

Whither Sexual Ethics and Politics?

First International Conference of the
International Network for Sexual Ethics and Politics

5-7 September, 2011
Ghent University, Belgium

Timetables and Abstracts

Conference Theme

Sexual ethics and politics lie at the core of how we understand and practice our sexual lives. They form the basis from which we understand and engage with diverse and different sexualities. Our explicit as well as implicit ethical thinking and feeling about sexuality is a significant way of understanding, analysing, evaluating and judging sexuality as a personal, public and social construct, exploring ascriptions of both positive and negative values to sexual practices that have impacts on those who do them and on societies in which they are done. Sexual ethics provides a means of reasoning about what is pathologised, prejudiced against and discriminated against and what is held up as healthy, virtuous and legitimate. Sexual ethics seeks to cut through discursive silences, aesthetic impressions, poorly reasoned judgments and illegitimate and oppressive state and public responses to erotic pleasures and desires. It forms the basis not simply for analyses of the vagaries and ills of contemporary moral values, legal rules and political and cultural discourse on sexuality; it allows us to explore and creatively imagine better values, discourse and rules in more enlightened societies. And this is, by its very nature, a political process. The sexual is political and just as sexual politics could be enriched by emancipatory ethical thinking, sexual ethics should connect with contemporary sexual activism, politics and practices aiming at the realisation of sexual equality and justice.

Conceived in this way, sexual ethics and politics are a way of grappling with and critically thinking through the problems and possibilities of our sexual lives – with the many and diverse ways we think and respond to our and other people's sexualities and the context of sexual rights and justice, and key developments such as sexual commerce and work, sexual health and illness, sexual liberty and repression.

We see sexual ethics as a critical and discursive enterprise, informed by transdisciplinary approaches but characterised by the application of reasoned deliberation and judgement and ethical thinking in sexual scholarship. Ethical discourse on sexuality is enriched by the insights brought by both empirical and theoretical work, and by concrete legal, cultural, social, social psychological and political analyses as well as philosophical engagement.

This conference seeks papers, presentations and panels focusing on conceptual and theoretical debates, cultural and political analysis and empirical studies from which conceptual, ethical and political conclusions are drawn. Whilst we welcome a wide and diverse range of papers, we are particularly keen to encourage submissions on the following three themes:

- Sexual politics, sexual citizenship, sexual rights and sexual (in)justice
- The scope and limits of legal regulations and socio-cultural change and activism as emancipatory tools
- New philosophical and ethical thinking on questions of sexual morality

INSEP sees the value in the fullest range of approaches to the study of sexual ethics and politics, including: gendered and feminist perspectives; distinctive lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and transsexual perspectives; queer perspectives; and approaches from more general positions such as liberalism, Marxism and democratic theory. The 2011 conference seeks to be an inclusive space of debate, welcoming dialogue and vigorous debate, but not sectarianism.

Venue

Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

Ghent University
Blandijnberg 2
9000 Ghent – Belgium

Room 2.16: REGISTRATION & COFFEE BREAKS

Room 2.19: PRESENTATIONS

Both rooms are located on the second floor.

Hosted by the
Center for Ethics & Value Inquiry (CEVI)
Ghent University
Belgium

General Overview & Timetable

Monday 5 September 2011

09:30 - 11:30: Registration & Introductory Session
11:30 - 13:00: Session 1: Sexuality and Globalisation
13:00 - 14:00: Lunch break
14:00 - 15:30: Session 2: African and Indian Sexual Politics
15:30 - 16:00: Coffee break
16:00 - 17:30: Session 3: Sexuality and the Obscene
17:30 - 18:30: Drinks

Tuesday 6 September 2011

09:30 - 11:00: Session 4: Gender, Sexuality and Culture
11:00 - 11:30: Coffee break
11:30 - 13:00: Session 5: Sexuality, Citizenship and Pathology
13:00 - 14:00: Lunch break
14:00 - 15:30: Discussion session 6: Subjectivity, Agency and Sexuality
15:30 - 16:00: Coffee break
16:00 - 17:00: Session 7: Sexual Politics
17:00 - 18:00: Roundtable Reflection Discussion
20:00 - ...: Conference Dinner

Wednesday 7 September 2011

09:30 - 11:00: Session 8: The Ethics of Sexual Science
11:00 - 11:30: Coffee break
11:30 - 13:00: Session 9: Sexuality, Ethics and Consent
13:00 - 14:00: Lunch break
14:00 - 15:30: Session 10: Commercial(ising) Sexuality
15:30 - 16:00: Coffee break
16:00 - 17:00: Closing Plenary

Monday 5 September 2011 - Overview

09:30 - 11:30: REGISTRATION & INTRODUCTORY SESSION

- Registration: room 2.16
- Formal Institutional Welcome
- Welcome to the Conference (Tom Claes and Paul Reynolds)
- Academic Program for the Conference and Possible Outputs (Paul Reynolds)
- Conference Activities and Housekeeping (Tom Claes)

11:30 - 13:00: SESSION 1: SEXUALITY AND GLOBALISATION (Chair: Paul Reynolds)

- *Globalisation and Sexual Diversity*
Rudi Bleys – Ghent University, Belgium
- *Sexuality, Globalization & the Future of 'Sexual Ethics'*
Tom Claes – Ghent University, Belgium
- *The Legacies of 'Racial Treason': Fear, Aversion and Attraction under Societal Taboos on 'Mixed Heritage'*
Christien van den Anker – University of the West of England, UK

13:00 - 14:00: LUNCH BREAK

14:00 - 15:30: SESSION 2: AFRICAN AND INDIAN SEXUAL POLITICS (Chair: Tom Claes)

- *Image is Everything: Kenyan State Sexual and Abortion Politics*
Jane Wambui Njagi – University of Waikato, New Zealand
- *The Dynamics of Sexual Politics in Nigeria – A Catalyst for Gender Bias*
Beatrice Nkechi Okpalaobi – Azikiwe University, Nigeria
- *Valentine, Love and Pubs: Contested Freedoms, Obscenities and Conflicted Identities - Some Thoughts on Gender and Culture in Globalised India*
Mitra Nishi – Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

15:30 - 16:00: COFFEE BREAK

16:30 - 17:30: SESSION 3: SEXUALITY AND THE OBSCENE (Chair: Paul Reynolds)

- *Psychologization and Sexuality: the Politics of the Obscene*
Jan De Vos – University of Gent, Belgium
- *Extreme Sex and Sexual Rights: Exploring the Boundaries of Sexual Liberalism*
Tommi Paalanen – JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland
- *Lost in translation: Pedophilia*
Sam Geuens – Ghent University, Belgium

17:30 - 18:30: DRINKS

Tuesday 6 September 2011 - Overview

09:30 - 11:00: SESSION 4: GENDER, SEXUALITY AND CULTURE
(Chair: Rudi Bleys)

- *Vaginal Practices Across Cultures: Expressions of Gender Inequalities?*
Els Leye – International Centre for Reproductive Health, Ghent University, Belgium
- *Honour, Shame and Women's Capabilities*
Sophie Withaecx – Centre for Gender and Diversity – RHEA, VU Brussel, Belgium
- *A Feminist Anthropological Perspective on Harmful Cultural Practices and Women's Sexual and Reproductive Rights*
Chia Longman – CICI, Ghent University, Belgium

11:00 - 11:30: COFFEE BREAK

11:30 - 13:00: SESSION 5: SEXUALITY, CITIZENSHIP AND PATHOLOGY
(Chair: Tom Claes)

- *Criminalisation of Clients and the New Moralism*
Nina Persak – Institute for Criminal-Law Ethics and Criminology, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- *The Client Laid ... (Bare): Legal and Medical Professions and the Regulation of Sexual Relationships with the Patient/Client*
Mark Thomas – Queensland University of Technology, Australia
- *The Scope and Limitations of Sexual Citizenship in Theorising the Cultural Worlds of Non-heteronormative Communities*
Allison Moore – Edge Hill University, UK

13:00 - 14:00: LUNCH BREAK

14:00 - 15:30: DISCUSSION SESSION 6: SUBJECTIVITY, AGENCY AND SEXUALITY
(Chair: Johanna Wagner)

- *Considerations for the Ethical Possibilities of Queer and Feminist Activist Spaces*
Kate O'Halloran – The University of Sydney, Australia
- *Ethical Sex and Young People as Active Sexual Citizens*
Moira Carmody – University of Western Sydney, Australia
- *SlutWalks: Talking the Talk, and Walking the Walk?/*
Johanna Wagner – Ghent, Belgium

15:30 - 16:00: COFFEE BREAK

16:00 - 17:00: SESSION 7: SEXUAL POLITICS
(Chair: Paul Reynolds)

- *Socialism and Homophobia: Two Sides of the Same Coin? A Cuban Case Study*
Jasper Rommel – Ghent University, Belgium
- *The Sexual Norm (1944-1989)*
Georgieva Romyana – Sofia University, Sofia, Bulgaria

17:00 - 18:00: ROUNDTABLE REFLECTION DISCUSSION

20:00 - ...: CONFERENCE DINNER – location: Brasserie HA'

Wednesday 7 September 2011 – Overview

09:30 - 11:00: SESSION 8: THE ETHICS OF SEXUAL SCIENCE
(Chair: Sam Geuens)

- *Some Ethical Philosophical Issues about the Concept of “Hypersexual Disorder”*
Werner Leys – Forensic Psychiatry, P.C. Sint Jan-Baptist, Zelzate, Belgium
- *The Analytic Framework for Ethical Evaluation in Sexological Practice*
Tommi Paalanen – Center of Excellence in Sexual Health Education, Jyväskylä, Finland
- *ICD-10 Revision in Finland. A Review of Recent Events*
Tiina Vilponen – Sexpo Foundation, Helsinki, Finland

11:00 - 11:30: COFFEE BREAK

11:30 - 13:00: SESSION 9: SEXUALITY, ETHICS AND CONSENT
(Chair: Paul Reynolds)

- *Towards an “(Im)possible” Sexual Ethics: Rethinking Feminine Sexual Deviance and the Limits of Informed Consent*
Alexandra Dymock – University of Reading, UK
- *Saying Yes to Pain: BDSM and Consent*
Angelika Tsaros – Department of American Studies, University of Graz, Austria
- *Beyond Consent: Sexual Ethics, Power Exchange and Abject Bodies*
Paul Reynolds – Edge Hill University, UK

13:00 - 14:00: LUNCH BREAK

14:00 - 15:30: DISCUSSION SESSION 10: COMMERCIAL(ISING) SEXUALITY
(Chair: Tom Claes)

- *How Porn Could Be Better*
Petra Van Brabant – Department of Philosophy, University of Antwerp, Belgium
- *Sexual Ethics and the Problem of Economic Pressures on Sexuality*
Rhéa Jean – University of Luxembourg, Luxemburg
- *Sexual Ethics, Materiality and Change: Thinking Sexual Commerce*
Paul Reynolds – Edge Hill University, UK

15:30 - 16:00: COFFEE BREAK

16:00 - 17:00: SESSION 11: CLOSING PLENARY

- *Whither Sexual Ethics and Politics: Bringing Together the Conference Themes and Ideas \ Closing Comments*
Chair/Facilitators: Tom Claes & Paul Reynolds

Monday 5 September 2011 - Abstracts

09:30 - 11:30: REGISTRATION & INTRODUCTORY SESSION

- Registration: Room 216 – second Floor
- Formal Institutional Welcome
- Welcome to the Conference (Tom Claes and Paul Reynolds)
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11:30 - 13:00: **SESSION 1: SEXUALITY AND GLOBALISATION**
(Chair: Paul Reynolds)

Globalisation and Sexual Diversity

Rudi Bleys

Center for Ethics and Value Inquiry
Ghent University, Belgium

The phenomenon of globalisation manifests itself on the level of sexual diversity. Not only are 'local' variants of sexual diversity being 'translated' in terms of LGBT identities. Conducive to this are (g)local and global LGBT activism as well as the changing international and supranational context of human rights, citizenship and fight against discrimination. At the same time, however, we note some fields of tension, that interrupt the teleological narrative of progressive emancipation and liberalisation: sexual identity vs. cultural identity (which trumps which?); (g)local vs. global.; minimal (*politic of indifference*) vs. maximal (*politic of difference*). The genesis of a global ethical framework relates awkwardly to ongoing projections about corporeality and embodiment, potentially leading to new ways of exclusion.

Sexuality, Globalization & the Future of 'Sexual Ethics'

Tom Claes

Center for Ethics and Value Inquiry
Ghent University, Belgium

Recent developments in the wake of the globalization of sexualities can and should reorient contemporary (western) sexual ethics. Recently, Parker et al. (2004) have claimed that "transnational public health and human rights discourses, and social movements concerned with gender inequality and the oppression of sexual minorities, have influenced the field of sexuality research." In this paper I argue that a sexual rights and health agenda, realized in and through global sexual activism, should reorient sexual ethics as well.

I start with a review of some of the main issues and themes as can be found in contemporary (western academic) sexual ethics. The *de facto* morality of sexual consent is credited with a valuational and a normative deficit. Next, I will document and evaluate, using Ritzer's model of gl/robalization, the ethical significance of recent thinking and global activism on sexual rights and health. Following up on this I will show how this sexual rights and health agenda can remedy the deficits mentioned earlier and enables us to formulate and safeguard an emancipatory as well as pluralistic outlook on how ethically to deal with and think about global sexual issues and the diversity of sexual repertoires, identities, relationships, meanings, etc. Further development of the notions and formulations of sexual rights and health is called for – from tools for the prevention of harm, to levers and ideals for positive and emancipatory sexual empowerment. Recent thinking and developments concerning 'global sexual citizenship' can bolster these developments. I will also discuss some of the mechanisms (e.g., Benhabib's 'democratic iterations' and Kurasawa's notion of human rights as practices) that frame and canalize these ongoing processes. I conclude with a SWOT analysis of the proposed model, reviewing issues like universalism, (ethical) imperialism, traditionalism, religion and culture.

The Legacies of 'Racial Treason': Fear, Aversion and Attraction under Societal Taboos on 'Mixed Heritage'

Christien van den Anker

Department of History, Philosophy and Politics
University of the West of England, UK

In this paper I explore the concept of 'racial treason', which formed part of the legal framework in Nazi-Germany. It was based on racial purity theories that were a widespread and dominant discourse of eugenics in the 1920s and 30s. Having a sexual relationship with a Jew or a black person was forbidden for White gentile Germans. In case of such a relationship, the Jew or person targeted by racism could be forcibly sterilised or interned in a camp and subjected to forced labour or killed in the gas chambers. In case of a pregnancy in such a 'verboden' relationship, forced abortion took place, despite abortion being generally outlawed at the time. The core question raised here is what the ongoing legacies are of the dehumanising attitude underlying the legal killing practices justified by 'racial treason' laws.

For example what part do they play in ongoing aversion to 'mixed marriage', mixed heritage children and sexual attraction between White Christians and their 'others', including Jews, people targeted by racism and Muslims.

In order to trace these attitudes I use research reporting the lived experience of 'whites' (Frankenberg) and of 'others' (Khosravi; McNeill) as well as analyses of orientalism (Said), racism (Fanon) and anti-Jewish oppression (Sartre).

I sketch the intersectionality with other axes of inequality such as gender. (Lutz et al). Although 'racial treason' laws applied universally, traditionally white christian men can have sexual relations with Jewish or women targeted by racism, whereas White Christian women can't do the equivalent. This mimics that Slaveholders could have sex with enslaved women while their wives can't do the same with enslaved men. Similarly, in early colonising of indigenous people, White European male settlers often had indigenous women as temporary or Long term reproductive partners. Related to these practices are the traditions on ethnic belonging: indigenous women marrying an outsider are not seen as belonging to their tribe anymore, whereas indigenous men can bring their outsider wives into the tribe.

In the final part of the paper I discuss some of the fears, aversions and attractions bequeathed in the hard to capture emotional realm of sexual attraction. Which Purity myths underlie the ongoing fears of contamination and threat to cultural or literal survival? Which stereotypes feminise or hypersexualise 'others'? I conclude that it remains complex to build close relationships, let alone sexual or family relationships across ethnic or religious boundaries. By delving into experience and emotions I try to sense Where do taboos stem from? Was ist verboten? And I end with a call for making ourselves and others aware of the long history of oppression and dehumanisation underlying current exclusions and separations. The optimism expressed about younger generations mixing automatically is not realised unless these legacies are recognised and addressed.

13:00 - 14:00: LUNCH BREAK

14:00 - 15:30: **SESSION 2: AFRICAN AND INDIAN SEXUAL POLITICS**
(Chair: Tom Claes)

Image is Everything: Kenyan State Sexual and Abortion Politics

Jane Wambui Njagi

University of Waikato, New Zealand
Department of Linguistics and Languages
University of Nairobi, Kenya

Each year, over 320,000 Kenyan women undergo induced abortion. More than 2,600 of the abortions result in death while more than 20,000 women are admitted to public hospitals with complications. However, although abortion has figured increasingly in public discourse, the issue is still mired in ambivalence, obscurity and compromise. Using information based on multiple sources of evidence including interviews with major stakeholders in 2009, the paper

seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the Kenyan state's inability and/or unwillingness to institute substantive policy changes.

It will be demonstrated that the Kenyan state, due to patriarchal neo-patrimonial politics, has not developed consistent policies around abortion. Instead, state leaders strategically make ambivalent and at times contradictory public utterances with the hope of creating positive images to both pro and anti-abortion actors. Furthermore, the government, in an attempt to achieve hegemony in the face of the low legitimacy and stiff tribal politics, often uses women's subordination and the ideology of male domination as unifying factors to galvanise support from men as a group. Consequently, populist policies, especially those targeting control of women's sexuality such as the law criminalising abortion have been maintained, although not enforced, while others have been formulated. The fact that Kenya women have remained unrepresented in governance has made it easy to sideline gender issues.

These findings validate a feminist perspective that sees the state not as a neutral arbiter of competing interest groups, but as a patriarchal hierarchy which often acts to reinforce female subordination when need arises. At the same time, the paper also demonstrates that state impact on sexual and gender politics may not point to any singular intent that it pursues to oppress women. The Kenyan state was said to be keen on decriminalizing abortion for various reasons, but the nature of politics has hindered that.

The Dynamics of Sexual Politics in Nigeria – A Catalyst for Gender Bias

Beatrice Nkechi Okpalaobi

Faculty of Law

Azikiwe University, Nigeria

Dynamics simply buttresses the effect of forces of nature that relate to activities which may be prescribed or modified. Dynamics of sexual politics in Nigeria seeks to address ideas, activities, laws or change of attitude or practice that affect women which will be instrumental to change and development. There are a lot of factors that seem to negative women's sexual rights in Nigeria as against the international guidelines as contained under the conventions e.g. CEDAW and Affirmative Action. This paper will seek to analyze laws that discriminate against women, the nature of sexual politics in Nigeria, customary beliefs and attitudes that threatens the female gender. The trend of emancipation as practiced by other nations will also be in focus, solutions to the problem and the way forward will also be discussed.

The paper seeks to address the laws, practices, attitudes and ideas that hinders and reduces the female folk in their worth and dignity against set standards by the provisions as laid down by various conventions and instruments. In Nigeria there are a host of customary laws that hinders women from participating in a lot of activities and these customary laws are highly political and discriminatory. The goal of this paper will be to identify these obnoxious customary laws and juxtapose them with international set standards. The paper will also discuss the typical context where these laws are applied, the difficulties that women face in practice arguments proffered by the men folk, the best method to adopt in order to ameliorate these practices. However this gender re-enforcing rhetoric also re-asserted women's own non-involvement in the public affairs and proselytizing of the movement, demonstrating that essentialist argument have inherent limits.

Valentine, Love and Pubs: Contested Freedoms, Obscenities and Conflicted Identities - Some Thoughts on Gender and Culture in Globalised India

Mitra Nishi

Centre for Women's Studies

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

This paper will look into a series of recent events which show a changing face of gender and its interpretations in a modernizing, globalising India. These events may be interpreted as reactionary response to the uneven modernity and culturally suspect western influences such as opening of pubs, women drinking in these pubs, the increasing space in audio- visual and print media on the heady emotion of love and the celebration of valentine's day, all of which

have made for much controversy all over India in recent times, hinting at a social crisis signifying divides between generations, classes, communities and cultures.

Yet these also signify social transition towards a culture of freedom and choice going hand in hand with the fact that middle class urban women with increasing access to work and independent incomes are enabled to try out new freedoms, and experiment with new lifestyles and choices that mark their escape from the traditionally stifling confines of parental and marital homes. There is bound to be worry and insecurity that this new assertion and freedom cause in certain quarters.

The controversy itself is pinned on raging debates on Indian culture and women; the onslaught of westernization and globalization that threatens to erode this great culture and society, particularly the youth; the need to make difference between westernization and modernization; the need to protect the corruption and commercialization of Indian values and traditions, particularly the indigenous notions of love (noble and sacred feelings and emotions threatening to become crass and commercial); the family that is threatened by the decadent notions of individualism and freedom. The worries are many, and the manifestations are in terms of violent curtailments of individual freedom, particularly of women by a certain section of the right wing forces in the country, today commonly referred to as the moral police. Are all these developments only negative or are their silver linings.

15:30 - 16:00: COFFEE BREAK

16:30 - 17:30: **SESSION 3: SEXUALITY AND THE OBSCENE**

(Chair: Paul Reynolds)

Psychologization and Sexuality: the Politics of the Obscene

Jan De Vos

Center for Ethics and Value Inquiry - CEVI
Ghent University, Belgium

In the last decennia there seems to be a remarkable shift discernable in the field of education regarding the partition between the public and the private. In the traditional bourgeois education of parenting was a private practice. The public sphere was foremost the place where the results of education were supposed to become visible.

In today's parenting the distinction between public/private has not so much lost its meaning due to the private being increasingly invaded by the public (through, for example, the so called psy-complex) but, rather, through the public becoming flooded by the private in a very particular way. In post-fordist times the actual practice of parenting is made visible to the gaze of everyone. This is where the private space comes to be folded over into the public. Just think how parents send photos and videos of their kids around or post them on websites or blogs.

Mentioning the internet here will probably immediately call into mind that the described shift of education could also be repeated concerning the field of sexuality. Sexuality in this "age of mechanical reproduction" (if I am allowed this re-usage of Walter Benjamin's title) is also thoroughly affected by the altered late-modern partitions of the inner and the outer. In this paper I will argue that all this makes that the obscene and the pornographic present themselves in places and situations where they are not expected. More in particular, my these will be that, as in neoliberal societies private life folds into the public sphere, Academia into the State, private companies into public services, the first world into the third... politics itself becomes sexualized. Just consider how a Big Other Society of Control can be understood according to the paradigm of voyeurism, moreover containing the threatening sadistic verdict that anyone is guilty until proven otherwise.

The way in for this exercise is the analysis of the phenomena of psychologization: if once Freud was reproached for his alleged pan-sexualism, today's pan-psychologization must be read in a sexual, and hence in a political way.

Extreme Sex and Sexual Rights: Exploring the Boundaries of Sexual Liberalism

Tommi Paalanen

Center of Excellence in Sexual Health Education
JAMK University of Applied Sciences
Jyväskylä, Finland

The objective of this study is to clarify the boundaries of sexual liberalism by examining moral qualities of so-called extreme sexual practices such as sadomasochism. I apply the theory of liberal sexual ethics to evaluate Finnish and British legislation and legal praxis concerning extreme sex and my aim is to present ethically justifiable guidelines for dealing with such cases.

The key principle of ethical liberalism is John Stuart Mill's claim that the autonomy of the individual may be limited only when it is necessary for preventing harm to others. I am examining the scope of this principle by using philosophical sexual ethics to answer following questions: 1) What kinds of sexual practices are "extreme"? 2) What are the limits of sexual rights in such practices? 3) When can such practices be justifiably prohibited by law?

My study has produced two distinct results: 1) The impression of extremity and moral abhorrence towards such acts are usually based on misconception that confuses personal revulsion and moral acceptability. 2) Laws that criminalize extreme sex practices or their depictions are not justified, if they do not have a direct connection to prevention of harm.

Desires don't suppress themselves even if the practices are banned. The purpose of law is not to shape people's sexual preferences, but to protect their rights and liberty. Thus laws that are directed at keeping up beliefs of proper sexual behavior, like the prohibition of extreme pornography, cannot be ethically justifiable. Instead, they violate sexual rights of people with atypical sexual desires.

Lost in Translation: Pedophilia

Sam Geuens

Sexologist
Center for Ethics and Value Inquiry – CEVI
Ghent University, Belgium

We live in an age of sexual pluralism (e.g. Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994). Today's sexual pluralism has given rise to communication problems. Over the years it has become clear that terms central to the field, like, sex, intimacy, pornography, are used in a wide variety of contexts. As context is crucial to ascribe meaning to terms, one and the same word is often used to refer different things (e.g. Sanders, & Reinisch, 1999; Giddens, 1992; Bauserman, 1993).

As controversial subjects the paraphilias have always been at the center of the debate about normal and healthy versus abnormal and pathological sex (Laws, & O'Donohue, 2008). Recent turmoil in Western societies concerning the sexual behavior of the clergy have put one paraphilia in the spotlight, namely pedophilia. There seems to be an unusually strong association of the term pedophilia – ultimately a term that points to a certain sexual preference – to the idea of criminal misconduct. The general idea seems to be that a person who gets off on children or teens belongs in jail. The possibility of having a certain preference, certain urges and not acting on them doesn't seem to come to mind, at least not when it concerns such a controversial preference.

With this talk I will argue that given a subject so controversial and sensitive as pedophilia, people need to be more careful about what they write/say and the words they use to do it. Both the abundance of terms used to describe one and the same thing and the misuse of terms, in popular media and scientific research, can lead to misconceptions with serious moral, medical, legal, ... consequences for the individual and the society we live in.

17:30 - 18:30: DRINKS (ROOM 216)

09:30 - 11:00: **SESSION 4: GENDER, SEXUALITY AND CULTURE**
(Chair: Rudi Bleys)

Vaginal Practices Across Cultures: Expressions of Gender Inequalities?

Els Leye

ICRH - International Centre for Reproductive Health
Ghent University, Belgium

This paper explores the parallels between 3 vaginal practices, i.e. female genital mutilation, cosmetic vaginal surgeries and hymen reconstructions.

When considering the World Health Organisation's definition of female genital mutilation, all procedures on female genitalia for non-medical reasons qualify as "female genital mutilation." The World Health Organisation classifies these procedures into four types, including clitoridectomy (Type I), excision (Type II) and infibulation (Type III). Type IV includes "all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical reasons" including pricking, piercing, incising, stretching, introduction of harmful substances and cauterization.

This paper explores labia reduction for cosmetic reasons and hymen reconstructions, as well as female genital mutilation, from a health and human rights perspective, and argues that these procedures are performed to conform to certain norms regarding the female body and sexuality, and can all be considered as harmful cultural practices, i.e. Type 4 of female genital mutilation. In many (European) countries, specific criminal laws have been put in place to deal with female genital mutilation. Hymen reconstructions and cosmetic vaginal surgeries are legally accepted and are considered as normal medical practice. Based on qualitative research on the implementation of Belgian criminal law on female genital mutilation and the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Belgian gynecologists on female genital mutilation & vaginal surgeries, this paper will demonstrate that due to the lack of clarity regarding Type IV, health professionals struggle with vaginal practices performed for cultural and religious reason, such as hymen reconstructions and cosmetic vaginal surgeries.

Honour, Shame and Women's Capabilities

Sophie Withaecx

Department of Philosophy and Moral Sciences
Centre for Gender and Diversity – RHEA
Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

The concept of honour-related violence refers to a variety of violent practices, aimed to protect family honour and to purify violated honour. The central notions of 'honour' and 'shame', which prescribe gendered codes of conduct for men and women, are often linked to a vision on women as male property, disposing of no autonomy and functioning as the embodiment of 'male honour' and reputation. Literature on honour-related violence is indeed rife with descriptions of girls and women who are, in the name of family honour, forced to take on a traditional female role and to forsake their individual sexual freedom.

Based on empirical research among migrant women in Belgium and inspired by Martha Nussbaum's capability approach, this paper wants to explore how we can assess migrant women's choice and agency in their uses and interpretations of the notions of 'honour' and 'shame.' While at first glance, the honour/shame-complex seems indeed to imply a threat to women's capabilities, the women's narratives show a plurality of sometimes contradictory interpretations of 'honour.' The notions of 'honour' and 'shame' appear to be used by some women as guidelines within their own system of morality, which does impose restrictions on their sexual behaviour, but cannot straightforwardly be reduced to male coercion. The occurrence of violence appears then to be contingent on political and socio-economic factors rather than on the pre-eminence of the notion of 'honour.' It is suggested therefore that rather than taking cultural notions of 'honour' as sole focus, analyses of violence against migrant women should take into account the context wherein unequal gendered power relations and

misogynist interpretations of culture are formed and sustained. This context should not only include migrant families, but also the state as actors which bear responsibility in enhancing or undermining women's capabilities.

A Feminist Anthropological Perspective on Harmful Cultural Practices and Women's Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Chia Longman

Centre for Intercultural Communication and Interaction

Research Unit Culture, Gender, Diversity

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'Harmful cultural (sometimes 'traditional') practices' is a term increasingly employed in the last three decades by organizations working within a human rights framework to refer to certain discriminatory practices against women in the South, especially in Africa and Asia. In UN policy documents such practices are presumed to reflect shared values and beliefs that span generations and are tied to 'cultural traditions' of gender inequality which imply a violation of women's rights to 'health, life, dignity and personal integrity.' A wide range of practices has been labeled as harmful cultural practices, many of which relate to the control over women's reproduction and sexuality, including female genital 'mutilation', traditional birth practices; son preference, prenatal sex selection and female infanticide, etc. On the international agenda, growing attention to HCPs has evolved from a limited health perspective to a human rights perspective in which 'personal' issues have become politicized, relating violence, embodiment, and women's sexuality to structural gender inequality. Yet Third-world feminist and postcolonial scholars are increasingly critical of the way these politics (re)produce an 'average oppressed third world woman' devoid of agency and subjectivity. From a radical feminist perspective, then again, Sheila Jeffreys in *Beauty and Misogyny* (2006), provokingly argues that western beauty practices such as make-up, high heels and cosmetic surgery should similarly be seen as damaging to women and clearly fit the UN definition of HCPs. In this paper, I question the viability of the notion of harmful cultural practices from the perspective of (feminist) anthropology. Can 'western' beauty practices be analyzed or understood as HCPs, and/or are cross-cultural comparisons possible? Through which theoretical lenses on gender, equality, freedom, embodiment, subjectivity, agency and power can HCPs be understood and assessed?

11:00 - 11:30: COFFEE BREAK

11:30 - 13:00: **SESSION 5: SEXUALITY, CITIZENSHIP AND PATHOLOGY**
(Chair: Tom Claes)

Criminalisation of Clients and the New Moralism

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In order to reduce the demand for prostitution and in turn the prostitution itself, the Swedish model of regulation of prostitution focuses on the criminalisation of clients of. In Belgium, similar ideas have been recently voiced by a political party, proponents of which consider, inter alia, prostitution as such to be violence towards women. The paper will reflect upon this conception of prostitution and the proposed solution to the "prostitution problem", and examine its underlying legal philosophical and criminological issues. It shall take a closer look at the discourse of the advocates of such criminalisation and unpack their arguments. Are they really harm-based, as they purport to be? Which value or legal good are they protecting? What lies behind the caring language, the language of protection and threat? Who are we protecting anyway? Do such ideas really automatically lead to the reduction of violence or rather add to it? Do they reinstate legal moralism as a legitimate ground for criminal-law prohibition? Moreover, can all "socially undesirable" conduct be legitimately criminalised in a modern criminal legal system and, in particular, are questions of sexual morality between consenting

adults legitimately in the realm of state or public intervention through criminal law? The paper shall tackle these questions, as well as address some important principled, legal and ethical objections and limitations to such a criminalisation, which should be considered prior to any legislative undertaking.

The Client Laid ... (Bare): Legal and Medical Professions and the Regulation of Sexual Relationships with the Patient/Client

Mark Thomas

School of Law

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

'Dream case. Isn't it? High profile. Splashy. Big closing.
Get the not guilty. Have sex with the client. It's all there.'

Denny Crane: Boston Legal

For the fictional US attorney, Denny Crane, sex with the client is, it seems, a routine (and highly desirable) experience.

In terms of the regulation and discipline of medical practitioners, it is assumed by the relevant tribunals that the maintenance of a sexual relationship with a patient is prima facie a breach of the professional standards. Although the courts and tribunals which discipline medical practitioners no longer apply the rigid morality of the oft-cited De Gregory, accepting that sexual mores have undergone considerable change since that case, suspension or striking off remain the most frequent disciplinary responses to medical practitioners (and other health professionals) who have affairs with patients, with the gravamen of the impugned conduct deriving not so much from any presumed intimacy inherent in the doctor patient relationship, but in the abuse of trust, and the exploitation of the (presumed) asymmetric power inherent in the doctor-patient relationship, against which mere consensuality finds no traction.

The contention that the relationship was relevantly consensual ignores the feature that it arose out of the inherently unequal professional relationship between doctor and patient, and was in this case additionally characterized by the aspect of exploitation found by the Tribunal.

Despite the similarity between the doctor-patient and the lawyer-client relationship insofar as the presence of trust and the distribution of power are concerned, no such presupposition – that embarking on a sexual relationship with a client marks out inappropriate professional conduct on the part of a lawyer – exists for lawyers. In *Lamb*, the High Court of Australia affirmed the decision of the Full Court of the Supreme Court of Queensland, which had admitted *Lamb* as a Barrister in the face of a number of criticisms of his conduct, among which had been that he had had extra-marital intercourse with a client after her decree absolute, but prior to the settlement of the property issues arising from the now-dissolved marriage. Notwithstanding the acting Chief Justice's use of the term "unprofessional conduct" to describe *Lamb*'s behaviour (or even Windeyer's J characterisation of it as "reprehensible"), neither the Full Court nor the High Court had considered the conduct to be disintitling in terms of admission to the Bar.

Conventionally, the distinction between the proscription on sexual relationships between medical practitioners and their patients and the more liberal approach taken to lawyers having sex with their clients lies in the difference in the physical aspects of the relationships: medical practitioners routinely require their patients to undress, and routinely touch patients in the course of diagnosis. It would be extraordinarily rare for the taking of instructions or the provision of legal advice to require such intimacy.

The problem (and it is a problem) is that the professional codes which govern relationships between professionals and clients are not generally developed by way of close ethical analysis, nor do they generally assert specific ethical frameworks against which conduct is assessed. Rather, they reflect a series of undemonstrated and often paternalistic assumptions which are almost certainly no longer reflective of the relationship which they once (might have) described. This paper seeks to deconstruct the relationships between medical treating and diagnosing professions (particularly medical practitioners, psychiatrists and psychologists) and their patients and lawyer and their clients as they are mapped by the respective medical and legal disciplinary frameworks.

The Scope and Limitations of Sexual Citizenship in Theorising the Cultural Worlds of Non-heteronormative Communities

Allison Moore

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Edge Hill University, UK

Theories of sexual citizenship not only expose the exclusivity of traditional definitions of citizenship, they also problematise the public / private dichotomy and the relationship between notions of citizenship constructed in the public sphere and their impact - or otherwise - on people's experiences in the private sphere. However, this paper will argue that, whilst there is much that is attractive in theories of sexual citizenship, particularly the expansion of citizenship into areas previously excluded because they existed in the private realm, it is not without its limitations. Although discourses of sexual citizenship are useful in exposing the exclusivity of traditional definitions of citizenship and in providing a benchmark against which equality / inequality can be measured, they remain partial and limited in a number of ways. In part, this is due to their concentration on sexuality at the expense of other social divisions that shape experiences of citizenship, as well as a universalising tendency to conflate 'lesbians' and 'gay men' under the category of sexual citizenship, which fails to recognise that lesbians, as women, will experience their citizenship status differently to gay men and also means that theories of sexual citizenship have little to offer in understanding and making sense of the experiences of other non-heteronormative sexualities. To address some of these limitations, this paper utilises the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias and, in so doing, introduces a cultural dimension to existing social constructionist theories of sexuality. Both theorists, in different ways, transcend the public/private and subjective/objective divides and both provide useful tools for analysing the internalised subjective worlds of individuals, something that existing theories of sexual citizenship fail to do. The key concepts that are utilised in this paper are practice, field, capital (Bourdieu), habitus (Bourdieu & Elias) and figuration (Elias).

13:00 - 14:00: LUNCH BREAK

14:00 - 15:30: **DISCUSSION SESSION 6: SUBJECTIVITY, AGENCY AND SEXUALITY**
(Chair: Johanna Wagner)

Considerations for the Ethical Possibilities of Queer and Feminist Activist Spaces

Kate O'Halloran

Department of Gender and Cultural Studies - SOPHI
The University of Sidney, Australia

This paper deals with one of the key concerns of the 'Whither Sexual Ethics and Politics?' conference, namely, it explores the possibility of finding new philosophical and ethical ways for thinking about sexuality. To first define ethics, this paper draws on Daniel Smith's (2003) definition. Smith argues that the 'fundamental question of ethics is 'What can I do?' Given my degree of power, what are my capabilities and capacities? How can I come into active possession of my power?' (Smith 2003, 62, emphasis in the original)

Taking Smith's definition, I question the possibility for there to be a specifically 'feminist' or 'queer' ethics. I suggest, for example, that 'queer' activist cultures are often represented in misleading and/or homogenising ways. To formulate a sufficiently complex idea of what a 'queer' (activist) ethics might mean, there must be an acknowledgement of the different types of tensions and debates that currently cloud these communities. These tensions include ongoing debates around the deployment of identity categories, the 'sex wars' (including discussions around the decriminalisation of sex work), and continuing withdrawal from some members of the community due to perceptions of exclusion or political inadequacy.

My discussion will centre on recent examples of controversy around activist events or spaces such as the recent global wave of 'SlutWalks' (focusing Sydney and Berlin events in particular) and 2011's 'Feminist Futures' conferences in Melbourne, Australia. I discuss the identificatory pull of activist-run spaces and the possibility that they induce a politics of victimisation that the queer community has recently tried to move away from.

Ethical Sex and Young People as Active Sexual Citizens

Moira Carmody

Centre for Educational Research
University of Western Sydney, Australia

Young people are often constructed in cultural and policy discourses as a potential threat to citizenship, in need of training and discipline by adults and the state or ethical reconstruction before they can be accepted into the citizenship fold. This is particularly so in relation to issues of sexual desire and the expression of an active sexuality or sexual assault. A cultural approach to citizenship or a difference centred approach (Moosa – Mitha 2005) is concerned with a need to develop an inclusive citizenship that respects ‘difference.’ This approach focuses on the lived experiences of citizenship and the practices of exclusion and discrimination that mediate citizen’s membership and political voice (Hart 2009). These theoretical approaches are useful in considering how young people can be recognised as subjects in their own right and how they can be recognised as different citizens with their own voices and decision making abilities.

In this paper, I will discuss the research and educational practice I have been conducting since 1999 with young women and men aged 16-25 on building ethical and respectful relationships in casual and ongoing sexual relationships. The Sex + Ethics Violence Prevention Program I have developed is underpinned by Foucault’s ideas about ethical sexual subjectivity. The program has to date been run with 200 culturally, socio-economically and sexually diverse young people in Australia and New Zealand. Pre, post and 5 month follow up evaluations reveal that young people embrace the notions of ethical subjectivity and are applying them frequently in their intimate relationships, friendship groups and communities. Their sense of belonging and of relationships of mutuality and respect are evident in their narratives. These findings suggest that recognising and engaging with young people on a basis of respect and recognising difference

SlutWalks: Talking the Talk, *and* Walking the Walk?

Johanna Wagner

English Studies
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This spring North America and the UK saw “SlutWalks” pop up in various cities in response to comments by a police officer (Michael Sanguinetti) in Toronto, Canada, who, while giving a lecture on safety at Osgoode Hall Law School, stated that one way women could avoid being victimized or raped is by not dressing “like sluts.” Feminists and women’s activists on campus began an immediate response, and with the help of Facebook, Twitter, and other social media, spread the word around the globe. Walks were staged in Toronto and other Canadian cities, the US (Boston for one), Europe, the UK, and Australia thus far.

SlutWalks are intended to protest the unspoken assumption that rape victims are responsible for their own rapes (as implicitly stated by officer Sanguinetti); however, the verbiage and visual images many have seen during the walks have made them quite controversial. For example, although the women were asked to dress like “regular women” in the Toronto walk, many of them took on the garb of what they visualize as “sluts” for shock value, to demonstrate their freedom of dress, etc. Other feminists/activists have a problem with both visual and verbal in the walks, finding nothing of merit to come about by embracing the term “slut.”

The questions posed in this roundtable will be of the like: How best can we fight against rape? What are the ethical risks we take in mixing messages about rape for media attention? In calling women “sluts” voluntarily? How can our voices be heard politically? Should we be even more graphic or shocking? Do marches such as these, which are seen as “women’s issues” and attended by mostly or almost all women, have any affect on the general public? In what ways? What is the fine line between attempting to prevent, and taking responsibility for a crime like rape? How do we show the difference? Are we already working on dangerous ground when we suggest women can “prevent” rape? Should prevention workshops and seminars about rape (such as the one on the Toronto campus) be aimed only

at women? At men? How do we interpret these marches in the West while rape is being used as a weapon of war even as we speak in other parts of the world?

With various feminisms acting disparately and simultaneously in the twenty-first century, there should be a lively discussion from various feminist camps on this issue.

15:30 - 16:00: COFFEE BREAK

16:00 - 17:00: **SESSION 7: SEXUAL POLITICS**
(Chair: Paul Reynolds)

Socialism and Homophobia, Two Sides of the Same Coin? A Cuban Case Study

Jasper Rommel

Center for Ethics and Value Inquiry – CEVI
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Marx and Engels, founding fathers of the socialist theory, have hardly written on homosexuality. However, the few references they made on the subject were quite homophobic. Countries referring to Marxism as for their state ideology, like the Soviet Union or China, were certainly no homosexual paradises. There was a short period of liberation for gays in the Soviet Union during the 20's, but together with other sexual progressive measures this was turned back in the Stalin era during the 30's. Homosexuality became illegal again, which would not change until the collapse of the Soviet Union.

But the socialist country that had the worst image on dealing with homosexuality was Cuba. The books of Reinaldo Arenas and documentaries such as *Improper Conduct* gained lots of attention abroad and gave Cuba an image in the West of a homophobic inferno for homosexuals. Although these examples were not objective or historically correct, there's no doubt that homophobia and discrimination against homosexuals was institutionalized in the 60's until mid 70's.

In this paper I search the historical roots of homophobia in socialist Cuba. As the historical and cultural frame makes clear, it's not (only) socialism that is to blame. The next chapters deal with the evolution of government policy on homosexuality: from institutionalized homophobia and repression against homosexuals until the mid 70's, over armed peace and tolerance until the 90's and finally towards an emancipation discourse with the movie *Fresa y Chocolate* (1993) as a symbolic turning point.

The Sexual Norm (1944-1989)

Rumyana Taneva Georgieva

Sofia University
Sofia, Bulgaria

Our aim was to investigate the existing discourse on sexuality in the years of the former Communist regime in Bulgaria (1944-1989). We analyzed articles in popular journals in order to reconstruct the attitudes towards the topic in question

The focus of the communist regime on the woman in the 50's followed the notion that women are most oppressed since they – as housewives – lacked access to the labor market. In order to make the woman more visible in the workplace were created numerous posters showing women in factories, schools, laboratories, etc. All articles at that time presented stories of successful working women. Soon after followed a significant decrease in the number of live births and the party leaders had to turn their heads to promoting motherhood and child raising among women of labor. This opened the door to shy discussions of female sexuality in order to explain infertility, strictly bound to the female body solely. When love was discussed, sexuality was excluded from the horizon and the ideal of comradeship indulged the couple to be more passionate towards the society instead of each other. In the 60's and 70's the topics begin to change – sexology was slowly introduced to the audience and several articles were published on male impotence. Still, love remained partially desexualized. In the whole investigated period we found only one article, devoted to the sexual desire of the woman, called "The cold woman" and needless to say the article presented the story of a "frigid" wife

who would not share intimate moments with her husband. The tone of article was not compassionate but instead accusatory and blaming the woman for worsening the family climate.

In the years before the crash of the regime in 1989 the dynamics changed dramatically and the discourses on sexuality began to multiply.

17:00 - 18:00: **ROUNDTABLE REFLECTION DISCUSSION**

20:00 - ...: CONFERENCE DINNER – location: Brasserie HA'

09:30 - 11:00: **SESSION 8: THE ETHICS OF SEXUAL SCIENCE**
(Chair: Sam Geuens)

Some Ethical Philosophical Issues about the Concept of “Hypersexual Disorder”

Werner Leys

Forensic Psychiatry, P.C. Sint Jan-Baptist
Zelzate, Belgium

In the new soon to be released edition of the DSM V (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) the new category of “Hypersexual Disorder” (HD) will be explicitly admitted. Until now there was only the category “Sexual disorder not otherwise specified” 302.90.

In 2009 Kafka authored an article in the “Archives sexual behavior” titled “Hypersexual disorder: A proposed diagnosis for DSM V.” That there is a distinction between paraphilia and normophilia is arguable. Defining “hypersexuality,” however, seems to be more complicated since we are entering here in the field of “normality.” Measuring normality is something which is according to some highly questionable. Foucault, e.g., asks in “The history of sexuality” whether the discourse of sex hasn’t has as a duty chasing deviant forms of sexuality from reality. Where we see that in history a first focus has focused on perversions, or paraphilias, there now seems to be a tendency toward focusing on ‘normality.’ Since the Kinsey reports there seems to be a lot of research about measuring “normality.” The use of self report scales (for HD for instance the HDSI) as a means for measuring is another point for discussion. When looked upon from philosophy en ethics, we might ask what is the purpose of all this measuring of “normophilia”? Foucault answers that the effects of this confession must be medicalized.

In forensic psychiatry we see that a lot of patients do not have the ability to control or sublimate their sexual desires/ “drives.” Frequent use of pornography seems to be common. It could be questioned whetherif we must appreciate each deviation of normality (in HD a TSO > 7) as pathological. Långström and Hanson (2004) ask whether an excessive sexual behavior should be a distinct disorder.

The Analytic Framework for Ethical Evaluation in Sexological Practice

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Center of Excellence in Sexual Health Education
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A sexologist is often involved in situations that call for sensitivity and ethical thinking. In these situations it is important to be able to distinguish relevant ethical questions and responsibilities from non-ethical issues. The objective of this study is to provide a philosophical framework for ethical evaluation in sexological practice and thereby to help sexologists in decision-making.

First, the scope of ethical evaluation must be defined. The realm of ethics is distinguished from law, authority, opinions and personal preferences. Also distinctions are made between ethical rules, ideals and systems of non-ethical rules. Second, the evaluation of an act is divided into its basic components: intentions and consequences. Their relevancy and status are discussed. Third, the autonomy of the individual is regarded analysing the concepts of consent and sexual rights.

The crucial question behind the analysis is: What kinds of acts are morally wrong? In answering the question, I align with the liberal moral philosophy of Joel Feinberg: only acts that cause harm can be justifiably condemned and restricted. Feinberg defines harm as wrongly caused setback of interests. In the context of sexual ethics, wrongness can be interpreted as a violation of sexual rights.

These analyses are part of an attempt to determine the most basic principles of sexual ethics. From the point of view of liberal ethics, the basic principles should be as thin as possible and thus able to respect freedom of the individual. The basic principles cannot tell

what is good in life or sexuality – they only tell what is definitely wrong. Other branches of ethics, like virtue ethics, are needed to answer the more holistic questions about goodness in sexuality.

ICD-10 Revision in Finland. A Review of Recent Events

Tiina Vilponen

Sexpo Foundation
Helsinki, Finland

ICD-10 Classification of Diseases was revised in Finland in 2011 after Norway (2010), Sweden (2009) and Denmark (1995). The proposal for the national revision was an outcome of close collaboration between *Seta* (national LGBTI rights non-governmental organization), Sexpo Foundation (sexual politics, training and therapy) and a group of private experts from the fields of medicine, sexology and social sciences. The proposal was handed to the *National Institute for Health and Welfare* (THL) at the end of year 2010.

12.5.2011 it was announced by the THL that they will revise the national version of ICD-10 according to the proposal. Consequently the following diagnoses were removed:

- F64.1 Dual-role transvestism
- F65.0 Fetishism
- F65.1 Fetishistic transvestism
- F65.5 Sadomasochism
- F65.6 Multiple disorders of sexual preference

The reasons for the removals were clear. It was shown in the proposal that the medical criteria is not clear in these categories, the use of these categories is low, and that these categories might cause harm to the people with alternative sexualities in health and social services and in legal situations.

Drafting the proposal gave a starting push for a new kind of cooperation between alternative sexuality groups. The cooperation is named as “Perv-o-Forum” and it involves representatives from various organizations and individuals across Finland.

Despite some differences these groups have a lot of common when it comes to politics. The most important shared aim is to improve understanding and recognition of alternative sexualities. At the moment the Forum is preparing material for social and health care services. The material will contain basic information about the groups and their special needs in public.

11:00 - 11:30: COFFEE BREAK

11:30 - 13:00: **SESSION 9: SEXUALITY, ETHICS AND CONSENT**
(Chair: Paul Reynolds)

Towards an “(Im)possible” Sexual Ethics: Rethinking Feminine Sexual Deviance and the Limits of Informed Consent

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Taking Lee Edelman’s idea of locating queer’s complex relationship within an “impossible” politics as its starting point, this paper will address the problem of situating paradigms of feminine sexual deviance within ‘progressive’ and liberal politics, psychiatry and law. Using the figure of the female masochist and the governance of sexuality in the UK by way of example, the paper turns to feminist theory to question the idea of predicating such a paradigm on the liberal limit of informed consent within a patriarchal legal system and society. Where suppression of the death drive is refused by women, consensual sexual encounters involving significant physical and/or psychic risk, danger and suffering may go beyond this liberal limit, and thus the law. Women who take this position are pathologised or read, through law, as victims of bodily assault. A sexual ethics that refuses both the liberal reliance on consent and widely accepted narratives of health and the will to pleasure found within much feminist

discourse would seem to indicate an “impossible” sexual politics. However, the paper will go on to argue that through rethinking feminist ethics of care along non-normative lines that are perhaps not always predicated on liberal politics, this “impossibility” may in fact be rendered possible. The influence of queer scholarship that engages with the work of Jacques Lacan on the refusal of futurity, the death drive and the politics of pleasure is particularly imperative to allowing for such a sexual ethics to emerge; a sexual ethics that both protects women, and allows for the possibility of their sexual subjectivity.

Saying Yes to Pain: BDSM and Consent

Angelika Tsaros

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University of Graz, Austria

The the most basic idea of consent is that if all participating adults agree, there is no problem. This simple presumption can, however, easily be compromised when raising the stakes: What if you don't consent to 'normal' pleasure, but pain? Can you actually consent to being hurt?

Allowing an attack on one's bodily integrity is a very problematic issue. While public torture has run the gamut from the Roman circus, to the medieval spectacle for the masses, to something they did in obscure nations with questionable political systems, and finally back to a somewhat acceptable way of getting information to prevent attacks like those in 2001, private torture has always been viewed as morally problematic, perverted, and most importantly, illegal.

In BDSM (bondage/discipline, domination/submission, sadism/masochism) torture is a given. Adding to sexual humiliation through 'sex slave' scenarios, dominant sadists of all sexes inflict physical harm on their partners. I argue that what might seem outrageous to a general public is no different from accepted forms of sexuality performed by even the most pious of men: actually, even safer. The consent given by the participating partner renders valid and legal a situation that could otherwise be brought to the attention of the authorities: allegations of rape or assault and battery might follow a sexual encounter.

Recent publications on the issue argue that since rape is a predominantly female problem, consent is a female issue (cf. Archard, *Sexual Consent*). While many feminists disagree and blame a culture of easily accessible pornography and availability of sex, they leave out (or attack) the BDSM sexual subculture which is viewed by many as situated somewhat in the vicinity of 'danger to women.' I argue that consensual BDSM is the polar opposite of the current reality of threat of sexual violence to women: BDSM requires constant and enthusiastic consent thus making the consent – through the possibility to withdraw it by use of a safe word – more valid than the assumed consent of non-safe word sexual practices. Therefore, consenting to pain is not only possible and valid, in its currently practiced form in BDSM it is preferable to a more intransparent form of assumed consent in more accepted forms of sexuality.

Beyond Consent: Sexual Ethics, Power Exchange and Abject Bodies

Paul Reynolds

Department of Social and Psychological Sciences
Edge Hill University, UK

Consent is a very important, indeed critical feature of ethical sex, yet it also encourages a careless and lazy presumption of thinking that consent is the only and primary ethical condition for good sex. In this paper I want to explore what else is needed that takes us beyond consent and towards the challenge of filling out sexual ethics to account for the ethical needs of different desires. Concentrating principally on two cases: BDSM and the 'happy' masochistic slave, and sexual ethics and exchanges in long term relationships, I want to explore three concepts: relational reciprocity; duty of care and other-regarding commitment. In no sense do these do more than begin the discussion about the vocabulary of sexual ethics, but they provide an important means by which we might explore ethics beyond consent, or where consent is problematic.

13:00 - 14:00: LUNCH BREAK

14:00 - 15:30: **DISCUSSION SESSION 10: COMMERCIAL(ISING) SEXUALITY**
(Chair: Tom Claes)

How Porn Could Be Better

Petra Van Brabandt

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University of Antwerp, Belgium

I suggest that there is double dissociation: an absence of artistic pretension in porn films, but also a neglect of pornography in art films. This is perhaps regrettable. The exploration of the artistic or aesthetic dimensions of (the screening of) sexual experiences can enrich or make our sexual gratification more complex. It can work in on the complexity and learning potential of or sexual gratification. The result could be more layered sexual gratification; a sexual gratification to which is added a sense of bedazzlement. Fortunately, we don't think the gulf between pornography and art is essential. Elsewhere I have argued that there is no principled reason for thinking these categories are incompatible. That leaves us with a final question: what would count as an artistic porn film, or a pornographic art film?

Sexual Ethics and the Problem of Economic Pressures on Sexuality

Rh a Jean

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Liberal philosophers have often put an emphasis on the question of sexual freedom, whereas radical and moderate feminists have been fighting the sexual violence experienced by vulnerable persons (women, in particular, but not only them). How can we develop a sexual ethics that focuses, on one hand, on sexual freedom, and, on the other hand, on the protection of people from abuses and violence, at the personal and the political level? Can we develop some ethical principles related to sexuality? I propose some basic principles. Among them : "The right to freely choose our sexual partner," "The right to refuse any time a sexual relation" and "The right to be free from physical, psychological and economic pressures."

I consider that the economic pressure for sex is a form of sexual violence. That's why I consider prostitution as being damaging for sexual freedom (contrarily to the liberal assertion): the economic transaction put the prostitution on a very different level than libertinage and other forms of freely chosen practices. Like Debra Satz, I consider that sexuality is something that should not be for sale and the reason is that the market put a pressure on sexuality and therefore, put our (especially women's) sexual freedom in danger and make us more vulnerable to abuses and sexual exploitation. Like Scott Anderson, I consider that prostitution is a sexualisation of work and is damaging for employee's status and for our sexual personal identity.

If having a sexual ethics, based on some relatively clear principles, can make us questioning prostitution, it also gives us a basis to protect authentic and various sexualities that are freely chosen. A valuable sexual ethics would fight against discrimination of sexual minorities, but, at the same time, would fight against personal, political and economic control of our sexuality.

Sexual Ethics, Materiality and Change: Thinking Sexual Commerce

Paul Reynolds

Department of Social and Psychological Sciences
Edge Hill University, UK

Can we have ethical sexual commerce? There are generally two schools of thought on this question: one stresses the notion of choice and liberty in sexual conduct and expression, the possibility of ethical sexual commerce within the context of other forms of labour under

capitalism, and probes at the particularly of sexual prejudice in arguments against all sexual commerce; and an argument that begins with Kant's categorical imperative not to use humans merely as a means to an end, and emphasises power, oppression and exploitation in sexual commerce. These arguments are mainly confined to sexual services and sexual representations, and less so the markets of sexual paraphernalia. They are generally represented as liberal and radical positions.

In this discussion I want to suggest that these two positions are both problematic insofar as they seek to partial readings of sexual commerce that elide with 'ideal-positions' on selling and buying sex. Three considerations rather muddy the picture: an a priori notion of the individual and their consciousness and self-reflection, especially in the context of sexual illiteracy in contemporary societies; the importance of context and conjuncture in understanding how agents of sexual commerce are constituted and constitute themselves, where the sexual 'front line' that divides legitimate from illegitimate is a fluid and conjunctural one (with pragmatic consequences); the importance of tying sexual commerce to non sexual commerce and adopting a broader political and philosophical critique in which structural and procedural conditions are given their proper priority.

15:30 - 16:00: COFFEE BREAK

16:00 - 17:00: **SESSION 11: CLOSING PLENARY**