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“DISCIPLINE AND ITS DISCONTENTS”

Please note that the deadline is January 28, 2019.

AFEA 2019 – LGBTQ+ Workshop

“The Discipline and Indiscipline of Bodies”.

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At the end of the nineteenth century and during the first two thirds of the twentieth century, religious, political and medical forces often found themselves objectively allied in a moral crusade that sought to establish an immutable sexual order by disciplining bodies through the affirmation of heterosexuality as the only valid and beneficial orientation, by reinforcing gender roles and by promoting a repressive model that confines sexual intercourse to the sphere of conjugal embrace and punishes sodomy, adultery and fornication.

Women were considered only in their role as mothers and wives and could not resort to contraception or abortion. Controlling the sexual behavior of LGBTQ+ Americans was enforced at the expense of their dignity and of respect for their freedoms. The passing of the *Sexual Psychopath Laws* (1937-1967) further blackened the brand of their infamy and promoted feelings of guilt and shame by persuading them that their sexual orientation was a perversion. They were confined in psychiatric institutions, where they underwent "treatments" with often irreversible consequences (castration, hysterectomy, lobotomy, electroconvulsive therapy, self-disgust cures, untested drugs). Morris Ploscowe (*Sex and the Law*, 1951) took a strong stand against the excesses of the sexual and moral panic that LGBTQ+ Americans were the collateral victims of: "These individuals are nuisances for the most part. They create **scandal** and **annoyance**, but they are not a serious danger to the women and children of a community" (203). Their refusal to conform to the norm that had been assigned to them led to systematic discrimination and even persecution, which ended up opening the way to an insurrectional struggle against their oppressors.

Feminist and LGBTQ+ movements have never ceased to develop, taking various forms over the decades, ranging from the legendary Stonewall rioters (1969) to today's assimilationists who only want equal rights (marriage, adoption, MAP/gestational surrogacy), but also including sub-political mobilization strategies, Act Up's epic struggles in the 1980s and 1990s, and the uncompromising speeches of Hal Offen (1977): "Our rights are ours because we exist—we must demand them and fight for them—not work for them **with a promise to behave**". The LGBTQ+ movement is striving, as best it can, to represent a very diverse community and to present multiple demands through an intersectional approach, including the right to refuse to discipline bodies. The personal/private is political.

In the 21st century, despite unquestionable progress made in gender equality and LGBTQ+ equality, Donald Trump's accession to power has brought with it threats to existing freedoms in the fields of abortion (*Roe v. Wade*, 1973) and marriage for same-sex couples (*Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015). These threats are triggering protests against the misogyny, sexual assaults and harassment suffered by many women (#MeToo). Trump has significantly restricted access of transgender people to the military; "transitions" are discouraged and bans have been passed to restrict the access of their variously transformed bodies to certain places (*bathroom wars*). Despite its being a ruling with limited scope, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the pastry chef who refused to make a wedding cake for a gay couple (*Masterpiece Cakeshop*) due to his religious beliefs. Might other initiatives in the name of "religious

freedom" hinder the full equality of LGBTQ+ citizens' rights? To what extent is the America of its turbulent, indisciplined president going through a renewed phase of invisibilization and regression with regard to LGBTQ+ issues? What discourses and modus operandi have been put in place by those who reject discipline so as to be able to offer a long-term riposte and be heard?

This workshop will explore both the different means some use to discipline bodies and the various ways used by others to assert their indiscipline between 1870 (Karl Westphal, "Contrary Sexual Sensations") and 2018. Some papers will be concerned with historical facts and sociological observations, while others will examine the representation (especially on American television) of this discipline and indiscipline of LGBTQ+ bodies (religious "accommodations", multiple sex partners, unsafe sexual practices, pregnant transmen, etc.). We warmly welcome transnational submissions which, while maintaining a US focus, take a critical look at the treatment of LGBTQ+ people in Chechnya or at Justin Trudeau's apology for the purge of LGBTQ+ state officials in Canada, for example. We will carefully consider proposals for papers on conversion therapies, which also rely on America's number one metanarrative, namely gender, which of course depends on the discipline of bodies.

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