

# Who's Afraid of Disability?

Thursday, 04.02.2016, 19:30 - 21:30

**Organisators:**

Jacqueline Kool & Sofie Sergeant - Disability Studies in Nederland  
Jules Sturm – Netherlands Institute for Cultural Analysis & UvA  
Ymke Kelders & Sofia Apostolidou – Netherlands Institute for Cultural Analysis

**Guests:**

Odile Seitz, Sven Walser, Lisa Pfahl, Marie-Jose Calkhoven, Kenny Fries



## Quotes:

1. Shildrick, Margrit. "The Disabled Body, Genealogy and Undecidability", in *Cultural Studies*, 19:6, 2005, p. 755-770.

Margrit Shildrick suggests that disabled bodies, in manifesting insecurity, create a deep anxiety to normativity. And not because of how unfamiliar they are to normativity, but because "in signifying disease, trauma and decay, the anomalous body is an uncomfortable reminder that the normative, 'healthy', body, despite its appearance of successful self-determination, is highly vulnerable to disruption and breakdown." (757)

2. Sobchack, Vivian. "The Prosthetic Impulse: From a Posthuman Present to a Biocultural Future", London: The MIT Press, 2006.

"Like the turns and effects of language in use, my experience – and view – of my leg (and of the rest of my body) is not only *dynamic* and *situated* but also *ambiguous* and *graded*. Whether and to what degree I live (and describe) my prosthetic [...] is dependent on the nature of my engagements with others (how do they see it, avoid it, or talk about it abstractly, or can I keep pace with them?), with my environment (when I'm in unfamiliar territory, the question is always "How far can I walk on it?"), with my mood (how physically attractive or frumpy do I feel overall, and what part of myself will I single out for praise or blame?), and my project (how do I write about "my leg" or "it" within the context of cultural studies?)." (27)



3. Samuels, Jean Ellen, "My Body, My Closet: Invisible Disability and the Limits of Coming-Out Discourse" (2003)

"Coming out, then, for disabled people, is a process of redefinition of one's personal identity through rejecting the tyranny of the *normate*, positive recognition of impairment and embracing disability as a valid social identity. Having come out, the disabled person no longer regards disability as a reason for self-disgust, or as something to be denied or hidden, but rather as an imposed oppressive social category to be challenged and broken down. . . . Coming out, in our analysis, involves a political commitment. Acceptance of a medical model of disability and being categorized by others as disabled does not constitute coming out as disabled." — Swain and Cameron, "Unless Otherwise Stated" 76; Garland-Thompson, *Extraordinary Bodies*, 13.

When we look at narratives of disabled people about their own coming-out processes, we see that the language of coming out is used liberally but often carries very different meanings. While many of these stories emphasize connections with a disability community, much as Swain and Cameron suggest, they also demonstrate the various methods and implications that coming out entails for different individuals. (238)

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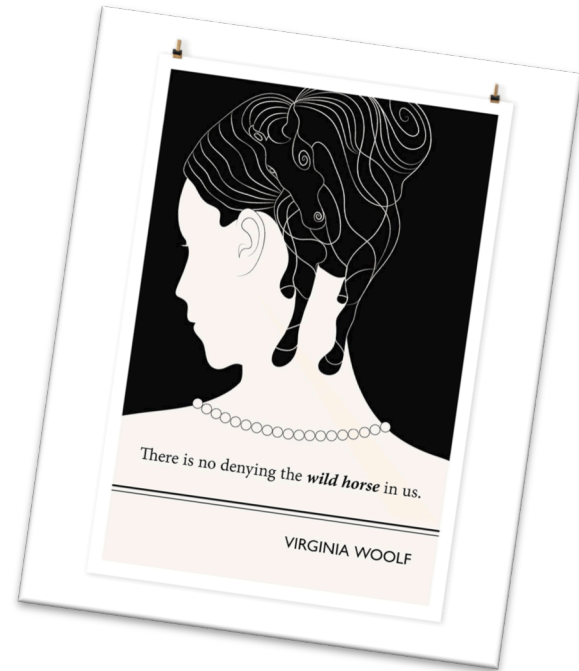
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