

**The Australian Sociological Association
CRITICAL DISABILITY STUDIES THEMATIC GROUP**

NEWS

Welcome back everyone.

We are now at the end of first semester and most of us are gearing up for another semester of teaching, supervision and of course, where we can fit it in, research!

The first six months of this year have been extremely hectic. There have been multiple government announcements with regard to changes in university-based research funding. Most of you are probably aware that in early June, the Minister Kim Carr, announced that the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) will be abandoned. While we are all awaiting news on the proposed new 'measurement system', many of you are no doubt, pleased that the ERA system has now been discarded. Many of us felt directly the pressure to publish in A / A* ranked journals despite their questionable relevance to our areas of research. For new and emerging fields, such as our own, this imposed additional challenges, especially given that there were only two journals that received an A ranking despite the quality of other well established scholarly journals within the field.

There have also been substantial changes made to Australian Research Council's Discovery Grants. A new research category was created, *Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA)*. An estimated 200 places are to be offered in 2012. Even though the ARC Discovery Research Grant process is highly competitive, the direct allocation of funding for a large number of ECRs could provide a number of opportunities for our research area. As an emerging area of research, with a growing number of recent graduates, the DECRA's may create opportunities for employment for disability studies PhD graduates, at a time when university employment is becoming increasingly casualised and precarious.

Our other good news is of course our growing membership base. Welcome to all of you who only joined this year and thank you to those of you who have stayed with us over the years. We hope that the information updates and the newsletters are both informative and useful. We also hope to continue to create an atmosphere of collaboration and collegiality, where members feel enabled to network across the group to establish new research partnerships.

Finally, this will be our last six months of convening. Russell Shuttleworth has agreed to take over from December 2011, however, would like a co-convenor to share the role with. We discuss what's involved in greater detail below and also include Russell's email address.

Thanks again for your enduring commitment to CDS. We look forward to working with you to get the final newsletter out come October 2011.

Karen Soldatic and Helen Meekosha

TASA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2011
Newcastle University
29 November – 1 December

Planning for the Australian Sociological Association's Annual Conference 2011 is well underway. As Convenors of CDS we have been working alongside the Conference Organising Committee to ensure that the venues are accessible and that disability access and inclusion is considered as part of the overall conference design and program.

This year's conference theme, Local Lives/Global Networks, resonates strongly with the work of our members, particularly those of us who have been involved with the global disability rights movement, advocating for surpranational policy change, such as the recent United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The call for refereed papers closes soon on July 22nd. The closing date for non-refereed papers is Monday, 29 August 2011.

We are aware that many people have already submitted papers. Those of you who are still considering presenting or attending the conference, we would like to encourage you to join us. TASA conferences provide a rich environment for sociologists, cultural theorists and a range of inter-disciplinary scholars to meet and form partnerships, with the hope of working together across disciplinary boundaries. Adding new theoretical and empirical insights from the CDS arena, is a vital mix to informing the future development of sociological thought and inquiry.

Registration is now open. You can register by clicking on the following link:
<https://events.con-sol.com/ei/getdemo.ei?id=337&s=06G0NXSUM>

Accommodation, Travel, Accessibility

We have been reassured that this year's conference has adopted the newly ratified TASA *Disability Access, Inclusion and Participation* policy. Thus, disability access, inclusion and participation have been taken into account from the conference's initial inception and design and in turn, there should be few issues unlike previous years. If you have any queries regarding accommodation, accessibility, travel to/from the venue etc, please contact the conference convenors by clicking on the following links: [Dr Steven Threadgold](#) and [Dr Emma Kirby](#).

Accommodation: Five hotels have been identified as having good disability accessibility. These hotels have been allocated within the TASA Conference program and therefore, delegates are encouraged to contact them directly to ascertain their personal suitability. The following link will provide you with the full information and contact details: <http://www.tasa.org.au/tasa-conference/2011-tasa-conference/accommodation/>

Getting around Newcastle: A full mobility access map is provided on the at following link: http://www.tasa.org.au/uploads/2011/01/East_Mobility_09.pdf

CDS NEW CONVENORS: 2012 - 2013

Yes, our time is up! From December 2011, Helen and I will no longer be the conveners of the CDS Group. While we have both thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to 'embed' Critical Disability Studies within Australia's leading sociological association, it is also time for us to move over to bring in new ideas to take the group to its next stage of development.

Russell Shuttleworth, Senior Lecture, School of Health and Social Development, Deakin University, has agreed to take over from December this year. Russell has an outstanding international profile within the field of Critical Disability Studies and there is no doubt that the CDS group will benefit greatly from his rich scholarship and extensive international and local networks. Russell would like to share this role and is seeking expressions of interest. If you would like to co-convene the group alongside Russell from 2012 – 2013, please contact Russell directly on:

r.shuttleworth@deakin.edu.au

RESEARCH PROFILES:

Dr Anthony Hogan

Director

National Institute for Rural and Regional Australia

The Australian National University

Dr Anthony Hogan a Fellow in the School of Sociology at The Australian National University, the Director of the University's National Institute for Rural & Regional Australia, Convenor of the Australian Sociological Association's thematic group on applied sociology and member of TASAs disability research interest group. Anthony holds qualifications in sociology, welfare work, epidemiology and rehabilitation counselling and is accredited as a Qualified Practising Market Researcher (QPMR) by the Australian Market and Social Research Society. He is Adjunct Associate Professor with the Centre for Research Action in Public Health at the University of Canberra. Anthony is President of the ACT Deafness Resource Centre, a community based organisation providing services and support to people with acquired hearing loss. Anthony identifies as a person with hereditary auditory processing problems and experiences many of the day-to-day communication problems common to people with acquired hearing loss e.g. very significant troubles communicating hearing in noisy settings.

Anthony commenced his academic career later in life following a successful career providing community-based social services for people who are deaf and hearing impaired. Anthony's master's thesis evaluated the feasibility of providing Australian hearing services within a community-based model. Anthony undertook his PhD at Macquarie University and examined the interface of social processes and identity on the situation where people lose all their hearing. Mike Oliver was one of Anthony's PhD examiners, as was Gillian Fulcher. Anthony undertook his post-doc at the University of Sydney where he developed methods for assessing the health and social impacts of hearing services.

While continuing his work in disability studies over the past 5 years Anthony has also focused his research energies on the many social issues arising in rural Australia in the face of economic and climate change. His first major project in this space was

the provision of quantitative inputs into the Kenny Report on Drying which examined social aspects of drought and drying in Australia. He subsequently has completed major several projects on the health and social impacts of change on Australian farmers.

Anthony's program of research and advocacy has focused on bringing the social model of disability to bear on hearing services. Hearing services in Australia and elsewhere are inherently situated with the medical model. Services in Australia commenced within a more socialized model but were quickly taken over by device-based services in the post-war period and have mostly remained so ever since. Anthony's research has particularly focused on documenting the social position of people with hearing loss. His work has addressed education, income and employment issues, as well as addressing physical health and psycho-social wellbeing issues impacting on this social group. He co-authored Listen Hear! – a study of the economic impacts experienced by people with hearing loss. He is presently conducting a series of studies including the cost-benefits of early intervention services for children with hearing loss, social and health outcomes for children with hearing loss, social and health outcomes for children with chronic ear infections, hearing loss and social identity and stigma, hearing loss and mental health. Anthony presently has a series of research grants submitted which look to develop community based, client driven services for people with hearing loss.

Anthony has authored three books on living with hearing loss and is presently writing his forth. His earlier books were concerned with the re-orientation of hearing services from the medical to the social model of disability and sought to engage audiologists and speech therapists in a social change process. In his forthcoming book *Fairer hearing* (2012) Anthony will systematically apply the social model of disability to a variety of issues impacting on the needs of people with hearing loss.

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

International Journal of Inclusive Education (IJIE)

Youth: Responding To Lives

Special Edition Editor

Dr Andrew Azzopardi

University of Malta

The International Journal of Inclusive Education (IJIE) is a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal focusing on inclusion.

Edition profile:

If children and young people are to develop a notion of citizenship as inclusive, it is crucial that issues of identity and diversity are addressed explicitly - but getting the pedagogical approach right will be critical: the process of dialogue and communication must be central to pedagogical strategies for Citizenship.

[http://publications.education.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DfES Diversity & Citizens hip.pdf](http://publications.education.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DfES_Diversity_&_Citizenship.pdf) Accessed on 3/11/2010).

Young people remain one of the most contested populations that navigate in our communities. Within all the discourses that engage the notion of inclusion, youth

present an interesting challenge that merits our academic rendezvous within a range of contexts. What we conceptualise as "youth" differs in different theoretical positions, schools of thought and socio-cultural experiences but is partly defined in diverse scenarios as a rational, responsible, free, conscious, choosing, autonomous, self-regulatory with a contestable social position.

This Special Edition is to draw from various fields of knowledge, in an effort to theorise, create new and innovative conceptual platforms and develop further the hybrid idea of discourses around social inclusion and youth (from policy, practice and research perspectives). This rich edition brings academics and activists to fill the persistent gap in the problematisation of these issues and in the process pushing towards the understanding of inclusion, communalism, citizenship intertwined with complex youth debates.

This international Special Edition will be noteworthy if the submission of articles will manage to highlight the interconnections between the exclusionary experiences of young people's lives. The focus of this Special Edition is intended to help us understand how young people shape their development, involvement, and visibility as socio-political actors within their communities. The thinking around this Edition is to link the speckled experiences of youth that remain one of the most electrifying stages in a community's lifecycle. Engagement with notions of identity and change, involvement and anti-/social behavior, community cohesion or absence of, politics, social activism will be looked upon favorably.

Manuscripts which offer a critical and methodical perspective on social policies and the broad realm of social inclusion/exclusion and how it affects young people will be looked upon favorably. The inter-disciplinary notion remains shrouded in epistemological darkness, conveniently endorsed but often little understood and insufficiently theorized and developed. We are interested in having an Edition that analyses equal opportunities and its allied concepts, including inequality, inequity, disadvantage and diversity that have been studied extensively across all disciplines of social sciences and humanities but now need a youth studies 'application'.

Manuscripts that indicate an across-cutting engagement with a number of themes are encouraged. What is important in this IJIE Edition is not the systematic presentation of a theme but the critical underpinnings of that theme, the politicisation of the issues and the focus on transformations.

'Themes' and 'questions' (though not exclusively) potential contributors might consider:

- What is social inclusion and how does it impact on young people?
- Young people's political consciousness to translate into public, social, philanthropic and religious movement participation.
- Youths as visible agents of social change in their virtual communities.
- Understanding of young people's involvement in civil society and social activism.
- Conceptualising the elusive notions around 'youth'.
- How can communities of young people be garnered?
- The role of culture, customs, religion and/or laws on young people.
- The impact of new and emerging technologies (e.g. internet, social media and ICT) on young people.

- Integration of young people in their communities.
- The role, impact and implications of community economies on young people.
- The roles and connections between human security, social capital and young people.
- The relationships, dynamics and impact between development, poverty and young people.
- Youth cultures and the experiences of young people across diverse times and places.
- A political representation of youth and the role of youth work.
- Stigma and its impact on the understanding of youth.
- Alternative visions of life and the way youth are responding.
- Identity, change and well-being of young people.
- Informality in contested spaces.
- Youth sexuality and its underpinnings.

Logistics

All selected articles will be anonymously peer-reviewed by experts in the author's field of study. This Journal will not accept material that has been previously published or is under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Manuscripts should be written in English

Interested contributors are asked to send 250-word abstracts using Microsoft Word (.doc) by not later than the 20th July 2011 to Dr Andrew Azzopardi at the following address:- andrew.azzopardi@um.edu.mt. For those abstracts that are selected, a chapter contribution of 5,000 to 6,000 words (including references and endnotes), will be requested and will need to be submitted to the Editor by the 20th October 2011 (footnotes are to be avoided when reasonably possible).

NEW DISABILITY STUDIES UNIT

Disability Jurisprudence

(Online and on campus, Gold Coast) 7127LAW

Griffith Law School, Griffith University, open to law and non-students.

25 July 2011

Convened: Assoc/Prof Fiona Kumari Campbell

Email: fiona.campbell@griffith.edu.au

In this course students are introduced to the main trends and debates within law concerning the formation of the disabled subject and the regulation of disability nosologies. It investigates, by the use of applied studies, the relevance of theoretical issues (jurisprudential as well as drawn from the field of critical disability studies) to contemporary law. Students will critically analyse the purpose and exercise of law-making within Australia and abroad by considering performative and rhetorical aspects of legislation and the consequence of the current legal thresholds of abledness and disability.

Comprising three units of study (7127LAW) introduces core and contested concepts in *jurisprudence* as they relate to how *disability is 'thought'*. The first unit, *'Thinking*

Disability describes and considers competing interpretations of disability theory, its position and representation in law. Providing the platform for informed disability debate this unit includes discussion from various disciplines and international perspectives in statute and case law before presenting students with specific, problematic definitional 'situations' for legal interpretation/debate. The second unit, *'Disability Jurisprudence'* focuses more particularly on the presumptions and theoretical presuppositions that underpin the formation of legal responses to disablement embedded in case and statute law. We examine notions of suffering and social injury as a mechanism to argue for legal protections and remedies. Consideration is also given to disability related citizenship theory around 'reasonable adjustment' and anti-subordination measures. The final unit of study, *'Contested Terrains'* spices up the course's investigation of law's engagement in the production and maintenance of nuanced understandings of 'abledness' and its constitutive outside 'disability'. Topics for this unit consider the ways technology and science morph legal understandings of *mens rea*, productivity, wellness and volition when encountering the disabled body at law. We particularly explore some novel judgements that test the parameters of disability discrimination law.

COURSE STRUCTURE

- Disability Country: On Normalcy; Who is a disabled person? 'Outlaw' disabilities?
- Old World: Hegemonic explanatory frameworks for thinking disability
- New World: Alterity, Ableism & Affinity - New ways of thinking about disability and abledness
- Taking it to the World: Law's way - geodisability knowledge; globalisation and legal regimes
- The Reasonableness of Disability? Reasonable accommodation/adjustment or positive discrimination
- Lex Crip: Representing/performing disability in Court
- Arguing Differently: Anti-Subordination Theory and other thoughts: The places of difference
- Limits of Tolerance? Social Injury and Rights as Suffering.
- I love Disability: Designer disability, voluntary disability, transablism, body identity integrity disorder
- Oozing and Altered States as Disability: Fatness and (illegal) addictions as impairments; pregnancy; what does this do for our thinking about the relationship between wellness and impairment?
- Mitigation: Should disability be considered at law in its mitigated or unmitigated state? Are/should there be ontological limits?
- Hate Crimes: Do people really hate disabled people? Purpose of hate crime legislation and unintended consequences
- Limits of Disability and Limit-pointed identities in law?

Further Information about enrolments contact Anne Mackay:
a.mackay@griffith.edu.au

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE REPORTS

Willard Suitcase Exhibit and Unspeakable Lecture and Film Series (University of Washington, Jan.-Mar. 2011)

Joanne Woiak
Disability Studies Program
University of Washington
Email: jwoiak@u.washington.edu

Unspeakable series archive: <http://uwdisability.wordpress.com/>

From January through March 2011, the University of Washington hosted the traveling version of the Willard Suitcase Exhibit at Odegaard Undergraduate Library. The exhibit brings a patient-centered view of the history of psychiatry to a wide audience, through the stories told by the contents of suitcases that were abandoned in the attic of a New York state mental hospital that operated from 1870 until 1995 (<http://www.suitcaseexhibit.org>). The UW Disability Studies Program (<http://depts.washington.edu/disstud>) was invited to co-sponsor the exhibit's visit by members of the Seattle organization Live Inclusive, who are committed to enhancing community living opportunities for people with developmental disabilities (<http://liveinclusive.org>). Live Inclusive planned a series of eight weekly evening presentations featuring personal stories and policy discussions about community living options for individuals with disabilities. My colleague Sherrie Brown and I in Disability Studies saw this community-campus partnership as a promising opportunity to highlight issues around disability history, identity, and rights in the contexts of the UW campus, the state of Washington, and beyond. Our program has a history of presenting timely and thoughtful annual public symposia, and so to complement the exhibit we decided to develop free public programming consisting of documentary film screenings and invited lectures by people in the disability studies community from a variety of disciplinary and activist perspectives. The entire series of 22 events was a great success, with attendance averaging about 40 people per event and as many as 80 at the opening reception and several of the guest lectures. The UW librarians reported that the exhibit itself was one of the best attended and received that they have ever hosted.

The UW organizers put together a diverse set of events that we titled "Unspeakable: Disability History, Identity, and Rights." Our major sponsors included student groups that arranged the film showings as well as a visit by disability and queer writer and activist Eli Clare, and a wide variety of departments that collaborated to bring other invited speakers (among them the Haring Centre for Applied Research and Training in Education, Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity, Department of History, and Program on Values in Society). We advertised heavily across campus and to local disability organizations. Our DS students participated in the events for class credit and several helped out as volunteers, and we were pleased to see attendance by many students and faculty from programs such as Education, Social Work, Women Studies, Comparative History of Ideas, and Law, Societies, and Justice. There was also tremendous community interest in the exhibit and the programming. Live Inclusive invited disability service professionals from supported living and employment organizations, as well as leaders of government agencies and advocacy

groups such as The Arc. The UW organizers contributed to these outreach efforts by publicizing the events to self-advocacy organizations, centres for independent living, and state-wide disability rights agencies. The exhibit also gave us the opportunity to make valuable connections with people in the psychiatric consumer-survivor movement, local professionals in the mental health field, and activists doing work on restoring and memorializing cemeteries at state hospitals.

The films we screened for “Unspeakable” included documentaries on the histories of institutionalization and sterilization, *Willowbrook* and *Lynchburg Story*, as well as the biography of activist Arthur Campbell, *If I Can't Do It*. Richard Cohen's just re-released documentary *Hurry Tomorrow*, filmed in an L.A. psychiatric ward in 1974, attracted the largest crowd and a lively discussion about how much things have and haven't changed in psychiatric care from the time of the Willard Hospital patients to the 1970s to the current day. Live Inclusive sponsored a wonderful talk by Darby Penney, who is not only the researcher and curator for the Willard Suitcase Exhibit but also a long-time leader in the rights movement for people with psychiatric histories. The UW student commissions for disability, women's, and GBLT issues jointly hosted two presentations by Eli Clare that drew large and enthusiastic crowds. It was great to see our local disability and queer communities joining together for these activities, exploring such issues as shame, intersectionality, and historical memory. Another highlight of the quarter was a collaborative performance response to the exhibit created by a UW undergraduate dance class that was taught by Dance faculty member Jurg Koch.

Our line-up of invited scholars included disability historians Geoff Reaume and Jeff Brune, professor of education Phil Ferguson, and philosopher Licia Carlson. York University's Geoff Reaume gave an impassioned talk on “Memorializing Mad People's History” that helped us to gain greater appreciation for the public history and archival work being done in Canadian disability studies and activism by current and former psychiatric patients. Phil Ferguson from Chapman University had a large audience for his presentation of his important research findings from the files of inmates, families, and professionals associated with Oregon's Fairview Training School. Phil also led discussion about a couple of compelling films that document official portrayals and family memories of Fairview. Jennifer Stuber, a faculty member in UW's School of Social Work, lectured on “Transforming the American Conversation about Mental Health.” Licia Carlson from Providence College was inspired by the Willard suitcase exhibit to write a fascinating paper analyzing some of those individuals' stories from her disciplinary perspectives in feminist philosophy and disability ethics. And I gave the wrap-up presentation for the series, on my studies of archival materials from Washington state mental institutions dealing with eugenics and forced sterilization.

I am extremely grateful to these colleagues who came out to the Pacific Northwest during a cold, rainy winter to generously share their expertise and their support for this project. I especially want to thank Gallaudet University's Jeff Brune for coming back to Seattle and spreading his enthusiasm for disability history. I was initially inspired to organize the “Unspeakable” series because of conversations with Jeff—whom I had not previously met despite both of us having been located at UW until just a few years ago. In early March, he led a well-attended and productive brownbag seminar that brought faculty and students of DS and History into

conversation. Jeff also delivered a public talk about his research into the shifting identities of *Black Like Me* author John Howard Griffin, which helped us to think about disability history and identity formation outside of institutional settings. His arguments about the intersections between disability and other identity markers such as race and gender in Griffin's life resonated with the personal narratives of the "lives left behind" told by the Willard exhibit.

The tremendous support that the DS Program received from our campus and community partners made it possible to maintain a high level of interest throughout this eight week series of activities. I think our efforts generated good critical dialogues on the complex issues surrounding institutionalization and power, and disability identities and social justice in the past and present. The exhibit was a powerful catalyst for interactions among academics, disability service professionals, agencies, families, self-advocates, and the public. Everyone who attended had the opportunity to gain some appreciation for disability studies and the social model perspective on the meanings of disability and disability rights. Given the complicated politics and current social climate in the state of Washington around issues of mental disability, as well as the ongoing policy discussions at UW regarding issues of accessibility and disability services, the exhibit and events were especially timely. Our "Unspeakable" series contributed to giving voice to diverse scholarly and community views on empowering people with disabilities.

Joanne Woiak is a lecturer in the Disability Studies Program at the University of Washington and her areas of specialization are history of medicine and eugenics.

Does Every Child Matter, post-Blair? They sure do!
Dr Katherine Runswick-Cole
Research Fellow in Disability Studies & Psychology
Research Institute for Health and Social Change
Manchester Metropolitan University
Email: k.runswick-cole@mmu.ac.uk

Podcasts of the sessions are available to download at: www.cdsmmu.posterous.com

What's life like for disabled children in England? A research team based at the Research Institute for Health and Social Change at Manchester Metropolitan University have been finding out about the lives of disabled children and their families over the last two years as part of the project 'Does Every Child Matter, post-Blair? The interconnections of disabled childhoods' funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

On 6th April, 2011, a conference was held at MMU which marked the end of the project but the beginning of the process of sharing the project findings. The day brought together researchers from across the UK with disabled young people, parents/carers, and professionals to share ideas. Professor Dan Goodley and Dr Katherine Runswick-Cole started the day with a presentation of key project findings (for more information visit <http://post-blair.posterous.com/>).

Dr Louise Holt from Loughborough University presented a paper entitled: *Special units for young people with socio-emotional differences: micro-institutions or spaces*

of inclusion? After the break, Hannah Derbyshire presented 'My Story' – a fun filled story of her life as a young disabled person. This was followed by Linda Derbyshire's moving and inspirational talk 'Mug of a tea cup?' in which she explained how she had challenged people to include Hannah in school and in the wider community. After lunch, George Newsome presented 'Little about me' in which he asked the audience to think about the ways in which they could challenge people who discriminate against disabled people. Dr Janice McLaughlin, Newcastle University, spoke about mothering a disabled child in her paper *Modes of care and mothering: How does citizenship and care intersect in the lives of mothers of disabled children?* And the day ended with Dr Angharad Beckett from Leeds University talking about '*Challenging Disabling Attitudes; Building an Inclusive Society*'. *Making the case for anti-disablist education strategies.*

Gill Newsome, a lecturer in the department of Clothing, Design and Technology at the Hollings faculty, and George's mum said: "George's involvement in the project has been a great opportunity for him to comment on his views and life experiences as a young disabled person. George's participation in the project has also added to my area of research is textile related products for people with disabilities. I would be interested in talking with University colleagues whose research has also covered disabilities in one way or another."(g.newsome@mmu.ac.uk).

Dr Katherine Runswick-Cole said 'We know that disabled children matter and, like their non-disabled peers, disabled children are participating in their schools and communities in positive ways which challenge the sometimes negative images of disabled children and young people that circulate. But, we also know that many disabled children still face unacceptable barriers to full participation and that they and their parents/carers have to fight to be included. In a time of 'Big Society' and in the context of cuts to public services, it is everyone's responsibility to challenge policy makers, practitioners and the wider community to expose and then dismantle these barriers for disabled children. As Linda said in her presentation 'Do disabled children matter? They sure do!'

Critical Autism Seminar day makes an impact

Dr Katherine Runswick-Cole
Research Fellow in Disability Studies & Psychology
Research Institute for Health and Social Change
Manchester Metropolitan University
Email: k.runswick-cole@mmu.ac.uk

Media and Podcast address: <http://cdsmmu.posterous.com/pages/downloads>

The first Critical Autism seminar day was held at Sheffield Hallam University on 18th January, 2011. The event was co-hosted by Critical Disability Studies @ MMU, the Disability Research Forum and the Autism Centre, at Sheffield Hallam. In stark contrast to 'traditional' seminars, often led by professionals, which promote autism awareness or intervention strategies, the Critical Autism day offered as a space for people who identify with the label of autism, parents/carers, activists and academics not only to challenge 'deficit' understandings of autism but also to challenge the category itself. An audience of 40 people including people from across the UK

attended the event in Sheffield, and delegates from Canada joined the session via Skype.

The keynote was given via Skype by Anne McGuire from the University of Toronto. Anne's presentation was entitled "*We have your son...": Frames of Terror in Advocacy's 'War on Autism'*". Anne's presentation was warmly received by the audiences in the UK and Canada. There were four presentations from members of CDS@MMU: Anat Greenstein presented with Steve Graby from the Disabled People's Direct Action Network and Autism Rights Movement on *Social dis-order: autistic experiences of/in radical political activism*; Michael Richards presented: *'I've got Asperger's because I read it on the Internet': An analysis on how labels are formed and placed on young men and how this can be tackled*; Katherine Runswick-Cole presented with Rebecca Mallett from Sheffield Hallam University on *Buying (into) Autism: The Commodification of 'Disability' in the Academy* and Dan Goodley presented *Autism: a post-structuralist analysis*.

Katherine Runswick-Cole, from Manchester Metropolitan University said: 'This was a fascinating and enjoyable day which brought together a range of perspectives on the cultural production of autism. The participation of people who identify with the label of autism, parents/carers, activists, academics and professionals was key to the success of the day. The results of the questionnaires completed by delegates at the end of the session suggest that we can be confident that the day had impact. Indeed, one professional told us that the day had given him new ways of thinking and talking about autism to share with the families he works with.'

For more information about the day or to add your name to a contact list to receive information about future Critical Autism events please contact: k.runswick-cole@mmu.ac.uk

NEXT EDITION: OCTOBER 2011

We are keen to increase CDS members' contributions to the newsletter. Please contact Karen Soldatic on k.soldatic@curtin.edu.au with any book reviews, research profiles, call for papers and other relevant information that you may like to add prior to 1 October 2011.