



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

# FITS AND MISFITS: RETHINKING DISABILITY, DEBILITY, AND THE WORLD WITH MERLEAU-PONTY

46th Annual Meeting of *The International Merleau-Ponty Circle*  
Nov. 10-12, 2022, Georgetown University; Directed by Joel Michael Reynolds  
[Registration information here](#)

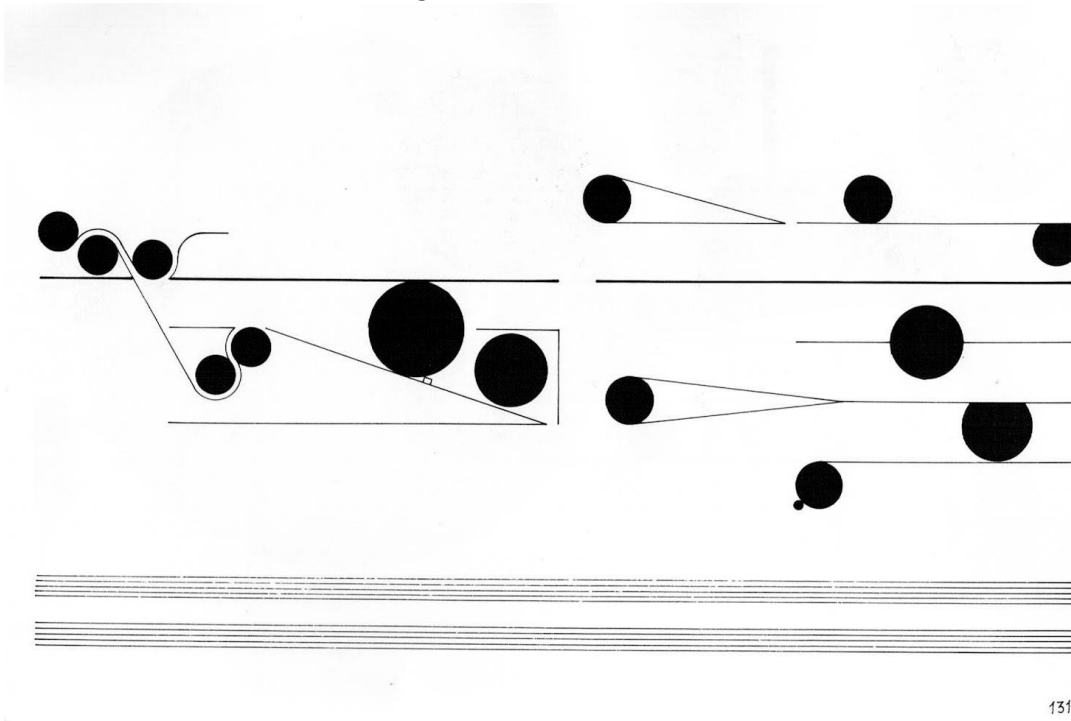


Image: Cornelius Cardew, *Treatise*

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## Keynote Speaker:

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Emory University  
*The Romance of Miss Fitz and Norm Mates*

## Invited Lectures:

Alia Al-Saji, McGill University

*A Debilitating Colonial Duration: Merleau-Ponty and Fanon from Amputation and Colonial Prosthesis to a Politics of Refusal*

Helen Fielding, Western University

*Movement and Perceptual Thinking: Challenging the Standard of Right Perception*

David Morris, Concordia University

*Bewildering and Decolonizing Time: Melting the Clock as Hypernorm of the I Can (and Philosophy)*



## Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup>

\*All sessions will be held in the Rock Creek Ballroom at the Glover Park Hotel.

\*\*N95, KN95, KF94, or CAN99 (or equivalent) masks are mandatory during all indoor events.

\*\*\*Virtual copies of presentations will be available to all conference participants. The link will be given out at the event.

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| 8:00-9:00 AM   | Registration: In front of the ballroom  |
| 9:00-9:15 AM   | Opening remarks: Joel Michael Reynolds (he/they), Georgetown University, Conference Director  |
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| Session 1: Vulnerability & Disability <span style="float: right;">Moderator: TBD</span>        |   |
| 9:15-10:00 AM  | Laura McMahon (she/her), Eastern Michigan University, "The Virtue of Vulnerability: Merleau-Ponty and Minuchin on the Boundaries of Personal Identity" [P]                                |
| 10:00-10:45 AM   | Jonathan Paul Mitchell (he/him), University College Dublin, "Disability, Debility, and Vulnerability" [V]   |
| 10:45-11:15 AM   | Coffee break  |
| <hr/>  |   |
| Session 2: Aging & Disability <span style="float: right;">Moderator: TBD</span>                |   |
| 11:15-12:00 PM   | Glen Mazis (he/him), Penn State Harrisburg, "The Almost Universal Other: Elderly Body/Selves" [P]   |
| 12:00 PM - 12:45 PM  | Ann Murphy (she/her), University of New Mexico, "Kindred Spirits: A Liminal Phenomenology of Dementia" [P]  |
| 12:45-2:30 PM  | LUNCH BREAK   |
| <hr/>  |   |
| Session 3: New Directions in M-P Scholarship <span style="float: right;">Moderator: TBD</span> |   |
| 2:30-3:15 PM   | Bella Rose Kelly (she/they), Marquette University, "Concealing: A Trans Phenomenology of Disability" [P]  |
| 3:15-4:00 PM   | Emily Douglas (they/she), Vanier College and Athabasca University, "The Flesh in Illness and Disability: Juxtaposing Merleau-Ponty and Spillers" [P]                                      |
| 4:00-4:15 PM   | Coffee break  |
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| Session 4: Orientation and Interpretation <span style="float: right;">Moderator: TBD</span>    |   |
| 4:15-5:00 PM   | Arsalan Memon (he/him), Lewis University, "The 'Disabled Person' vs. the 'Good Swimmer': Merleau-Ponty Interpreting Scheler Interpreting Kant Saving a 'Drowning Man'" [P]                |
| 5:00-5:45 PM   | Corrine Lajoie (she/they), Penn State University, "The Senses of Access: Fits, Misfits, and (Dis)orientations" [P]  |
| 5:45-6:00 PM   | Coffee Break  |
| 6:00-7:00 PM   | Invited Talk: Alia Al-Saji (she/her), McGill University, "A Debilitating Colonial Duration: Merleau-Ponty and Fanon from Amputation and Colonial Prosthesis to a Politics of Refusal" [V] |



## FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>

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\*All sessions are in Rock Creek Ballroom

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9:00-9:30 AM Registration: In front of the ballroom

Session 1: Suffering, Ethics, and Communication Moderator: Talia Welsh, UT Chattanooga

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9:30-10:15 AM Hannah Venable (she/her), University of Mary, "Reimagining the Relationship between Suffering and Disability with Merleau-Ponty and Kierkegaard" [P]

10:15-11:00 AM Susan Bredlau (she/her), University of Maine, "Conversational Accessibility: Healthcare, Community, and the Ethics of Everyday Encounters" [P]

11:00-11:15 AM Coffee Break

Session 2: Ableism, Capabilities, and Vulnerability Moderator: TBD

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11:15AM-12:00 PM Randall Johnson (he/him), Psychiatry-Private Practice, "Unlearning Ableism, Fiercely" [P]

12:00-12:45 PM Jackson Reese Faust (he/him), Howard University, "Vulnerability as the Fragility of Worlds, Debility as their Silencing: Merleau-Ponty's Challenge to Capabilities Approaches to Disability" [P]

12:45-2:30 PM LUNCH BREAK

\*\*A mentoring lunch will be arranged for attending Graduate Students (Location TBD)

Session 3: *M.C. Dillon Memorial Lecture Award Winner*

Introduction: Gail Weiss, George Washington U

Moderator: Corrine Lajoie, Penn State

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2:30-3:15 PM Gaia Ferrari (she/her), Duquesne University, "Entangled Embodiments: Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy of Disability" [P]

3:15-3:30 PM Coffee Break

Session 4: Art, Aesthetics, & Merleau-Ponty Moderator: TBD

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3:30-4:15 PM Madeleine Levac (she/her), University of California, Berkeley, "Sane Sensing: Art and Affective Disorder in Merleau-Ponty" [P]

4:15-5:00 PM Rebecca Longtin (she/her), SUNY New Paltz, "Merleau-Ponty, Cezanne as Misfit Artist" [P]

5:00-6:00 PM *Reception* (all registered participants are invited to enjoy!)

Session 5: **Keynote Lecture** Moderator: Joel Michael Reynolds, Georgetown University

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6:00-7:30 PM Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (she/her), Emory University, "The Romance of Miss Fitz and Norm Mates," [Live ASL Interpretation will be provided for the keynote address] [P]



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## SATURDAY NOVEMBER 12<sup>th</sup>

\*All sessions are in the Rock Creek Ballroom

\*\*N95, KN95, KF94, or CAN99 (or equivalent) masks are mandatory during all conference events occurring indoors

10:00 – 10:30 AM Registration (self-serve)

Session 1: “Pathologies” and Merleau-Ponty Moderator: Tim Isley, Psychiatry, Private Practice

10:30-11:15 AM James Wheeler (he/him), Stony Brook University, “On Perceptual Variation Sensory Overload, Merleau-Ponty, and the Constancy Hypothesis” [P]

11:15-12:00 AM James Rakoczi (he/him), Durham University, “Illness Life Writing as Anti-Philosophy: Towards a Corresponsive Grounds of Neurobiology and Lived Experience” [V/P]

12:00-2:00 PM Business Lunch

(Registration Required; Vegetarian and Vegan options available; Although optional, we encourage all conference participants to attend the Business Lunch. Information about future conferences and elections for a new General Secretary and Associate General Secretary will take place. Note: *All graduate students on the program are invited to the Business Lunch free of charge.*)

Session 2: Embodiment and Temporality Moderator: TBD

2:00-2:45 PM Christine Wieseler (she/her), Cal Poly Pomona “Performativity, Phenomenology, and Theorizing Embodied Subjectivity” [V]

2:45-3:30 PM Rachel Elliott (she/her), University of Exeter, “Sharing Time with Misfits: Disability and Synchronization” [V]

3:30-4:00 PM Coffee Break

Session 5: Invited Addresses Moderator: Gail Weiss, George Washington U.

4:00-5:00 PM Helen Fielding (she/her), Western University, “Movement and Perceptual Thinking: Challenging the Standard of Right Perception” [P]

5:00-6:00 PM David Morris (he/him), Concordia University: “Bewildering and Decolonizing Time: Melting the Clock as Hypernorm of the I Can (and Philosophy)” [P]

6:00-7:00 PM Cash Bar (Held in the Glover Park Restaurant)

7:00-9:30 PM Conference Banquet (Held in Glover Park Restaurant; Registration Required; Vegetarian and Vegan options available)

*All graduate students on the program are invited to the Conference Banquet free of charge.*

### SPONSORSHIPS:

*The 46<sup>th</sup> meeting of the IMPC is sponsored by Georgetown University, including the departments of Art and Art History, American Studies, French and Francophone Studies, Psychology, Global and Comparative Literature, History, the Medical Humanities Initiative, the Humanities Initiative, and the Program on Peace and Justice—and with especially generous support from the Graduate School, the College, the Department of Philosophy, the Disability Studies Program, and the Kennedy Institute of Ethics. **NB:** This event would have been impossible without the astonishing admin support and skills of Carina Olsson and Ellie Yaeger in the phil dept. A million thanks to them!!*



## Accessibility<sup>1</sup>

The IMPC is committed to the principles of universal design. It is our explicit goal to make our conferences (a) as accessible and welcoming as possible from the ground up and (b) to operate with an understanding that accessibility requires flexibility and ongoing communication with one's particular community in a given context. Increasing accessibility benefits everyone. Presenters, moderators, and participants all play an important role in facilitating the proceedings of the conference. In the general spirit of the conference, we aim to address any potential issues through "calling in," not "calling out."

Prepare to be flexible. Access needs are shifting and fluid, and it may be that even your very well-prepared accessible presentation will need to be shift depending on who attends your presentation.

Please avoid wearing scents. They are triggering for headaches and various kinds of environmental illness.

Speak at a reasonable pace. Always use the microphone. Be responsive to your audience. Where appropriate, re-voice questions from the audience. Describe any images or videos displayed or utilized in print media. Note that people read much faster than they typically talk, which is hard for everyone to follow, so please consider the length of your paper in relationship not simply to word count, but speaking pace.

Consider, if appropriate trigger/content warnings: a trauma trigger is an experience that causes someone to recall a previous traumatic memory, although the trigger itself need not be frightening or traumatic and can be indirectly reminiscent an earlier traumatic incident. Be mindful of whether your contributions to the conference (whether as presenter, questioner, or what have you) might contain triggering content and provide warning of such content.

## Location

The conference will be held at **Glover Park Hotel: 2505 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington, DC 20007**. In addition to being a *wheelchair accessible* venue, it is near a number of main roads that connect you to Georgetown's campus and all the major areas in DC (Adams Morgan, National Zoo, Shaw, U Street, Georgetown Waterfront, Southwest Waterfront, etc.). Wisconsin Ave conveniently features a number of eating options very short distances from the hotel. It's also just 15 minutes (walking) south of the Washington National Cathedral and 15-20 minutes (by car) north of Capital Hill.

## Lodging

Accommodation in DC is very expensive, especially in the fall. ***Please plan to book The Glover Park Hotel***, with whom we negotiated a highly competitive rate. To get the block rate, reservations **must be made by October 10<sup>th</sup>**.

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<sup>1</sup> These guidelines been modified from the *PhiloSOPHIA* guidelines and *SPEP's* ADI guidelines, with special inspiration from Amy Vidali, the MLA, <http://composingaccess.net/>, and other conference organizations, participants, and committees who have demonstrated leadership on this front.



### **Weather**

Winter weather (northeast style) sometimes befalls DC early in November—plan your attire accordingly.

### **Air Travel**

Three airports service Washington, DC: Reagan (DCA), Dulles (IAD) and Baltimore (BWI). DCA is the closest, IAD is farther, and BWI is a significant distance, though depending upon your flight options, it *could* end up being economical to fly into BWI despite the transport costs down to DC. Please research carefully.

To reach the conference location from any of these airports, I would highly recommend utilizing a taxi, Uber, or Lyft. While it is possible to utilize public transportation, neither the conference hotel (nor anywhere near Georgetown's campus, believe it or not) is on a metro stop (it's absurd). A combination of train and bus is possible, of course, but you should carefully plan such a trip if you choose that method.

### **Train Travel**

Washington Union Station is just 21 minutes by car (with no traffic) from Glover Park Hotel. The most efficient way other than car is to take the red line metro to the Dupont Circle station and then jump on the N6 or D2 bus lines. Busing (no metro) from Union station involves taking the 33 and then the D6 and will likely take you 40-45 minutes. Non-car options will drop you at Benton St NW & Observatory Pl NW, which will then require 7-9 minutes of walking to the Glover Park Hotel.

### **Car Travel**

We are researching parking options around the hotel. This will be updated at a later date.

### **Food Options**

This will be provided in the registration materials.

### **Hybrid**

To allow greater participation and accessibility, this conference is hybrid. Talks that are in-person are marked [P] and talks that are virtual are marked [V] above.



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*Original Conference CFP & Theme Description*

**Fits and Misfits:  
Rethinking Disability, Debility, and the World with Merleau-Ponty**

**46<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the International Merleau-Ponty Circle**

Much of Merleau-Ponty's thought centers around the idea that we find ourselves not separate from the world, nor even "in" it, but fully intertwined with it—caught up in a web of relations and forces that shape experience through and through. Certain relations and forces shape us in ways that are definitive for our sense of "fitting" or "misfitting," a framework I invoke from Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's seminal article, "Misfits: A Feminist Materialist Disability Concept" (Hypatia, 2011). Fits and misfits, in Garland-Thomson's sense, are everywhere, once you know how to look for them: spatial, placial, architectural, equipmental, technological, economic, social, cultural, the cosmos, and so on.

Scholars across disability studies have found Merleau-Ponty's oeuvre to be a source of inspiration—as well as critique—for thinking about disability in terms of fits and misfits as well as in conversation with other disability frameworks. We invite scholars from a diverse range of disciplines to explore the relationship between Merleau-Ponty's thought and issues relating to disability (broadly construed), debility (to invoke Jasbir Puar's work in *Right to Maim*), and the world. We welcome scholars of critical disability studies (understanding that term to pick out a very large interdisciplinary field spanning the humanities and social sciences), philosophy of disability, feminist phenomenology, Indigenous philosophy, de-/post-colonial theory, critical philosophy of race, as well as researchers in neuroscience, cultural and literary studies, and French and Francophone studies, among other fields and disciplines, to submit papers on this theme.

The conference is directed by Joel Michael Reynolds. Plenary and keynote addresses will be announced shortly. Submissions of no more than 3,500 words should be prepared for anonymous review and sent to Joel Michael Reynolds ([joel.reynolds@georgetown.edu](mailto:joel.reynolds@georgetown.edu)) with the subject heading "IMPC Submission" by July 1st, 2021. The annual conference features the M. C. Dillon prize and lecture for the best graduate student paper submission. To be considered for the M.C. Dillon prize, please indicate so on the cover letter of your submission.

To host the conference at a physical location, a certain percentage of talks will need to be presented in person (barring another public health or other such shut down). Please clearly indicate on the cover letter of your submission whether upon acceptance, you would attend the conference in person or virtually. If you plan to attend virtually because doing so physically presents insurmountable accessibility issues (of whatever sort, including economic ones), you are welcome (but not required) to include that information. You are also welcome to include there any anticipated accessibility needs, which will greatly assist in planning.