



STREAM

S12. Feeling Sick and Sickly Feelings

STREAM ORGANIZER(S)

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DESCRIPTION

This stream will explore the overlaps between affect and disability studies, teasing out possibilities for mutual influence and intoxication. Experiences of disability, illness, and affect alike call attention to the bodymind's porousness. They foreground our ontological entanglements with the systems in which we're embedded (Marya & Patel 2021); how the body and world modulate, energize, and dis/able one another in turn. It's no surprise, then, that affect and disability are mutually constitutive on several levels: socially disruptive affects are often pathologized as mental illness (e.g. depression, anxiety, prolonged numbness), and disabled experiences entail a host of "bad crip feelings" (e.g. loneliness, abandonment, grief) (Smilges 2023). Panelists in this stream will enter extended conversation around how affect and disability studies intersect and challenge each other, as well as the potential risks and opportunities of blurring the distinctions in-between.

Panelists might draw from disability studies to write with debilitating affects: chronic depression, melancholia, or numbness (Cvetkovich 2012; Chen 2000; Winters 2016; Bruce 2021; Langstaff 2016), for instance, all of which have been pathologized and medicalized in various ways (Khúc 2024). What resources does disability studies offer to reframe these states through a political/relational lens (Kafer 2013), or to realize the full political potential of embodiment? Conversely, submissions might uplift affective states specific to experiences of disability, such as the grief of k/crip time (Samuels 2017), the loneliness of ableist exile (Clare 1999), and the betrayal of care abuse (Kim 2025) – but also to the unique forms of pleasure that arise from access intimacy (Mingus 2011), disability intimacy (Wong 2024), cross-animate eroticism (Chen 2012; Chen & Luciano 2015), and disability-inflected kink (Hedva 2024; rhodes 2025).

Papers in this stream are invited to take up these provocations and the questions below:

- How are our atmospheric attunements changed, disrupted, or short-circuited by the entrance of neuroqueer and divergent receptivity? How might theorists of affect account for this invisible diversity in modes-of-being?
- How can we (re)design affect studies methods for disabled, mad, and neuroqueer bodyminds? How might their lived experiences open into new ways of knowing, feeling, and theorizing the world?

- What are the risks of pathologizing undesirable affects as disability? Conversely, what possibilities are opened up?
- How should affect studies be informed by the Psychiatric Survivors Movement, along with its k/crip and mad studies offshoots (e.g. Campbell 2022; Penney 2022; Shimrat 2022)?
- What are the affective implications of reclaiming terms like “crip” (McRuer, 2006; Kafer, 2013), “krip” (Moore Jr 2000) and “madness” (Bruce 2021; Lewis et. al 2025), both in and out of academia (or K/Crip Studies)? What charge do these terms carry? What is the affective force of our etymology more broadly?
- Similar to the “queer” in queer studies, “k/crip” also functions as a verb. To k/crip a system of knowledge means to disturb its relation (or lack thereof) to illness, to reimagine the presumed binary of dis/ability, and to trouble the boundedness of what such labels even mean (Cedillo & Yergeau 2019; Smilges 2023). What would it look like to k/crip affect studies, so as to refract, scatter, and complicate the knowledges produced?