

‘Exposing Bodies: Surveillance and Embodiment’

An interdisciplinary symposium run by *The Surveillance and Everyday Life Research Group*

<http://surveillanceandeveryday.com/>



A Special Call for Papers

Friday July 8th, 2011

**Faculty Common Room,
New Law Building Level 4, Eastern Avenue, University of Sydney**

Symposium Overview

'...no one has hitherto laid down the limits to the powers of the body, that is, no one has as yet been taught by experience what the body can accomplish...'

(Spinoza, 1675/2006: 59)

'The body is not primarily an organism or an organization. It is an immanent assemblage of kinetic particles and anonymous forces, motion and energy that constitute every body: a bacterial body, a eukaryotic body, a multicellular body, a cultural body, the body of machines, etc. ... A body is primarily defined by associations and splittings...'

(Parisi, 2004: 29)

The University of Sydney's *Surveillance and Everyday Life Research Group* invites abstracts for an exploratory symposium examining the everyday voluntary/involuntary exposure of the body as facilitated by organisationally situated surveillance technologies and citizenry devices.

Whether in artistic or scientific domains, the human and non-human body has been historically subject to myriad complex processes aimed at its identification, organization, (re)presentation and classification. An ontology of the body as a reliable organism for measurement and as a social text that can be visualized, identified, mapped, read, profiled, categorized, influenced and coerced in a variety of ways, has been central to such definitional enactments. A traditional assumption deriving from the professionalization and politicization of health, for example, is that 'objective' bodily knowledge derived from the senses can strategically be used to understand and treat illness/bodily dysfunctionality, to harness subjectivity in particular ways, and to direct behavioural practices and conduct (e.g. interactional norms, mobility, sexual reproduction and consumption). Perhaps this imaginary is best illustrated in the relationship between biomedical science and body parts, functions and processes, and between government and citizen. The body's objectification within an array of biopolitical regimes has been greatly facilitated by a variety of established and emergent 'envisioning' technologies with surveillant capacities, including fingerprinting devices, radiographic x-rays, facial and voice recognition software, DNA databases, biobanks, body scanners, video and camera transmission equipment, webcams etc. Many of these bodily capturing 'probes' and recording devices function to convert bodily complexity, materiality and motion into discrete forms of textual data, which can then be read, decoded, interpreted and analysed both by individuals and by expert officials in a multitude of interesting ways.

In contrast to expert imaginings that project a stable, universal body into the heart of the liberal, human subject, the bodies that are processed and (re)mediated by what have been termed 'surveillant assemblages' are perhaps closer to the open, indeterminate, unknown forms that Spinoza had long ago described, or the mutating, dis/associating bodies depicted more recently by Parisi. In important ways, contemporary surveillant assemblages constitute anew the chaotic bodies they encounter and process. Situated amidst the multiplicity of these interactions, yet cognizant of the sea of embodiment that escapes, or is even utterly indifferent to, surveillant capture, this symposium takes up Spinoza's invitation to imagine what the body can accomplish.

Key questions and issues for critical reflection include: how are bodies conceived through and transformed by surveillance technologies? What functions, within surveillant assemblages, do bodies perform? Which bodies escape, or are excluded from, the embrace of surveillance, and why? How is surveillance mediated through embodiment? How and why are embodied-subjects complicit in their surveillance? How do they resist or negotiate surveillance? How is bodily mobility regulated? How are surveillance techniques used to mobilize the body's performative potential? By addressing such questions, this symposium will establish a framework for mapping the socio-cultural and politico-economic affinities linking surveillance and bodies.

Symposium Themes

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| ⇒ <i>Bodily Identification, Profiling & Biometrics</i> | ⇒ <i>Disease Monitoring and Non-Human Bodies</i> |
| ⇒ <i>Biomechanics & Comportment Analytics (including recognition softwares, algorithms etc.)</i> | ⇒ <i>Bodies in Sport & Mass Mediated Sporting Mega-Events</i> |
| ⇒ <i>Normal/Abnormal Bodies & Classificatory Politics</i> | ⇒ <i>Bodily Regulation & Discipline</i> |
| ⇒ <i>Biotechnology & Bioengineering</i> | ⇒ <i>Body Images & Mediation</i> |
| ⇒ <i>Biopower & Objectivation</i> | ⇒ <i>Distributed Bodies & Bodily Flows</i> |
| ⇒ <i>Bodily Exhibitionism & Performativity</i> | ⇒ <i>Bodily Im/mobility</i> |
| ⇒ <i>Cyborgs, Robotics & Alternative Bodies</i> | ⇒ <i>Biocapital, Biobanking & Bioeconomy</i> |
| | ⇒ <i>Disappearing Bodies & Re-emergent Codes</i> |

Symposium Keynotes

PROFESSOR CATHERINE WALDBY, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, The University of Sydney: *'Biobanking in Singapore: Post-developmental state, experimental population'*

Catherine Waldby is Professorial Research Fellow in the Department of Sociology and Social Policy, Sydney University, and Visiting Professor at the Centre for Biomedicine and Society, King's College London. She researches and publishes in social studies of biomedicine and the life sciences. Her books include *AIDS and the Body Politic: Biomedicine and Sexual Difference* (1996 Routledge), *The Visible Human Project: Informatic Bodies and Posthuman Medicine* (2000 Routledge), *Tissue Economies: Blood, Organs and Cell Lines in Late Capitalism* (with Robert Mitchell, Duke University Press 2006) and *The Global Politics of Human Embryonic Stem Cell Science: Regenerative Medicine in Transition*, (with Herbert Gottweis and Brian Salter, Palgrave 2009). She is the director of the Biopolitics of Science research network and a member of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia. She has received national and international research grants for her work on embryonic stem cells, blood donation and biobanking.

DR CHARLOTTE EPSTEIN, Department of Government and International Relations, The University of Sydney: *'The Big Other Is Watching You: Surveillance, Sovereignty, Subjectivities'*

Charlotte Epstein is a Kenyan-born French International Relations (IR) scholar centrally interested in the role of discursive power in shaping international politics. Key related publications include *The Power of Words in International Relations* (MIT Press, runner up to the 2009 ISA Sprout Award), 'Who Speaks? Discourse, the Subject and the Study of Identity in International Politics' *European Journal of International Relations* (2011). She brings these concerns to bear on the ways in which surveillance technologies are reshaping everyday practices of the international, such as the crossing of borders. She has explored such questions in her 'Guilty Bodies, Productive Bodies, Destructive Bodies: Crossing the Biometric Borders', *International Political Sociology* (2007) and 'Embodying Risk: Using Biometrics to Protect the Borders' in *Risk and the War on Terror*, ed. Louise Amoore and Marieke de Goede (2008). Charlotte read International Relations at the University of Cambridge (PhD and Mphil) after reading Philosophy (Mphil and BA) and Literature (BA) at the Universités de Paris I-Sorbonne I and Paris III-Censier.

Participant Instructions

Please send a 200 word abstract by **Wednesday June 15th** to both:

Dr Gavin Smith – gavin.smith@sydney.edu.au

Dr Martin French – martin.french@sydney.edu.au

Paper givers will be allocated a 20minute presentational slot.

Registration includes both tea/coffee breaks and lunch.

Registration Payment Categories:*

Fully waged/academic	AUD \$100.00
Concession (student, casual, pensioner)	AUD \$25.00
Symposium dinner	AUD \$50.00

* Please note that for administrative purposes payments for this event must be made by a valid credit card.