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Abstracts

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Keynote Address, Stephanos Dragoumis Amphitheater

Lisa Tuttle, “Is Technology Gendered? Thoughts from the Borders of Science Fiction and Feminism”

As a feminist and science fiction writer/reader/viewer/fan I will discuss the role of science fiction in creating our ideas about new technology, and consider some technologies that, while not yet real, are widely expected to bring about radical changes when they are developed: artificial intelligence, new reproductive technologies, extreme life extension techniques, and sexbots. In “SF and Technology as Mystification” (1979) Joanna Russ pointed out that most discussions about the threats and promises of new technology obfuscated the reality of what lurked behind “technology”: “a much bigger monster: capitalism in its advanced, industrial phase.” Gwyneth Jones, in 1994 wrote about the connections between cyberspace fiction and the reality of the emerging internet: “Cyberspace will be ruled, like all our worlds, not by the thinking mind and its aspirations but by the greedy dreamer: that alliance of appetite and aggression we call ‘commercial interest and state control,’ to conceal from ourselves the fact that we ourselves choose to have things run that way.” Be careful what you wish for: this moral is found in ancient legends and modern fiction. The short answer to the question raised in my title: yes, of course, like everything else in our society. And because of that, women are more likely to be ignored, marginalized, and damaged by the unintended consequences of many new developments in science. SF is one way of thinking about technology, but an active, thoughtful, critical feminism is more important; vital if we have any hope of shaping non-gendered technologies in the future.

Session #1, Stephanos Dragoumis Amphitheater

Samantha Cooper, “Exploring how Postmodernist Perspectives Mediate Representations of Gender Hybridity and Dys-/utopia in Science Fiction”

Technological advancements of the body have been represented in literature for decades; each with its own interpretation of the issues surrounding augmentation of the human body. If we cast a postmodernist eye over science fiction, we reveal a conglomeration of unnerving stories; containing experimental narratives and unpredictable timelines. The key theme of this exploration is the presentation of gender across three generations of science-fiction, namely Joanna Russ’s *The Female Man* (1975), Octavia Butler’s *Bloodchild* (1995) and Will McIntosh’s *Love Minus Eighty* (2013). Due to postmodernism’s pesky habit of meddling with language and construction, ‘the postmodern allows for, indeed, might well be the precondition of, the reconstruction of historical narratives through the agency of gender.’ This paper utilizes postmodernism as a way to explore overturned constructions of gender as ‘utopia’, what the cyborg/hybrid means for gender and the ways in which contemporary science fiction interacts with notions of gender. The postmodernist framework is also key to this exploration due to its deep and complex connections to science fiction. As Keith Booker muses: If postmodernist fiction needs to explore new modes of cognitive mapping, and if cognitive estrangement is the principal strategy of science fiction, then it only makes sense that science fiction should be a paradigmatic mode of postmodernism. As a theory highly critical of construction within language, postmodernism is thus suited to exploring and critiquing presentations of gender in science fiction. A key source for this exploration is Haraway’s ‘A Cyborg Manifesto’, which neatly intertwines postmodernist considerations of the cyborg, and the more critical aspects of feminism: ‘Liberation rests on the construction of the consciousness, the imaginative apprehension, of oppression, and so of possibility.’ This

exploration is adding to postmodern feminist study by bringing into consideration areas of bending gender in cyberpunk-era and contemporary literature and examining how the often utopian image of a world without gender can be problematic throughout developing eras of science fiction.

Teresa Botelho, “Technofeminist Fictions and The Creation of Scientific Knowledge: From the Practical Chemists of *Mizora* to the AI Programmers of *He, She and It*”

Feminist critiques of the protocols of scientific production have navigated a conflicted line between two seemingly contradictory agendas, summarized by Mary Wyer et al.*: the denunciation of the many ways in which both the priorities and practices of science and technology research have been dependent on historical, economic and social contexts that are “deeply entangled with commitments to the superiority of men over women” (237) and a pervasive reluctance to base the demand for recognition and reevaluation of the work of female scientists on the concept of gender-based differences extended to the domains of methodology and praxis. This reticence, explained by the natural apprehension that a notion of “women’s science” would lead to the downplaying of the achievements of its practitioners has led, as scholars like Londa Schiebinger have argued, to a modulated quasi-denial of the relevance of gender, sustained by the belief that, unlike in the social sciences, the scientific methodology’s neutrality and objectivity would serve as a protective buffer against the most egregious biases. This paper discusses the issues of gendered difference in fictions of science-making by examining two feminist texts written one century apart: *Mizora: A Prophecy*, by Mary E. Bradley (1880), the first all-female American utopian novel, where a society of “practical chemists” have applied scientific practices to successfully manipulate their environment and create a world free of disease, poverty and soul-breaking hard labor, and Marge Piercy’s *He, She and It*, which invests in the tropes of cyberpunk to reinvent the processes of creation of artificial life, where the personhood and sentience of the male android at the center of the narrative is the product of the work of two women, inverting the subject/object traditional male dominated logic. The discussion will center in particular in the strategies both texts use to interrogate and undermine traditional metaphors that identify women with nature by telling tales of control and mastery, and in the way they balance the questions of formal scientific objectivity with gendered psychological insights.

*Wyer, Mary et al. *Women, Science and Technology: A Reader in Feminist Science Studies*, New York: Routledge, 2009

Betty Kaklamanidou and Evdokia Stefanopoulou, “Posthuman Female Heroines and Postfeminist Limitations in *Westworld*”

Westworld (2016–present), the HBO adaptation of the 1973 same-titled sci-fi hit, is one of the most complex television narratives in recent years. At the same time, the twenty episodes of the first two seasons that have aired so far pose significant questions about posthumanism as well as postfeminism. *Westworld* is a huge theme park where visitors pay to interact any way they want with the robots that populate its world. Yet, unlike the robots of the 1973 version who easily betrayed their mechanical origin, this time, *Westworld*’s “hosts” do not only resemble humans in every external detail but have also managed to acquire memories, and thoughts that somehow transcend their sophisticated electronic codes. An interesting opposition between humans and posthumans is created as the main stars include the park’s creator, Dr. Ford (Anthony Hopkins), and the Man in Black (Ed Harris), two human males and Dolores (Eva Rachel Wood) and Maeve (Thandie Newton), the two posthuman females who start to rebel against what they feel is imprisonment in a fake world. In the bigger part of the first season Dolores and Maeve literally perform their gender, playing rather traditional female roles, reflecting our own constructed identities. However, once they transcend their

internal coding, a new subjectivity emerges. Using posthuman theory as our main context of discussion, we would like to argue that despite the evolution in the representation of both Dolores and Maeve in season two, a postfeminist analysis cannot clearly conclude that this is a step forward for feminism. It seems that the inherent obstacles in postfeminist theory still prevent film and television scholars to unpack the complicated female characters that abound in contemporary US television.

Session #1, Melina Merkouri Amphitheater

Tanfer Emin Tunc, “Food Feminism: Consumer Safety and Women’s Activism in the 1960s and 70s”

As members of the social movements of the 1960s and 70s, American women transgressed prescribed gendered norms in all aspects of life, including the expectations of industry, big business and mainstream mass marketers. They began distrusting the so-called limitless progress of science and technology as well as corporate powers, especially their persuasive product ideology. Aligning themselves with environmental concerns, they started what would eventually become Ecofeminism, which rests on the belief that women and the environment share a common agenda because both have been abused, oppressed, and exploited by the same patriarchal, commercial and technoscientific forces. With the Vietnam War came an increased sensitivity to what chemicals, such as Agent Orange and Napalm, could do to the human body and food chain. This, in conjunction with Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, which brought to life the horrors of the pesticide DDT, prompted many women in the United States to reassess what was being served at their dinner tables. It also led to their participation in the food movement through numerous forms of activism, ranging from lobbying for new safety laws, measures, and nutritional labelling; to aligning with unions and workers’ rights groups to seek food security and justice; to efforts concerning organic and green consumption. As this presentation will explore, food concerns in the 1960s and 70s overlapped with social movements such as environmentalism and feminism. In fact, the labeling of food products began with grassroots initiatives as empowered women’s groups, homemakers, and concerned consumers alerted their favorite magazines and companies that packaged foods were probably not as healthy as they claimed to be. Campaigns for quality regulations, price controls and safety standards were intricately connected to women’s activism which, to a certain extent, ensured their momentum and overall success. Moreover, consumer safety as a mature social movement overlapped with the environmental and the women’s liberation movements, contributing to the formation of “food feminism” – a type of activism that resists and subverts the ways in which American institutions, especially science, industry and the legal system, dominate women and what they eat; empowers women to seek alternatives to commercialized and processed food; and encourages reform and change in American nutritional practices.

Elodie Chazalon. “Old Concept, New Meanings? How Deleuze and Guattari’s Concept of “Rhizome” Sheds Light on Feminist Activism and Practices”

The manifold and diverse feminist struggles, opinions, and ideologies that succeeded and crisscrossed one another throughout history have both contributed to promoting and engulfing the feminist credentials (Fraser, 2005; Fraser, 2011). The emergence of the “mediasphere,” a “critical ‘culturescape’ in which meanings flow through various human and technologically enhanced modes of communication” (Lewis, 2008) apparently leads to the same impasse. On the one hand, the visibility and plasticity offered by the Internet and digital networks have entailed an unprecedented growth of online activism and virtual feminist practices. “Groups,”

“communities” and “associations” of diverging nature regularly burgeon online, echo each other, work underground or publicly, sometimes faking invisibility to re-appear again, in a new shape. These groups, conscious of the shifting nature of feminism(s), gender, and feminist theories and practices, may possibly have grasped the upsides and pitfalls of the Internet and digital networks and have adapted themselves to the challenges of the mediasphere. Priding themselves on both unpredictable actions/tactics and finely tuned strategies, enhancing their rootedness or playing with multiple identities, they fight on all fronts, embracing individual as well as collective claims in an intersectional, local and global perspective. Precisely due to its shifting, unpredictable, and all-encompassing nature, the flourishing culture of online activism is often perceived as disorganized, depoliticized, decentered – though (still) western-centric (Mestiri, 2016) – or as being detrimental to offline activism. It is accused of replacing activism and affirmative action by words and “virtual” – literally and figuratively – practices. Within the framework of international cultural studies, we will apply Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s concept of the “rhizome” (Mille Plateaux, 1980; A Thousand Plateaus, 1987) to recent forms of virtual practices in the USA. Instead of opposing online and offline activism, we argue that contemporary online and offline communities work as “rhizomes”: connection and heterogeneity, multiplicity, and “deterritorialization” are their *raison d’être*. Despite its detractors (Wallin, 2010), the extended metaphor of the rhizome can be construed as a tool to better visualize how feminisms, politicized and depoliticized discourses and structures have evolved, transformed themselves and adapted to ever-shifting capitalist environments in order to live a life of their own, while at the same time giving impetus to each other. Several community websites (reelgrl, reelgirl, bitchmedia, feministing, etc.), sometimes coupled with their social media pages, will be analyzed on the semiotic and structural levels to show that online activism and digital networks articulate with and embed themselves in a larger culture of activism, highlighting that feminist technological practices, though disoriented and disorienting, are nonetheless eloquent and pivotal.

Ana Popović, “‘Women Aren’t Just One Thing’: *The Good Fight*’s Portrayal of Feminism”

CBS’s TV series *The Good Fight* portrays feminist activism in the digital era. With three female leads, the show represents the challenges that women face in a world where politics are transferred online and the Internet manufactures reality. The show is famous for its boldness in confronting the most pressing socio-political issues of today, particularly those related to feminism in the #MeToo era. This paper explores the ways the series, online content itself, explores the power and limitations of feminist movements online. What makes *The Good Fight* quality TV is the multitude of female perspectives. The characters represent the generational divide in feminist activism and even though they belong to a similar social circle, when dealing with the complex issues of being a woman in today’s world, their perspectives differ significantly. By tackling issue such as the #MeToo movement and its divide, online harassment of women, womanhood as victimhood and the issue of consent, as delivered in the current political reality through different media outlets, the show portrays how complex these issues are and how blurred the ethical lines have gotten in the manipulative world of social media. The paper focuses on the elusiveness of the truth, clarity and righteousness in a world where reality is manufactured through social media and so-called reality TV. These issues are portrayed in the show as precisely the source of the divide among feminists. By offering different and often conflicting views of multiple generations of feminists, the show goes to prove that the experience of being a woman varies for each individual and that femininity cannot be limited to one thing, one type or one perspective, as women are facing the same concerns in different ways. The show offers different interpretations of the same uncomfortable situations, whether from female and male perspective or from the perspectives

of multiple women. By creating characters who are themselves subtly biased and unaware of their own potential harmful influence on female rights and concerns, *The Good Fight* translates complex issues to relatable behavioral patterns which its audience can recognize. In this way, the show teaches feminism in the era of spectacle as the respect of female individuality.

Session #2, Stephanos Dragoumis Amphitheater

Ezgi Ilimen, “Octavia E. Butler’s *Fledgling*: Feminist Technoscience and the Rise of Black Female Cyborg”

This presentation addresses the politics of identity in Octavia E. Butler’s feminist science fiction *Fledgling*. Octavia E. Butler’s black female protagonists in science fiction assume progressive roles and confront essentialist race, gender, class and sexuality norms. *Fledgling* stresses the impact of science on identity, femininity and body politics. In this work, Shori challenges socially constructed gender, heteronormativity, race politics and hierarchical species relations between Ina (vampire) and human communities. She is a genetically modified black Ina armed with extraordinary capabilities for survivance. Biotechnology contributes to Shori’s creation and eases her adaptation process to changing circumstances. Through her Ina mothers’ experiments, Shori has human genes and a dark skin armory, which makes her resistant to sunlight. Due to her daywalker status, reproductive function and strong venom, she is regarded as a miracle, healer, scientific triumph, threat and/or disgrace to her Ina ancestors. In *Fledgling*, Octavia Butler expands patriarchal hegemony’s control over race relations, gender norms, sexuality and reproduction, class and bloodline rules to Ina community. Shori’s part human and part Ina creation and intimate symbiotic relationship with humans disturb hierarchical power relations between the Ina and humans. Genetic modification provides Shori with an alternative space between two species. Octavia Butler particularly stresses the constructed nature of race, gender and other identity markers by echoing Judith Butler’s “gender performativity”. Some of the Ina community fathers react to genetic engineering, which improves Ina physiology and stamina, through mob violence and murders. They have a perverse faith in Ina superiority and purity with the emphasis on nobility and conformity. Shori’s defiance of normative identity politics across species transcends rigid borders of identity and body. In the light of Donna Haraway’s “A Cyborg Manifesto,” Shori emerges as a black cyborg, liberated from social constraints on gender, body and evolution. In *Fledgling*, science alters body, nature, subjectivity and evolutionary process. With human and Ina DNA, Shori promises a higher chance of survival to human and Ina communities.

Chrysavgi Papagianni, “Using the ‘Master’s Tools’: Julie Dash’s Re-Appropriation of Technology in *Daughters of the Dust*”

Ecofeminists have broadly argued that science and technology are at the service of patriarchal society. The refutation to that, found for instance in Haraway’s seminal text “The Cyborg Manifesto,” is that technoscience can be used to combat the very discourses that produce it. Essentially, there is a note of familiarity in this debate, as it brings in mind the question of whether we can “use the master’s tools to dismantle the master’s house,” a question that has haunted feminist discourse for decades. This presentation will argue that the “master’s tools” can indeed be used to undercut the patriarchal status quo from within. The ‘tools’ I will be looking at here are the camera and the filmmaking technology that has enabled women to claim a voice and a space of their own. As a case in point, I will be discussing Julie Dash’s *Daughters of the Dust* in order to highlight how the director’s use of the technology of film

leads to an essential redefinition of the African American female identity. This is evident for instance in the specific cinematic choices she makes, namely the use of crosscutting, slow motion and flashbacks that blur the boundaries between the past, the present and the future and eventually help salvage the stories of African American women. At the same time, the presence of technology at the level of the diegesis in the form of Mr. Sneed's photographic camera is indicative of a feminist intervention that aims at revising the white, patriarchal histories of exclusion. Indeed, the fact that the Unborn female child is 'inserted' into the photo of the male members of the family taken by Mr. Sneed, is a powerful moment of appropriation of technology that enables women to be re-inscribed into the Social Imaginary.

Saskia Fuerst, "Janelle Monáe's *Dirty Computer*: An Afrofuturist Vision of Resistance and Empowerment for Black Girls"

With the hugely successful release of Marvel's *Black Panther* (February 16, 2018), the term Afrofuturism has been introduced into mainstream U.S. news media and stories, drawing popular attention to a relatively new field of studies within Black Diaspora Studies. As a space "concerned with the possibilities for intervention within the dimension of the predictive, the projected, the proleptic, the envisioned..." (293), Kodwo Eshun notes how Afrofuturism is an ideal platform for marginalized Black voices. Indeed, female rappers and singers like Missy Elliot and Janelle Monáe have been analyzed for their empowering, Afrofuturist representations of Black girls and women's lives within their music videos. Yet Monáe is not only an Afrofuturist; she is also an activist for #BlackGirlMagic and calls attention to issues of self-confidence, self-love and the dangers of succumbing to the stereotypes and label of Other for Black women. She advocates that Black girls and women embrace and love their difference, "ala Audre Lorde style," and liberate themselves due to, not in spite of, their socially perceived differences. This is important for children as, in general, they need to be provided with empowering tools to re-vision and re-interpret typical socio-cultural representations of their lives, leading to critical consciousness and civic action (Steinberg and Kincheloe 22). As Patricia Hill Collins notes in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, myths such as the mammy, the matriarch, and the jezebel serve to control Black womanhood and justify the continued marginalization of Black women. The same is true for Black girlhood. Through portraying Black girls and women as active participants in futuristic, technologically advanced societies, Monáe contests oppressive stereotypes of Black girlhood. Taking a closer look at her emotion picture *Dirty Computer*, I will discuss how Monáe presents positive counter-narratives and is an activist for "transgressive politics" in her visual media.

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Christina Dokou, "Technoscience vs. Teknon-science: The Tragedy of the Female Scientist in Cynthia Ozick and Brian K. Vaughan"

In "Creativity and the Childbirth Metaphor," Susan Stanford Friedman notes how the phallic signification of the pen made the world of authorial creativity traditionally adverse to women. The same might hold true with a vengeance where the phallic screwdriver is concerned. Cast *ad nauseam* in the role of cyborg/cloned/fembot Pandoras as foils to their technology-mastering male creators, or alternatively as virtual tech support (ranging from Annanova,

Cortana and Siri to the freakish or geekish – read: “unfeminine” – Lisbeth Salander in *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, NCIS’s Abby Sciuto, or *Criminal Minds*’ Penelope Garcia), women in the eye of contemporary pop culture continue to display a relationship with technology that is, at best, severely complicated in relation to feminist ethics. Taking occasion from two very disparate texts, Cynthia Ozick’s 1997 “serial” novel *The Puttermessa Papers* and Bryan K. Vaughan’s 2002-08 comic series *Y: The Last Man*, this paper will attempt to explore this failure to enunciate a “feminine” technoscientific praxis in fiction. In particular, there seems to be a common tragic failure to integrate the procreative ethos and creative technoscience: when the latter is placed in the service of the former, the curse of Frankenstein rears its ugly head, and catastrophe ensues. The female scientist – be it a Jewish polymath like Ruth Puttermessa who creates a female golem to save New York, or the world’s top experimental geneticist, Dr. Allison Mann, who seeks to cure the plague that has killed everything male on Earth except one man – in her attempt to release procreancy from the necessity of heterosexual reproduction, unwittingly unleashes a plague of, for lack of better words, “hyperfemininity” that threatens to destroy, or actually destroys, culture. Thus, the release from the biological restraints of procreation and the establishment of a utopian *femarche*, both of which were once hailed as cornerstones of the second-wave feminist agenda, are deconstructed, parodied, and retrospectively opposed as destructive, while the figure of the female savant/scientist emerges as a tragic one, torn between the need to nurture, and the catastrophic consequences of that need, for which any form of redemption her skills can offer is never enough.

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Session #2, Melina Merkouri Amphitheater

Ina Batzke, “The Regulation of the Female Body and Biotechnology in Speculative Fiction”

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, emerging international legal standards provided broad support for reproductive health as a right essential to the freedom and self-determination of women, recognized maternal mortality as a human rights violation, and established public funding as an essential tool in securing access to reproductive health in practice. But as the international legal foundations grew increasingly robust, developments in the United States regrettably moved in the opposite direction: With its 2007 *Gonzales v. Carhart* decision, the Supreme Court discarded decades of precedent requiring abortion restrictions to include a health exception, sending first signs that female health is no longer a paramount concern. Then, at the close of the decade, healthcare reform efforts sparked a national debate about funding and insurance coverage for abortions, indicating that the United States may miss a critical opportunity to lead this growing international recognition of the centrality of reproductive rights to the freedom of women. In other words: rights, that had been understood as given, had once again been reversed, and the current climate sees others under a similar threat. At the same time, the turn of the millennium has introduced new biotechnologies that pose new threats of regulation, such as embryo transfer technologies (ETT), embryo genomics, or stem cell technology in general. As a reaction to all of this, the recent years have seen a surge in feminist speculative fiction that arguably engages with this

distinct contemporary US political moment that is once again reckoning with sexual power, albeit under different circumstances. Notably, some of these texts resist the recurring discourses of regulation by transforming and reimagining the female body with speculative imaginations of overt physical and political power. As a case study for this paper, I want to take the perhaps most prominent example, Naomi Alderman's *The Power* (2017), which central premise is women developing the ability to release electrical jolts from their bodies, thus leading them to become the "dominant gender" and changing the world order. Certainly, texts such as Alderman's must be read as reactionary to contemporary contexts, i.e. to an increased attention to the regulation of the female body. At the same time, I would like here to begin thinking through and placing these fictional engagements in conversation with nonfictional/autobiographical science investigations that have dealt with these varied female bodily capacities since the reproductive rights movement.

Artemis Michailidou, "My Choice, My Decision: Reproductive Technologies in Jodi Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper* & *A Spark of Light*"

This paper is going to examine subjectivity and the female body in two novels by Jodi Picoult: *My Sister's Keeper* (2004) and *A Spark of Light* (2018). The former focuses primarily on in-vitro fertilization and the concept of the "designer baby", while the latter explores the controversial issue of abortion; however, there are several instances which suggest that abortion and IVF can often be seen as the two sides of the same coin. Drawing upon recent theoretical debates such as those proposed by Michelle Murphy, who analyzes "the complex and discomfiting itineraries" that feminist health projects have followed (*Seizing the Means of Reproduction*, 2012), or Rosi Braidotti, who explores the "posthuman turn for feminist theory and practice" and urges us to embrace a "joyful political resistance" (*Posthuman Feminism*, 2018), I will address not only the issue of feminist activism in contemporary North America, but also the limitations and prejudices of the legal system in the twenty-first century. My paper will also analyze Picoult's handling of choice and decision in relation to pioneering matters pertaining to technology and reproduction, such as stem-cell research, and will show how both IVF and abortion raise crucial questions about biology, morality and ethics in contemporary America. Ultimately, I will argue that Picoult's intelligent exposure of urban myths in relation to reproductive technologies brings to light (and, simultaneously, castigates) a "white male supremacy" project whose entanglements still dominate a large part of American society, infiltrating the legal and medical system and seeking to disempower women and the dynamics of the feminist movement. By showing how our own decisions can open up new choices in the way reproductive health is approached and politicized today, the author makes a strong statement that defies this disempowerment and celebrates feminist activism and bonding.

Aleksandra Izgarjan, "Policing the Female Body: Louise Erdrich's *Future Home of the Living God*"

This paper explores various ways in which religion, patriarchy and technology are used for controlling the female body in Louise Erdrich's novel *Future Home of the Living God*. Set in not too distant future, the novel depicts dystopian society ruled by white male religious government. Due to an unspecified environmental disaster, evolution is moving backwards so babies that are being born are often more animal than human. Technology is used for surveillance and control as all pregnant women are detained and used for assisted production of healthy human babies. The novel thus foregrounds various issues surrounding pregnancy and female body. It includes not only policing, manipulation and control of the female body, but also explores fragility of the genetic makeup and how easily it can be disturbed or reversed. Technology in the novel is seen not as useful, but rather as a vehicle for turning women into procreative slaves. Thus, like many other science fiction novels revolving around

reproductive rights, *Future Home of the Living God* looks at political, biological and technological aspects of procreation. Since the main character Ceder Hawk is adopted Native American, the novel also portrays anxieties surrounding birth, adoption and transmission of genetic heritage. Complete control of women and their offspring becomes the dominant feature of the repressive regime in the novel, reflecting Erdrich's concerns regarding the state of the women's rights at present.

Key words: Louise Erdrich, technology, reproduction, dystopian novel.

Zoe Detsi, "The Technology of Orgasm: Sexuality, Maternity, and Hysteria in Sarah Ruhl's *In the Next Room, or The Vibrator Play*"

In her Playwright's Notes, Sarah Ruhl acknowledges Rachel P. Maines' comprehensive historical account of *The Technology of Orgasm* (1999) as her main source of inspiration for *In the Next Room; or, The Vibrator Play* (2009). Set at the dawn of electricity in post-Civil-War American society, the play dramatizes the early use of electromedical technologies and focuses on the vibrator as a medical instrument to treat women diagnosed with hysteria. Ruhl's play is a successful combination of refined comedy, bitter satire of an age of rapid technological development, and painful awareness of the rigid social construction of female sexuality. *In the Next Room* offers an incisive look into the complexities of the Victorian era regarding gender stereotypes, cultural standards, and the solidification of science, with a clear modern relevance in terms of the inevitable, yet many times violent, impingement of technology on the human body, life, and mentality. Ruhl brings on stage a profound critique of centuries-old medical interpretations of female sexual pathologies, of a cultural context of male control over the female body, and of the eternal binaries between woman – man, nature – culture, body – mind, art – science.

Session #3, Stephanos Dragoumis Amphitheater

Abigail Fagan, "The Technoscience of Women's Temperance Writings"

In 1903, The Committee of Fifty criticized the Women's Christian Temperance Union for misrepresenting physicians' statements on whether or not alcohol was a poison in the WCTU's public school "Scientific Instruction". The Committee of Fifty was organized in New York in the 1890s to participate in the debate about Prohibition and publish studies ascertaining whether alcohol was a substance that needed to be controlled legally. Comprised of male professionals, the Committee of Fifty was particularly critical of the Women's Christian Temperance Union's use of sensationalism to convince children that alcohol consumption was likely to kill them and their family members. Temperance was one of the major reform efforts that dominated discourse of the long nineteenth century in the United States. Temperance societies, for instance, began organizing in 1810 and persisted in their efforts until federal Prohibition passed Congress in 1919. While temperance reform is often considered to be a bourgeois project of assimilation, I argue throughout my dissertation that it provided disenfranchised members of American society the venue to imagine the deaths and failures of the enfranchised: throughout most temperance narratives, voting white men succumb to the physically and mentally disabling effects of habitual binge drinking. In this paper, I will consider women's temperance literatures (including novels and the scientific documents produced by the Women's Christian Temperance Union) in terms of their employment of scientific language. Although the rhetoric of addiction and alcoholism did not emerge until the turn of the century, along with heated discourse on evolution, milieu, and genetics, women had been describing the disastrous effects of binge drinking on men and

families since at least the 1830s. Guiding questions for this inquiry include: how did women authors employ scientific language of drunkenness in their depictions of proto-addiction? How did these images serve a larger feminist or women's-rights oriented agenda? How did these images gender behavior? And how are these depictions evoked in much more recent scientific discussions of alcohol consumption and inheritance, particularly in terms of epigenetics?

Saniye Bilge Mutluay Çetintaş, “Breast Cancer Treatment in Autographic Narratives”

Graphic narratives add another dimension to the necessary and ethical act of writing about breast cancer. The visual aspects of the narrative articulate the personal and political conceptions of the disease in a profound manner. Marisa Arocella Marchetto and Miriam Engelberg, both breast cancer patients in their early forties, render their experiences of the disease, the medical procedures, and recovery stages through graphic narratives. Both books are published in 2006 but differ in many aspects: Marchetto uses bright colors with a cheerful attitude; Engelberg prefers scratchy black and white, minimalist drawings with a satirical tone. Marchetto is interested in New York celebrity and nightlife scene of which she is a part; Engelberg is a mother of a young child and a homemaker. After the diagnosis, Marchetto immerses herself further into dining and outings with her Italian chef fiancée, while Engelberg decides to spend time in front of the TV, doing crossword puzzles. Finally, Marchetto is able to triumphantly defeat the cancer and continue her career and upscale life with a slight change in her attitude, while Engelberg's cancer lapses into Stage IV and metastasizes to her brain, eventually causing her death. Drawings and maps of the disease in these narratives are subjective representations of how the authors view the nature of their illness. These visuals present the medical practices, like CT scans and chemotherapy sessions, and the invasive cancer cells or the nuisance of hospital performances. The authors use double register while documenting their experience of undergoing mammograms, biopsies and needles, bearing ongoing testing, changes of weight, vomiting and hair loss. On one hand, there is a constant effort to explain the changes the body goes through as a result of medical/technological intervention, on the other hand, the emotional reaction of the subject to the procedures is revealed, thus the connection of the breast cancer to women's gendered subjectivity, nurturing, sexuality and self-conception. This paper will be accompanied with a PowerPoint presentation of the narrative frames to comment on how technological/medical intervention affects self-conception during treatment.

Jennifer S. Tuttle, “Returning the Gaze of Technomedicine: Feminist Vision in Martha Hall's Breast Cancer Pathographies”

This paper analyzes how American artist Martha A. Hall deploys the artists' book form to indict, appropriate, and intervene in technomedicine's visual hegemony over women's bodies. The artists' book is a hybrid art form encompassing a wide spectrum from traditional letterpress to sculpture, where the book itself is an original work of art that integrates content with form (such as paper, binding, color, text, and found objects). Hall's oeuvre documents her attempts to call out the exploitations of medical technoscience that she experienced from her second recurrence of breast cancer in 1996 until her death in 2003. Her work itself is deeply compelling, but Hall's activism was not limited to the content of the books. Committed to getting her work into the hands of medical practitioners in order to change both attitudes and practices in their treatment of breast cancer patients, Hall worked actively to place her one- or few-of-a-kind books in the libraries of institutions with medical education programs. It has followed that her work is used regularly in medical humanities curricula and shown in galleries and at symposia related to women's health. What Ian Williams says of graphic pathography (graphic narratives by patients) – that they are sites where patients wrest control of their bodies' representation in the visual field and reclaim subjectivity and bodily

autonomy – can be applied to artists' books like Hall's. In books such as *Test Day and Voices*, she incorporates her own bone scans, ultrasounds, and other medicovisual objects, emphasizing simultaneously the violations and blind spots of technoscientific visualization; elsewhere, as in *Dark Room Days* and *One Week from Today*, she imports her own productions of visual technology, such as photography and altered X-ray radiography, dramatizing how the body is dismembered by medical imaging and appropriating the medical gaze and its technologies to represent her own body and illness experience. Hall's books compel the reader to undertake a physical examination of her books as a proxy for her body and thereby to lay hands upon her body, seeing it through her eyes; the reader also becomes the object of her gaze. Through sophisticated bindings, unusual textures, arresting colors, and assertive images, her books themselves become alternative technologies for visualizing a body with breast cancer. Hall's work thus protests the ways that medical technoscience colonizes women's bodies and actively reshapes the medical encounter toward a feminist vision of health care and of women's corporeal self-ownership.

Sangeetha Puthiyedath, "Exteriorizing the Interior; Diseased Minds, Diseased Bodies: Illness as Metaphor in Margaret Atwood's *Bodily Harm*"

The distance between the straightjacketing imposed on women by society and their aspirations is a recurring theme in Margaret Atwood. Her protagonists, alienated from themselves as well as society, have a complex and troubled relationship with their own bodies. A woman's body is presented by Atwood as heavily inscribed by the culture in which she finds herself in. Compelled to constantly measure and judge herself against the proscription that deny acceptance to a woman's body if it does not conform to male determined precepts of beauty, the body becomes an important intermediary in a woman's dialogue with society and a tool with which she negotiates her relationship with the outside society. The threat against her bodily integrity is both from within and without, which she experiences as a threat of imminent fragmentation. In fact, the inner malaise that afflicts the mind of her characters often find an objective correlative in bodily ailments. In Atwood's novel *Bodily Harm*, the protagonist Rennie is diagnosed with cancer. The invasive nature of the disease, the "corrupting" of the flesh from within engender a feeling in the victim that she has been betrayed by her own body. Unlike a disease caused by a virus or bacteria like tuberculosis or even syphilis¹ which involves an invasion from outside she feels that she alone is responsible for her condition. For Rennie, worse still is the cure prescribed – a mastectomy. As a woman living in a society which insists on reducing the female to the confines of the body, the operation has a direct impact on Rennie's perception of herself. Her cut-off left breast questions her identity as a woman and forces a rethink about her subjectivity and her position in society. In this paper I plan to explore the concept of disease as an exterior manifestation of an inner malaise and the multiple ways in which societies delineate specific diseases and confabulate it with moral positions thereby using it as a tool to judge the individual.

¹ The speculations of the ancient world made disease most often an instrument of divine wrath. Judgment was meted out either to a community (the plague in Book I of the *Iliad* that Apollo inflicts on the Achaeans in punishment for Agamemnon's abduction of Chryses' daughter; the plague in *Oedipus* that strikes Thebes because of the polluting presence of the royal sinner) or to a single person (the stinking wound in *Philoctetes*' foot). The diseases around which the modern fantasies have gathered — TB, cancer — are viewed as forms of self-judgment, of self-betrayal. (Sontag *Illness as Metaphor* p. 40)

Session #3, Melina Merkouri Amphitheater

Emmanuel Skoulas, “Online Gender-Based Harassment: Misogyny in Social Media”

Digital Technology has allowed new forms of “misogyny” to manifest themselves from the real to the virtual world. Online Misogyny is a dynamic phenomenon that has evolved since the beginning of the digital revolution and the spread of the Internet so today we can talk about a phenomenon that has conquered online space in a coordinated and easily detectable way. What is of interest is that online gender-based harassment relates to misogyny as it has been expressed in almost every “public space” and in “every society”. The virtual place has become the new public place where ideologies, attitudes, perceptions and cultural stereotypes against women find their way sometimes in a “harsh and cruel” way. As a result, new terms have been invented to “frame” the phenomenon of online misogyny. Besides Name Calling, other terms such as Revenge Porn, Doxing, Gamergate form the context of online misogyny in its worse form such as Gender-Based Harassment. What is of interest and relevant to the discussion of the online misogyny is the blurry “boundaries” of the virtual space. When for example a friendly conversation turns into an “attack” against a woman or when comments become abusive. My paper will try to focus on the different dimensions of online misogyny, through the new online discourse narrative and its modern terms. It will try to catch up with the latest developments on the field and how different key players respond to that (i.e. Silicon Valley Companies, Feminist Groups etc.). Finally, it will try to look at some of the more recent policies related to the emerging trends in the field of online misogyny.

Despoina Feleki, “Intertwining Feminist Narratives: Political Writing and Speech in Networked Spaces”

The technology of print and the novel have “housed” global concerns and perspectives for centuries with feminist writers often proposing either lifelike worlds or imaginary utopian visions and corresponding dystopian fears. For Ursula K. Le Guin, Utopian and Dystopian writing constitute the antidote to inertia perpetuated by institutions (The Wave in the Mind 2018). Since the turn of the century, the New Media Age has dictated a new democracy of thought, new participatory potentials and a revitalized communal sense among writers and readers. Within this new media context, I explore the connections between feminism and technoscience. I begin to explain how new social constellations made possible via digital media can relate to socio-cultural change and, more specifically, how feminist discussions can be refashioned on social networking sites. In my effort to disclose the way feminist writing and speech are reconfigured in both digital and lived spaces, I discuss the activist practices of Margaret Atwood. Atwood’s feminist writing and collaborative skills have turned her to digital online platforms and social networking sites. Since the 2016 TV adaptation of The Handmaid’s Tale (1985) a whole new feminist culture of resistance against the unjust abuse of women has been energized. On these grounds, I test the intersections between Atwood’s dystopian novel and the innumerable metanarratives that spring from the female fans’ digital emanations. As I bring into spotlight online creative projects as diverse ways of female resistance against male sexual assaults, I discuss how the indeterminacy of online space allows a new language, a newly acquired awareness and gender relations to come to the surface and activate the masses. On top of that, the immediacy and viscosity that new media offer allow the fast reproduction of images and feminist discourses that trigger a large-scale uprising of women. All in all, digitality and networking help shape ideas about what femininity can mean in the twenty-first century and about the new roles allocated to women. Women readers acquire a louder voice, turning from passive readers to actual writers of their

fates. Twitter and Facebook social networking sites become the communal spaces where writers and female audiences actually “meet.” They constitute the expressive tools which women can use to combat the political and social status quo.

Mariza Tzouni, “Cyberlesqued Re/Viewings: Political Challenges in the Neo-burlesque Spectacle”

Provided that the 1990s was characterized as an era of newness with the insertion of extreme technological advances, the rise of multiculturalism, new media expansion and the appearance of the World Wide Web, neo-burlesque appeared as an all-new form of entertainment which de-/re-/contextualized the act of viewing. Burlesque has been metamorphosed through the occurrence of neo-burlesque as an attempt to stress newness into the old; that is to re-generate a nationalized theatrical sub-/genre to an inter-/nationalized cyber-/spectacle which re-/acts against the sociopolitical distresses of the twenty-first century. Initiated with the *Yahoo Group* along with a plethora of online groups and blogs which have sprung till then, the Internet manages to weave a nexus among producers, performers and fans inter-/nationally. It has also enabled neo-burlesque to cross over the national borders and break those barriers which were formerly narrowed to mainly the U.S theatrical reality. In this milieu, the rise of social media globally, namely, the Facebook, the Twitter and the Instagram, have facilitated both the performers’ and the spectators’ re-/viewings since the former can re-/present and promote their neo-burlesque pieces as well as advertise their campaigns and products increasing in this way their popularity, while the latter, in their turn, can be informed about the performers’ recent activities, purchase goods or follow their accounts as evidence of support or even condemnation. Moreover, the *YouTube* has revolutionized spectatorship, since neo-burlesque performers of versatile performing styles, age, race and body sizes launch their work in order to gain popular appeal through the gathering of views claiming in this way an increase of paychecks and attendance to distinguished events and venues. As far as the spectators are concerned, they can re-experience a preferable performance for free and be offered inexhaustible views without being spatiotemporally localized. However, these innovations spark ambiguity. In other words, on the one hand, they become the means through which networks, burlesque communities, discussions and feedback are realized, while on the other hand, they end up being the *locus* where stereotypes are perpetuated, misinterpretations are created, and comments of hatred and misogyny are posted. Michelle L’amour’s *Leatherette Debut* and Legs Malone’s *Doughnuts* consist examples of equivalent healing cases, whereas, on the contrary, Roxi D’Lite’s and Dita Von Teese’s paradigms propagate e-commercialization. Taking everything into account, this paper seeks to explore how the cyberlesqued version of neo-burlesque acquires political dimensions challenging the way of seeing in an era of new media advance.

Silvia Schultermandl, “Quick Media Feminisms and the Affective Economies of Hashtag Activism”

The Web 2.0 is full of personal self-expressions, and many of them depict the mundane as elements of a cultural archive of the present. For these kinds of self-expressions, May Friedman and I have coined the terms *quick media* (Friedman/Schultermandl 2016). As collective term for this recent phenomenon, “quick media” describes the online services which enable users to post, tweet, like, pin, and blog self-generated personal content (Friedman/Schultermandl 2016: 9). Taking quick media’s valence as autobiographical practices as a starting point, my paper is interested in the affective economies of feminist projects on social media. In particular, I want to connect ideas about kinship as a particular form of feminist solidarity to the formats, contexts, and practices of hashtag feminist projects. Phenomena such as #metoo, #BlackLivesMatter, and #SayHerName are well-known and often-cited examples of the forceful impact of online connectivity and kinship building and

their effects on embodied relationship, social structures, and public consciousness precisely through the kinds of solidarities quick media can facilitate. I am using the notion of kinship as a framework through which to analyze the self-in-relation which is the subject of the life writing practices. The concept of the self-in-relation is prominent in narratology as well as in postmodern identity theories. In the context of networked interactivity, which relies on a “many-to-many structure, with a range of participants being private in public,” it refers to ongoing debates about the prevalence of the self in online media and the relational aspect of identity in the context of online connectivity and kinship. With the help of the feminist activist project #DearCatcallers on Instagram, I will apply transnational feminist theory and affect theory in order to better understand the affective economies of this and similar instances of hashtag activism.

Session #4, Stephanos Dragoumis Amphitheater

Stavroula Vergopoulou, “Gender and Media Literacy: Analyzing and Translating Advertising Language”

Within the context of feminism and technoscience and more specifically of feminism and the media, this study focuses on the problematization of overt and covert sexism in advertising language in relation to the discussion about the dynamics of translation of advertisements as a potential gender-equality oriented process. The connection between gender and translation has been analyzed by Simon, Castro, Federici, Leonardi and others, and feminist translation strategies have been discussed by von Flotow. However, feminist translation strategies of advertising language have not been examined yet. This study concerns a gender-related analysis of American and Greek commercial advertisements (of food and drink, household products, and personal care products) and of the translation of American advertisements into Greek. In the age of capitalism and global networking through the media, the power of advertising is constantly increasing through ongoing technological advancement on the basis of a more and more elaborate combination of different visual, kinetic and/or acoustic stimuli. Although the power of technological innovation in advertising is indisputable, the power of language in advertising needs to be acknowledged too. Advertisements do not only promote products and services, but also convey values and norms. Thus, through advertising language, including body language, specific gender stereotypes and fixed perceptions of femininity are explicitly or implicitly transferred. In both printed and digital advertisements, various verbal and non-verbal means are used in order to make them effective and successful. Therefore, a gender-related analysis of advertising language is necessary to expose sexism in advertising, raising awareness about media literacy. Media literacy can help the receivers of advertising messages develop their critical thinking, filtering the information sent through advertising. What is the role of the translator in this context? Can translators promote gender neutral or gender equality-oriented language? Can translation be considered part of feminist activism? Can media literacy contribute to the recognition of gender stereotypes in advertising and to the promotion of resistance to their uncritical acceptance, raising awareness about a more gender-inclusive perspective and feminist language use in media? As advertising does not evolve in a socio-cultural and linguistic vacuum, it is interesting to focus on a gender-related analysis of advertisements in different linguistic and cultural settings. Intriguing aspects of this analysis are the connection of advertising language with gender representation in media, the way American advertising influences culturally and linguistically Greek advertising, and the role of translators as language and culture mediators as well as potential feminist activists.

Konstantina Theodoridou and Haido Fanara, “Cinderella Stories: Feminism, Digital Media, and Literature in an ELT Classroom”

This paper explores the interrelationship between feminism, technoscience, and literature, and how these can be incorporated in an EFL classroom. Firstly, feminist pedagogy, as described by Berenice Fisher in 1981, should be an integral part of twenty-first century teaching and learning, as with contemporary tools it can offer multiple benefits and prepare learners for life outside the classroom. These include, but are not limited to, raising awareness on social issues, understanding register, reading between the lines, and developing critical thinking. It is also known that feminism is a topic at the forefront of current news, so learners need to be familiar with the topic and the relevant vocabulary itself, apart from using it as a means to developing other skills. Digital technology is inextricably connected with this mindset, as it is a twenty-first century tool, and also exposes users to a wide range of genres and register, thus making them aware of the social aspect of language and constituting them active readers of writerly texts, as Barthes encourages in his seminal work “The Death of the Author”. Literature is a third component that can be employed to create educational material based on these principles. In our work, the well-known fairytale of “Cinderella” was chosen as its long history has allowed for the creation of a variety of versions, which reflect societal changes and the development of feminist ideas. Starting from the Grimm brothers’ version, we followed the tale in time and in its transatlantic journey by incorporating a range of American texts, from Disney animated films to Hollywood romantic comedies, from Moch and Gewandter’s lesbian play “Cinderella: The Real True Story” to Garner’s politically correct “Cinderella”. Students were, then, trained to recognize and use different types of discourse as well as challenge their internalized preconceived notions about fairytales, language use, and gender roles. Based on the principles of feminist pedagogy, using digital tools and a literary text, learners collaborated, engaged in discussions in a safe environment, synthesized information, explored and produced language. We propose the creation of similar lesson plans, enriched with more fairytale characters, or genres to create a course or a school project that would equip learners with twenty-first-language and online skills that expand beyond the scope of mere language use.

Dimitra Giannouplaki, “This Computer has Empathy, This Machine Cares!”

Can computers inspire and develop our empathy? Electronic literature can upgrade female students’ empathetic skills that are essential for their meaningful interactions in and outside the classroom. In her electronic text “Separation” (2003), Annie Abrahams achieves this by inviting us to experience how a computer can empathize with a user who suffers from Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI). Here, the computer provides exercises that can help a user prevent and recover from this condition in the same way a good friend might have reacted given that there has been empathy with the user. It is a prime example of interaction between humans and computers and here it is the machine that provides the necessary help. A female artist introduces a new form of empathy coming from a machine. By focusing on Abrahams’ innovative online artistic practice and considering Cathy Davidson’s in *How to Revolutionize the University* (2017) innovative pedagogy in relation to technology, I will attempt to explore the way in which online material can help female students become more engaged and empathetic citizens. Attention in this paper will also be paid to the educational methodology that can be employed turning female educators and female students into sensitive decision makers when it comes to selecting the teaching material. Females, according to studies, tend to show higher levels of empathy and this is why we need them to show the way to new teaching approaches, where students’ feelings will not be ignored but highly valued. Cultivating empathy through electronic literature can offer strong and meaningful learning experiences.

Maria Sanchez, “‘Fat, Fly, Brown’ and Inspirational: The Pedagogical Lessons of Poetry and Social Media Activism”

How can following a poet on Instagram lead to increased engagement with politics and a willingness to claim feminism? This presentation examines the political and pedagogical implications for teaching contemporary poetry popularized through social media platforms. Focusing on U.S.-based Salvadoran-Californian writer Yesika Salgado, I discuss how the inclusion of “Insta-poets” and other writers working through social media can offer scholars means of substantively interrogating and reworking undergraduate English curricula. A self-described “fat, fly, brown woman and poet,” Salgado deftly utilizes multiple social media platforms, particularly Instagram, YouTube, and the Latinx media site Mitú, as channels through which to disseminate her work and reach ever-growing audiences. Her activism centers on an unabashedly feminist and Latina/x body positivity, consistently deploying her physical image as both homage to, and interrogation of, the experiences of racialized and highly surveilled corporeality. In this essay, I discuss the results of my teaching Salgado’s poetry across these platforms, and how students explicitly and joyfully express their reactions to Salgado’s feminism. Through analysis of Salgado’s work and her inspirational example for students, we see not only the futures of poetry in the U.S. – what Jesse Lichtenstein calls the ability of young writers to “make poetry matter again” – but also the complexities of employing social media platforms as means of questioning corporeality and the visual. An example: Salgado’s poem “Ode to a Fat Girl’s Crop Top” describes the garment as a “sweet shirt” and “a fuck you,” a response to loved ones (“*ay mija, why can’t you wear a regular shirt?*”) as well as to strangers (“go ahead and look as long as you want”). My students studied the poem in multiple forms (online and print versions), its response from followers (comments, shares), and then effortlessly began conversations regarding the power of Salgado’s “self-love,” the contradictions of visual representation, the feminist potential and drawbacks for visibility and embodiment, and the complications of how racial identities intersect with body positivity. Students articulated that Salgado’s example, reaching them through platforms already part of their social media lives, “spoke to them” about how feminism and body positivity might apply to them, even when previously, some of them were adamant that that they did not. Thus, “Insta-poets” may be a vital resource for feminist/fat activists of the future.

Session #4, Melina Merkouri Amphitheater

Ljiljana Markovic, Biljana Djoric Francuski, Bosko Francuski, “From Being Invisible to Becoming Empowered”

The theme for the 2019 International Women’s Day, #BalanceforBetter, adequately reflects the need for a world in which the balance between genders will be more equalized. Coincidentally or not, 8 March 2019 has also been set for the release of *Captain Marvel*, the twenty-first movie in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), and the first movie within it to have a female main character. Thus, in 2019 the International Women’s Day will be celebrated with a completely new facet, because on that day the first woman in the role of Marvel’s lead superhero, Carol Danvers, is set to hit the screen. Namely, in the original 1961 Marvel’s Fantastic Four team of superheroes, Susan Storm was the only female, and while the three men gained typically masculine superpowers (rubber body; fire manipulation; superhuman strength), Susan obtained the ability to turn ... *invisible* – unseen and unheard. This was fully in compliance with the pervasive sexist tropes and recurrent stereotypes about gender roles of that time (cf. de Beauvoir, *Second Sex*), but that was not all. In line with gender categorization, according to which men are supposed to be active, whereas women are

passive and submissive (cf. Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*), the three male protagonists also possessed brains and wisdom, whilst Susan was relegated to the typical societal concept of the woman: the role of wife and mother, and has thus remained known as the Invisible Girl/Woman. On the other hand, Marvel's first female lead superhero on screen, Carol Danvers, was an American air force pilot whose genetic structure got mixed with that of Captain Marvel on the occasion of a nearby explosion, which gave her powers similar to his – enhanced strength and durability, flight, and energy projection. Although Captain Marvel died of cancer in a 1982 comic, Carol donned his mantle as late as in 2012. The uniform is different from his, and when wearing her helmet, she sports a mohawk, however, her taking on Captain Marvel's codename establishes her as the follow-up to the legacy of a great hero. It is the purpose of this paper to explore, within the theoretical framework of feminist discourses disseminated by Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, Susan Bordo, Rosi Braidotti, Karen Boyle, and others, the steps that have steered Marvel's female protagonists from being invisible in mid-twentieth century to becoming empowered in the post-feminist age.

Agnes Strickland-Pajtok, “Digital Media and Hungarian American Women’s Migration Narratives”

The main aim of this talk is to observe and scrutinize the typical features of gendered memory in the reminiscing narratives of the generations born between the 1920s and 1940s. The corpus for this analysis consists of the interviews of the American-Hungarian online visual archive, Memory Project (<http://memoryproject.online> produced by Réka Pigniczky and Andrea Lauer Rice). The in-depth conversations are devised to record and recount the experiences of those men and women who emigrated from Hungary to the United States in the late 1940s ('DP generation') or shortly after the 1956 revolution ('1956-ers'). The change of political regime forced millions into exile (without the hope of return). After the trauma of fleeing, one had to come to terms with the hybrid identity of an immigrant, inhabiting the third space located between two, often conflicting cultural realms, which often brings forth the feeling of isolation, restricted communicative competence and rootlessness. The digital archive Memory Project uniquely offers new media as a means to come terms with past grievances and present isolation through self-expression for a mature age group for whom these facilities are normally not accessible. My investigations are centered on the peculiarities of feminine narratives. The retrospective interviews not only give insight into the social norms of the 1940s, 50s and 60s, but also reveal typical feminine strategies of dealing with the hardships of immigrant-life, for instance mitigating homesickness via creating an idealized version of Hungary within the space of the home, and through the never-ending attempt to recreate the lost smells and flavors of the homeland. The following questions are also intended to be tackled: was it (and is it) possible for a woman to be simultaneously politically subversive and socially acceptable or these two notions are exclusive? Do crises restrict the scope of feminine (corporeal and/or intellectual) liberties or rather enable women to acquire positions, which are normally reserved for men? To what extent is remembrance governed by the social-historical-cultural aspects of gender? And, finally, alluding to Gayatri Spivak's theory, can digital storytelling endow the subaltern group of upper-aged women with the ability of speaking?

Katharina Wiedlack, “Whiteness and Migration in the Era of Trump: Russian Women in Birth Tourism Discourses”

In my presentation I analyze reports on the phenomenon of 'Russian birth tourism' to Miami, Florida in American news media over the period of the last two years. Already during his presidential campaign, Donald Trump agitated against the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution that grants children born on American soil citizenship. His rhetoric targeted

preferably Mexican and other migrants of color immigrating from the global South. When President Trump reiterated his wish to end the birthright to citizenship after his inauguration, a wave of articles started reporting on the flock of white wealthy Russian women arriving in Miami every year to give birth there. Although there are no exact numbers available, “the Center for Immigration Studies has estimated more than 30,000 women tap it every year” (Popina 2018) news outlets report. Liberal media saw an opportunity in focusing on the flourishing business of birth tourism to illuminate the double standards of the Trump brand and administration. News outlets such as the Daily Beast scandalized that “[w]hile Trump rails against U.S.-born children of undocumented immigrants, his Florida properties have become a playground for birth tourists from Russia’s upper crust” (Zavadski 2017). I am interested in bio-political aspects of the reporting and the accompanying photographs that show beautiful white women, their tiny babies and occasionally men. I focus on the construction and othering of Russianness as whiteness on the intersection of economic factors and values. I argue that the wealth of Russian birth tourists is emphasized to draw on American New Cold War discourses that understand Russianness as connected to kleptocracy, cronyism and egotism. Since Trump’s presidency has been accompanied by the suspicion of Russian interference and support of his election etc., the articles are not intended to show Russians in a bad light, but to deconstruct the American president and his antiimmigrant stance by association. Presumably unintentionally, however, they construct Russian women as white others to Americans and reaffirm Cold War discourses.

Kristin J. Jacobson, “The Uneasy Feminist Technoscience of HBO’s *Westworld*”

HBO’s *Westworld* tweaks the concepts of manifest destiny, freedom, and the frontier in its technoscientific pursuit of the American dream. *Westworld* depicts an immersive amusement park that offers visitors the opportunity to enter frontier narratives and interact with robotic hosts. The park bills itself as “the first vacation destination where you can live without limits.” My paper examines the gendered implications of *Westworld*’s fantastic West and the American dream. I argue that an analysis of *Westworld*’s technologically gendered landscape and protagonists highlights the West’s enduring appeal and the radical transformations required to keep the American dream accessible in the twenty-first century. My paper analyzes *Westworld*’s landscape and android technology from an intersectional, ecofeminist perspective. I specifically focus on *Westworld*’s constructed landscape and two female android hosts, Dolores Abernathy (Evan Rachel Wood) and Maeve Millay (Thandie Newton), who disrupt the male (anti)hero’s journey – known to viewers as the Man in Black (Ed Harris). In exploring *Westworld*’s manufactured West I aim to further Krista Comer’s investigation of the relationship between new regionalism and postmodernism (*Landscapes of the New West*, 1999) and test the ways the series self-consciously reproduces and challenges “nationalist empire” in its depiction of a fantasy American frontier (Comer 6). *Westworld*’s technoscience offers an uneasy postmodern American dream unable to escape its manifest destiny imperialism. The android protagonists specifically question postmodernism’s feminist potential to demolish patriarchy. What results is a depiction of an uneasy, uncomfortable feminist technoscience grounded in violence. Gendered narratives as well as gendered landscapes are key to this investigation. Dolores and Maeve are programmed respectively to follow conventional virgin and whore narratives. Their racial identities (white-Dolores/black-Maeve) and primary character roles (rancher daughter Dolores/sex worker Maeve) underscore these patriarchal roles. However, as the characters evolve, they break out of their respective gendered and raced stereotypes and challenge rather than fall victim to the drama’s white male (anti)hero/villain, the Man in Black. The characters’ use of violence to (re)claim their power questions whether the women are doomed to use – as Audre Lorde cautioned – the master’s tools in their pursuit of freedom and, as a result, “never dismantle the master’s house.” My paper concludes that the uneasy feminist technoscience depicted asks viewers to

consider whether the characters' violent means not only justify their pursuit of freedom and the American dream but also depend on it. Westworld's violent landscape and narrative question the technology required to dismantle the patriarchy.

Session #5, Stephanos Dragoumis Amphitheater

Maria Giannouli, "Gender Stereotyping in *Detroit: Become Human*"

In the last few years of massive technological innovations, video games' production has significantly developed, especially if we consider the emergence of Virtual Reality (VR) platforms, in affordable prices, ready to populate every gamer's house, and the fascinating growth of narrative story-lines in recent video games. Nevertheless, with regard to Gender Stereotyping in video game narrative (or ludology) little or no adequate change has been noticed. Hence, it would be essential to investigate the conjunction of Feminism and Technoscience in the video game industry, and particularly through the examination of one of the most recent video games blockbuster, *Detroit: Become Humane* (Quantic Dream, 2018). My goal in this presentation is to scrutinize the limitations of imagination and the inability to transcend traditional gender roles and stereotypes in the construction of robot android characters; in short, why the android-protagonists in the story are gendered. To achieve a relatively complete result, the game narrative will be approached as a literary text, with detailed inspection of character and story depth, as well as with respect to the interaction of the narratee/player with the multiple alternative choices that determine the plot-ending and development as well as the characters' attributes. By using Butler's gender performativity, I aim to demonstrate the inability of game developers to surpass gender norms even when designing characters with no genitalia to be biologically defined as male or female. This presentation attempts to shed light upon an academically understudied storytelling platform which perpetuates and establishes gender stereotyping and has significant influence on the societal development of adolescents.

Georgios Vasilikaris, "Women and LGBTQ Characters in Video Games"

Storytelling has always been of great importance for people and an essential part of human nature even from the ancient times. Throughout the years, technology has provided us with various media in order to satisfy this very need including books, music, cinema and more recently videogames. Due to their inherent nature, videogames have the ability to grasp the player's attention in order to convey different sets of emotions and achieve various goals. Consequently, videogames have always been in the public eye and have raised several juxtapositions on whether they promote violence, immoral behavior and, more recently, sexism (mainly due to scandals such as #Gamergate and the depiction of women in games like *Grand Theft Auto 5* and *Red Dead Redemption 2*). However, are videogames as sexist as many people claim? From Samus Aran (*Metroid*) to Ellie and Tracer (*The Last of Us*, *Overwatch*) and from Birdo (*Super Mario Bros Series*) to Kanji and Lala (*Persona Series*) this paper will examine the way female and LGBTQ characters have been portrayed in videogames in the past and compare them with their more recent counterparts, focusing on the social shift that has occurred in an attempt to dispel some common prejudices regarding this specific medium of entertainment. Another issue that will be addressed is the increasing number of female gamers, whether professional, hardcore and even casual, and how this has shaped the gaming community overall. Concluding, the videogame industry has developed and made huge leaps in a relatively short time, developing a market value three times larger than this of Hollywood. However, many people still neglect the academic value of videogames and the impact they may have on the society. Do videogames encourage sexist

behavior? Do games reinforce sexist stereotypes? And finally, is the gaming community as inclusive as it should be? All of these questions will be answered in due time.

Vassilis Delioglanis, “Female Presences in the Field of Locative Media: The Case of Teri Rueb”

The present paper views Teri Rueb as a dominant female presence in the field of locative media, a term referring to location-aware and mobile technologies. In particular, Rueb is one of the few female locative media practitioners who has contributed to the field through the creation of locative sound walks. Rueb has been active in the field since its emergence in the early 2000s, when the use of the Global Positioning System (GPS) was popularized. Referring also briefly to her earlier works, this paper will emphasize the ways in which Rueb’s most recent locative works still revitalize the field of locative media by challenging the ways in which space can be perceived. The paper sheds light on the ways in which the physical (natural) space is digitally augmented in Rueb’s 2017 site-specific sound-walks, *Times Beach* in Buffalo, New York’s Outer Harbor, and *Fens* in Boston, Massachusetts’ Back Bay. Following the trails in the areas of the Times Beach Nature Preserve and Back Bay Fens respectively, users of the mobile applications are invited to listen to oral narratives that are attached to particular locations through the use of locative media technologies. This superimposition of digital/virtual sound-space on the physical environment leads to the emergence of a locative space, which appears to be both virtual and physical at the same time. This paper investigates the relationship between virtual and physical spaces as well as the juxtaposition of natural and urban spaces as these are portrayed in *Times Beach* and *Fens*. The multiple narratives in these works function as a means to demonstrate the ways in which locative space is visually, verbally as well as textually and aurally constructed. Ultimately, the physical environment (both natural and urban) with which users interact while walking merges with the site-specific narratives of Times Beach and Back Bay Fens.

Lizzy Pournara, “Patchwork Palimpsest: Performing Gender in Electronic Hypertext”

Published in 1995, *Patchwork Girl* is Shelley Jackson’s CD-ROM-based, Storyspace hypertext novel and presents itself as a rewriting of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, featuring Victor Frankenstein’s female monster which was destroyed by him during its creation in the original novel. The importance of Jackson’s *Patchwork Girl* lies in its ability to bring forward issues related to female creativity, authorship and gender performance in the virtual environment of electronic hypertext. In this paper, I use the figure of palimpsest in order to illustrate the dynamics between male and female literary production, with the upper layers corresponding to the male dominant literary practice that superimpose upon the lower parts of the female, which, however, are not totally concealed, but manage to show through. Bringing to the surface the medium that produces the literary text, I argue that Jackson underlines the subordinate layer of female literary production within the palimpsestuous discourse of literary writing. In *Patchwork Girl*, the female body is identified with the electronic hypertext, which, due to its fragmentary nature, exposes all those layers that have remained hidden or withheld. By highlighting the importance of the electronic hypertext as a medium, Jackson stresses its connection to both the body and its fragmentary nature, as well as to the dispersed shreds of female literary practice. This paper will focus also on the female literary lineage that is outlined through a series of remediations between analog and digital media that take the form of material metaphors in *Patchwork Girl*. Jackson strives to bring the voice of the female writer to the upper layers of the palimpsest, by also paying attention to the palimpsestuous relationship between the media that embody a literary work.

Session #5, Melina Merkouri Amphitheater

Katrina S. Woltmann, “Modernist Bad Women: Technology, Pre-Code American Cinema, and Subversive Sexuality”

America's modernist era and its extreme technological advancements created a sociohistorical moment that encouraged specific gender roles and normative ways of being. While theorists like Janet Staiger have addressed the bad women trope in early cinema, and Margaret Singer and others relate the serial queen to certain visual spectacles of melodrama as it relates to this newfound technology, I situate portrayals of bad women as they relate to the technoscience of the modernist mode of understanding material existence. Early modern film largely subscribes to heteronormative patriarchal roles for women, but subversive articulations of bad women challenge these portrayals. I look at depictions of women and in particular the “fallen” or “bad” woman in *Applause*, *Blonde Venus*, *Gold Diggers* of 1933, and *She Done Him Wrong* in order to address the intricately nuanced and often subtly transgressive depictions of women and female sexuality in early modern cinema. This provides a new means of understanding cinematic technology as related to the gender roles it reflected and informed. I address these four movies in chronological order of their release and dissect the portrayals of bad women in these films to show that they reflect a certain sociohistorical moment that was conceptualized in the advent of modernity in pre-Code America. Walter Benjamin writes that the technoscience of the modernist era brought about “the decline of experience” and thus aura and memory. Yet while film does represent in some way a remove from the aura of original art and live performance, it also creates a rupture of the past into the present – and this rupture may enact a kind of defamiliarization, inducing a different sort of encounter with aura. This is further complicated by the idea of a “false sublime” which forces the auratic experience by aggressive overstimulation, which is then countered by the concept of innervation. Innervation implies a means by which external stimulation may lead to potential enlightenment, particularly as induced through mimesis. In Miriam Hansen's understanding of the Benjaminian view, technology itself is not necessarily responsible for a move away from auratic experience; instead, it is the ways in which technology is often employed. I argue that the way technology is often employed can allow for innervation through an exploration of feminism in film, allowing a contemporary understanding of the relationship between feminism and technology.

Imola Bülgözdi, “Virtual Reality and Ludic Identity Construction: Does Cyberfeminism Stand a Chance in Hollywood?”

This paper intends to examine the changing Hollywood representations of identity construction in virtual reality, with special focus on the question whether cyberspace can provide the new opportunities for feminists, as pioneered by Donna Haraway. While theories of identification in cyberspace range from utopian dreams of an identity free from social constraints to the pessimistic view that virtual reality simply reproduces existing power relations, *The Matrix* trilogy (dir. the Wachowskis, 1999-2003) undoubtedly had immense impact on the popular imagination, shaping the public's response not only to virtual reality, but also to the human-technology relationship in general. As argued by Patricia Melzer, *The Matrix* ultimately aims to re-establish clear boundaries between humans and machines and posits identity in a “natural” body, one not violated by technological enhancements. This technophobic stance is coupled with the rejection of the posthuman existence as such, practically denying the core experience of the cyberpunk literature that inspired it, along with the cyberfeminist hope to embrace a fluidity of identity provided by the invisibility of the

body in cyberspace. *The Matrix*'s conservative views are in conflict with Katherine N. Hayles's contemporaneous definition of posthumanism based on the new models of subjectivity which emerge from the human-technology relationship, irrespective of bodily intervention. Since the publication of *How We Became Posthuman* (1999), the shift to Web 2.0 has taken place and transformed the Internet into the interactive experience it is today, flanked by two significant trends: the "ludification of culture" (Kenneth J. Gergen, 2018) and the ubiquity of new media in western culture. It is in light of these trends that I propose a comparative analysis of the premises and representation of identity construction and agency in virtual reality in *The Matrix* trilogy and *Ready Player One* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 2018). The latter introduces VR via the experience of gaming and embraces posthumanism in an environment based on interactive digital technologies possessing an inherent medium-specific ludic dimension. It is my contention that *Ready Player One* offers a highly relevant view of the contemporary human-technology interface, giving insight into the ludic identity construction proposed by Valerie Frissen et al. in *Playful Identities: The Ludification of Digital Media Cultures* (2015). Therefore, this film is worth investigating from a cyberfeminist perspective for its treatment of gender and race, as well as the role of technology in the twenty-first century, despite adhering to some of the Hollywood requirements.

György Kalmár, "Gendered Technophobia: Artificial Intelligence and Feminine Agency in Post-Crisis Sci-Fi Cinema"

Linking anxieties about gender and technology is a well-known cinematic phenomenon at least since the spectacular electronic birth of the techno-witch in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927). The phenomenon, however, seems to have gained new popularity in the twenty-first century. Such events as the terrorist attacks of 9/11 or the 2008 global financial crisis have provided such anxieties and regressive fantasies with new resonances. My proposed paper focuses on this renewed cinematic trend, as well as its social, ideological and theoretical implications. It explores films that express male anxieties about the current AI-related technological revolution by way of depicting technology as a threatening, powerful and feminine Other. Such films as *Ex Machina*, *Creative Control* or *Blade Runner 2049* operate mostly with masculine subject-positions, and pit their male protagonists against clearly more sophisticated, more powerful, gendered female cyborgs or AI-s, thus interweaving technophobia with misogyny. My paper analyzes the way the present crisis refashions these well-known fantasies with a new slant and pointedness, and indicates how these films can be seen as symptomatic of the early twenty-first century struggles over gender and power. The post-crisis era saw a dramatic rise in social anxieties related to technological innovation, social progress, and even feminism. The source of these fears may be traced back to the way globalized neoliberal capitalism entailed a general decrease in human agency (as more and more decisions are made by invisible algorithms), how it made large masses of blue-collar workers economically redundant, and caused the emergence of a new disempowered lower class, the so-called *precariat*. The 2016 US elections served with a perfect example of the gender-related fantasies produced in our crisis-ridden times. It did not only indicate the voting power of the *precariat*, but also revealed a strong, nostalgic, male longing for control, and – echoing some of the films I wish to analyze – showed the way a powerful woman with a progressive feminist agenda can be pictured (as Hillary Clinton often was) as a "political robot", a sophisticated but insincere figure who wishes to destroy everything left of traditional male dignity. Thus, through the socially contextualised analysis of the above-mentioned films, the paper indicates the way these seemingly entertainment-oriented works tap into the gender-related anxieties of the post-crisis era, and can therefore be regarded as symptomatic of the technology-driven social transformations of our times.

Chara Triantafyllidou, "Projections and Replicants: Body Politics in *Blade Runner 2049*"

Albeit fictional, the world of "Blade Runner 2049" provokes the much-needed debate on body commodification, suspension of ethics, and femininity in science fiction. Starring a female projection, Joi, and Niander Wallace, the ambitious "replicant" manufacturer, the recent Blade Runner movie portrays more than just violence for the sake of violence. Even though it lacks the splatter and torture devices seen in many Hollywood movies, *Blade Runner 2049* renders its women disposable. The purpose of this paper and presentation is to examine the implications behind femininity being reduced to its reproductive function and being controlled in ownership terms. Furthermore, it attempts to connect the virtual and real world, questioning the desensitization of violence as a result of the violent screen spectacle. Exploring the various channels through which the female body and identity are rendered expendable, the presentation looks into the characters of Luv, Joi, and Niander and Wallace. The characters and their actions are correlated with Alison Phipps' "Politics of the Body", in an attempt to explain the intrusion of neoliberal thinking in the social realms and the conversion of the body into "market terms" (Phipps 11). Apart from the body as commodity, the paper also delves into digitized bodies, the electronic metaworld and its connection with the real world, touching upon the disembodiment caused by the body being digitized information and thus losing its material substance. Considering that a movie would mostly be appreciated for its aesthetic value, putting ethics aside, the paper attempts to point out the correlation between the real and virtual world. Based on Žižek's theories, I pinpoint how both realities merge with each other, with virtualization reaching the point of intruding "real" reality and possibly transforming the audience's perception of it. Moreover, I seek evidence of a cruelty and torture culture being encouraged in the movie, based on Giroux's argument that in many Hollywood films questions of ethics and responsibility are being suspended. Overall, my ultimate aim is to show how the commodification of the female body and the various forms of violence against women impacts the issue of feminism in the real world, inevitably asking whether ethics should outweigh aesthetic value.

Work Cited

Phipps, Alison. "The politics of the body." Cambridge: Polity (2014).