



International Conference on
Polyamory & Mono-Normativity

November 4th/5th/6th 2005

Research Centre for Feminist, Gender & Queer Studies
University of Hamburg

Prof. Dr. Marianne Pieper and Robin Bauer
Main Building, Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, Lecture Room M

ABSTRACTS

&

Introducing the

Speakers

Dossie Easton

Polyamory: Fabulous Multiplicity, Fantastic Abundance

Dossie Easton will speak on the philosophical and sociological aspects of the myth of monogamy and the realities of open sexual lifestyles: how does being open about our desires and free to explore them change our lives? Our relationships? Our worldviews? Our cultures?

Dossie Easton, a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in San Francisco, is co-author of *The Ethical Slut*, a guide to infinite sexual possibilities as well as *The New Bottoming Book*, *The New Topping Book* and *Radical Ecstasy*. She has worked as a psychotherapist with individuals, couples, triads and more in her private practice for many years, and has extensive life experience of community based sexual lifestyles, starting from her vow of permanent nonmonogamy in 1969.

Marianne Pieper and Robin Bauer

Mono-Normativity and Polyamory

Non-monogamous patterns of intimacy as a valid way of relating continue to be largely excluded from the social scientific discourse, since theories of and research on primary relationships are rooted in a mono-normative perspective. In our paper we will introduce our term and concept of mono-normativity and present some preliminary results from our ongoing empirical study on non-monogamous forms of relationships.

Marianne Pieper is Professor for Sociology at the Department for Social Sciences at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, University of Hamburg. Director of the Research Centre for Feminist, Gender and Queer Studies. Her main subjects are Gender and Queer Studies, Postcolonial and Poststructuralist Theories and Methods of qualitative Research. She is member of the international Research Network "PRECLAB" and leader of the research project "Precarious Labour and Subjectivity" Together with Robin Bauer and students of the Department for Social Sciences she conducted a research project on "Non-heteronormative patterns of living". Recent publications: Marianne Pieper/Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez : Gouvernamentalität. Ein sozialwissenschaftliches Konzept im Anschluss an Foucault (2003). Marianne Pieper, Thomas Atzert, Serhat Karakayali, Vassilis Tsianos, Empire. Die biopolitische Wende (forthcoming in 2005). Marianne Pieper/Robin Bauer, Polyamory und Mono-Normativität. Erste Ergebnisse einer empirischen Studie zu nicht-monogamen Lebensformen (2005).

Robin Bauer holds a position in the curriculum development project "Degendering Science" at the University of Hamburg. He studied Chemistry, Philosophy and Educational Sciences. He is currently working on his PhD in sociology on queer BDSM practices and communities. Website: http://www.erzwiss.uni-hamburg.de/degendering_science/_e/e_index.html

Marianne Pieper and Robin Bauer have been co-teaching queer studies classes for several years.

Kassia Wosick-Correa

Rules & Regulations: How Consensual Nonmonogamous Relationships Negotiate Love, Commitment and Sexual Intimacy

This study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative data to examine the negotiation of rules that govern sexual behavior within consensual nonmonogamous relationships. A feminist analysis is used to explore the significance of such rules within a culture that emphasizes monogamy and perceives nonmonogamous relationships as lacking in structure or regulation. Findings show that nonmonogamous individuals construct agreements that restrict or enable sexual behavior with others based on levels of trust and commitment, the desire to "feel special," and to maintain interpartner bonds. Gender and sexual orientation are shown to be the most salient predictors of whether individuals engage in consensual nonmonogamy: bisexual women and gay and bisexual

men have high rates of consensual nonmonogamy. Conversely, heterosexuals engage in moderate levels and lesbians have the lowest rates of nonmonogamy. Data also suggest that "cheating" is problematic for both monogamous and consensual nonmonogamous relationships; although individuals engaged in consensual nonmonogamy have redefined cheating in terms that resist mono-normative definitions of infidelity.

Kassia Wosick-Correa wrote her PhD thesis on "Rules & Regulations: How Consensual Nonmonogamous Relationships Negotiate Love, Commitment, and Sexual Intimacy" at the Department of Sociology, University of California, Irvine. She is an instructor at the University of California and the Irvine Valley College. Her research focuses on exploring issues around Sexualities, Gender, Feminist Theory, Intimate Relationships and Social Inequalities with qualitative methods. Her publications include: Wosick-Correa, Kassia R. 2003. *Lesbian and Gay Psychology: New Perspectives*, edited by Adrian Coyle and Celia Kitzinger. *Contemporary Sociology*, 32 (3): 327 and Wosick-Correa, Kassia R. Review of *Sex Matters: The Sexuality and Society Reader*, edited by Mindy Stombl et al. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2004).

Volker Woltersdorff

Dr. des Volker Woltersdorff, aka Lore Logorrhöe, was born in 1971, studied German, French and Italian Literature in Munich, Pisa and Paris, 1995 *Maîtrise en lettres modernes* at the *Sorbonne Nouvelle*, since 1999 he has been assistant teacher at the Institute for Comparative Literature at the Free University of Berlin, Germany. He is member of the interdisciplinary research group "Cultures of the Performative" where he is currently working on a research project entitled: "Performing Sadomasochism in Art, Subculture, and on the Internet" (for further information consult: http://www.sfb-performativ.de/seiten/b4_vorhaben_engl.html.) In 2004 he successfully defended his thesis about gay coming out narratives. He has published many writings in gay studies and queer theory and politics, unfortunately all in German.

Christian Klesse

Polyamory and its 'Others': On the Representation of Casual Sex, Swinging and 'Promiscuity' in Polyamory Discourses

Polyamory is a new term that has emerged in debates about non-monogamy and has fed into the proliferation of new socio-sexual identities and lifestyles. Drawing on qualitative in-depth interviews with bisexual-identified practitioners of polyamory in the UK, I delineate some of the central themes of this particular relationship philosophy. I explore different and conflicting interpretations of the term currently prevalent in the emerging polyamory movement. My major focus is on how respondents define polyamory with regard to other 'styles of non-monogamy'. The definition of polyamory as a love-centred practice of 'responsible non-monogamy' frequently goes hand in hand with normative representations of more sex- or pleasure-focused forms of non-monogamy. Polyamory is frequently juxtaposed with casual sex, swinging, or 'promiscuity'. I argue that this tendency hampers the potential of polyamory to ground a truly pluralistic sexual ethics that may embrace the diversity of non-monogamous sexual and intimate practices.

Christian Klesse is currently working on a book manuscript titled 'The Spectre of Promiscuity. Gay male and Bisexual Non-monogamies and Polyamories'. The book is based on a research project into non-monogamy, power and sexual politics in Great Britain. Until very recently he held the Sociological Review Research Fellowship 2004-2005 at Keele University (GB). Since 2004 he has also occasionally taught units for the Gender Studies and Queer Theory Programme at the University of Hamburg (Germany). He gained academic training and qualifications at the University of Essex (PhD Sociology), Greenwich University (MA Gender and Ethnicity) and the University of Hamburg (Social and Economic History). His major research interests fall into the following areas: sexualities, intimacy, social movement politics, race/ethnicity, power, body modification, and research methodology.

Contact: christianklesse@hotmail.com

Ani Ritchie and Meg Barker

(Re)writing the lexicon of love in mono-normative culture: constructions of alternative languages in on-line polyamorous communities.

Polyamory is an emerging sexual story that troubles 'compulsory heterosexuality' and the mono-normative relationship patterns inherent in this. The dominant language of monogamous heterosexuality is reproduced and perpetuated in everyday conversation and saturates mainstream media depictions. Through an analysis of online discussions and self-help websites and books, this paper explores the ways in which members of polyamorous communities construct their identities through language. We argue that the potentials of polyamory are, to some extent, constrained by the mono-normative matrix and its conventional lexicons of partnerships, infidelities and jealousy. However, we highlight alternative languages which are emerging in discussions in on-line and real life polyamorous communities that offer possibilities for the development of new identities and experiences. Finally, we reflect on the reception of these challenges to taken for granted notions of love by considering reactions to our recent research on polyamory in the British media.

Ani Ritchie: Faculty of Media Arts and Society, Southampton Solent University. East Park Terrace, Southampton SO14 0RX. Tel: 02380 319000. E-mail: Ani.Ritchie@solent.ac.uk

Ani Ritchie is a lecturer in Media With Cultural Studies at Southampton Solent University. She teaches in the areas of sexualities, gender and feminist theory. She has particular expertise in sexual representation and cultural identity. She has studied women's sexual identity construction in relation to media depictions of lesbian sexuality and she now conducts qualitative research with lesbian and bisexual polyamorous women involved in alternative sexual relationships and practices. Her collaborative research with Meg Barker on polyamory has been well received by academic audiences and has provoked a great deal of interest in the popular press.

Meg Barker: Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences, London South Bank University, 103 Borough Road, London SE1 0AA. Tel: 0207 8155814. E-mail: megbarker108@hotmail.com

Dr. Meg Barker is a senior lecturer in psychology at London South Bank University. Her research focuses primarily on identity construction and practices in the bisexual, polyamorous and SM communities, and she has published on polyamorous identities in the *International Journal of Constructivist Psychology* and presented her empirical work with polyamorous people in several forums. She is also the honorary secretary of the Lesbian & Gay Psychology Section of the British Psychological Society and associate editor of *Lesbian & Gay Psychology Review*. She publishes both academic and general interest writing on gender, sexuality and relationships.

Renate Lorenz

Renate Lorenz is a free author, curator and filmmaker, mostly in the fields of Queer Theory and Queer Politics. At the moment she is visiting professor for Queer Studies at the *University of Arts, Hamburg*.

Since the beginning of the 90ties Renate Lorenz is working at the intersection of visual culture, theory and politics. She is editor and author of a fundamental publication about art and politics in the German-speaking area, called »Copyshop – Kunstpraxis und politische Öffentlichkeit«, which came out first in 1993 and she is the author of a number of other texts and books like »geld. beat. synthetic« about art, feminism and bio/technology (1995), »Linda Singer: Sex und die Logik des Spätkapitalismus« or »Reproduktionskonten fälschen! - Heterosexualität, Arbeit & Zuhause« (both 1999). In the middle of the 90ties she installed as curator of the Shedhalle, Zürich together with Sylvia Kafehsy a programm, which concentrated on the development of relevant feminist models of exhibiting and in 2000 she organized an international conference about exhibitions & sexual politics at Zürich.

Since 1998 Renate Lorenz works together with Brigitta Kuster and Pauline Boudry on a transdisciplinary research project, which defines »work« as a queer field of politics and therefore takes theoretical work as well as exhibitions, performances and films into account. Her current project is a book and exhibition named »normal love« on work, subjectivation & sexuality (forthcoming in spring or fall of 2006).

Anuja Agrawal

Ideology vs practice: The ideal of mono-normativity in a community of sex workers in India

The paper will be based on my empirical research among the Bedia community of Northern India. The research was conducted as part of my doctoral dissertation. Labeled as a 'criminal tribe' by the British regime in India, the Bedia women took to singing, dancing and sex work as a survival strategy several generations ago. By now their practices have undergone several mutations but sex work remains an entrenched and proliferating practice among many segments of the community. The Bedias are extremely unusual and socially marginal although sex work has brought them a certain degree of prosperity.

The paper will discuss how, despite a complete economic reliance upon multiple sexual relations of the unmarried women within the community, the Bedias continue to extol monogamy and chastity of women as revered ideals. Above all, this is institutionalized in the community's division of its women into two distinct categories: unmarried daughters and sisters who are expected to engage in multiple sexual relations on the one hand and the wives and daughters-in-law who are expected to personify monogamous ideals on the other hand. There are many interesting repercussions of the community's effort to sustain such a social structure.

The paper will document some of critical practices of the Bedia community and reflect upon the theoretical significance of the ideological hold of mono-normativity in a context which is otherwise unable to consistently enforce it in practice. Of such a phenomenon, the Bedia community is a most revealing example.

Anuja Agrawal has been teaching the Undergraduate Honours programme in Sociology at the Department of Sociology, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, New Delhi, since July 1994. She has joined the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi as a Reader in February 2005. Her PhD thesis was titled 'Kinship economy and female sexuality: A case study of prostitution among the Bedias'. Her publications include: 'Bedias are Rajputs': Caste consciousness of a marginal community, *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (n.s.), 38(1&2): 221-246, 2004, (also published as part of a volume in the Occasional Studies Series: Dipankar Gupta (ed.) *Caste in question: Identity or hierarchy*); Kinship and trafficking: The case of the Bedia community, *Canadian Woman Studies* 22(3, 4): 131-35, 2003; Addressing the male Psyche: Some observations on the representation of prostitution in a popular Hindi magazine, *Thamyris: Myth making from past to present* (Najade Press, Netherlands), 5(1): 59-78, 1998; Gendered Bodies: The case of the 'third gender' in India, *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (n.s.), 31(2): 273-97, 1997.

Daniela Danna

Polyamory among catholic-educated lesbians

(in comparison with catholic-educated gays and heterosexuals): the Italian surveys on homosexuality.

Polyamory has been theorised and experimented first heterosexually in the anarchist movement (Fourier), but the practice is easier and more "natural" in same-sex relationships and in relationships between bisexuals: two people in these relationships can be attracted by the same person.

In Italian surveys on homosexuality (see references), questions have been asked about the preferred form and the actual form of relationship, revealing 4-13% preference for open relationships (growing with age) while 51% of the men and 29% of the women of the national sample in a stable

relationship have also had at least another sexual encounter (the interviewers didn't ask whether it was known by the primary partner).

I will start with a secondary analysis of the three datasets, confronting them with data on heterosexual couples, and integrate this quantitative approach with in-depth interviews with lesbians living in Milan about how polyamory is lived and perceived in a community that (differently from other cities, as Bologna) is currently scarcely thematizing this issue.

Daniela Danna is researcher (permanent position) in Sociology at the Department of social and political studies, Faculty of Political Science, University of Milan.

I teach the course in Comparative Social Systems for the three-years degree in Organization and Human Resources).

María do Mar Castro Varala

Dissertation in Political Science on "Utopian Discourses of Migrant Women" at the Justus-Liebig University, Giessen. Diploma in Psychology and Pedagogy. Independent Scholar and Lecturer.

Nikita Dhawan

Lecturer for Intercultural Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy, Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany. M.A. in Philosophy/M.A. in Germanistik at the University of Mumbai, India. Presently doing her PhD in Philosophy at the University of Bochum, Germany on "Silence: an intercultural philosophical analysis" from a postcolonial feminist perspective.

Recent Publications:

Castro Varela, María do Mar/Dhawan, Nikita: Spiel mit dem Feuer: Post/Kolonialismus und Heteronormativität, *femina politica*, 1/2005;

Castro Varela, María do Mar/Dhawan, Nikita: Postkoloniale Theorie. Eine kritische Einführung. Bielefeld: transcript 2005.

Dossie Easton

Defanging the Green Viper: Managing Jealousy with Love, or: ETHICAL SLUTS - How to do polyamory well and thoroughly.

As all the wonderfully different kinds of people we are, we play many different roles with many different people, and many of us hope that many of them are sexual. How do we manage our (sometimes very) complicated open sexual lifestyles with full respect for all the members of our sexual constellations? How do we deal with conflict, jealousy, time, roles, mundane life and all that, and manage to have fulfilling and connected relationships with all our lovers? Most importantly, how do we challenge and detoxify the green viper of jealousy? In this workshop we will research and discuss the skills that successful sluts have used to make a community of lovers where everyone gets their needs met and no one gets done wrong.

Dossie Easton, a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in San Francisco, is co-author of *The Ethical Slut*, a guide to infinite sexual possibilities as well as *The New Bottoming Book*, *The New Topping Book* and *Radical Ecstasy*. She has worked as a psychotherapist with individuals, couples, triads and more in her private practice for many years, and has extensive life experience of community based sexual lifestyles, starting from her vow of permanent nonmonogamy in 1969.

Bisexuality and Family - Journal Issue - Submissions by Jan 20, 2006

Publication Date: 2006-01-20

Date Submitted: 2005-10-15

Announcement ID: 148171

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

For an upcoming 2006-07 volume, The Journal of Bisexuality is planning an issue on
**BISEXUALITY AND FAMILY:
THEORIES AND PRACTICES IN ELECTIVE/EXPANDED KINSHIP, AFFINITY, AND PARENTING**

Possible foci are bisexuality and family practices like monogamy, non-monogamy, responsible non-monogamy, polygamy, polyandry, and Polyamory; bisexuality and nuclear, extended, expanded, elective, tribal, and cyberspace families; bisexuality and the reproduction cycles: fertility, pregnancy, childbirth, child rearing, sibling relating, biological and elective parents and relatives; bisexuality and parenting, step-parenting, surrogate parenting, adoption, and grand-parenting; bisexuality and incest; incest taboos and their transgression; bisexuality and abuse.

Possible related foci include bisexuality and initiation rituals; bisexuality and human development, including childhood, sexual awakening, adolescence, young adulthood, maturity, aging, later life, old age, senility, gender, and transgenderism; the body, nudity, spirituality, health, disability, illness, food, nurturing, care, affection, and erotic practices in bisexual families; past and/or non-Western models of bisexual families.

We are interested in theoretical, critical, and research articles, reports from the field, personal narratives, reviews, poems, and interviews. For articles, we welcome a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives, including those based in disciplines like critical theory, philosophy, sociology, psychology, legal studies, literature, cultural studies, anthropology, and medical science. For the more experiential submissions, we welcome expertise in the healing arts, the creative arts in general, the new spiritualities, Polyamory, paganism, fetishism, DBSM, as well as past and/or non-Western modalities.

Please email all inquiries, abstracts, and submissions to both Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio serena1@coqui.net and Nan Wise thelovecoach@aol.com. Other possible addresses are serena1@choicecable.net, and serena2000@woow.it. Please send abstracts with bios and/or inquiries by November 15, 2005. Complete submissions (including text, abstract, keywords, and bio) will be due on January 20, 2006.

Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio, Ph.D.
Professor of Italian and Humanities
University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez
Mayaguez, PR 00681-9264 (USA)
Email: serena1@coqui.net
Website: www.serenagaia.com