

Stephen Tomsen and Michael Salter

(UWS and UNSW)

Felony Fights: Masculinity, Spectacle and Suffering

Date

Thursday July 21, 2011

Time

2pm - 4:30pm

Venue

Building EB, level 2,
room 21 (EB.2.21)
Parramatta Campus
([view map](#))

Convenor

Greg Noble
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Over the last twenty years, the sensual attractions of what Katz (1988) influentially called the 'pleasures of evil', have been commodified and repackaged in a new media environment. With the development of technologies such as pay-per-view television and the internet, this trend has come to include depictions of violence between men that exceed the formal and informal regulation associated with combat sports. Sadistic and voyeuristic interests that were previously sublimated in cultural life are now more openly nurtured in these representations. *Felony Fights* is an American website and set of DVDs depicting real combat between male former convicts and other men. This presentation will consider the ways in which this male violence and criminality are represented and observed and explores how this may or may not intersect with a prevailing culture of punitiveness. Viewer responses to these clips reflect a complexity of meanings, projections and symbolic associations between violence, power and masculine identities.

Stephen Tomsen is a Professor of Sociology and Criminology at the University of Western Sydney. He is a School based member of the Centre for Cultural Research who has conducted decades of research on the links between masculinity and violence. This reflects his ongoing interest in theoretical debates about violence, gender, subjectivity and the politics of victimhood, and in the interpretation and contestation of cultural representations of crime, sex and transgression. Stephen's latest book is *Violence, Prejudice and Sexuality* (2010, Routledge).

Michael Salter is a lecturer in criminology at the University of Western Sydney. His research focuses on cultures of masculinity and violence against children and women. His forthcoming book *Organised child sexual abuse* (2012, Glasshouse/Routledge) is based on the life histories of twenty-one adults sexually abused as children by groups and networks of perpetrators. He is a Research Associate at the Centre for Gender Related Violence Studies at the University of New South Wales where he works on a range of projects in relation to domestic violence and sexual assault. He is interested in the relationship between cultural representations and social practice in the reproduction of gendered inequity.

Greg Noble

(CCR, UWS)

The Torment of the Migrant: Acquiring an 'ethnic habitus'

Popular accounts highlight the sensuous dimensions of migration – the tastes, sights, smells and sounds of difference, and the experience of being different, that mark the movement from a known setting to the unfamiliar one in which the migrant has to make themselves 'at home'. This paper will draw on the notion of the habitus to analyse the embodied transformation of the migrant into an inhabitant of the country of settlement. Bourdieu used the idea of the habitus to comprehend the system of dispositions we possess – but focused primarily on the ways social relations and history are internalised and experienced as 'second nature'. Bourdieu focuses on the 'ontological complicity' of the habitus with the 'field', the social game, in which it is enacted. But what if the habitus doesn't fit? Bourdieu notes the possibility of discordance – when discussing bachelor peasants and displaced Algerian workers, but doesn't elaborate upon the 'transubstantiation' of the habitus. Drawing on Lebanese migrants' experiences of resettlement, this paper will argue that these transformations entail the inhabiting of a peculiar condition of embodied ambivalence. I will characterise this as the 'ethnic habitus', because it repositions the migrant as a subordinated member of the field of national belonging according to multiple logics of differentiation.

Greg Noble is Associate Professor at the Centre for Cultural Research, University of Western Sydney. His research focuses on youth, gender and ethnicity, multiculturalism, education and embodiment. His co-authored books include *Kebabs, Kids, Cops and Crime* (2000), *Bin Laden in the Suburbs* (2004), *Lines in the Sand* (2009) and *On Being Lebanese in Australia: Identity, Racism and the Ethnic Field* (2010). Greg is also one of the editors of the journal *Continuum*.



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