Panel Proposal for NECS, Prague June 20-22, 2013

Please note that individuals may submit only one paper proposal, either to the open call or as a part of a pre-constituted panel or workshop. Panels may consist of 3-4 speakers with a maximum of 20 minutes speaking time each. All presenters are obliged to provide us with a title, an abstract of max 150 words, 3-5 key bibliographical references, name of the presenter and institutional affiliation. Panel organizers are asked to submit panel proposals including a panel title, a short description (up to 100 words) of the panel and information on all the papers as listed above. Please submit all proposals before January 31, 2013 through the submission forms that will be accessible from January 1st on at: www.necs.org. Notification will follow shortly thereafter (around February 28, 2013). The conference language is English.

Panel organizer: Rikke Schubart

Panel chair:
Olof Hedling
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Panel Title: Theorizing Horror and Bad Emotions

This panel presents theoretical approaches to emotions in horror from affect studies, cognitive studies, aesthetic studies, and phenomenology. The panel understands emotions as intersections between affect, feelings, senses, and emotions proper, and “bad” emotions are both negative emotions (affectively unpleasant) as well as normatively bad emotions (what is believed morally wrong). The panel examines emotions in fictions and in the relationship between fictions and audiences, genre and culture. Questions asked include: what emotions dominate in horror, how do audiences make sense of them, and how can we theorize the relationship between emotions and core questions about ethics, aesthetics, and gender.

Presenters
1. Rikke Schubart, panel organizer (University of Southern Denmark)
2. Angela Ndalianis (University of Melbourne)
3. Tarja Laine (University of Amsterdam)
4. Adam Lowenstein (University of Pittsburgh)

1. Rikke Schubart

Paper Title: Bloody Disgusting: Birth and Breast-Feeding in À L’intérieur (2007) and Grace (2009)

Birth scenarios are a familiar trope in the horror genre. This paper analyzes birth, breast-feeding, and disgust in the French film À L’intérieur (2007) and the American film Grace (2009). It situates the films in a wave of contemporary horror concerned with female bodies, female concerns, and featuring horror heroines.
Often, birth scenarios have been linked to supernatural forces (Rosemary’s Baby), science (Demon Seed), or alien invasion (Aliens) and theorized as symbolic representations of male fears and pleasures (Clover, Creed). In À L’intérieur and Grace, however, ordinary female bodies are assaulted by female attackers. From a postfeminist perspective and with a cognitive approach to disgust, this paper argues that a) the represented disgust is of interest to female audiences sharing the capacity for pregnancy and b) that the films belong to a postfeminist development in a genre wrongly believed to service only male desires and needs.

Bibliography


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2. Angela Ndalianis

Paper Title: The Aesthetics of Disgust, Sensory Intelligence, and the Living Dead

This paper will explore how New Horror films of the C21st transform real terror into fictional horror that uses shock tactics to assault spectators through their bodies and their senses, the ultimate result producing a sensory and emotional intelligence that aims at social critique. C21st living dead films such as Dawn of the Dead (2004),
Land of the Dead (2005), 28 Weeks Later (2007), and [REC] (2007) have returned to the hard-core critical approach that typified the first wave of contemporary horror in the late 1960-70s – and the films are darker, violent and more disturbing than their low-budget predecessors. This paper will explore how these films have created a critical dialogue about themes of devastation, terrorism, survivalism, and U.S. and global politics and ideology; it will be argued that this dialogue relies on an aesthetics of disgust that demands a reaction from the spectatorial body.

**Bibliography**


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**Angela Ndalianis** is Associate Professor in Screen and Cultural Studies at the University of Melbourne. Her research focuses on contemporary entertainment culture, media histories, neo-baroque studies, and the role played by the senses in diverse media experiences, including film, videogames and theme park attractions. Her publications include *Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment* (2004), *The Contemporary Comic Book Superhero* (editor, 2009), *Science Fiction Experiences* (2011) and *The Horror Media Sensorium* (2012). She is currently completing two books: one is on robots and entertainment culture, and the second is on Batman and his representation in recent comics.

3. Tarja Laine

**Paper Title: Emotion, Rhythm, and Pain in Darren Aronofsky’s Requiem for a Dream**
Requiem for a Dream (2000) follows the spiralling plunge into desperation of its four main characters, whose lives intertwine through varying phases of drug addiction. This emotionally exhausting descent is expressed by means of the film’s hyperkinetic aesthetics, best characterised as overwhelming in a particularly negative fashion. Especially the film’s ending brings about an affective dissonance as it is disturbing in a very primal way. This paper argues that the affective dissonance in the film is achieved by means of its rhythmic progression from ‘euphoric’ to ‘dysphoric’ which directly addresses the spectators’ own corporeal rhythm with exceptionally painful consequences.

Bibliography


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Dr. Tarja Laine, Assistant Professor in Film Studies (University of Amsterdam), is the author of Feeling Cinema: Emotional Dynamics in Film Studies (2011) and Shame and Desire: Emotion, Intersubjectivity, Cinema (2007). Her essays on emotions and sensations in cinema and media have been published in journals such as Film-Philosophy, Midwest Studies in Philosophy, Media, Culture & Society, Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture, Studies in European Cinema, New Review of Film and Television Studies, PostScript and Film and Philosophy. Her research interests include cinematic emotions, film aesthetics and film-phenomenology.

4. Adam Lowenstein

Paper Title: Feminine Horror: In My Skin and Surreal Affects
My paper examines writer and director Marina de Van’s stunning French art/horror film *In My Skin (Dans ma peau*, 2002). I will argue that *In My Skin* stands at the crossroads of a number of important discourses that are rarely considered together: horror film, feminism, surrealism, affect theory, and the so-called “New French Extremity.” Analyzing *In My Skin* as a film that practices a particular kind of surrealism (closer to Georges Bataille’s brutal materialism than André Breton’s romantic idealism, but with a feminine twist all its own) permits us to see the hidden intersections between the aforementioned discourses. Furthermore, the film’s surrealist effects also generate surreal affects for the audience by ripping away skin onscreen and getting under our skin offscreen. So where exactly does *In My Skin* leave us in terms of horrific affect? Ultimately, I contend, in a place best described through notions of a feminine, tactile surrealism.

**Bibliography**


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**Adam Lowenstein** is Associate Professor of English and Film Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, where he directs the Film Studies Program. He is the author of *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film* (Columbia UP, 2005) as well as essays that have appeared in *Cinema Journal, Representations, Critical Quarterly, boundary 2, Post Script*, and numerous anthologies. He has been interviewed on issues of cinema and culture in the *New York Times*, the *Village Voice*, and in the documentary *The American Nightmare*. He is currently completing a book concerning cinematic spectatorship, surrealism, and digital media.