

## Amanda Third

(CCR & School of Humanities and Languages, UWS)

### Decapitating Woman: Ulrike Meinhof's Brain, Containment and the Embodiment of Unreason

'It's a question of submitting feminine disorder, its laughter, its inability to take the drumbeats seriously, to the threat of decapitation. If man operates under the threat of castration, if masculinity is culturally ordered by the castration complex, it might be said that the backlash, the return, on women of this castration anxiety is its displacement as decapitation, execution, or woman, as loss of her head'.  
- Hélène Cixous and Annette Kuhn

Following her death in custody in Stammheim Prison in May 1976, unbeknownst to her family, the brain of German journalist-turned-RoteArmee Faction terrorist, Ulrike Meinhof, was removed and preserved for future neuroscientific study. In 2002, it came to light that a scientist based at the University of Magdeburg had conducted an extensive analysis of Meinhof's brain in order to ascertain whether brain surgery she had undergone in 1962 might have contributed to her 'slide into terror'. This paper reads the story of Meinhof's brain in order to think through the links between imprisonment, female terrorism, and the containment of women in Western culture. I argue that the removal of Meinhof's brain marks an attempt on behalf of the German state to contain not only the threat of this female terrorist beyond her death but also the ever-present threat of excessive (political/criminal) femininity more generally.

**Amanda Third** is Senior Lecturer in the School of Humanities and Languages and the Centre for Cultural Research at the University of Western Sydney. She has recently completed a manuscript on popular cultural representations of female terrorists, which discusses how second wave feminism was 'cross-wired' with terrorism within the United States popular imagination in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Amanda also has a research interest in the socio-cultural dimensions of young people's technology use and has participated in several large externally funded collaborative research projects with organizations using technology to support young people. She is currently the Chief Investigator on an ARC Industry Linkage project entitled '*Young People, Technology and Wellbeing Research Facility* that examines cross-sector knowledge brokering practices. She was a founding member of the Technology and Wellbeing Roundtable (founded 2008), has served on the WA Advisory Committee of the Inspire Foundation, and sits on the Board of Management of the Marrickville Youth Resource Centre. Amanda is currently President of the Cultural Studies Association of Australasia and Research Program Co-Leader in the Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing, which has received federal government funding for 2011-2015 to investigate the potential for young people's technology use to support their mental health and wellbeing.

## Penny Rossiter

(School of Humanities and Languages, UWS)

### Bogans: The Sticky Affective Politics of Class.

In *The Bogan Delusion* David Nichols claims that 'the word [bogan] has so many definitions it's meaningless'; yet, his work demonstrates the painfully meaningful way that the term circulates, catches, and adheres to bodies, things and places. Definitions of bogans - who they are, where they live, what they like - are contradictory, often wacky, and usually denigratory, but they are not meaningless. 'Proud bogans' attest to this too.

This paper draws on the work of Sara Ahmed on affective stickiness to explore the meaningful but conflicted complexity that the term bogan signifies. The analysis is indebted to recent work in the UK on the affective politics of class (e.g. Skeggs; Lawler; Reay; Tyler) but it also marks a shift in the field of inquiry through consideration of the abrasive potential of comedic interventions such as *Bogan Pride* and *Housos*. *Bogan Pride* screened on SBS in 2008. *Housos* is the subject of ongoing controversy concerning its representation of Housing Commission tenants (including a petition tabled in the NSW State parliament on behalf of residents of Mt Druitt) so it may or may not go to air on SBS in the near future.

**Penny Rossiter** is a Lecturer in cultural studies, gender studies and politics in the School of Humanities and Languages at the University of Western Sydney. Her current research interests include questions of response-ability, embodiment, and the production of communities through the entangled relationships of the human with the more-than-human.



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#### Date

Thursday August 18, 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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