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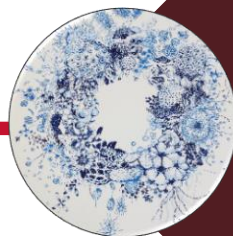
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Unsettling Disgust, or How to Racialize Microbes

Theories of disgust tend to cast it as a “primordial emotion,” a base animal instinct that serves a protective function for individuals. When applied in a narrow sense—e.g. to things people eat—this makes some sense. But disgust is more pervasive than that, serving as an affective response that applies to kinds of substance, kinds of people, kinds of places, and kinds of experiences, often binding communities together in shared senses of disgust. In this talk, I focus on the emergence of American disgust, which is baptized in colonial era attitudes towards non-white bodies and their practices. I follow American disgust through three moments to show how it has changed and stayed the same, modulating from being about bodies and substances to being about potentials. In following this trail, I focus on early American medicine, the marketing of Armenian yogurt to American consumers, and the recent rise of fecal microbial transplants, which marries historiographic and ethnographic research. American disgust is always racialized, but who and what carries race reflects changing conceptions about the body, the body of others, and the substances that move between bodies.

Matthew Wolf-Meyer is the author of *The Slumbering Masses: Sleep, Medicine and Modern American Life*, *Theory for the World to Come: Speculative Fiction and Apocalyptic Anthropology*, *Unraveling: Remaking Personhood in a Neurodiverse Age*, and the forthcoming *The Colony Within: Excrement, Medicine, and Racist Disgust*. He is the editor of the forthcoming *Proposals for a Caring Economy*, and with Denielle Elliott, *Naked Fieldnotes: A Rough Guide to Ethnographic Writing*. His research focuses on the biology of everyday life, affective approaches to subjectivity, and posthuman bioethics. He is currently a Senior Research Fellow in Tampere University's Institute for Advanced Study and a member of their Faculty of Social Sciences.

Weitere Informationen: www.ifeas.uni-mainz.de



Artistic representation
of the microbes on
one's toilet.

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