Social Theory in the Disabled Nation: Class and the Quagmire of Affect

Dr. Rachel Gorman, Affiliated Fellow UB Center for Disability Studies

Friday April 22 – 3 pm – Park 280

Spinoza Map Thomas Hirschhorn and Marcus Steinweg (2007)

Since the publication of Hardt and Negri's *Empire* in 2000, Euro-American social theorists have increasingly conceptualized the human in terms of 'affect.' While disability theorists begin to incorporate post-Marxist political economy, some queer and gender theorists are turning to disability as a cipher for ongoing theorizations of affect. The 'affective turn' (Clough, 2007) has specific implications for disability theory and politics. Gorman argues that the ongoing theorization of the human in terms of affect is both a *biopolitical* project, in that it obscures neoliberal processes of labor reproduction through a focus on "preindiviual bodily capacities" (Clough, 25); and a *necropolitical* project, in that it obscures class antagonisms between "disabled subjects who [are] 'targeted for life' [and those who are] 'targeted for death'" (McRuer, 2010, 171).

Rachel Gorman is Assistant Professor in the Graduate Program in Critical Disability Studies at York University. Since receiving her PhD from the University of Toronto with a dissertation on disability culture and class consciousness, Gorman has held a Lectureship at the Women and Gender Studies Institute of the University of Toronto; a Research Fellowship at Manchester Metropolitan University; and a Postdoctoral Fellowship exploring disability politics and national liberation struggles. Gorman created the first two courses for the Disability Studies stream at the University of Toronto, and has taught courses on neoliberalism; madness and postcoloniality; and art and contemporary social movements.

For any questions or concerns regarding access, please contact Mike Rembis: marembis@buffalo.edu