



FAT STUDIES: REFLECTIVE INTERSECTIONS

12 - 13 JULY 2012

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

WELLINGTON, AOTEAROA NZ

HERS IS

The moon does not have
a strategic plan

She is not owned by a corporate
her pull is not a hand
or a bank balance,
Dow Jones means nothing to her.

Hers is
a going towards
and a return,
a hiss and a roar
a spit and polish
a shaving of pua backs
to produce a showing.

She can dance
she can
can wave her hips and laugh
knowingly,
what a woman
moves as she
must.

Yes
I knew her
A small beacon in the world.

To me she was a bonfire
a torch setting itself alight
on a beach
in a limited season.

Roma Potiki
Shaking the Tree (1998)
Steele Roberts, Wellington, NZ

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VENUE DIRECTORY

MASSEY UNIVERSITY WELLINGTON CAMPUS
Wallace Street, Mt Cook, Wellington

Foyer, Executive Seminar Suite	Registration Desk
Executive Seminar Suite	All sessions
Foyer, Executive Seminar Suite	Catering
Break-out Room 1	Exhibition Room

Disclaimer: The Organising Committee accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the abstracts contained in this Programme. This responsibility remains with the author(s).

WELCOME

Ngā mihi mahana ki a koutou

On behalf of the conference organising committee, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the first Aotearoa New Zealand Fat Studies conference! I am thrilled to be hosting this conference in our corner of the world, and excited by the opportunities it brings. I hope that our two days together provides further groundwork in developing a collaborative interdisciplinary framework for Fat Studies research which draws on the distinctive culture-centred approach unique to Aotearoa New Zealand. Many thanks to the organising committee, the Massey Wellington Events staff, and the many others whom helped make all of this possible. Special thanks to Annemarie Jutel and Deborah Russell for providing support as sound boards, and the Women@Massey Friday mentoring circle for tending to my taha hinengaro.

Cat Pausé PhD

Chair, Conference Organising Committee

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

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USEFUL INFORMATION

The information below is provided to make your attendance at the conference as pleasant and trouble-free as possible.

Banks: There is a National Bank ATM machine situated outside Building A at Massey's main entrance.

Café: Massey University, Wellington has a café located on campus on the ground floor of the Student Services Building. It offers hot beverages and snacks and will be open Thursday and Friday 8am-5pm.

Car Parking: User pay parking is available in the carpark next to the main entrance on Wallace Street. If parking on the street for more than 2 hours a parking coupon is required. These can be purchased from most dairies including Jala's Store, across the road from Massey at 28 Wallace Street. Coupons for the day cost NZ \$7.50.

Catering during the Conference: Arrival tea and coffee on the first morning; morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea both days are included in your registration fee.

Cell phones: Please ensure that your cell phone is either switched off throughout the conference proceedings or set to silent mode.

Doctor(s): Wellington Accident and Urgent Medical Centre is located at 17 Adelaide Road, Newtown. Their hours are 8am – 11pm every day, no appointment needed.

Emergency (in the unlikely event of): The emergency number for police, fire service or ambulance in New Zealand is 111. Massey campus security can be contacted on phone 0800MASS 50 or 0800 627 750.

Please make yourself aware of the positions of all the Emergency Exits and Evacuation Procedures which are on display at all exit points. In the unlikely event of an emergency, please exit through your nearest marked EXIT door.

First Aid: A First Aid Kit and Defibrillator are available at the RFM Desk on the first floor of Block 5 or alternatively by contacting Massey campus security on phone 0800MASS 50 or 0800 627 750.

Name Badge: For security reasons and easy identification, we request that delegates wear their conference name badge at all times during the conference and social events.

Pharmacist(s): The closest pharmacy to Massey University's Wellington campus is the After Hours Pharmacy, 17 Adelaide Road, Newtown. It is open Monday – Friday 9am-11pm; Saturday – Sunday 8am-11pm.

Shuttle Services: Super Shuttle 0800 SHUTTLE (0800 748885): 0800 748 885

Taxis:

Green Cabs Limited 0508 447 336

Wellington Combined Taxis Ltd 04 384 4444

Toilets: Male and Female toilets are located in the Executive Seminar Suite

Twitter: @FatStudiesNZ12, #FatStudiesNZ2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Thursday 12 July 2012 | Session One – Panel
9:15am – 10.30am

Fat bodies politic: Neoliberalism, biopower, and the 'obesity epidemic'

Jackie Wykes

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This paper will argue that the discursive construction of the 'obesity epidemic' mobilises neoliberal concepts of risk and responsibility to produce fat people as failed subjects across various sites of power, including capitalist production, profitability, and reproductive (hetero)sexuality. Fat subjects are produced as irresponsible and therefore as unworthy, and this is used to justify the (threatened or actual) denial of health care, transport, education, employment, representation, and dignity. My analysis will draw on Foucault's concept of biopower and the management of life to argue that that discourse of health, particularly the language of crisis and war around the 'obesity epidemic', produces fat subjects as 'enemies of the state' and links them to physical and social degeneration.

I argue that rather than posing a real threat to the economic future of society, 'the obesity epidemic' is deployed as a proxy for anxieties over class, race, and disability, particularly through the 'wrong' sorts of consumption. This argument will be supported through a close examination of Australian anti-obesity policy along with exemplary mainstream news articles which portray 'the obese' as parasitic and undeserving of rights, self-determination, or health care.

Jackie Wykes is a PhD Candidate in the School of Culture and Communications at the University of Melbourne, where she also teaches in cultural studies. Her thesis looks at fat embodiment and sexual subjectivity through a queer and materialist lens. Her academic work has been published in Somatechnics (2012), and she is co-editor of the forthcoming anthology Queer(y)ing Fat Embodiment, and the creative collection Fat Mook (Vignette Press 2013). She is involved in a range of fat activist projects, including the Melbourne chapter of Aquaporko fat femme synchronised swim team, Chub Republic, and Va Va Boombah fat burlesque.

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Thursday 12 July 2012 | Session One – Panel
9:15am – 10.30am

James (Jamie) Burford is a doctoral student at Auckland University in the Faculty of Education. James' doctoral studies are focussed on que(e)rying the emotions of doctoral writing - with a particular emphasis on inquiring into the political and/or critical potentials of 'ugly feelings'. James has investments in queer and trans communities/activisms, and has worked as an educator, community development practitioner and youthworker.

Que(e)rying fat pride

Jamie Burford

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This is a paper in two parts. I begin by engaging autoethnographic and lyric inquiry to reflect on my experiences at the intersections of gay, genderqueer/trans* and fat politics in Aotearoa-New Zealand. I pay particular attention to my experience of fat shame and pride in the sexuality and gender diverse communities I participate in. I speak to my experience of finding gender diverse communities (especially trans and genderqueer communities with a grounding in feminisms) to be more aware of body size politics than the GLB communities I am also a part of. In the second part of this paper I flesh out these reflections by drawing upon recent queer/trans and fat studies scholarship on the political possibilities offered by anti-social politics and negative affects. Despite finding genderqueer/trans* communities to be more accommodating of diverse body shapes I am interested in the risks posed by the neat conversion of fat shame into expectations of fat pride. I explore what is lost in these conversions, and what can be learned from radical queer activism that eschew politics of pride and celebration in favour of shame and depression. I argue that a politics of shame could be an alternative to pride movements, which are too often captured by corporate, conservative, and assimilationist agendas. I conclude the paper by identifying possible actions that could mobilise a critical politics of shame in queer-trans*-fat communities.

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Thursday 12 July 2012 | Session One – Panel
9:15am – 10.30am

Grace Millar is a historian and a political activist. At age 7 she organised a successful protest for ice cream, with her brother, sister, and friend. She is currently working on her PhD, which examines Families and the 1951 waterfront dispute. She writes less academically on political matters on her blog: Capitalism Bad: Tree Pretty, which she started in 2005. She also writes for the Hand Mirror, a New Zealand group feminist blog, and Alas, a blog.

We must despise the bodies of poor people to save them: Fat hatred and the Left in the time of 'the obesity epidemic'

Grace Millar

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The political left is no stranger to fat hatred; the image of the fat cat, or fat capitalist has had a long tradition in left-wing propaganda, and is still sometimes used today. However, apart from propaganda purposes today's imagery and demography of fat is no longer tied to wealth, but instead to poverty. Despite this many on the left have continued to use fat-hatred, both in an anachronistic way and in a new way that endorses Mainstream Media and government's attacks on poor people's bodies. This paper will explore the fat-hatred of Fight the Obesity Epidemic, The Guardian and Jamie Oliver, that hates fat bodies, for their own good and its acceptance on the political left. It will place the left's acceptance of this ideology in a longer history of middle-class hatred of working-class bodies. Finally it'll argue that the 'obesity epidemic' is an ideology of neo-liberalism, and demonstrate its corrosive effects on the parts of the left that accept it.

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Thursday 12 July 2012 | Session Two – Paper
11:00am – 12.00pm

Queer(y)ing body size: Opening up space for difference

Robyn Longhurst, PhD

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Over the past decade queer theorists have ‘unfixed’ sex and gender. In a similar manner, I aim to ‘unfix’ body size and shape. As people age, become ill, pregnant, menopausal, change diets and jobs, slim, bulk up, work out, and undergo surgery, their bodies change in size and shape. Social scientists have paid a great deal of attention to issues of sexuality, sex, gender, class, race and ethnicity, but there has been relative silence around body size and shape. This project builds on research conducted in fat studies, critical weight studies and geographies of obesity. It is argued that although focusing on fatness is important, it is also vital to think about a range of other bodies sizes and shapes and about how bodies continually change in size and shape over the life-course.

Recognizing changes in body size and shape can potentially help open up discursive and material space for making acceptable a diverse range of perpetually shifting bodily forms not just slim bodies. This research draws on the work of queer theorists especially work on performativity, the closet, shame and pride, and queer phenomenology in order to expose the fluid and spatially contingent nature of sized subjectivities. Although queer studies has mainly been used as a platform from which to critique heteronormativity and fixed sexual identities it can also be usefully applied to a broader range of normative knowledges. In the same way that it can ‘unfix’ the conflation of men/masculinity and women/femininity, it can also ‘unfix’ large/unhealthy and slim/healthy.

Robyn Longhurst is Professor of Geography at University of Waikato. She is Editor-in-Chief of Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography and Chair of the International Geographical Union Commission on Gender and Geography. She teaches feminist, social, and cultural geography. Robyn has published on issues relating to pregnancy, sexuality, mothering, ‘visceral geographies’, masculinities, and body size and shape. She is author of Bodies: Exploring Fluid Boundaries (2001), Maternities: Gender, Bodies and Spaces (2008) and co-author of Pleasure Zones: Bodies, Cities, Spaces (2001) and Space, Place, and Sex: Geographies of Sexualities (2010).

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Thursday 12 July 2012 | Session Three – Panel
1:10pm – 2:10pm

The gendering of ‘obesity panic’: A prospective intersectional research investigation

Christy Parker, PhD Candidate & Senior Policy Analyst
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Reflecting global trends, ‘obesity’ has been framed as a ‘national health crisis’ in Aotearoa New Zealand with both health policy and practice increasingly oriented towards the ‘problem’ of weight management. This is despite dissent about the conceptualisation of obesity as a medical problem, and the feasibility or desirability of weight loss approaches. Within this context there has recently been a proliferation of biomedical research and media attention concerned with the effect of pregnant women’s body weight and nutrition on perinatal outcomes and the health of their future children. ‘Maternal obesity’, as it has been termed, is now linked with a range of suboptimal childbirth outcomes as well as being conceptualised as the harbinger of obesity in the future adult through the effects of ‘foetal programming’.

This paper provides a rationale and context for my PhD research on the rise of ‘maternal obesity’ and ‘foetal programming’ as significant new public health issues. I consider the implications of the relocation of the ‘fight against fat’ to the pregnant body and the gendering of both the causes of, and responsibility to address, the so called ‘obesity epidemic’. I locate this topic at the intersections of feminism and fat studies and affirm the importance of critical intersectional responses to help ensure that the practices and bodies of knowledge that are intended to support health have intended and equitable outcomes.

Christy Parker is the Senior Policy Analyst at Women’s Health Action Trust and a PhD candidate in Sociology at the University of Auckland. Christy is interested in the politics of women’s health; gender, queer and intersectional perspectives on health and embodiment; and health equity. Her current research is examining the gendering of ‘obesity panic’ through the construction of ‘maternal obesity’ as a significant new medical and social ‘problem’. The gendered production of neo-liberal subjectivities, and the implications for reproductive politics and social justice in health are of central interest.

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Thursday 12 July 2012 | Session Three – Panel
1:10pm – 2:10pm

Shapes of motherhood: Exploring embodied experiences of 'fatness' in pregnancy through photographs

Meredith Nash, PhD

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Drawing on qualitative data, this paper draws upon 'feminist' 'memory work' and the 'photovoice' method as frames for discussing the ways in which visual images may be used to trace and understand body image and feelings of 'fatness' in the first and second trimesters of pregnancy. This paper argues that digital photographs taken by women during the early stages of pregnancy can reveal important information about how they experience and perceive 'fatness' in contrast to cultural and biomedical images of pregnancy. In other words, a key aim of this paper is to identify whether photographs, objects that often support dominant cultural ideologies about pregnant bodies and body size, can also be used to resist these ideologies and how we may read this resistance. Here, the concept of 'fatness' itself is questioned as women's individual embodied experiences of pregnancy are reflected in the production and viewing of their own photographic images.

Meredith Nash, PhD is a Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Tasmania. Her research engages with feminist sociology of the body and how it contributes to understandings of women's reproductive health. Her book, Making 'Postmodern' Mothers: Pregnant Embodiment, Baby Bumps and Body Image will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2012.

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Patti Watkins received her doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology from Virginia Tech and is currently an Associate Professor in the School of Psychological Science at Oregon State University. Patti has developed and teaches the courses, Women, Weight, and Body Image as well as Fat Studies, both cross-listed between Psychology and Women Studies. Her research has involved promotion of physical activity for fat women from a HAES perspective, examination of interpersonal weight bias and its consequences, and pedagogical approaches to teaching about women, weight, and body image.

Thursday 12 July 2012 | Session Four - Panel
2:20pm – 3:20pm

Teaching Fat Studies: Intersections with Behavioral and Health Sciences

Patti Watkins, PhD
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The field of Fat Studies has grown tremendously in recent years, with colleges now offering courses in this area. A recent review identified four courses taught at university level, three within Humanities-oriented departments and one within a School of Psychological Science where 90% of enrollees majored in Psychology or fields within the College of Public Health and Human Sciences. This presentation will highlight the unique challenges of teaching Fat Studies to students whose majors provide a strong grounding in weight-based models of health and for whom weight bias is quite entrenched. Additionally, it will introduce qualitative data collected in a Women, Weight, and Body Image class which integrated Fat Studies principles, with most students majoring in behavioral or health sciences.

Students' responses to course material illustrate acceptance of Fat Studies concepts. These include viewing weightism as a social justice issue intersecting with other forms of oppression ("It is a bit discouraging to see that discrimination and hatred is not only against those with a different skin color, but the way their bodies are shaped as well. Young children need to be taught about differences in people, giving them a foundation of acceptance, aiding them in realizing that there are many kinds of people, many different colors, many different shapes, many different functions, dialects, abilities, talents.") and adopting Health At Every Size as an alternative to weight-based frameworks ("I agree that weight charts are completely inaccurate. There was a period in my life when I was majorly restricting food. According to my doctor and the charts, I was at a healthy weight, but I had stopped menstruating and had no strength. Healthy weight for everyone is completely different."). The presentation will conclude with a discussion of course content and pedagogical practices that might facilitate teaching Fat Studies to various student populations.

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Thursday 12 July 2012 | Session Four - Panel
2:20pm – 3:20pm

Occupying space: Making room for fatness in Art and Design Studies

Leah Sweet

Parsons School for Design, New School University
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This paper focuses on the concept of occupying space to explore productive crossovers between fat studies and the study of art and design. Firstly, it presents the example of the traditional art museum as a seemingly permissive space, both institutionally and within the popular imagination, that extols fat nudes despite Western society's increasing intolerance for fatness in walking, talking, individuals. The cultural conditions and assumptions that shield these art historical bodies against the pathologization of fatness within mass culture and make them favorites for appropriation in contemporary fashion, film, and advertising will be briefly evaluated.

Secondly, this paper will explore how the disenfranchisement of fat people via non-inclusive spaces (physical and social) can be addressed in part by making room for fat studies in design education. As makers of material/visual culture, designers influence how and if political issues enter popular consciousness; their potential editorial power extends beyond academia to the public sphere. Based on my experience teaching art/design theory to first-year design students at Parsons, I will propose a general curriculum for design students of all specializations that emphasizes ambitious, nontraditional design forms/support systems/contexts and ultimately results in increased understanding for fat bodies, visibility, and rights.

Leah G. Sweet teaches in the Department of Art and Design History and Theory at Parsons School of Design, New School University. She received her PhD in Art History from New York University, and first engaged with Fat Studies in 2010 by organizing a panel discussion entitled "Fat Politics and Sexuality in the Face of Hate," which featured public figures in fat rights, activism, and visual representation. Her research interests include crossovers between American and European performance art in the 1960s, and the reception of the "high art" studio nude in popular culture.

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Thursday 12 July 2012 | Session Five - Keynote
3:30pm – 5pm

Fat lived ambiguities: Fat political selves and weight loss surgery

Samantha Murray, PhD
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This might be a story about a bad fatty. Or, perhaps it is a story about a good fatty gone bad. Or a bad fatty made good, depending on your perspective and socio-cultural investments.

In this paper, I wish to foreground a critical narrative of fat being-in-the-world and engage/theorise my multiple and seemingly contradictory fat subjectivities: as a Fat Studies scholar, as one engaged in an ongoing fat activist project, as a feminist who remains (and identifies as) fat, and as a woman who has undergone weight loss surgery. Drawing on critical autoethnographic methodologies, I will explore my lived fat subjectivity as multiple, contextually contingent and fundamentally ambiguous. With the help of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, I present a critical (and embodied) narrative about the disconnection(s) experienced between fatness as it is imagined/perceived and as it is lived: in short, a story about the irrevocable tensions that underpin my fat being-in-the-world.

Samantha Murray is a Lecturer in Critical & Cultural Studies in the Department of Media, Music, Communication & Cultural Studies at Macquarie University. She is the author of 'The 'Fat' Female Body' (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), and the forthcoming 'Fat Panic and Disciplined Embodiment: 'Health' and Bodily Aesthetics in the Management of Obesity' (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). She is also co-editor (with Nikki Sullivan) of 'Somatechnics: Queering the Technologisation of Bodies' (Ashgate: 2009), chief co-editor of the new journal 'Somatechnics' (published with Edinburgh University Press), and has published several articles and chapters on embodiment and the discursive constructions of normalcy and pathology.

PROGRAMME Thursday 12 – Friday 13 July 2012

All presentations will be held in the Executive Seminar Suite

Thursday 12 July 2012

8:30 – 9:00am	Registration and Coffee
9:00 – 9:15am	Welcome and Mihi
9:15 – 10:30am	Panel Jackie Wykes <i>Fat bodies politic: Neoliberalism, biopower, and the 'obesity epidemic'</i> Jamie Burford <i>Querying fat pride</i> Grace Millar <i>We must despise the bodies of poor people to save them: Fat hatred and the Left in the time of 'The obesity epidemic'</i>
10:30 – 11:00am	Morning Tea
11:00 – 12:00pm	Paper Robyn Longhurst <i>Queer(y)ing body size: Opening up space for difference</i>
12:00 – 12:30pm	Film 'The Fat Body (In)visible'
12:30 – 1:10pm	Lunch
1:10 – 2:10pm	Panel Christy Parker <i>The gendering of 'obesity panic': A prospective intersectional research investigation</i> Meredith Nash <i>Shapes of motherhood: Exploring embodied experiences of 'fatness' in pregnancy through photographs</i>
2:20 – 3:20pm	Panel Patti Watkins <i>Teaching Fat Studies: Intersections with Behavioural and Health Sciences</i> Leah Sweet <i>Occupying space: Making room for fatness in Art and Design Studies</i>
3:30 – 5:00pm	Keynote Samantha Murray <i>Fat Lived Ambiguities: Fat Political Selves and Weight Loss Surgery</i>

SOCIAL PROGRAMME

Event: Welcome Function
Venue: Old Museum Building, Wellington
Time: 1830 – 2030
Dress: Smart Casual

PROGRAMME Thursday 12 – Friday 13 July 2012

All presentations will be held in the Executive Seminar Suite

Friday 13 July 2012

9:30 – 11:00am	Panel Jenny Lee <i>Embodying stereotypes: Memoir, fat and health</i> Andrew Dickson <i>Multiple Intersections: Autoethnography, Fat Studies and Endurance Running: “The case of the fat athlete”</i> Kath Read <i>Save the whales: An examination of the relationship between academics/ professionals and fat activists</i>
11:00 – 11:30am	Morning Tea
11:30am – 12:30pm	Panel Darren Powell <i>“If you don’t do exercise you get really fat”: Children’s lessons in fitness and fatness</i> Julz Darroch <i>It’s about ME: Fat acceptance, health culture and preteen girls development</i>
12:30 – 1:30pm	Lunch
1:30 – 2:30pm	Paper Annemarie Jutel <i>The role of diagnosis in marginalising corpulence</i>
2:30 – 3:15pm	Film ‘Weightless’
3:15pm – 3:30pm	Afternoon Tea
3:30 – 4:45pm	Paper Cat Pausé <i>You got your intersectionality in my fatness; you got your fatness in my intersectionality...</i>
All Day	Poster Ria Pugmire <i>Children’s talk about health, bodies and physical activity: Exploring notions of fitness and fatness</i>
4:45 – 5:00pm	Closing

SOCIAL PROGRAMME

There is a table booked in the Wellington CBD for dinner on Friday evening open to all attendees and family or friends. Please indicate your interest before noon on Friday.

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Friday 13 July 2012 | Session Six - Panel
9:30am – 11:00am

Jennifer Lee is a lecturer in Creative Writing and Literary Studies at Victoria University, Australia. She also gives an annual Fat Studies lecture in the Gender Studies programme. She is currently co-editing a creative anthology, Fat Mook, for Vignette Press. In addition to her academic publications, she writes and publishes memoir, fiction and narrative non-fiction in anthologies and literary journals, and has an article about fat prejudice in the current issue of Overland.

Embodying stereotypes: Memoir, fat and health

Jenny Lee, PhD
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In Fat Studies, it is rightly argued that fat doesn't 'equal' lazy, ungroomed and unhealthy. But what does it mean when you are fat, diabetic, depressed and haven't shaved your legs in weeks? While my current health conditions do not necessarily stem from being fat, they make 'coming out as fat' more difficult in some situations, especially when you embody the medical profession's stereotyped ideas of what it means to be 'obese' – being 35 years old with Type 2 diabetes.

In this paper I question whether breaking down fat assumptions is the best way to argue for an end to fat prejudice. Is there a better way to argue our position so that fat activists who have or had conditions such as: binge eating disorder, mental illness, diabetes, heart conditions, knee joint issues or high blood pressure can openly admit to these conditions without shame and fear that the argument against fat prejudice is valid and believed by people outside Fat Studies and fat activism only if the person making the argument is free from the medical conditions commonly associated with being fat? This will be discussed in the context of my position as a fat activist, creative writer and media commentator, and fat person with health conditions. This paper focuses on the intersection of Fat Studies, fat activism, Health at Every Size and creative writing.

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Friday 13 July 2012 | Session Six - Panel
9:30am – 11:00am

Andrew Dickson is a Lecturer in the School of Management at Massey University in Palmerston North. His PhD thesis 'The Other Side of Weight Loss' used psychoanalysis to pick at the seams of the wider weight loss industry. Andrew's research interests continue to revolve around the use of psychoanalysis to critically consider the concept of weight and fitness and the use of autoethnography as method.

Multiple Intersections: Autoethnography, Fat Studies and endurance running: “The case of the fat athlete”

Andrew Dickson, PhD
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Is it fair to say that most endurance runners don't 'get' fat people? Obviously they do if the fat person appears to be trying to lose weight (because if successful they can become real, proper endurance runners). They also do if they can construct the fat person as 'well built', 'large framed', or the like (it's not your fault). But what if the fat person just wants to run? I am an autoethnographer, so here is a story:

...the race director read out the first three places for the open men and women and the masters' men and women and then wrapped up proceedings. But just as everyone was leaving he jumps up and says loudly "hang on, hang on – I forgot one. Where's my mate? There he is – down the back, Andrew!" and proceeded to award me the prize for the first Clydesdale. I walk up to the front where the 'real' runners are to collect my prize but I'm conflicted – the bloke who won ran the race in just over 3 hours, I took more than an hour longer to haul my fat self over the course – what right do I have to collect a prize?

This paper attempts to uncomfortably knit Fat Studies with Sport Studies using the methodological glue that is autoethnography. Using psychoanalysis and the age-old concept of the hysteric I theorise how a fat person such as me can work to unsettle the construction of 'an athlete' and indeed the entire framework that is 'athleticism'.

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Friday 13 July 2012 | Session Six - Panel
9:30am – 11:00am

Kath Read is from Brisbane, Australia and is an IT librarian by day and at night she puts on her glittery spandex and becomes a rad fat feminist activist. She is finding that she is sneaking more spandex and glitter into her day job as well as she gets older. She had an epiphany at age 35 that saw her realising that if she did not give up trying to be thin, she would be giving up her life, both figuratively and literally. She is not an academic, and she has Type 2 diabetes, two facts she is frequently shamed for, but she refuses to carry that shame.

Save the whales: An examination of the relationship between academics/professionals and fat activists

Kath Read
Fat Heffalump
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This essay presentation will be an examination of the relationship between academics and other professionals in the fields related to weight and health, and fat activists, with particular focus on power and privilege.

With the growing professional and media attention on weight stigma, Health at Every Size principles and fat activism, collaborations between academics and other professionals in fields related to weight/health, and grass roots fat activists are becoming more common. For fat activists, these topics are deeply personal and emotionally charged. Careful consideration is required from those in academia or professional fields who are either not fat or who are in positions of power, on the impact of their actions on the fat activists they collaborate with, and on fat people in general.

The essay aims to highlight the very personal nature of fat studies work and the deep impact that it is likely to have on fat people, particularly those who work in collaboration with academia and professionals on highly public projects.

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Friday 13 July 2012 | Session Seven - Panel
11:30am – 12:30pm

“If you don't do exercise you get really fat”: Children’s lessons in fitness and fatness

Darren Powell

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Current concerns about an alleged childhood obesity crisis and children’s physical (in)activity levels have led to a proliferation of programmes and practices designed to make children fitter, healthier, more active and less fat. Even though a myriad of fitness lessons are commonly taught in New Zealand primary schools, seldom are these lessons (or the teachers that conduct them) cognisant of the ways children understand their own and others’ corporeality.

In this session I draw on key results from research I carried out with six primary school children, examining how these children experienced fitness lessons and constructed notions of fitness, fatness, self and the body. The children’s responses illustrated that fitness lessons were perceived as a means to get ‘non-fat’. Furthermore, the children monitored, judged and moralised their own and others’ bodies and behaviours. I concluded that children’s subjectivities were potentially shaped via fitness lessons in a manner that can result in social stigmatisation, dissatisfaction with bodies, and an impoverished relationship with physical activity.

To conclude, we will reflect on the children’s understanding of fatness to engage in a collaborative discussion about what kind of children are being (re)produced in schools, and how Fat Studies can contribute to children’s lessons in fitness *and* fatness.

Darren Powell was a primary school teacher for twelve years. Working with children in New Zealand, England and Scotland, Darren became concerned about the dissatisfaction many of his students had with their own (and others’) bodies, and began to question the role of primary schools in maintaining or creating a ‘cult of slenderness’. This led to his Master’s research looking at how children understand the fitness lessons they are made to participate in. Darren is a professional development facilitator for Physical Education New Zealand (PENZ) and has presented at numerous national conferences on obesity, body image and fitness lessons in primary schools. He is currently studying towards his doctorate at Charles Stuart University in Australia, examining anti-obesity programmes and educational resources being ‘gifted’ to primary schools by corporations.

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Friday 13 July 2012 | Session Seven - Panel
11:30am – 12:30pm

Julz Darroch is a Wellington based Fitness Educator specialising in health and fitness of all sizes and ages. She has extensive experience in fitness education and has contributed the field through a variety of roles and forums over a twenty year period. In 2011, with government funding cuts to girl's self-defence courses, Julz designed and launched "Its About Me" a self-esteem and anti bullying project for girls. To date this project has proved successful and being well utilised in various communities and schools around Wellington.

It's About ME: Fat acceptance, health culture and preteen girls development

Julz Darroch
Fitness Educator
julz@julzdarroch.co.nz

This presentation/workshop will contribute to the intersectional discourses between fat acceptance, health culture and adolescent development.

Fitness educators, teachers and social workers need to implement effective programs for pre adolescents and teenagers in which girls' body image resilience and size diversity is promoted.

Body image dissatisfaction is a pervasive problem that frequently takes hold in adolescent girls. While the healthy eating/healthy behaviours initiatives that are promoted in schools can have a positive impact on physical health they can further harm self esteem and body image and create or increase fat phobia.

The educational project presented identifies the factors that contribute to girls' abilities to resist social pressures regarding thinness and promotes self-esteem through size/ fat acceptance. It includes specific prevention and self-esteem building strategies that educators can use to promote positive body image and size acceptance in adolescent girls.

This presentation discusses the research and development of 'Its About Me' a model that seeks to educate girls, parents and teachers on some of these issues. These outcomes are achieved through schools/ community programmes web based resources and social media.

Development of this model included consultation and bi-cultural practice with local Kaupapa Maori groups.

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Friday 13 July 2012 | Session Eight - Paper
1:30pm – 2:30pm

The Role of Diagnosis in Marginalising Corpulence

Annemarie Jutel, PhD

Victoria University of Wellington

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Medical diagnosis plays an important social role: enabling access to resources, legitimizing patient complaints and defining public health priorities. The sociology of diagnosis explores how diagnoses are socially framed and assigned, and the consequences of the disease label to the individual and to public health. In this presentation, using overweight as a heuristic, I will describe the social model of diagnosis and how it assists us to understand contemporary attitudes to health, illness and disease. At the same time I will explain how the ascendance of diagnosis and the paradigm of evidence based practice have forced the emergence of overweight as a disease category.

Annemarie Jutel used to be a skinny runner who wondered why everyone thought her flat abs were seen as a sign of good personhood. She undertook a PhD at Otago in Physical Education seeking to understand why women (in particular) associated slenderness with virtue, and corpulence with vice. That work led to her consider the emergence of overweight as a disease, and to explore further how diagnostic labels are both framed, and function, socially. She has published widely on the sociology of diagnosis. Her book, "Putting a Name to It: Diagnosis in Contemporary Society" was published in 2011 by Johns Hopkins University Press.

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Friday 13 July 2012 | Final Session - Paper
1:30pm – 2:30pm

Cat Pausé is a Human Development Lecturer and Fat Studies researcher at Massey University. Her research focuses on issues of fat identity construction, maintenance, and revision. Her current projects include an autoethnographic exploration of coming out as fat and collecting data on fat attitudes in students enrolled in initial teacher education. Cat serves on the Editorial Board for 'Fat Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Body Weight and Society' and is a co-editor of the upcoming text, 'Queer(y)ing Fat Embodiment'. Cat also maintains a presence in the Fatosphere with her blog, Tumblr, and podcast, 'Friend of Marilyn'.

**You got your intersectionality in my fatness;
You got your fatness in my intersectionality...**

Cat Pausé, PhD
Massey University
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From Kimberelé Crenshaw's first theoretical use to Flavia Dzodan's more recent declaration – the issue of intersectionality is acknowledged within feminist circles as an important tenant of scholarship, pedagogy, and activism. While many scholars embrace intersectionality, the tensions it causes are very real. Intersectionality often almost seems at odds with scientific exploration. How do we study a population – while acknowledging the intersectionality and individual differences that exist within said population? We must learn from the lessons of the past and recognize that ignoring differences within a group only leads to tension among the group. And we must work to avoid intersectional invisibility – but how? How may we as academics, activists, and artists embrace intersectionality – and learn from our failures to do so? In this session, I will explore intersectionality within Fat Studies and fat activism, and consider ways we move forward.

ABSTRACTS IN PROGRAMME ORDER

Thursday 12 July - Friday 13 July 2012 | Poster
All day

Children's talk about health, bodies and physical activity: Exploring notions of fitness and fatness

Ria Pugmire
Massey University
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Fears of an 'obesity epidemic' have led to a growing focus on children's weight and activities. Children are seen as 'at risk of' or currently suffering from fatness, largely attributed in popular discourse to overeating, 'bad' diets and increasingly sedentary lifestyles. Echoing work overseas, this has led to various initiatives in New Zealand (e.g. Mission-On, APPLE, Project Energize and SPARC's Active Schools Toolkit). In such initiatives, children, and those responsible for them, are targeted both directly and indirectly, at both school and home, with messages about 'getting fit' and 'eating right' with implicit or explicit undertones of weight-loss. The aim of this research project is to step back from obesity interventions and consider their social and political context and effects. In order to understand how obesity discourse affects our young people, and whether our attempts to 'help' in the 'fight against obesity' are good for children's health and wellbeing, this project explored how young children in New Zealand construct bodies, health, gender, fitness and fatness in their talk. By investigating how children make sense of these notions and what meanings they draw on in their talk, the research aims to contribute to our understandings of obesity discourse and its effects.

Following ethical approval, eight six and seven year old children took part in individual semi-structured interviews which involved play and craft activities to focus discussion. The talk was transcribed verbatim, and preliminary discursive analyses have been undertaken to explore how children talked about their and others' bodies and activities in terms of: the roles of body image (size and shape) versus function (sport, exercise, play); discourses of health, morality and pleasure; gendered relationships with health, fitness and fatness; and how children evaluate, integrate or resist information from different sources (such as parents, peers, school and TV). As discourses are identified, they will be considered in terms of their broader effects on children's identities, behaviours and their relationships with their own and others' bodies.

*Ko Tararua tōku maunga
Ko Kahuterawa tōku awa
Ko Pākehā tōku iwi
Ko Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri me Te
Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa tōku
marae
Ko Pugmire rāua ko Burns tōku
whānau
Ko Ria tōku ingoa.*

*The Tararuas are my
mountains, the Kahuterawa is
my river, I am a non-Māori New
Zealander, the Society of
Friends/Quakers and Massey
University are my (spiritual
and academic) meeting places,
Pugmire and Burns are my
families, Ria is my name.*

*Ria Pugmire is a postgraduate
student at Massey University,
currently completing her
Master of Arts in Psychology,
with A/Prof Antonia Lyons as
her supervisor. Fat studies, and
its intersections with gender,
identity, health imperatives,
and education have become
both a personal and
professional interest for her
through this study.*

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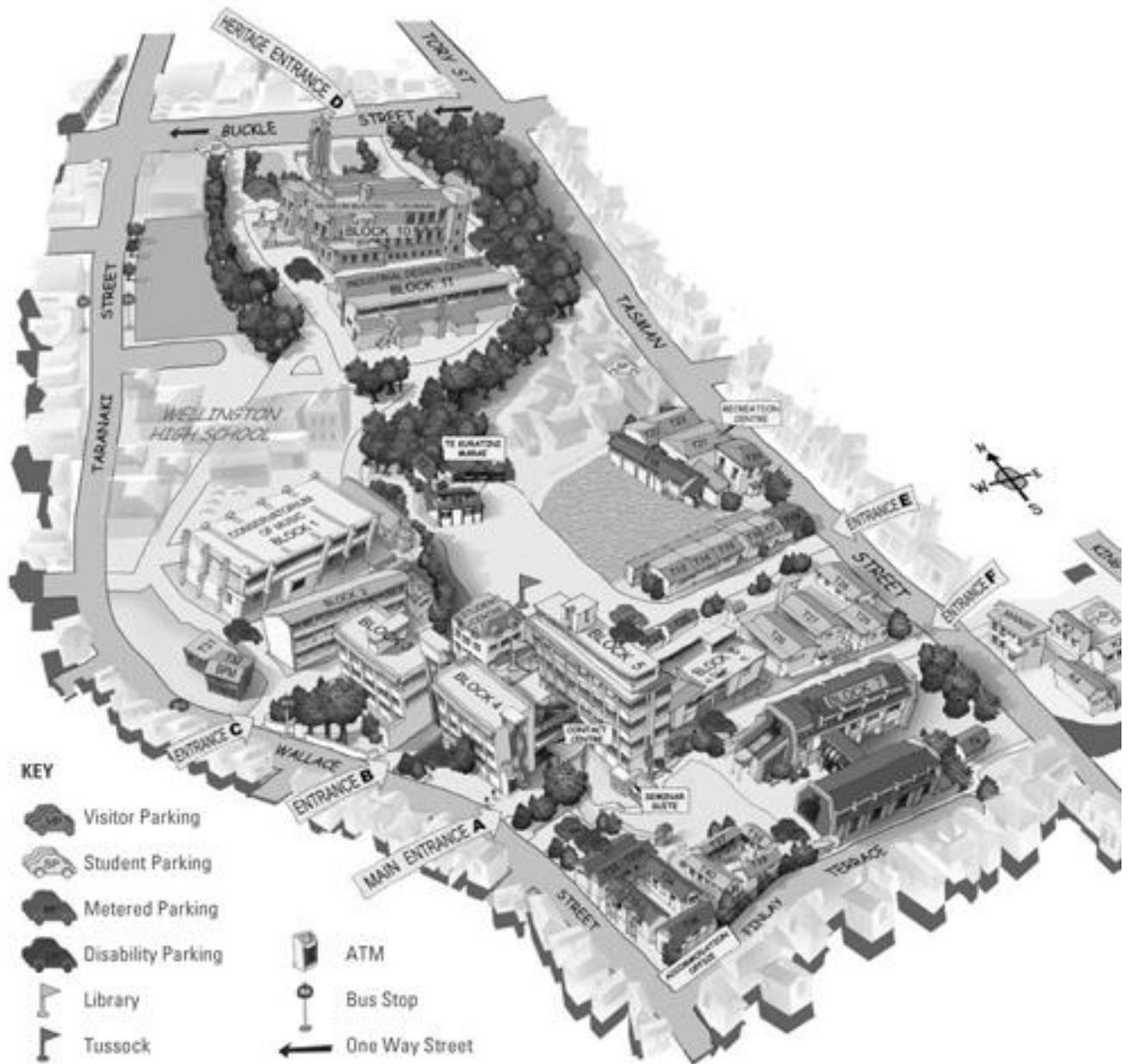
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Fat Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Body Weight and Society is the first academic journal in the field of scholarship that critically examines theory, research, practices, and programs related to body weight and appearance. Content includes original research and overviews exploring the intersection of gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, age, ability, and socioeconomic status.

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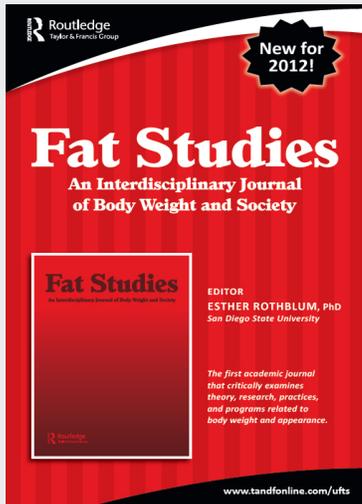
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