

# Blurred Body Boundaries

International Conference: June, 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012



University of Vienna  
Department of Romance Studies  
Campus, Spitalgasse 2, Yard 8  
“Sitzungszimmer”

## Early Modern Natural Philosophy Meets Postmodern Gender Theory

This conference takes the challenge to congregate two ‘bodies of knowledge’ that even in contemporary scientific communities are not customary subjects of a vivid exchange of ideas: Postmodern feminist and gender theories and Early Modern scientific discourse. The core hypothesis of the conference is that the two periods, which frame the so-called Scientific Revolution, share significant epistemological ventures and habits of thought. The complex field of mutual influences between the “inside” and the “outside” of the body that preoccupy Early Modern philosophy is also a core problem in recent theories on body regimes. Especially today’s Gender theorists depict the idea of an embodied mind, which subverts the dichotomist order of matter and form. The innovative thematic approach will be reflected in the organization of the panels: Scholars from the field of Gender Studies and of Renaissance Studies will equally share presenting and discussing papers along different topics.

THURSDAY, JUNE, 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012

9:30 WELCOME NOTE:

10:00 – 12:00 **PANEL I:**  
Contested Borderzones: Animals and Humans

Sergius Kodera, University of Vienna/New Design University St. Pölten: „**The Discrete Naturalisation of Humans in Giovan Battista della Porta’s Physiognomy**”

Karin Harrasser, Academy of Media Arts, Cologne/University of Art, Braunschweig: „**Becoming Human With and Against the Animal. Helen Keller and the Meaning of the Seeing-Eye Dog**”

RESPONDENT: Birgit Wagner, University of Vienna

14:00 – 16:00 **PANEL II:**  
Contested Borderzones: Humans and Artefacts

Montserrat Cabré, University of Santander: „**Adorning the Female Body: Divergence and Accord in Fifteenth-Century Women’s Thinking on Women**”

Bernadette Wegenstein, Johns Hopkins University Baltimore: „**Breast Off: from Saint Agatha’s Martyrdom to Preventative Mastectomies in Today’s Breast Cancer World**”

RESPONDENT: Wolfgang Müller-Funk, University of Vienna

17:00 – 19:00 **EVENING KEYNOTE-LECTURE:**  
Alison Jaggar, University of Colorado at Boulder:  
“Feminist Methodology in Practice: **Learning from a Research Project**”

Organisation together with the Department of Development Studies

FRIDAY, JUNE, 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012

09:30 – 11:30 **PANEL III:**  
Contested Borderzones: Real and Virtual

Elena Carrera, Queen Mary University of London: „**Dismantling Gender Stereotypes, Re-Embodying Pleasure: Teresa of Avila’s The Way of Perfection (1569)**”

Evelin Stermitz, University of Vienna/University of Ljubljana: „**Defragmented Objects: Women’s Bodies in a Virtual Context**”

RESPONDENT: Sigrid Schmitz, University of Vienna

12:00 – 14:00 **PANEL IV:**  
Contested Borderzones: (E)Motion and Passion

Marlen Bidwell-Steiner, University of Vienna: „**Emotional Flow: Affection between Philosophy and Stage**”

Brigitte Bargetz, Research Fellow at the Institute for Cultural Inquiry, Berlin: „**Passionate Politics: Affective Accounts and Body Politics**”

RESPONDENT: Christina Lutter, University of Vienna

15:00 – 17:00 **PANEL V:**  
Contested Borderzones: Male and Female

Leah deVun, Rutgers University New Jersey: „**Cures and Closures: Hermaphrodites and the Demands of Difference in the Early Modern Mediterranean**”

Diana Rey, University of Vienna: „**Blurring of the Bodies or Assault on the Boundaries? Re(de)constructing Transsexuality from within and beyond Medical Discourses and Gender/Queer Theory**”

RESPONDENT: TBA

17:30 – 18:30 **ROUNDTABLE:**  
Summary of the contributions



Concept and Organization:  
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