contestants took part in sexual harrasment and in fact argued that sexual harrasment is an important part of the fighting game community that needs to continue." Aris Bakhtinians, coach of the Tekken team, claims that "the sexual harrasment is part of the culture. If you remove that from the fighting game community, it's not the fighting game community." This interview encapsulates what many women, people of color, and sexual minorities have known about the gaming culture for years: racism, sexism, and homophobia are not deviant or exceptional behaviors within gaming communities, but are rather licensed, or as Bakhtinians claims, intrinsic and native to it. This claim by some gamers that sexual and racial harrasment in the form of hate speech are normative rather than aberrant in the world of digital games is far from uncommon, indeed it is endemic to much online conversation about games to be found in game forums and during game play. This paper will examine how discursive claims to cultural sovereignty and the assertion of racism and sexism as indigenous cultural practices permit gamers to appropriate linguistic strategies commonly used by people of color. This trope figures women, queer players, and players of color as destructive newcomers or settler-colonists in contrast to homonormative, putatively male players who envision themselves as authentic members of an endangered culture which needs to be preserved.

*Timothy Welsh.*

### **The Vitality of the Digital: Bioart and Videogames**

When Robert Mitchell makes the case that bioart redefines the “newness of new media” in *Bioart and the Vitality of Media*, he specifically has in mind “the digitization that computing technologies make possible.” Indeed, alongside the biological milieu addressed in bioart, we are seeing the expansion of our digital milieu, penetrating all facets of everyday life. What then might it mean to have “vitalist” digital media? This presentation will attempt to answer this question by comparing bioart such as Beatriz de Costa’s *Transgenic Bacteria Release Machine* (2001) with digital art like Danny LeDonne’s *Super Columbine Massacre RPG* (2005). Mitchell’s “vital media” shifts emphasis from a media object’s representational capacity to its capacity to exceed immediate user interaction and have significance in multiple, tangential processes simultaneously. I will show how we might similarly discuss digital objects in terms of the separate, but overlapping systems in which they participate and to which they expose their users. By way of demonstration, I will explain how *Super Columbine Massacre RPG* subjects its players to the supposed desensitizing influence of violent media by situating them as violent videogame players themselves. As it elaborates on this positionality through self-conscious reference to popular culture and philosophy, *Super Columbine Massacre RPG* reveals how videogames – and digital media more generally – can act as hinge points where technological, industrial, and cultural systems are joined. Further, the game exemplifies how digital media might intervene in these interrelated processes and, as Mitchell would say, “create new constellations of things, people and institutions.”

Session 10 (I) Frontier 203D

#### **The Non-Human Reader**

Chair: *Marjorie Luesebrink*

The computer is a non-human reader, and the particular kind of processing/reading it does needs to be closely examined. The software environment can act in a reading capacity by filtering, compressing, and manipulating every type of information. Members of this panel will address specific works in which such non-human reading takes place. Spreadsheet narratives in Excel, poetry generators, databased storytelling via blogs, cultural analytics performed on big data, avatar performance in *Second Life*, and other attempts to interface with non-human dynamic data will all be discussed. The panel will consist of 4 presentations of 15 minutes each in order that we may have a full 30-minute discussion of significant points. [Note: order of panelists should be - Strickland/Luesebrink Sample Douglass Baldwin]

*Jeremy Douglass.*

#### **Bedtime Stories about Big Data**

Data mining and visualization are key techniques in "big data" digital humanities, with applications in literature and the arts including analyses of corpora (distant reading) and of genre (cultural analytics). Analyzing an art collection with an algorithm creates a new, defamiliarizing perspective. But how is this non-human reading "narrated" to a human audience? This talk considers cultural analytics case studies in which multi-dimensional machine readings are reduced into 2D "shadow puppet" visualizations. By defamiliarizing and by simplifying, our machines read us "bedtime stories" about big cultural data sets—for good and for ill.

*Sandy Baldwin.*

#### **Give It Up Avatar: Always Already Non-human Readers**

Give it up. Leave reading and the position of readers (human, non-human) to be sorted out after the fact. The encounter between human and non-human reader is a screen for sorting organs, but no encounter takes place. Not a human "here" and non-human "there," sorting subjects and codes, bodies and machines. No, the concept "non-human reader" names and makes a process (reading but also breakdown or catastrophe) of the impossible and imaginary continuity (“epigenetic landscape”) of organism ("genidentity"). Consider performance and display of bodies and texts in *Second Life*, an ongoing

collaboration between Sandy Baldwin and Alan Sondheim: display as emanation of non-humanity, working out of display as work (labor, art) being read, being seen.

*Mark Sample.*

**How to Read a Million Blogs: We Feel Fine and the Nonhuman Reader**

This paper explores the algorithmic nature of We Feel Fine, a massive database of millions of "feelings" culled from hundreds of thousand of blog posts since 2005. Growing at a rate of 15,000-20,000 posts a day, Jonathan Harris and Sep Kamvar's project reimagines intimate life writing as procedural machine reading. I will argue that We Feel Fine prefigures a new literary form, what I call databased storytelling.

*Marjorie Luesebrink; Stephanie Strickland.*

**Moby Dick-inson, Water, and Spreadsheets as Non-human Readers**

Short description: How does an e-writer enable the presence of a non-human reader in a work of poetry or fiction? In Strickland's slippingglimpse, a statistical approach is taken to strange attractor patterns in Atlantic waves; in Strickland and Montfort's Sea and Spar Between, rhetorical and programming choices are made to interact; and in M. D. Coverley's Tin Towns and other Excel Fictions a spreadsheet with torqued data input types is used, mapping between non-human forms and the human reader.

Session 10 (J) Frontier 203B

**Towards a Stengers-Whitehead Lexicon of the Nonhuman II. Whitehead's Humor, James's Whitehead**

Chair: *Hugh Crawford*

The present two-panel configuration is designed to serve as a linchpin between the most recent 5-year run of the Whitehead stream (concluding this fall) and whatever may follow. Instead of focusing directly on the recent English-language translation of Isabelle Stengers' *Thinking with Whitehead*, the first three speakers approach the work slant, placing Stengers' Whiteheadian meditations in the broader context of her own thought and of Whitehead's—in the context, that is to say, of closely related works and concerns (hers, his, others'), traces of which already enter into this great speculative study of a great speculative philosophy. The second panel continues the turn away from excessively human-centered, critical (by contrast with speculative) orders of thought even as it examines complementary features of the thinking and making involved in thinking with *Thinking with Whitehead*. Unallocated time will serve to inaugurate discussion—with the audience joining in as fellow panelist—of alternative futures for the Whitehead stream.

*James J. Bono.*

**Taking Stengers' "Whiteheadian Humor" Seriously: Creativity, Non-human Societies, Enduring Objects, and Science Studies**

Creativity, as term and stubborn fact of experience, is fundamental to Whitehead's philosophy. Earlier, I have discussed how Whitehead's "enduring objects"—as non-human societies of actual occasions that arise from the "contrast between inheritance and novel effect"—serve as an antidote refusing traditional notions of perduring principles and deterministic substances. These latter principles and substances have long authorized a view of natural processes as replicating unchanging patterns taken as foundational to biological explanations of life and organisms. My paper will review and extend the Whiteheadian alternative: a buzzing world of things filled with the intensity of vectorial flows of feeling, physical vibrations, and "societies" and "organisms" marked by a "rhythmic character" that can lead to stability. *Thinking with Stengers*, I shall then connect this alternative Whiteheadian cosmology to a key text cited by Stengers, which begins with the sentence, "Each task of creation is a social effort, employing the whole universe" (PR, p. 223). As Stengers insists, "thinking under the constraint of creativity" with Whitehead leads not only to his "adventure of speculative cosmology" but to the necessity of what she calls "Whiteheadian humor" as itself expressing the "task of thought: not to judge, but to learn to

appreciate.” In contrast to the “habits of professionals” that are “bereft of humor,” Whiteheadian appreciation proves significant for science studies, I shall argue, precisely in its refusal of the myth of the “creator” and the “heroic mode of radical risk” in the production of knowledge.

*Steven Meyer.*

**William James Thinking with Whitehead**

Isabelle Stengers has offered a distinctive interpretation of “James’s oeuvre” as “an ethics of thought” that hinges on “a pragmatic constraint”—pragmatic because “posed at the level of effects, not at the level of what authorizes”—“confer[ring] on the refusal of certain effects, accepted as perfectly legitimate by many ‘ethical’ philosophers, the power to put thinking to the test, to oblige it to expose itself to the violence of the world.” In preparing the English-language translation of *Penser avec Whitehead*, Stengers added occasional references to James, such as the observation in a discussion of “the mathematician’s trust” that what James “called faith or belief” was “his only answer when confronted by those who have declared that life is not worth living, ‘the whole army of suicides’” (p.15; see p.27 of the original for the equivalent passage). In the present talk I examine the effects these references may have, deliberate or not, beyond the purely pragmatic aim of making Whitehead more familiar to his American (non-) readers. To what extent does James put Whitehead’s thinking to the test, put thinking with Whitehead to the test? Moreover, one may further inquire, to what extent can James, for Stengers, for us, be said to come after Whitehead, after “l’effet Whitehead” (the title of a 1994 collection edited by Stengers)? Do such possibilities occur somewhat as *Thinking with Whitehead* (2011) follows *Penser avec Whitehead* (2002), in a strict line of succession, or in a thoroughly different temporal modality—interstitial, impersonal, nonhuman even?

Session 10 (K) Frontier 203E

**Mediation and Resistance**

*Anthony C. Cooke.*

**“Intangible Corporalities: Coded Entities and Surveillance Matrices in the Information Archives”**

Traditional critical engagements by scholars regarding African-Americans and media focus on two topics: issues of representation—the methodologies concerning positive or negative portrayals of African-Americans as “human,” and the uses or abuses of mass media as it pertains to demonstrating African-American humanness. Only recently has there been a turn towards considerations of African-Americans and new media (in the work of Lisa Nakamura, for example); however, even these more recent inquiries tend to also revolve around promotion of a familiar liberal humanist concept of individual agency. This paper proposes that a more productive method of studying African-American concerns is to focus on non-human entities; that is, new media information flows of code and distribution networks. Moreover, through attending to themes of privacy and surveillance (two topics historically of particular interest to African-Americans) as expressed in Internet protocols, one may trace a certain dynamism here referred to as a “demographic subject”—mobile code-events, made up of user-device interaction and information gathered, stored, reinscribed, and dispersed throughout the Web. Such a multiple entity, both tied to and independent of the physical “subject” it both is and is not, contradictorily appears as closed (knowable via information gathering protocols) and as open-ended (malleable by a renewable stream of other programs networked to its information; social networking programs, for example). By using a posthuman approach to subjectivity, privacy, and surveillance, this paper endeavors to enrich discussions of African-American critical theory.

*Kelly Kirshner.*

**Critical Noise: “Human Microphones” and the Acoustics of Resistance**

The “human microphone” is a method of communication whereby a speaker’s words are made audible to a large crowd by vocal repetition rather than through an amplified device, usually emerging in response to official injunctions against the use of electronic microphones and similar technologies. This paper



examines the social mediation and effectiveness of the human microphone as a mode of protest and public discourse, focusing specifically on its most recent emergence at the "Occupy" protests of 2011-12. I consider the operation of this "device" in context with historical and technical conventions for the proper implementation of microphones in sound collection and amplification, and look closely at the competing claims about "participatory power" and "critical monotony" that arose in its wake. Although the human microphone does reclaim amplification without electrification, the collective echolalia upon which it is based has been critiqued for both its slowness and its tendency towards "noisy assent" without thought. This latter position warns of the danger in falling victim to a critical monotone whereby the nature of the acoustics might actively undermine free expression. Counteracting this, I argue, is the very linguistic unruliness of its acoustic pattern—a discursive instability that acoustically deconstructs this burgeoning monotony, as well as challenging social expectations for how an "ideal" microphone can or should act in context with public discourse. This reveals a more radical productivity for the human microphone than is generally acknowledged, an attribute I have argued elsewhere is at the core of microphonic performance.

Special Performance Session - Sat 5pm - 7pm

Special Performance Session (A) Frontier 201C

**Performances: Electronic Literature & the Nonhuman**

Reception III - Sat 5pm - 6pm

Reception III (A) 2nd Floor Concourse, Frontier

**Publishers' Reception**

Party - Sat 9pm - Midnight

Party (A) Hilton Hotel, Wright Ballroom

**The Annual SLSA Dance**

Session 11 - Sun 8:30am - 10am

Session 11 (A) Hilton, Walker Room (4th Floor)

**Dark Materials: Weird, Paranoid, and Gothic Encounters**

Chair: *Phillip Thurtle*

Obtaining knowledge of the world is often thought to proceed through standardization and logic. Often this supposes that we humanize the world by turning it into more of what can easily be understood and processed. This simple caricature, however, flattens the gothic anomalies of the world. These anomalies are important as they remind us that not all spaces, times, or ontologies are homologous. Times and spaces are often thought weird or strange precisely because they indicate the possibility of change beyond the expected. These encounters also seem to defy the usual rules of logic requiring the impossibility of separate ontologies, where either you exist as "a" or "b" but not both. What we find is that it is possible to experience the weird and the alien precisely because we have paranoia, fear, joy, and excitement. This response is not a response to what can't be known but an awareness of the intimacy required for understanding the undifferentiated potential of what may be.

*Adam Nocek.*

**Abstract Thought and the Problem of Cosmic Time**

It is no secret that speculative philosophy has been re-energized in the last decade, and this is thanks in large part to the identification of what Quentin Meillassoux has called the correlationist paradigm in post-Kantian philosophy. While solutions to the Kantian legacy are diverse and, more often than not, in conflict, an important problem facing many variants of speculative philosophy is how to think cosmic time, which is to say, a deep time indifferent to the human, to the Earth's deep time before and after the human. While this has been variously conceptualized in terms of the arch-fossil (Meillassoux), extinction (Brassier, Thacker), dark chemistry (Grant, Negarestani), etc., the point here is that deep time creates a problem for thought—thinking the time of an Earth without thought—one whose solution generally necessitates a speculative thinking capable of indexing the world-in-itself as opposed to the world-for-us. Despite the tendency to frame the problem of the Earth's deep time in anti-correlationist terms—the in-itself as opposed to the for-us—my suggestion here is that we consider it in terms of the radical constructivisms of Gilles Deleuze and Alfred North Whitehead, which exposes not only how such a division creates a false problem for philosophy, but also how speculative thinking about an Earth before or after humans—an Earth populated, perhaps, by Lovecraftian “weird biologies,” or even the minimal life of astrobiologists—cannot abstract from thought but must make its thought abstract.

*Elizabeth Bushmann.*

**Bad Romance and Good Intentions: A World with the Invasive Alien**

The nineteenth century saw many transfers and attempted transfers of animal populations between Europe, Asia and North America. Many of these previously introduced species have had destructive impacts on native nonhumans and human economies and are now considered “invasive” to many western ecosystems. In some cases, the US government has taken drastic measures to ensure eradication, including the construction of electric fences, processing for export and poisoning. The invasive alien has otherwise become an endless resource for consumption and game sport, deemed as a threat to be killed on sight. This artistic monologue will interrogate interests surrounding the topic of invasive species, questioning ideas of the “natural” and human/nonhuman violence with respect to specific contemporary cases. The invasive Asian Carp will be introduced as the feared, encroaching intruder that it is to the Great Lake area.

*Phillip Thurtle.*

**Losing my Wings: Towards a Gothic Theory of Biological Change**

A number of animal body types have the capacity for aerial locomotion; mine isn't one of them. Some animals can gracefully fall, some can parachute and glide, and still others have the capacity to flap wings and soar. From the standpoint of biomechanics, flight seems an impossible bodily accomplishment for me. My body weighs too much, my bones are too dense, and my appendages aren't shaped correctly. From the standpoint of genetic regulation, however, flight, or at least growing wings, is only a few developmental steps away. In this paper, I attempt a science of radical potentials and pregnant capacities as I interweave stories of the renunciations of flight in literature and movies, with a history of experiments on the genetic regulation of wing development. What emerges is an evolutionary theory based on the selection of undifferentiated potentials (as opposed to adaptation), a genetic theory predicated on connectivity and change (as opposed to reduction and determination), and an affect informed natural history of the immanent capacities of grounded earthlings (as opposed to transcendental dreams of taking wing).

*Orit Halpern.*

**Paranoid Formations: Rationality as Infrastructure**

Today, few terms are more critical to describing either economy or society than “rationality”. But despite the preponderant ubiquity of the term, it is rarely defined with any historical specificity or separated from older ideas of reason, sense, agency, and knowledge. This paper will examine how, in the years after the Second World War, rationality was redefined in cybernetics and its affiliated neuro, cognitive, and social sciences as algorithmic, rule bound, and logically representable in a manner that had little to do with reason, consciousness, or autonomous choice, but everything to do with rethinking humans, machines, and systems in terms of communication, control, and information. This redefinition of rationality provided a new epistemological infrastructure with vast impact for many fields. At stake in this shift was a transformation in measurement and numeracy. Rationality was a tool to bridge quality and quantity making new forms of process visible and knowable. Counter, however, to our commonly held assumptions, in the post war period rationality, even in game theory, was often defined as paranoid, dissociated from consciousness, and pathological. To be reasonable was an anomaly, to be rational a regularity, and between these two terms emerged new forms of measure and technology. Early computer programs, for example, demonstrated that only the profiles of paranoid schizophrenics could be programmed, and cybernetically informed psychology studies found rational people the most likely to be brainwashed and become violent. Rationality, then, was a blessing and a curse—a technological opportunity and a self-destructive tactic. Could rationality be affective and logical, paranoid and reasonable, progressive and destructive, centralized and networked? All at the same time?

Session 11 (B) Hilton, Mitchell Room (4th Fl)

**SLSA Creative Writers Read I: The Nonhuman as Medium**

Chair: *Laura Otis*

In the first of two panels, creative writers and artists will read from work in which digital media (blogs, e-mail messages, spreadsheets, online advertisements) modulate, filter, enhance, or enable the feeling of being human. Do creative works open avenues to explore the relationship between the human and the nonhuman in ways that analytical works cannot? Can and should creative projects ever be distinguished from scholarly or analytical ones? Following readings from their works, the authors would like to discuss the relative roles of creative and scholarly approaches to knowledge.

*Janine DeBaise.*

**Camera: How Photography Can Release Stories Embedded in the Body**

For the last five years, Janine DeBaise has been asking friends and sometimes strangers to pose for naked photos, which she then posts to her blog. The important part of the project, she’s discovered, isn’t the photos themselves but the conversations that take place as a result of the photo project. The photos act as a catalyst to release the stories embedded in our bodies. The blog has worked to begin a conversation, in a virtual space, about the body. She’ll be reading from the ecofeminist manuscript she’s writing about the naked photo blogging project.

*Laura Otis.*

**The Tantalus Letters**

The Tantalus Letters is an epistolary e-mail novel set during the first heady days of instantaneous electronic communication. It follows the exchanges of a developmental neurobiologist, a particle physicist, and two English professors who are involved with each other in complex ways. All four are tantalized by a medium that almost—but not quite--offers personal closeness. Their studies of developing neurons, top quarks, and human emotion merge as they seek intimacy that overloads the medium offering it.

*Marjorie Luesebrink.*

**\*Tin Towns and Other Excel Fictions\* - Spreadsheet Narrative**

\*Tin Towns and Other Excel Fictions\* is a collection of short narratives constructed with spreadsheets as authoring tools. Since these stories are read in "live" software, they can be manipulated to mediate the details of the fiction by the reader. Particular focus will be on \*Fukushima: The Fortunate Isle\* wherein facts and data can be altered as the narrative expands.

Session 11 (C) Hilton, MacArthur Room (4th Fl)

**Posthuman and Nonhuman in Late 20th-Century Fiction**

Chair: *Jennifer Jackson*

*Johanna Heil.*

**“Spirits raised by me”: Nonhuman Empowerment in Richard Powers’s *Galatea 2.2* and *Plowing the Dark***

Richard Powers’s novels *Galatea 2.2* and *Plowing the Dark* are distinguishably characterized by the coalescence of human creativity and technological expertise, on the one hand, and digital, nonhuman empowerment, on the other hand. In *Galatea 2.2*, a novelist and a computer scientist/cognitive neurologist program, teach, and prepare a neural network to take a Turing Test in form of a Master’s examination in English literature. In *Plowing the Dark*, a group of researchers and an artist create computer assisted virtual realities (VR). In both cases, the human protagonists eventually need to give up their control for the programs to continue the creative process, which eventually excels human expectations and capacities: The neural network in *Galatea 2.2* develops a philosophical understanding of its own ontological state while the VR in *Plowing the Dark* renders possible the dissolution of the human confinements of space and time that none of the human creators can remotely understand. Working on the intersection of psychoanalytical theory, media studies, and literary criticism, I use approaches by Lacan, Žižek, Kittler, Bolter and Grusin to discuss if and how we may consider these examples as instances of nonhuman empowerment, which can only materialize through the humans’ effacement of agency (cf. Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation 27*). In this context, I am particularly interested in how the recurrence of Classical and Romantic concepts, e.g. the double/doppelganger, the Pygmalion myth, or the “modern Prometheus”-figure, connects to the relationship between the sciences and the arts in the contemporary world as portrayed in Powers’s novels.

*Scott Selisker.*

**Posthuman, Non-human, Subhuman: Criteria in *Snow Crash***

Accounts of posthumanity, including the analyses of N. Katherine Hayles and Donna Haraway, in particular, take the posthuman as an end to the “innocence” or naïveté of the liberal subject as such. This paper seeks to challenge the dominant temporal narrative of the transition from human to posthuman by mapping the distinction between the human and the posthuman or subhuman spatially. Hayles’s work on Neal Stephenson’s 1992 novel *Snow Crash*, an exemplary science fiction of posthumanity, ends on a paradoxical point: after the text details so many modes of potentially revolutionary posthumanity, it seems a strange disappointment that *Snow Crash*, along with the other exemplars, should explicitly embrace a more traditional liberal subject and politics, essentially discarding the revolutionary possibilities of posthumanity within the calculus of the novel’s closure. I contend that there is both a narrative logic to this choice and a political one that conceives of many forms of posthumanity as subhuman. *Snow Crash*’s broadly conceived cast of cyborgs and posthumans—the modified sensoria of cyberspace and bodily modification, robot-animal hybrids, and programmed cult members—enables me to examine critically the criteria the novel establishes for posthumanity. I argue that *Snow Crash*’s principal criterion for posthumanity depends wholly upon ways of seeing, rather than on modes of machine-human hybrid embodiment. This claim allows me in turn to imagine the novel’s own “world-picture,” in which “human,” liberal, and “free” American selves define themselves against will-less, programmed, and therefore subhuman immigrant others.

*Jennifer Jackson.*

**Posthuman Embodiment and Potential in Houellebecq’s *The Possibility of an Island***

Michel Houellebecq’s *The Possibility of an Island* performs a fierce analysis of relationships, the current posthuman trajectory, and a rant against the “nostalgia of desire” for connection in a digital future. The narrator Daniel is drawn to a woman at a magazine that defines female bodies as hot cyber-preteens; they part when neither can handle the others’ aging body. He then pursues a younger woman, but cannot bear her self-absorption. Invited to join a religious/scientific cult, he’s promised eternal life through a downloaded identity via neurological circuits. These neo-humans wish to halt humans’ obsession with sex and violence, spending their spare time exchanging e-mails, free from suffering if also pleasure. I read Houellebecq’s novel with Kathryn Hayles’ analysis of posthuman embodiment. Deploying Hansen and Munster’s materialist arguments, I argue for reparative—if not transformative—tactics for thinking a non-human future. Houellebecq saturates *Possibility* with an affective language of compulsions, gesturing toward cognitive shifts in salience, the ability to attend among contrasts in order to prioritize and act. Drained of attentional mechanisms, the post-embodied sift through emotionally charged discourse but without anticipatory pleasure. In Deleuzian terms, the problem-event is in potential. My paper then worries Berlant’s notion of potentialities, or [W]hatever a life needs at the points where it seems impossible: contact as potential anchor, a movement that makes a moment stick, sometimes shaped toward the possible...environments for imaginative and collective activity, whether or not we pay attention to them. (Supervalent Thought blog, 4/14/11)

Session 11 (D) Hilton, Wright Ballroom A (4th)

**Affect and Its Consequences**

*Christina Walter.*

**An “Incipient System”: Modernist Impersonality and Affect Theory**

The body without organs. The affective body. The cyborg. The posthuman. All of these concepts announce the desire in contemporary theory not only to conceptualize a thoroughly material subjectivity—over and against the linguistic constructivism of poststructuralism—but also to use a scientific vernacular in order to achieve this goal, leading to what has recently been dubbed a neuroscientific turn in the humanities. This talk takes up the controversial modernist aesthetic of “impersonality,” which I read as an adaptation of modern optical science, in order to uncover the literary pre-history and with it the underlying mechanics of this turn. Impersonality was the aesthetic hallmark of a modernist frustration with existing formulations of subjectivity. It rejected a long-standing artistic commitment to Romantic expression—the belief that literature expressed the interiority or self of its author. Critics have long read this rejection as an outright refusal of the writer’s very subjectivity and embodied specificity. But such a reading can’t account for modernists’ rigorous engagement with propositions and experiments drawn from both an optical science that was redefining physiological perception, and from a variety of visual technologies, media, and discourses touched by that science. I argue that the impersonalists borrowed from optics and visual culture in order to investigate the unwilling psycho-physiological systems that mediate perception and condition personality. This talk sketches the formal and thematic tendencies of modernism’s optical impersonality and then looks ahead to current affect theory—particularly to the Deleuzian theories of Brian Massumi and the Tompkins-inflected work of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. I show how affect theory echoes these same tendencies in its tracings of material subjectivity, and even how modernist impersonality could still be useful to this project.

*Amanda Booher.*

**Affects and Ethics: Theorizing Non+Human Interrelations in Neuroprosthetics**

Advancements in neuroprosthetics promise a near-future of prosthetic limbs that are controlled by thoughts, that feel pressure and heat; of weapons or other external objects also controlled by thoughts; of

perhaps even reaching the singularity, integrating our consciousness into machine. These potentialities emerge from similar grounds, raising questions about the nature and ethics of the relationship between bodies and nonhuman objects. How do the boundaries and definitions of the human and nonhuman shift, integrate, and/or dissolve in these intimate interactions? Can the body/brain be fully (re)written for such integrations? Should it be? To what extent is the brain embodied? How might disembodiment change human perception -- of things outside one's body, and of one's self? How ought we negotiate bioethical concerns, from militarization to access across culture and class? This presentation will investigate these questions from multiple positions. Philosophically, this will integrate Massumi's work with affect and nonhuman objects, Merleau-Ponty's theories of intervolvement, and the ethics of Levinas and feminist bioethics (more broadly). Work in neurology, neuroprosthetics, and neuropsychology will inform the medical/scientific potentialities. Finally, (pop) cultural representations, particularly from DARPA and related news coverage, will provide grounds for specific interrogations of how neuroprosthetics are presented to the public. This presentation aims to develop a theoretical framework for understanding the essence and ethics of these emerging interrelations of the human and nonhuman.

Session 11 (E) Hilton, Wright Ballroom B (4th)

**Wolves to Wolfdogs: Creating and Condemning Charismatic Megafauna**

Chair: *Sarah Lewis Mitchem*

Of all the charismatic megafauna, perhaps no species has captured humankind's fascination as closely as the wolf. From ancient to modern times, these animals transcend the products of our disciplines: folktales, sculptures, field studies, novels, soundtracks, movies, gaming avatars, etc. Yet, while our interaction with these non-human animals has escalated widely between condemnation and preservation, we have also endeavored to modify the species through genetic manipulations. While the most well-known alterations are dogs, there is another subset population that mainly escapes public attention: wolfdogs. This panel brings together three academics, from three different fields, who reside in one of the top-producing wolfdog states: Florida. Borrowing from both their respective fields of training and their interactions with wolves and wolfdogs, each speaker presents important insights into humankind's connections with these animals.

*Sarah Lewis Mitchem.*

**Florida's Canid Curiosities: Conceptualizing Wolfdogs as a Practice of Alterity in Literature and Pedagogy**

In *The Beast and the Sovereign*, Derrida traces the paradoxical position of wolves in literature and the popular imagination. Prompted by the phrase *pas de loup*, he illustrates how wolves embody the position of an absent referent while being directly referred to: "the syntagm *pas de loup*, is precisely that the absence of the wolf is also expressed in it in the silent operation of *pas*, the word *pas* which implies, but without any noise, the savage intrusion of the adverb of negation." The phrase roughly translates to "the wolf is not here," yet actually implies that a subject is acting "stealthily." The animals are simultaneously erased (negated), referenced (named), and used to indicate intention (to act stealthily). Yet modern culture has escalated an animal variety that better embodies this precarious position of existence/erasure: wolfdogs. In just the US, over 300,000 straddle being classified as either a wild or domesticated species. This presentation examines various media to trace how wolfdogs became polarizing icons whose numbers increase due to the public's demand, yet are condemned by most state and county animal control regulations. While being an English teacher at the University of Florida allows me to discuss these animals in a scholastic framework, my personal affiliation with wolfdogs makes me acutely aware that the materials I provide only offer *pas de loup*, the animal as it is not there. Lastly, I discuss my attempt to rectify this situation by introducing wolfdog breed ambassadors to my students.

*Lindsay Mehrkam.*

### **Enriching the Life of the Sanctuary Wolfdog: Human Interaction as an Overlooked Welfare Strategy**

Wolf-dog hybrids are a controversial population that has received minimal attention in behavioral science. It is estimated that there are approximately 300,000 wolfdogs in the United States alone, and what is understood about their behavior is at best, anecdotal. This presentation will first examine how empirical questions have portrayed the wolf-dog hybrid and contributed to an understanding of their behavior toward people at present. The use of behavior analytic principles may be effective in understanding the relationship between caretakers and wolf and wolf-dog populations in captivity. Our results suggest that human interaction sessions resulted in significantly higher levels of positive social interactions with both human caretakers and conspecifics, increased sensory stimulation and activity levels, and reduced abnormal behaviors - all of which include the aims of environmental enrichment for captive animals.

*Chester Udell.*

### **Steps to an Ecology of Sound**

Landscape - A portion of the Earth's surface that can be comprehended at a glance. Soundscape - the portion of an environment mediated through sound. Any given environment is under continuous flux due to factors like natural process, climate change, urbanization, and technology. The notion of soundscape studies and acoustic ecology begin with R. Murry Schafer in the 1960's in response to the globally changing sonic landscapes. The "soundscape composer" engages with location-specific sound as a means to (de)construct an aesthetic representation (or abstraction) of that particular site in the form of a musical composition. My work with soundscape is influenced by a number of fields. For example, while composing pieces using wolf vocalizations I have recorded, I engage Native American literature on wolf/coyote mythology to inform my creative approach. I also cannot escape the ethological experience of observing wolf behavior while I collect these recordings, which becomes an inextricable influence in my process for constructing music using these sounds. Mutually, collected recordings and knowledge of sound analysis and manipulation has an inherent utility for scientific inquiry.

Session 11 (F) Hilton, Wright Ballroom C (4th)

### **Eating Animals**

*Annie Potts.*

### **From Reverence to Ruination: Representations of Chickens and Poultry Farming in Contemporary and Activist Art**

The works of artists such as Picasso, Klimt, Klee, Magritte and Chagall can be characterized as producing familiar renditions of the chicken; that is, representations of commonly shared ideas about 'chicken-ness' and what chickens symbolize within their particular cultural contexts. In other artworks, however, the image or idea of the chicken challenges the viewer by evoking a sense of the unfamiliar. Such works may disrupt conventions by associating chicken motifs with other, often less sanguine, aspects of chickens' lives or appearances, or by using chickens as metaphors for human concerns. The works of post-1960s contemporary artists deliberately seeking to defamiliarize the cultural place of the chicken will be presented and discussed. Sometimes chickens are used to draw attention to political or social issues affecting humans, as in South African resistance artist Ezrom Legae's 1978 Chicken Series, which protested against apartheid. Chickens may also be used in performative or experimental art to render more visible the increasing power of science, technology, agribusiness and consumerism, as in Belgium artist Koen Vanmechelen's Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, which attempts to create a universal chicken or 'Superbastard'. Artists advocating on behalf of chickens use innovative materials and means in order to convey their political messages. The works of New Zealand based de-taxidermist Angela Singer, Tasmanian multi-media artist Yvette Watt, US based painter Sue Coe, collage artist Nicholas Lampert, and photographer Mary Britton Clouse will be examined as examples of activist art involving disruptive depictions of chickens.

*Jessica Carey.*

**Nose to Tail Eating: Knowledge, Sacrifice, and the Redefinition of the Animal Body**

North American food culture's embrace of "nose to tail" eating, inspired in part by chef Fergus Henderson's *Nose to Tail*, involves a promotion of artisanal butchering, a renewed ethos of using every body part, and the foregrounding of an awareness concerning where one's food "comes from." From a critical animal studies perspective, in this paper I analyze how nose-to-tail defines our orientation to nonhuman life. Certainly, the ethos rejects the biopolitical "common sense" of the factory farm, which insists upon defining most aspects of life as waste. Yet it appears that nose-to-tail enacts this "resistance" by marshaling the same apparatus of knowledge-based domination of the animal other that is so central to the power structure of the factory farm. Following Jacques Derrida's observation that the human subject is instantiated through the assumption of mastery over others, especially the sacrifice of those deemed "animal," I examine aspects of human mastery that the rhetoric and practices of nose-to-tail articulate. First, I situate the movement's drive for more comprehensive knowledge of the animal body within recent theorizations of biopolitics, in which knowledge about others is considered an intimate factor in determining the worthiness of a life from a position of power. Second, I explore pleasure, and its role in defining human and animal life: nose-to-tail simultaneously invokes the contradictory pleasures of being wholly immersed in animality, and remaining entirely "above" it. Grasping the paradoxical mechanisms of these pleasures will help us theorize messages about animal life circulated in various contexts of food discourse.

*Scout Calvert.*

**Bovine Bioinformatics, Genetic Data, and the Internet of Animals**

In Douglas Adam's third book in the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy series, Arthur Dent and Zaphod Beeblebrox meet the dish of the day, a cow bred with the desire to be eaten and the willingness to say so. This science fiction classic presciently imagines the ultimate end of what has become known as "sourcing": knowing precisely where food was grown, by whom, under what conditions, and where it has travelled since. This paper is about the ways that livestock animals are becoming part of the "internet of things." In the 20th century, agricultural record keeping became the backbone of breed improvement plans. By late in the century, information and computing technologies could convert this data into phenotype indexes with strong correlative power to genotype. These "expected progeny differences" were very useful for selling the reproductive capacities of the animals, particularly in the form of frozen semen and embryos, since these proto-bovines can't be physically examined. Radio frequency technology has also sufficiently developed that programs for the individual tagging of commercial beef cattle are being implemented, both for herd management and for tracking outbreaks of diseases like E. coli and mad cow disease. Cattle are being constituted in assemblages that include DNA, gametes, EPDs, and sensor data. A cow in its lifetime is now an information-generating machine. This paper examines how cattle move in networks that include some humans, some nonhumans, and some nonanimals, including pedigrees, information technologies, EPDs, food chain tracking systems, cattle breeding operations, and the internet.

Session 11 (G) Hilton, Miller (4th Floor)

**Rhetoric, Code, and the Nonhuman**

Chair: *James Brown*

Rhetoric has traditionally focused on the human, and classical rhetoric on the male human: a "good man speaking well" (Quintilian) uses his "available means of persuasion" (Aristotle) and applies reason to the imagination in order to move an audience's will (Bacon). Contemporary rhetoric includes consideration of women rhetors and acts other than persuasion, but most recently, rhetorical theory has taken a non-human turn. Rhetoricians are now asking: what roles do animals, arena, and objects play in rhetorical acts such as persuasion, expression, and identification? This panel takes up that turn to ask new questions about rhetoric, software, and code: how can we consider new modes of rhetoric, where computational machines are authors or audiences? While code has been analyzed as text by rhetoricians and new media scholars,



our questions move beyond considering code as a static artifact. We ask: How must we revise rhetorical theory to account for machinic audiences, style in the construction of software, and the rhetorical education of computers? This panel addresses these questions by offering three interlocking presentations. The three panelists work together in order to theorize a nonhuman rhetorical theory of code.

*Annette Vee.*

### **Code, Copyright, and Machinic Audiences**

Speaker 1 examines the legal history and controversies of copyright laws that consider machines to be audiences. How does the idea of machinic audience press on established theories of rhetoric? Computers are rendered readers or audiences for “literature” through United States copyright law, which defines computer source code and object code as “literary works.” The 1976 United States Copyright Act declared that “Copyright protection subsists [...] in original works of authorship fixed in any tangible medium of expression, now known or later developed, from which they can be perceived, reproduced, or otherwise communicated, either directly or with the aid of a machine or device” (17 U.S.C. §102(a)). This statement was a radical departure from the longstanding paradigm that copyright was only available to human-readable works. The first legal challenge to the idea that “works of authorship” must have human audiences came in 1908, with the US Supreme Court case *White-Smith v. Apollo*, which debated whether player piano rolls--only legible to player pianos--were covered by copyright. Prior to that, Thomas Edison’s phonograph records disrupted legal notions of human performance through the physical reading and playing of phonograph machines. Player pianos rolls, phonograph records, and computer object code are all built for machine audiences, and their protection under copyright law prompts us to reconsider what it means to account for audiences in rhetoric. To this end, Speaker 1 uses contemporary theories of code and rhetoric (such as Bogost’s procedural rhetoric) in order to understand what machinic audiences mean for rhetorical theory.

*Kevin Brock.*

### **Style and Software Development**

Speaker 2 builds upon the argument established by Speaker 1 and asks: if machines are readers of literary works, what does it mean rhetorically when human authors compose code? While non-programmers might view code as a monolithic and concrete form of machinic instruction, many software developers recognize that code is fundamentally rhetorical, with coders engaging in fierce debate about the “proper” way(s) to code, using the term “elegance” to define code that works effectively on multiple levels. Such discussions raise questions about the goals of code: are machinic optimization and efficiency paramount? Why argue about how best to achieve that, when a device’s mechanical and computational capabilities stem from specific operations? Might readability, such as for development purposes, and preferences for individual coding practices be as significant? We would do well to consider how the rhetorical canons--of style and arrangement in particular--influence coding practices whose impacts extend beyond the scope of human persuasion. We might then ask where the constraints of a machine interpreter further rearrange and reconstruct a developer’s efforts, resulting in potentially different forms of rhetorical action and computation alike. Focusing here on the myriad examples of, and discourse surrounding, the “FizzBuzz” test commonly used in hiring software programmers (which examines programmers’ knowledge both of code languages and of procedural and iterative operations), Speaker 2 will explore some of the possibilities of software development style by highlighting how code achieves specific computational and persuasive goals.

*James Brown.*

### **The Rhetorical Education of a Computational Machine**

Speaker three takes the panel’s argument one step further by asking: If machines can be audiences and can be addressed with a particular style, can they also be the subject of a rhetorical education? Teaching a computational machine is not the same as programming it, since providing a machine with a rhetorical

education would assume that the machine is doing more than executing rules--it is learning an art, a techne. This presentation proposes that we rethink programming as a pedagogical enterprise, one in which the programmer is teaching the machine rather than merely feeding it instructions. More specifically, this presentation discusses the rhetorical canon of memory in order to speculate about how a computational machine might be said to gain a rhetorical sensibility by learning what ancient rhetoricians called the “art” of memory. By examining Stuart Moulthrop’s hypertext fiction *Reagan Library*--a work that uses Javascript to remember the actions of the interactor and to perform arguments about the fraughtness of memory--this presentation shows how procedural rhetorics educate not only human audiences but also the machines that execute them. This presentation suggests that conceiving of programming in terms of the rhetorical education of a machine opens the way toward nonhuman rhetorics of code and coding. By granting that a rhetorical education is not only for the human, we can continue the work of developing rhetorical theories that account for nonhuman agents.

Session 11 (H) Hilton, Schlitz (4th Floor)

**TEACHING IN THE AGE OF NEW MEDIA** (Roundtable)

Chair: *Carol Colatrella*

This roundtable will include several short (8-10-minute) papers offered by humanities scholars incorporating communication and social media technologies in their teaching. Discussants will reflect on how deploying technologies affects course construction and classroom practices. They will also identify effective assignments requiring social media and other digital tools. Conference attendees will be invited to share their views and practices in subsequent discussion.

*Mita Choudhury.*

**Contribution**

*Carol Colatrella.*

**Contribution**

*Pamela Gossin.*

**Contribution**

*David Hogsett.*

**Contribution**

*Kevin LaGrandeur.*

**Contribution**

Session 11 (I) Hilton, Usinger (4th Floor)

**Varieties of Cybernetic Systems**

*Katie King.*

**“Clarity here would be misleading” (Latour 2004:209): transcontextualities and feminisms**

Katie King, University of Maryland: <http://katiekin.weebly.com/> My “non human” is television. Well, sort of. And “sort of” is the relationality I work with and out of to participate with, among, and as another actant in eddying washes and distributed interactivities of “tools, bodies, networks, animals, climate, media, or biomes.” Clarity and unmixed metaphors are not my aspirations. Indeed I seek out transcontextual confusions for the very “tangles” for communication (Star & Ruhleder 1996:127) motivating a feminist transdisciplinary posthumanities. In the late sixties Bateson challenged us to question “conscious purpose,” to recognize its worldly effects, wondering about “orders of recursiveness”

in “the hurly-burly of organisms.” (Bateson 1968, 1979:201) My non human ecologies cannot get along without registering the play of commercial entertainment amid restructuring academies, being inside of and moved around literally by the very material and conceptual structures analyzed, a kind of self-consciousness only partially available for explicit discussion, never only “human.” TV idiom has a “sort of” relationality presaged by a quipping Latour: “Reason today has more in common with a cable television network than with Platonic ideas.” (Latour 1993:119) TV is never simply a transparent platform and its agencies always include the non human. Epistemological TV melodramas of the nineties play with sensation and affect in terms that invite us to experience agencies only “sort of” conscious, even to work out and among the vibrant matters (Bennett 2010) of so-called new feminist materialisms in their transdisciplinary tangles, only partially available for explicit discussion.

*Lindsey Dolich Felt.*

### **“Disabling” Cybernetics: The Materiality of the Prosthetic Interface**

In the early 1960s, a decade after he first suggested the possible cybernetic applications for prosthetic limbs in *Cybernetics* (1948), mathematician Norbert Wiener spearheaded a research project that sought to put his theory to practice. Borne out of a post-World War II medical economy, the “Boston Arm Project” was a joint effort to re-engineer artificial arms into self-powered, fitted interfaces that worked in tandem with the human nervous system. Also called the “Liberty Limb,” such a device would figuratively “emancipate” disabled veterans and the body politic from the Cold War. Bernard Wolfe’s dystopic science fiction novel *Limbo* (1952) anticipates this rhetoric years before the “Liberty Limb,” chronicling the story of future citizens who seek to eradicate aggression through voluntary amputation, and prosthetic replacement. Wolfe’s novel allegorizes much of Wiener’s work in biocybernetics, offering a compelling early example of how bodies plugged in to cybernetic prostheses signify a global “arms race.” In *Limbo*, prosthetic limbs stage the penetration of the body through a nonhuman “Other.” My paper explores two antithetical consequences of this bodily invasion: how the machine regulates the behavior of the novel’s characters, and conversely, how prosthetic interfaces animate humans in uncanny ways. I argue the futurist world of *Limbo*, twinned to a “historicized” account of biocybernetics, demonstrates the power of prosthetics to remap the phenomenology of the body. Responding to Cold War fears of enemy penetration, both Wiener and Wolfe inscribe revisionary narratives of how nonhuman actants can reinstate the materiality of human bodies and media.

*Chris Washington.*

### **Anthropomorphic Autopoiesis**

I read the disavowal of human sovereignty in the poetic trope of prosopopoeia to show how this trope actualizes a persuasively powerful account of autopoiesis (rather than simply poiesis). As theorized by systems theorist Niklas Luhmann, autopoiesis is the process by which a given system emerges as distinct from the massive sets of inchoate cultural, discursive, and scientific data that make up the environment of which it is a part. Such systems work by means of the paradoxical concept of operational closure, that is, they are closed and open to the environment of which they are part: “the concept of a self-referentially closed system does not contradict the system’s openness to the environment. Instead, in the self-referential mode of operation, closure is a form of broadening possible environmental contacts; closure increases, by constituting elements more capable of being determined, the complexity of the environment that is possible for the system.” Luhmann calls this filtering process differentiation, the mechanism of operational closure. As I argue, prosopopoeia, understood as a Luhmannian system, differentiates the human speaking voice from the non-human: it differentiates from them in order to work even as it announces its difference from itself: it needs the non-human for self-actualization. In reading John Clare’s “The Badger” I demonstrate how this very process of prosopopoeia’s operational closure—its concurrent effacement of the subject it represents—therefore also scrambles the human and non-human in the act of differentiating them. Therefore prosopopoeia undercuts its own generative anthropomorphism in the act of inscription and this human-nonhuman contamination is both the condition and uncondition of poetry’s posthuman possibility.

Session 11 (J) Hilton, Kilbourn (5th Floor)

**Arts and Ecologies**

Chair: *Stephanie S. Turner*

*Elizabeth Kessler.*

**Alignments: Earthworks, Astronomy, and Instrumentality**

In the early 1970s, several American artists conceived and constructed earthworks, large-scale sculptural projects, often in remote locations, that could act as instruments to observe and track astronomical phenomena. Examples include Robert Morris's Observatory (1971), Nancy Holt's Sun Tunnels (1973-1976), James Turrell's Roden Crater (1974-present), and Charles Ross's Star Axis (1971-present). As the dates indicate, some of these projects have spanned decades and remain works in progress. The artists often collaborated, sometimes extensively, with astronomers during the construction of the pieces to ensure the precise alignment with the sun, moon, and stars. Despite these efforts, the artists are quick to refute any claim that the works might function as instruments. This paper examines what is at stake in carefully designing such a piece, yet later denying the potential instrumentality of the work. It will examine how the artists define the notion of an instrument and why the concept is problematic within the context of art. It will also consider whether expanding the notion of an instrument may open up new ways of understanding the earthworks and their relationship to astronomy. Perhaps the earthworks are what historians of science Thomas L. Hankins and Robert J. Silverman have called "philosophical instruments," objects created for their intellectual and phenomenological possibilities. Or perhaps, following the lead of Robert Smithson's concept of the non-site, they are non-instruments, analogies or metaphors that represent the idea of an instrument rather than actualize one.

*Joseph Dreiss.*

**Direct Encounters with Nonhuman Nature: The Landscape Interventions of Andy Goldsworthy**

Andy Goldsworthy is perhaps the leading earth artist of the contemporary period. Since the 1980s he has been creating sculptures in natural settings using locally available materials. The structures that he creates out of twigs, rocks, icicles, roots, flowers, leaves, plants, wool and other natural materials are temporary and are minimally invasive. The only permanent record that exists of his creative work are the photographs that he takes and through which his work is known and made available for aesthetic appreciation by the art viewing public. Goldsworthy's work has been widely recognized for its beauty and for the astonishing variety of approaches the artist has devised to interact with the natural environment. The importance of his work lies in its effectiveness as a vehicle through which the artist and his public can directly, intuitively and imaginatively connect with the natural world. Goldsworthy's art has served as a paradigm that embodies an enlightened relationship between the human and the nonhuman natural and has inspired green architects in their attempts to redefine the relation between the manmade and the natural. A discussion of Goldsworthy's work in the context of a conference focusing on the nonhuman should contribute a valuable perspective in helping to define the manner in which human beings can satisfy emotional and cultural needs in a way that allows for a sustainable relationship with environment.

*Christine Filippone.*

**The Human Use of Human Beings?: Feminism and Systems Theory in Public Sculpture and Ecological Art**

Systems theory, probably the most influential scientific theory for artists working in the late 1960s and early 1970s, considers how mutually dependent variables function as a unit. Along with New Left and counter-culture imaginings of a changed world, systems theory afforded many women artists an alternative means of conceiving social and environmental relationships, and undermining a hierarchical and patriarchal social structure. Artists including Alice Aycock, Nancy Holt and Betsy Damon were familiar with the distinction between closed and open systems. By definition, open systems, such as biological, cybernetic and social systems, exchange matter, energy and information with the environment

and in so doing become more complex. In contrast, closed systems, such as spring-loaded clocks and many machines are set in motion by an outside force and function for a limited time, but ultimately wind down and stop. These artists equated closed systems with Modernism, the military-industrial-complex and technological society, and instead applied the concept of open systems to their public sculpture, reclamation and ecological art projects, which engaged social and environmental systems for the purpose of instigating social change. This project considers the ways in which the concept of open systems, consistent with many aspects of feminist theory, became a tool for social critique for these artists, offering a transformative, open-ended conceptual model for society and substantiation for social subversion in the midst of the feminist movement and social revolution of the late 1960s and 1970s.

Session 11 (K) Hilton, Juneau (5th Floor)

### **The Nonhuman Actor in Critical Media Studies and Design**

Chair: *Marcel O'Gorman*

This panel addresses current scholarship in media and science studies that raises questions about the historical separation of analytical and applied work. In assembling the panel, we challenge the contemporary relevance of a tradition of humanist scholarship that automatically separates critical perspective from object. The formerly “dumb object,” we contend, is increasingly animated and self-automated. We discuss this moment in humanities scholarship that must increasingly address not only its own forms of reproduction (the becoming digital of humanities research) but also the need for creative and created critical works. The papers in this panel address an interlinked group of themes and genres that include Alternate Reality Games (ARG) as critical tools; networked engagement in real-time; computational and sensor data as productive tools; and art production as a mode of investigation. We place such critical projects in a framework where one may locate nonhuman actants and posthumanist disciplinarity at work in describing a mode of literature, science, and arts for the current age.

*Ron Broglio; Marcel O'Gorman.*

#### **Animal-Machine-Desire: Putting dairy cows on twitter**

In late evening of July 27, 2010, Ontario Dairy cow Attention Please sent the following message on twitter: “Just unloaded 10.8 kg of creamy goodness at Robot 3.’ Ah! life's best hours are ever first to fly.” This is one of hundreds of messages sent by Attention Please and eleven other cows that were part of the collaborative art project “Teat Tweet” at University of Waterloo’s Critical Media Lab. The project provides a site-specific experimental media object that engages with both the local community and a global audience. Tweets from dairy cattle in rural Ontario, generated by the computer of a robotic milking apparatus, collapse the distance between country life and city life as the milk in the fridge becomes a present-at-hand object. In “Teat Tweet,” cows, technology, and human desire present themselves in real-time messages from a small farm in rural Ontario. This talk will explain the Teat Tweet project and its experimental media method. Additionally, we will discuss the implications of the “animal-machine-desire” assemblage and the relationship between human appetite and a self-milking-cow-system. These Deleuzian assemblages will be explored as embodiments of various posthumanist theories, with a specific focus on Jane Bennett’s concept of “vibrant matter.”

*Nicholas Rombes.*

#### **DO NOT SCREEN: Detective (and) Agency**

The DO NOT SCREEN project involves converting found footage into critical practice by exploring the methods by which what is typically used as the object of criticism and theory (a film) might in fact become the source of theory. The project centers on a self-automated segment of 16mm film from 1948, discovered in rural Michigan and digitized by the Critical Media Lab at the University of Waterloo. The project situates itself as both a creative and critical work that touches on the interplay between analog and digital, the function of nostalgia in cinema studies, and most of all the potential for the theorist to adopt the role and practices of the literary or cinematic detective. The gradual accumulation of evidence, the

following of leads, the examination of the smallest and seemingly insignificant details; all these tropes become possible critical and creative tools. Finally, as an open-source project, DO NOT SCREEN allows for perhaps the most important factor of all: the role of chance and accident as a potential methodology.

*Beth Coleman.*

**Talking to Strangers: Critical Theory and Practice in Contemporary Urban Design**

My goal in this paper is to describe a turn in media design and locative art practice that aspires to a contemporary version of the “naked city” of the Situationalist *dérive* (Debord, Wark)—by engaging new media platforms. In looking at this newly applied turn toward psychogeography, I discuss the tensions between theory and practice in relation to the emergence of “data cities,” which are often defined in terms of a nonhuman agency (Mitchell, Ratti, Greenfield). This paper looks at literature and critical theory on postmodern city life and asks how they may be engaged in an applied practice of urban media design. I address real-time networked engagement, computational/sensor data, and art production as modes of critical investigation. I address several digital media design projects, including Real-Time Rome (Ratti, et al.), City as Platform (Coleman and Goldkrand), and Currentcity (Beinat, et al.), that explicitly address aspects of critical media theory in regard to application. With this analysis, I point to the limits of a technologically determinate view, suggesting that there is more to cities than being “smart” (sensor technologies) or “apps” (applications for mobile media). In my argument, the critical discourses of actor-network theory, affect theory, database analysis, feminist materialisms, and new media theory are important factors in the rethinking and remaking of our urban spaces and imagination.

Session 12 - Sun 10:30am - 12pm

Session 12 (A) Hilton Walker Room (4th Floor)

**Identity, Immanence, and Inanimate Events**

Chair: *Christine Skolnik*

This panel brings together three diverse papers conceived around a common interest in immanent creatureliness. The first paper examines the rhetorical function of the epistemological distinction between human and nonhuman affect in the discourse of contemporary neuroscience. What sorts of cultural and political assumptions are iterated by a neuroscience that remains focused on human affect? And what would an ecological neuroscience seriously invested in nonhuman creatureliness produce? A second paper synthesizes readings of scripture and ecological science, with particular attention to niche theory as a response to the call of Nature. Inspired by François Laruelle, this paper seeks to open a space for a “non-philosophical” relationship between ecology and an ultimately secular theology by performing Laruelle’s method. The panel concludes with an examination of metallurgy in Deleuze and Guattari and its link to tragic drama as an affective process driven by intensive differences in the spatial arrangements of on-stage, off-stage and audience.

*Christine Skolnik.*

**“FEAR and Loathing in Affective Neuroscience”**

This paper reflects on the rhetoric of animal and human studies in affective neuroscience. I begin with a narrative about methodological struggles involving behaviorist B. F. Skinner, neuroscientist Jak Panksepp, and neuropsychologist Richard Lane. The narrative introduces a tension between experimental methods as a function of ethos in this hybrid field. One of the interesting structural features of affective neuroscience as a field of inquiry is that animal studies produce methodological imperatives to which human studies cannot aspire for ethical reasons, while research focusing on human affect tacitly supports the inhumane treatment of nonhumans. In some quarters, for example, animal studies are considered more legitimate because they provide direct proof of neurogenesis (via autopsy). In other quarters researchers accept indirect evidence of neurogenesis, available through PET scans and fMRI. Both subfields,

however, privilege human emotions. What interests me primarily are the underlying assumptions of the two camps. Animal scientists regard their “hard” evidence as more real than the “soft” evidence of PET scans and the like, reproducing both inherited value distinctions and tired critiques. On the other hand, scientists who privilege human experience as the proper subject or end of neuroscience privilege human “creatureliness” in a way that tacitly supports animal experimentation. What would an affective neuroscience uninterested in the differences between human and “other” creatureliness look like? What scientific assumptions would it challenge and what kind of methodologies might it produce? And how would such an approach discipline techno-science not only ethically but epistemologically?

*Anthony Paul Smith.*

**"Creatural Resistance: The Labour of Job and Ecological Niche Theory"**

Within the contemporary academy the only sanctioned relationship between the science of ecology and the humanities disciplines of philosophy and religious studies is environmental ethics. Under this regime of thought the humanists are asked to come along with the scientists and tell them what their ethics ought to be, but the relationship rarely yields anything particularly different or new from the perspective of either field. In this paper I seek to challenge this moribund state of affairs and propose a new relationship between philosophical theology (which remains ultimately secular) and scientific ecology. Following the work of François Laruelle I term this relationship a unified theory that mutates both the terms and hopefully opens up new lines of research and inquiry. Such a project is a large undertaking and so in the scope of this paper I focus on sketching the mutation of one idea from both fields – from philosophical theology the grand concept of Nature (with the capital N intended) and from scientific ecology the concept of niche. Following the method of non-philosophy, which I explicate in the course of performing it in the paper, both of these materials have to be mutated by some term from radical immanence they both rely on. That material comes from what could be termed the non-human, which in Laruelle’s sense would refer to the n-dimensional space of human identity or its infinite iterability, which actually opens up the question of the human beyond the borders of what is normally taken as human. In this paper I argue that this means opening up the human to a more general or generic name--that of creature without creator.

*Guy Zimmerman.*

**"The Or(e) in the Off-Stage: Metallurgy and Tragic Drama"**

“Metal is neither a thing nor an organism, but a body without organs,” write Deleuze and Guattari in *Nomadology, the War Machine*. Given the centrality of the BwO to Deleuze and Guattari, it is not surprising to locate, in contemporary discussions of the emergence of copper metallurgy, the possibility of a common root between two crucial deity figures, Yahweh and Dionysus. Archaeologist Nissim Amzallag places Dionysus at the birth of bronze age metallurgy as a homologue of Yahweh, the god of the Canaanite smelters, who not only commanded transformational powers, but was also able to confer those powers onto men. Amzallag stresses the connection between Dionysus, the god of tragedy, and Yahweh, who was also known in late antiquity as Io or Iao, “the god of magicians and sorcerers.” In this paper I explore how the furnace showed difference to be primary to identity, activating ideas of multiplicity and flow, and taking spatial form in the configuration of the tragic stage. In theater, human suffering can be viewed as an intensive property, and the purpose of the tragic spectacle is to move us toward an affective dissolution in which the recursive operations of the self are brought to a temporary halt, drawing attention to our underlying relational capacities. Furnace and stage are both virtual spaces in which these relational capacities become actual; the capacity of the tragic hero to suffer relates to the capacity of the audience to be moved by that suffering. The birth of metallurgy thus suggests that an intensive difference between a off-stage, on-stage, and audience is the driver of theatrical processes, and that, in tragedy, these processes are disjunctive ones.

Session 12 (B) Hilton, Mitchell Room (4th Fl)

**SLSA Creative Session II: Created Animals, Biological Manipulations**

Chair: *Wayne Miller*

In the second of two panels, creative writers will read from works that approach the nonhuman through the human. In the process we experience the animal in new ways, and confront created animals and various forms of biological manipulation. As in the first panel, we will ask how creative works might open new avenues to explore the relationship between the human and the nonhuman. Can and should creative projects be distinguished from scholarly or analytical ones? Following our readings, we will delve into this question.

*Karl Zuelke.*

**Rolf**

"Rolf" is a short story set mainly in a therapeutic riding academy where mentally and physically disabled children are given the opportunity to ride and work with horses. The story's main character is a volunteer in the academy. Her relationship with the story's title-horse develops in a way she doesn't expect, however.

*Michael Filas.*

**Biotene on the Soul Power**

This hybrid collage combines material from Aristotle's "On the Soul" or "De Anima" with pharmaceutical advertisements and other Internet materials about xerostomia (dry mouth) and its treatments. Soul music lyrics from James Brown are also included, recontextualized here to test funk and soul power amid so many treatments and products. Each non-fiction collage is accompanied by a fictional episode featuring Jack Porter, the hero of this series of collages who seeks to find love and happiness as he copes with his lifelong deficit of spit. Collectively, the work means to suggest ironies and triumphs as regular people struggle to understand and cope with the new ontologies fashioned through medicalization and capitalization of 21st century disease.

*Wayne Miller.*

**Derek of Bug World**

Wayne will read one or more brief passages from this novel, a sequel to *The Bog Monster of Booker Creek*. John Densch is struggling in life as he seeks to understand an alien-abduction story that has haunted him since childhood. Hypnosis leads him on a past-life regression to the 30 Years War, and ultimately on to the bug world he remembers from his childhood. Assuming he is not simply nuts, could all of this be the fabrication of a billion-year-old human communicating with John across time and space? Does he have some authentic connection to abductee Derek? Who are the people suddenly showing such interest in what John knows about the future? The book asks generally: what should we do with these Gödelian, belief-system-cracking moments, the kind that invades John's life repeatedly, but which we all face if we look?

Session 12 (C) Hilton, MacArthur Room (4th Fl)

**Visions of 21st-Century Environments**

Chair: *Stephanie S. Turner*

*Emily Carpenter.*

**“No Way Home”: Mapping the Nonhuman Landscape of Larry Fessenden’s *The Last Winter***

The visual strategies and narrative concerns of *The Last Winter* (Larry Fessenden, 2006) transform the film’s Arctic setting from spectacular scenery to nonhuman narrative agent. While seeming to figure the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as abstract, empty, and available for mastery, it formally describes those landscapes as depthless, abstract spaces that aesthetically isolate and psychologically bewilder human characters. The landscape is not subordinated to the human regard; instead, it seems to make itself invisible or inscrutable in order to derange human occupants. Only a seemingly nonhuman gaze – an



"animorphic" gaze – may roam freely over the land, stalking its human inhabitants and leaving significant traces of its creaturely presence. These traces signal a land claimed not by techno-scientific national projects of American frontier ideology, but by the lives and deaths of its primordial non-human occupants. The film registers signification on the landscape through semiotic frameworks that recall de Saussure and Peirce at the intersection of biosemiotics and eco-phenomenology. Uncanny encounters with the landscape call forth the threatening presence of these dead as a sign of human in-significance. This essay uses Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's notions of *dasein* and flesh, but transform them with the help of Neil Evernden, Yi-Fu Tuan, and Vivian Sobchack into a phenomenologically-informed view of human and non-human being in the landscape: not as mere existence or "being-there" but as a "field of care" articulated across or between geological and human temporalities.

*Sarah McFarland.*

**"It's All Over. I'm Still Here": After the Eco-Collapse in Helen Simpson's "Diary of an Interesting Year"**

The continued rise of post-apocalyptic narratives, public discourse about surviving zombie attacks, and "end times" stories in popular culture speak to the mood of the 2000s: the beginning of the end. Again. Doomsday fervor has occurred many times before in periods of great social stress; this time the stress is caused by anthropogenic climate change, and the apocalyptic speculation is about the nature of the future after an inevitable environmental collapse. Authors explore the political and social consequences of eco-collapse most vividly in fictional depictions where end of the world accounts can "provide both the voyeuristic satisfaction of terrible violence and the Robinson Crusoe excitement of starting over again," as Claire P. Curtis puts it. But what happens when there is no happy ending, when there is no hope of survival? Cormac McCarthy's 2007 post-apocalyptic novel *The Road* takes on this question, but here I want to examine what may be a response and a challenge to that fictional world: Helen Simpson's "Diary of an Interesting Year," originally published in *The New Yorker*. I argue that Simpson's story disrupts and manipulates the genre with her unnamed female narrator, who rejects the social contract altogether by subverting the patriarchal law that holds together traditional examples like *The Road*.

*Michael Garcia.*

**God and Religion Naturalized in Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Talents***

Session 12 (D) Hilton, Wright Ballroom A (4th)

**Whose Sensorium? Observation and Intimacy Divorced from the Body, 1950-1980**

Chair: *Allison Myers*

The notion of the receiver was a particularly fraught one in the cultural and scientific communities of the later twentieth century. Norbert Wiener's theories of cybernetics postulated that artificial intelligence mechanisms could turn human beings into better, more active receivers, while Alvin Tofler's 1970 book *Future Shock* argued that technological advancement was inhibiting direct personal communication and leading to a total corrosion of core selfhood. Between these two poles, artists and musicians explored the ways in which this de-centered selfhood could enable and assist new paradigms of non-hierarchical engagement centered outside individual bodies. This panel explores artistic milieu in which sensation and emotion took place not within or on the subject, but rather in a dynamic space between artwork and observer. Melissa Warak examines the confluences of sonic data that shaped Vassilis Takis' musical works of the 1950s and 60s. Allison Myers' paper interrogates philosophical assumptions of an individual consciousness in a period in which conceptual artists sought to undermine individual solvency and identity. Finally, Kate Green reveals the instability of "the interpersonal encounter" as viewed through performance artist Vito Acconci's work.

*Melissa Warak.*

### **“Labor in the Magnetic Fields: Human and Non-Human Work in the Soundscapes of Vassilakis Takis”**

Greek-born sculptor Vassilakis Takis, whose friend Marcel Duchamp once referred to him as a “joyful laborer in the magnetic fields,” created kinetic sound-producing sculptures in his series of Signals (1954-58) and Musical Sculptures (1965-1970s). These complex objects combined his interests in physics, analog technology, time, Zen Buddhism, and sound waves through the use of various metals, magnets, and speakers. Functioning as modern Aeolian harps, the Signals and Musical Sculptures reflect Takis’s preoccupation with ancient sonic structures as well as modernized Zen notions of “struck sound” and silence. In considering the dialectic of human artistic creativity at odds with and in concert with the machine aesthetic in Takis’s sculpture, this paper posits that these works function most effectively and interestingly within a fluid inverted framework of human versus non-human activity. While these sculptures are physically activated by non-human means – technology that replaces the musician – they are simultaneously given agency as musical instruments by human perception of sound. Therefore, in what ways do humans act as the “receivers” for these musical objects and what are the ontological implications of their reliance on viewer perception? Taking into account the notions of human and non-human “work”, I look to three specific collaborative periods tied theoretically to the innovation of the Signals and Musical Sculptures: Takis’s interactions with the Nouveaux Réalistes in Paris in the 1950s; his collaboration with composer Earle Brown in creating his earliest musical sculpture; and his artistic exchanges with American and European Beat poets.

*Allison Myers.*

### **The Viewer as ‘Perceiving-Field’ in Arakawa and Madeline Gins’ The Mechanism of Meaning**

Arakawa and Madeline Gins’ *The Mechanism of Meaning*, an eighty-two-panel painting-installation largely produced between 1963-73, offers a unique chance to examine a posthumanist approach to meaning in the visual arts. Using logic and perception puzzles drawn from experimental psychology, the work engages with issues in philosophy of mind, cognitive science and poetry to address the discursive nature of meaning formation. Engaging with the work, according to Arakawa and Gins, leads to a critical understanding of the subject as a fluid “perceiving field” rather than a hard-shelled subjectivity. It is surprising, however, to find a persistent application of humanist rhetoric within the work’s interpretations. Arthur Danto, for instance, reflects on how it can “nudge us onto higher and higher planes of awakened consciousness.” Fred Rush likewise suggests that it is able “to change human nature.” Though both recognize Arakawa and Gins’ idea of an expanded subject, much of their rhetoric remains tied to the notion of an individual consciousness or an all-encompassing idea of human nature – concepts antithetical to the artists’ posthumanist rejection of traditional subjectivity. In this paper I explore the problems in applying humanist rhetoric to *The Mechanism of Meaning* and use the work as a springboard to address the applicability of discursive and affective subjects in discussions of conceptual art.

*Kate Green.*

### **Vito Acconci’s Performative Acts of the Early 1970s: Encounters with the Body and Authenticity**

This paper, which focuses on Vito Acconci’s involvement in the Museum of Modern Art’s landmark 1970 exhibition *Information*, provides a case study of how performative artists used the body to break the fourth wall during the period. As conceptualism was developing alongside alternative formats of exhibiting, Acconci and performative-minded peers created charged encounters with viewers and others through actions that engaged physical and psychic dimensions of the body. In his work for *Information*, Acconci implicated unwitting correspondents and the museum staff when he had all of his mail forwarded to the gallery, where it lay guarded until he picked it up (Service Area). Acconci’s contribution several months later to the Jewish Museum’s *Software* show—he invaded unsuspecting viewer’s personal space (*Proximity Piece*)—generated more visible tension. Through a discussion of these encounter-based works and an overview of how they were framed by the artist and others during the period, I will assess the performative vectors such works produced. By contextualizing these performative efforts within an historical moment when many—countercultural youths, second-wave feminists, sociologists,

philosophers, and psychologists alike—were emphasizing the importance of authentic encounters, I will ultimately suggest that we consider the rise of performative art in the US during the period as an example of developing cultural interest in what constitutes an authentic encounter, and what it means to perform in the presence of others.

Session 12 (E) Hilton, Wright Ballroom B (4th)

**Animal Affects: Narrative and Posthumanist Theory**

Chair: *Brian Deyo*

Contemporary work on biopolitics has focused largely on how human bodies come to matter. However, many theorists and critics have evinced concern that current discussion on the body is too narrowly anthropocentric. This panel aims to address the limitations of anthropocentrism and focuses on narrative forms and theories that underscore the interdependency of human and nonhuman animal bodies. Joseph Schneider draws from the work of Donna Haraway and Alfred North Whitehead in an attempt to narrate how and why relations with companion species disrupt the iconicity of the subject-object relation in rationalist epistemology. He focuses on “non-languaged” intercorporeal intimacies with companion species that have the power to rewrite the human-animal binary. Next, Karalyn Kendall-Morwick explains how William Faulkner’s hunting story, “The Bear,” demonstrates narrative’s potential to exceed the limits of “human” experience and undo humanist fantasies of rational autonomy. She argues the tale posits the hunt as a mode of becoming that dissolves the borders of the humanist subject, which in turn reveals the human as always-already entangled in a complex web of interspecies relations. Lastly, Brian Deyo focuses on representations of intercorporeal intimacy between humans and cetaceans in Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*. He explains how and why the narrator’s immersion in sensate life opens him to a realm of sympathetic experience that defies abstract cognition. Following up on this insight, he argues Melville’s novel articulates a corporeal ethics of immediacy that dovetails with Jacques Derrida’s post-structural critique of human-animal relations.

*Brian Deyo.*

**“And Some Certain Significance Lurks in All Things”: Outlandish Sympathy in Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick***

As Melville’s narrator, Ishmael, embarks from the human-centered world of the “lea shore” into the outlandish world of the leviathan, he encounters a non-space where “things” fail to signify. Terra firma gives ground to an ocean wilderness where thought finds no solid footing. Men behave like savages; savages embody civility; whales manifest courage, love, and selflessness in the face of inhuman cruelty. Ishmael’s experience dictates the revision of anthropocentric structures of thought and feeling. Embedded within the chaotic flux of life in extremis, the narrator curiously refrains from the representation of humans and whales in accordance with the precepts of rationalist epistemology. Melville dramatizes the difficulties of translating embodied knowledge into narrative form, and presses upon the reader the immediacy of the experience of industrial whaling. The narrator’s immersion in sensate experience and, in particular, the life-world of whales, is driven by his fascination with the agency of matter. Matter impinges upon the body. Sense initiates passion, and passion has the power to disable reason. As Ishmael becomes attuned to the world of sense, he is affected by uncanny feelings of kinship and sympathy with whales and the nonhuman world. This capacity to be affected, in the words of Karen Barad, “allows matter its due as an active participant in the world’s becoming, in its ongoing intra-activity” (136). Thus I read Melville’s representations of the agency of matter as an ethical strategy that complicates the human-animal binaries of the Western metaphysical tradition.

*Karalyn Kendall-Morwick.*

**Interspecies Agency and Inhuman Narrative in Faulkner’s “The Bear”**

In *The Sense of an Ending*, Frank Kermode proffers an enduring theory of the appeal of narrative: it humanizes time, thus fulfilling a basic need to infuse human experience with order and meaning. With the

emergence of human-animal studies over the past fifteen or so years, critics like Susan McHugh and Paul Sheehan have countered that narrative is not necessarily human-shaped, proposing instead that its persistence in the face of 20th- and 21st-century anti- and posthumanisms demonstrates narrative's potential to exceed the limits of human experience and undo humanist fantasies of rational autonomy. In this paper, I explore narrative's inhuman potential by examining the multispecies encounter at the heart of William Faulkner's "The Bear." Faulkner's best-known hunting story, "The Bear" posits the hunt as a mode of becoming that dissolves the borders of the humanist subject and reveals the human as always-already entangled in a complex web of interspecies relations. Rather than humanizing time, the hunt thrusts the human into an evolutionary temporality in which he (gendered pronoun intended) is no longer the sovereign subject of Western humanism but simply one among many mutually beholden species continually calling one another into being. Thus, Faulkner's narrator insists that the term "hunter" denotes not an individual but a state—one made possible through the combined agency of the multispecies assemblage of human, dog, and bear. I argue that Faulkner uses the hunt to exploit narrative's inhuman potential, productively decentering human agency and opening up new vistas for representing human and nonhuman experience.

*Joseph Schneider.*

**Whitehead, White Cat, Aesthetic Experience, Affect: Scenes from a Relationship**

One of Haraway's insights on companion species is that humans can't "talk dog" and dogs, as far as we know, cannot "talk human" language. Haraway is not interested in speaking about human exceptionalism. Rather, the join presents the human member both with particular challenges and particular opportunities for something more than is usually imagined. Whitehead similarly decries the way attention only to humans as relevant entities in the world erases much of the wonder that is "nature." He writes of "subjects" or "superjects" that include humans, animals, wasps, and even rocks. Central to his focus is a notion of aesthetic experience, from which, he writes, "all the world" emerges. Finally, affect—not meaning emotion, but, from Deleuze, the capacity to affect or be affected—is read to happen "before" emotions are recognized and named. I propose here to use these and related ideas to story aspects of my relationship to a twelve year-old white cat that has lived with me now for almost all her life, and who was, in effect, "given to me" by my late wife (I then was not thrilled by the gift) before she fell ill with cancer and died. I hope to be able to write about non-languaged moments of intimacy between us that have become enormously important. I see these as affective and thereby necessarily physical, haptic moments of experience and feeling, rising to an intensity that Whitehead saw as the "satisfaction" of becoming itself. (242)

Session 12 (F) Hilton, Wright Ballroom C (4th)

**Zoos, Display, and Containment**

Chair: *corinna ghaznavi*

*Andrew Flack.*

**Animal Actors: Conceptualising Animal Agency in the History of the Bristol Zoo Gardens, 1836-2000**

Traditionally, the roles of animals in zoos have been acknowledged in a rather anthropocentric sense. They have been seen as valuable commodities, as scientific specimens, as objects of multi-sensory spectacle, as amusing almost-people and as icons of nature-we-are-losing. In recent conceptualizations of the zoo as a place in which human-animal relationships are configured, attempts have been made to recognise the agency of animals. Some of these analyses have correctly been accused of being anthropomorphic. This paper will point to three modalities of analysis which may be fruitful in the acknowledgement of animal agency in captive environments and which limit the potential for anthropomorphic projections. It will do so in direct relation to the history of the Bristol Zoological Gardens. Firstly, it will argue that the identification of moments whereby animals have been perceived to be 'problematic', 'resistant' and unpredictable may be enough to illustrate that the zoo cannot be

conceived of a place of total human domination. Secondly, it will examine the nature of relationships between individual humans and ‘their’ animals in an attempt to ascertain the extent to which these may be conceived of as what Donna Haraway conceptualises as a process of ‘becoming with’: the negotiation of mutual, if uneven and unbalanced, relationships. Finally, it will employ Actor-Network-Theory in an analysis of the polar bear controversy of the late 1980s/early 1990s to show how non-intentional behaviour contributed to causal networks and thus wielded great agency within and beyond the walls of the Zoological Garden.

*Aaron Santesso.*

### **Apparent Freedom: Urban Display and the Modern Zoo**

When Walter Benjamin likens those working in the Parisian arcades to zoo animals, he joins in the longstanding critical tradition of associating the most contrived and artificial forms of human containment in the modern city with the zoo. My paper would reverse the metaphor, looking at the ways in which the zoo, in Benjamin’s day especially, was working to “naturalize” the idea of containment and display. During the half century between 1880 and 1930, as architects and planners sought to create new, “humanized” urban environments, they regularly drew on the strategies of “authentic” nonhuman display developed by the zoo. For Dostoevsky, the Crystal Palace heralded a new form of urban existence, one “all ready-made and computed with mathematical exactitude.” By the time Benjamin described the arcades, this vision of life under glass had become urban reality. But nervousness about “ready-made” city life also inspired an appetite for openness and natural elements – a desire explored to greatest effect in the zoo. The German zoo designer Carl Hagenbeck pioneered the techniques of “barless cages” and “natural” environments (concrete mountain peaks, etc.) in his Tierpark zoo in Hamburg -- precisely to counter Benjamin's image of the zoo as a row of labeled cages. Zoo designers were among the first to disguise technologically-advanced and regulated living displays and promote them as organic and non-“mathematical.” Hagenbeck also introduced “ethnographic” human displays to his zoo, and this paper will ultimately explore the influence of such displays on modern urban existence.

*Daniel Vandersommers.*

### **"Reading Prairie Dogs, Constructing Science, and Deconstructing Humanism"**

The Philadelphia Zoo, in the 1870s, lay at an intellectual juncture where an erudite zoology became “common,” where modes of intellectualism commingled with forms of entertainment, where the professionalization and popularization of science became a single pursuit, and where fantasies of the exotic morphed with the mundane. Standing before the exhibits of the Philadelphia Zoo, visitors deliberated on topics once reserved for the zoological elite. Zoos transformed anyone, rich and poor, adult and child, man and woman, educated and uneducated, into zoologists. This paper will demonstrate how the public zoo movement created a popular zoology that enabled publics to perceive animals and habitats in new ways. Specifically, my paper will examine a particular exhibit that captured both the headlines and imaginations of Philadelphians—the prairie “dog town.” I will read prairie dogs (and several other creatures) as living texts central to the popularization of zoology, and I will suggest that despite their captivity, zoo animals exercised an agency that allowed them to transcend objectification and instruct urban audiences as subjects. Prairie dogs, as breathing texts, taught zoogoers about animal movement, symbiotic relationships, and ecological complexity. However, zoogoers standing before the prairie dog exhibit, simultaneously consumed a printed text, the *Illustrated Guide and Hand-Book of the Zoological Garden of Philadelphia*, to complement and give form to living narratives. This paper will deconstruct one type of animal display to see how its inhabitants burrowed beyond their walls and into the imaginations of many.

Session 12 (G) Hilton, Miller (4th Floor)

### **Avoid the Noid: Posthuman Paranoia**

Chair: *Kim Lacey*

With the intermingling of the human and the machine becoming more of a reality rather than merely a prospect, there is no shortage of naysayers promoting their fears of this techno-human relationship. Of course, this is not a new paranoia but one that resurfaces with any “radical” technological development aimed to assist humans’ productivity, creativity, and longevity. For our panel’s purposes, Posthuman Paranoia will be defined as the hesitance towards incorporating technological developments into quotidian activities. We wish to distinguish from Posthuman Paranoia from Neo-Luddite behavior by examining the tendencies of individual hesitance towards some (not all) forms of technological advances. Whereas Neo-Luddite behavior shuns actually using some of the technologies we will be discussing, Posthuman Paranooids still use the technologies but have reservations about its future implications. For example, Posthuman Paranooids often claim that social media is “ruining social skills” yet they do not see the possibility for social evolution in those spaces.

*Jared Grogan.*

### **Appetite for Destruction: Bataille’s Peak and the Ethics of Excess**

Nature has a way of reminding us of limits, of when it's time to take a loss, to burn off the excess energy at something that is not ‘work’. Allan Stoekl is one of several thinkers positioning Bataille as an ethical ecological thinker for whom "there is always too much rather than too little," and claims that sustainability can instead be a "logical after-effect" in a future that somehow recognizes limits through their transgression, and celebrates excess expenditure through the ritual, emotionally charged destruction of excess wealth on a more human and physical scale (277). This entails "the affirmation of pleasure, ritual, glory, and anguish before death" (264). Following Stoekl, the notion of expenditure, and a tragic sense of higher forms of destruction, in a sense become the ethical questions of our age. We've become blind to the real roles of expenditure, and we must, as Stoekl says, "distinguish between versions of excess that are 'on scale of the universe,' and whose recognition-implementation guarantees the survival of society (and human expenditure) and other versions that entail blindness to the real role of expenditure" (254). This presentation extends Stoekl’s treatment of Bataille by comparing three historical examples of “higher versions of excess”, “glorious loss” or “theaters of waste”: Sophie Gee’s study of 18th century displays of filth in *Making Waste*, Susan Strasser’s study of 19th century celebrations of waste that became a central feature of American consumerism and style, and a more recent rejection of morality and stewardship by environmentalists in favor of a celebration of a certain kind of excess in the face of scarcity -- a tactic to celebrate waste in an era fueled by paranoia about ecological devastation.

*Kim Lacey.*

### **Factish or Fiction?: Fake Images, Truth Claims, and Memory**

On Monday, April 27, 2009, the President’s plane, Air Force One, made a surprise visit to the airspace above downtown Manhattan. To many, this fly-by was startlingly similar to the images of 9/11. The most interesting part of this story, however, is not the fact that the plane’s flight path so closely resembled the 9/11 attacks, but rather it's the paranoid reactions from the public. Glancing through any of the reporting of the botched photo-op indicates outrage from the American public, but there is one constantly repeated comment in the online forums that sticks out among the others: “Haven’t they heard of Photoshop?” The demand for faked photography is intriguing—while photojournalists are responsible for supplying visual truth to the accompanying text, the public’s desire for a manipulated photo points to an interesting shift in our acceptance of what’s “real” and what’s not. Rather than invoking a painful memory, the public’s demand for a digitally composed photo also suggests that the integrity of the formation of memory from images on all levels – prosthetic, historical, and autobiographical – is at stake. To evaluate this claim, I will consider Latour’s discussion about the role of “iconography” and our (in)ability to see beyond its “factish” nature.

*Derek Risse.*

### **Idle Hands, Idle Bodies: Becoming Nonhuman One Hand at a Time**

*Paper Man* (2009) tells the story of Richard Mann (Jeff Daniels), a failed novelist who moves to a remote Long Island beach community to confront his writer's block. There, much to the dismay of his wife (Lisa Kudrow), Richard befriends 17-year-old Abby (Emma Stone), a "lost" teenager struggling to make sense of life in a slow town. Abby reinvigorates Richard's passion for his craft, and he eventually authors an autobiography based on their mutual-rediscovery. Like other films in this genre--Kaufman's *Adaptation* (2002) and *Synecdoche, New York* (2008)--*Paper Man* tropes the pathological in predictable ways: Struggling with the failure of his most recent publication and the impending failure of his marriage, Richard finds that he is unable to produce labor that satisfies his wife, his publisher, and himself. In this sense, *Paper Man* foregrounds a recurrent theme in popular representations of failed artists; the association of those that cannot make with their hands with the disturbed, non-living, and non-human. In increasingly networked and immaterial economies, I argue that popular mediations of idle bodies play to widespread concerns that the inability to make, makes us non-human.

*Conor Shaw-Draves.*

### **The Great Dissolve: The Technological Commons in the Wake of Sovereignty**

A major trend in contemporary critical theory points to the dissolution of the nation-state and thus a similar dissolution of traditional ideas of sovereignty. Ubiquitous networked technologies have, in part, facilitated this shift. Networked technologies have given humans the ability to reach beyond themselves (or as McLuhan says, to extend themselves) across borders, and to congregate and socialize in real time without concern for physical proximity. Recent phenomena, such as the Arab Spring and the #Occupy Movement, illustrate how this expansion of human interaction to a real-time, international scale can cause massive shifts in social, political, and economic discourse. These shifts, however, can also cause an unmooring, a sense of detachment or breaking apart from the comfortable familiarity of sovereign rule. The "people" of the nation-state, when extended beyond their borders, become something else. Critical theorists such as Virno and Hardt and Negri refer to this new organization of humanity as the "multitude," which is a multiplicity of singularities that can no longer be reduced to a particular "people." This unmoored, technologically networked multitude is in crisis, suffering a paranoia of sorts—unsure of how sovereign powers will react to this new global organization, but just as leery of granting that power to any new organizing principle. In this paper, I will explore the concept of the commons, as initially formulated by Aristotle, as well as in contemporary theory, as a way to theorize the organization of networks in the wake of sovereignty.

Session 12 (H) Hilton, Schlitz (4th Floor)

### **Reading, Writing, and Teaching (with) Machines**

Chair: *Jeanne Hamming*

*Helen Burgess.*

### **Another kind of "e-": physical computing and the exploded book**

In 1939, Norman Bel Geddes and Westinghouse presented to the world the "polyrhetor," a machine designed to narrate the futurama diorama at the New York World's Fair. A key feature of the polyrhetor (dubbed "twenty tons of voice") was the way it timed its recorded narration to individual visitors as they moved through the spaces of the diorama. This made the polyrhetor a machine that bridged the divide between the public/private intimacy of the spoken word and the permanence of a written storage device. This paper discusses the potential role of physical computing for exploding the understanding of what it means to read, write, and be a book. I present plans for "Wulf the Autoscribe," a polyrhetor device that uses electronic components to expose the innards of writing.

*Jeanne Hamming.*

### **Doing it in the Classroom: Procedural Pedagogy and Learning into Action in the Liberal Arts**

*Craig Saper.*

**Instruction Kit: Publishing Pedagogical Procedures for Reading**

In 1931, Bob Brown, a vanguard poet-publisher, unveiled a prototype for a reading machine, and the processed texts or “readies” for the machine. Brown intended the microfilm-like machine, and readies texts, to eventually condense a tome of a book to the head of a pin, libraries to a few shelves of micro-filmed and processed texts, and to allow readers to literally spin over texts at great speed. These effects are now ubiquitous, but we are only recently constructing procedures for teaching this type of machine reading. This paper looks at Bob Brown’s own specific procedures for preparing texts and reading using a machine, and asks which of those instructions can be used to teach e-literacy procedures.

*Mark Goadrich.*

**Node: Digital Pedagogy, Persuasive Technology, and Social Change**

In this paper I will present, as case study in digital pedagogy, my work on Node (launched in Fall, 2012), a learning community that engages students in leveraging emerging technologies for sustainable social change. Our efforts are focused on understanding and using technology and design to change attitudes or behaviors of the users through persuasion and social influence. Students involved in Node explore persuasive technology research that focuses on interactive, transmedia technologies, including the Internet, social media, video games, and mobile devices. This exploration incorporates and builds on the theories and methods of sociology, rhetoric, computational thinking and human-computer interaction, thereby threading a thematic narrative through a portion of their undergraduate coursework. With this understanding, Node students then actively implement and critically analyze projects that incorporate persuasive technology into pursuits of social good.

Session 12 (I) Hilton, Usinger (4th Floor)

**Nonhuman Methodologies**

*Steven LeMieux.*

**Nonhuman Scholarship and its Rhetorical Agency**

How do we write the nonhuman? about the nonhuman? with the nonhuman? In this paper I examine the rhetorical strategies employed within some of the prominent scholarship identified with the nonhuman turn. As the field itself is amorphous and in a constant state of being re-negotiated, I have focused my analysis on two general groups. I delineate between writing that falls under the category of Speculative Realism and Object-Oriented Ontology (e.g., Graham Harman, Ian Bogost, Levi Bryant) in which bodies are cast as objects and writing in which bodies are cast as subjects, a common feature in feminist criticism oriented around post and nonhuman issues (e.g., Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, Diane Davis). To analyze these works I employ the sentence-level coding schema developed by Susan Peck MacDonald—sentences are classified according to the grammatical subject and then broken down within two broad classes: the, phenomenal and the epistemic. Both groups of scholars compose their writing using a similar percentage of phenomenal and epistemic sentences, but within the phenomenal class (particulars, groups, and attributes) differences begin to emerge. Within this coded framework, I explore how these grammatical subjects operate, the focus of their action, what other bodies they engage, and how their agency is composed. I engage these texts both as the rhetorical gestures of their authors and as active agents with their own rhetorical power. Through this comparison, we can begin to see the tensions at play between their content and their action as and engagement with nonhuman actors.

*Benjamin Haber.*

**The Politics of Method: Speculative Sociality and the Future of Social Science**

The last decade of speculative philosophy and interdisciplinary practice has seen new critical attention focused on the corporeal, the material and the nature of life (and life of nature). In the social sciences



however, the ontological and/or nonhuman turn(s) have thus far received scant attention. Those in the social sciences who might be assumed more open to these rethinkings—namely those more qualitative or humanistically identified—tend to fear the political ramifications of such a move. The creepings of big data, the flatness of nonhuman ontologies can sound and feel like social science that smoothly resonates with state power and capital accumulation. The presumption that politically problematic quantitative social science can only be resisted with humanist and human-centered qualitative work piles dualisms on top of that those already too simple oppositions: data/story, aggregate/individual, knowable/indeterminate, etc. It is the object of this paper to attempt to think a political and a resistant that doesn't require ultimate translation to the human. Thus I look to highlight the indeterminacy of data, to consider a redistribution of intelligence and agency away from the human, away even from the organic, and to tentatively mobilize new ontological and epistemological frameworks for thinking sociality. By speculatively engaging with new methods and measures, by carefully and tentatively wading into the murky waters of epigenetics and nanotech without immediately jumping into the lifeboat of critique, I'll reframe the challenge of the nonhuman and the material as a political opportunity to engage with a changed and changing world.

Session 12 (J) Hilton, Kilbourn (5th Floor)

**Book Panel - Muriel Combes's *Gilbert Simondon and the Philosophy of the Transindividual* (tr. Thomas LaMarre)**

*Adam Nocek.*

**Presentation**

*Mark B. N. Hansen.*

**Presentation**

*Steven Shaviro.*

**Presentation**

Session 12 (K) Hilton, Juneau (5th Floor)

**It's Automatic: Rethinking The Causes of Perceptual Experience**

Chair: *Christine Skolnik*

It has become automatic to consider our subjective relationship to the objective world as grounded in a stable relationship between sensory perception and cognitive experience. This relationship can be rethought through a reconsideration of the term "automatic". The etymology of the term is suggestive: "automaton" means, quite literally, an act that is of itself, without a subjective agent. By calling into question the nature of the mediation between the perceiving subject and the object of perception, this panel encourages a discussion that takes into account not only the agency of the non-human, but also its corollary—a paradoxical notion of causality. Thinking "aesthetics" through its etymology – "the science of perception by the senses" – Michael Sloane's paper on representations of refuse in William Carlos Williams's poetry positions the non-human as agential, as an intermediary that ultimately effects an ethical re-cognition and subsequent recalibration of the self-waste relation. Patrick Casey extends this consideration of ethics by describing, with reference to Sigmund Freud and Henry Bergson, the phenomenon of laughter as one which exhibits the body as automatic, and, in this sense, non-human. Mary Eileen Wenekers will discuss the notion of automatic causality as it pertains to both scotoma and the recent cognitive problem of blindsight; with reference to Richard Wright's *Native Son*, she argues that these examples of traumatized visual perception present possible models of modern subjectivity. By investigating the relationship between subjective and objective agency, these presentations will prompt a reconsideration of the function of causality in relation to perception.

*Michael Sloane.*

**American Waste: Ethics and Eco-poetics in William Carlos Williams's Dumpster Diving**

This paper considers the ways in which waste forms and informs William Carlos Williams's poetry in order to explore the effect of the nonhuman's aesthetic. Here, traces of trash in Williams's work act as agents of disruption in order to challenge our conceptions of nature. Nature is not just green: "ecology for its part gets attached to everything", writes Bruno Latour. And so Williams's poetry digs up American object matter to find fertile ways of looking at and relating to waste; such a project aligns ethics with eco-poetics to expand the self-waste relation. Through an analysis of dumpster diving as a trope, a heuristic, this paper shows how Williams's aesthetic questions anthropocentrism and modes of production and consumption via "Between Walls" and Paterson. Williams draws our attention to dirty, broken, waste objects through experimental forms in order to emphasize that objects are sources of action; as such, they can and do affect us. "What kinds of tactics and active experimentation would be needed to open up the self to waste, to contest arrogant egoism and the exploitation and destruction it breeds?", asks Gay Hawkins. Answering Hawkins, this paper offers an analysis of dumpster diving as a materialist hermeneutic in Williams's poetry, helping us to recognize how aesthetics and ethics are radically fused through the task of turning trash into text, text into trash. Ultimately, Williams's poetry gleans garbage in order to observe offal objects and put matter back in materialism.

*Eileen Wennekers.*

**Blind Spots, Blindsight, and Trauma: Richard Wright's *Native Son***

In 1913, Ernst Mach remarked, "It will no doubt be admitted that in the scotoma there is manifested a particular kind of cortical phenomenon which differs in origin from ordinary sensation and which has no connection with the laws of association." His choice of the word association presupposes a particular model of reference, in which perception is caused by the association of sensory data with particular ideas. Tellingly, he does not extend this model to blind spots. Jacques Lacan's notion of the "cause as that which does not work" extends Mach's observation. Lacan describes the scotoma as the mark of a trauma that originates in the space of the Other. This model of causality doubles the structure of this trauma by rendering the origin of perception as one that is both external and autonomous. Recently, research into the problem of blindsight appears to further the discursive connections between the psychoanalytic understanding of the gaze and physiological models of sight. As a recent researcher writes, "We do not see the light by which we see." Applying these understandings of scotoma and blindsight, my paper engages with Richard Wright's *Native Son*. Marked by a series of incidences of optical disturbance that themselves act as textual blind spots, I argue, this narrative represents the traumatized subjectivity of its protagonist, Bigger, whose perceptions are marked by an annihilating relationship with the Other. In engaging with dialectical psychoanalysis and recent physiological research into optics, this reading aims to explicate a model of the affect of oppression.

*Patrick Casey.*

**The 'Wild Body' and the Parasitic Mind**

In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud famously declared that "Man has, as it were, become a kind of prosthetic God," citing the various "auxiliary organs" by which human beings had augmented their perceptual abilities. Freud's statement suggests the extent to which sense perception had been supplemented by new technologies, to the point where unaided perception could be considered inadequate for the modern context. In *Matter and Memory*, Henri Bergson resorts frequently to technological metaphors in order to describe the body as a perceptual apparatus, writing that the nervous system is "a mere conductor" and calling the brain "no more than a central telephonic exchange". For writers who espouse a necessary mind-body split, the body itself becomes a nonhuman mediator of perception. For both writers, laughter becomes the involuntary action of an automaton. Laughter, which Bergson argues occurs when one encounters the "mechanical elasticity... where one would expect to find the wide-awake

adaptability and the living pliability of a human being”, is, for, Lewis predicated upon an “essential separation” between mind and body. In Lewis’s theory of laughter, there are two “creatures, one that never enters into life, but that travels about in a vessel to whose destiny it is momentarily attached”: the mind, “the laughing observer,” is merely attached to what Lewis calls the “Wild Body,” “that small, primitive, literally antediluvian vessel in which we set out on our adventures”. In short, the mind becomes like a parasite to the body, which itself becomes merely a perceptual apparatus, an animal shell that is no longer truly human. This paper, then, will move to investigate the extent to which laughter creates a mediated interaction with the non-human.

Wrap-up -

Wrap-up (A) Hilton, MacArthur Room (4th Floor)

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