



APRIL 07

update

SYMPOSIUM PREVIEW BY GRACE KYUNGWON HONG

Strange Affinities

THE SEXUAL AND GENDER POLITICS OF COMPARATIVE
RACIALIZATION

ON APRIL 23, the Center for the Study of Women will present a one-panel symposium, entitled "Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization," from 3 to 5 pm in 314 Royce Hall. Roderick Ferguson, Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, will present "The Lateral Moves of African American Studies." Ruby Tapia, Assistant Professor of Comparative Studies at Ohio State University, will present "Volumes of 'Transnational' Ven-

geance: Fixing Race and Feminism on the Way to Kill Bill." Two UCLA professors, Rafael Perez-Torres of the Department of English and Russell Robinson of the Critical Race Studies program in the School of Law, will provide comment. This event is co-sponsored by the Asian American Studies Center, the Chicano Studies Research Center, the Women's Studies Program, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Studies Program, the Asian American Studies Department, UC Humanities Research Institute, and the Critical Race Studies Program in the School of Law.

continued on page 7

DOES THIS BMI MAKE ME LOOK FAT?

*Defining the bounds
of "normal" weight
in the U.S. and France*

Abigail C. Saguy

Feminists have a long-standing interest in the social pressures put upon women to conform to narrowly defined and unrealistic body expectations (see Bordo 1993; Chernin 1985; Hesse-Biber 1996; Nichter 2000; Thompson 1994; Wolf 1991). In her classic book *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body* (1993; 130), Susan Bordo argues that "denying oneself food becomes the central micro-practice in the education of feminine restraint and containment of impulse." The excruciating thinness of fashion models conveys a message that female beauty requires the denial of appetite, while advertisements for food

continued on page 4

Sciences From Below

FEMINIST AND POSTCOLONIAL STANDPOINTS

► How have recent feminist studies of modernity and tradition, along with postcolonial science and technology studies, produced new resources for thinking about gender, imperialism, and sciences?

SANDRA HARDING, with respondents FRANCOISE LIONNET (Professor, French & Francophone Studies) and SHARON TRAWEEK (Associate Professor, History)

SENIOR FACULTY FEMINIST SEMINAR SERIES: APRIL 18, 4 pm, Faculty Center



- STRANGE AFFINITIES: SYMPOSIUM PREVIEW
BY GRACE KYUNGWON HONG 1,7



- FROM THE DIRECTOR BY KATHLEEN MCHUGH 3



- DOES THIS BMI MAKE ME LOOK FAT?
BY ABIGAIL C. SAGUY 1, 4-5



- READING FROM THE MARGINS BY SIOBHÁN MCELDUFF. 6

-
- UPCOMING EVENTS..... 8-10

**CSW update is a monthly PDF/
web publication of the UCLA
Center for the Study of Women.**

EDITOR/DESIGNER

Brenda Johnson-Grau

UCLA CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WOMEN

DIRECTOR

Kathleen McHugh

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

April de Stefano

FINANCIAL MANAGER

Van DoNguyen

MANAGING EDITOR

Brenda Johnson-Grau

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Jessie Babiarz

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS

*Alessandra Brophy, Amy Chen, and
Sarah Cho*

~
BOX 957222
PUBLIC POLICY 1400H
LOS ANGELES, CA 90095-7222

CAMPUS MAILCODE: 722203

310-825-0590
310-825-0456 (FAX)
CSW@CSW.UCLA.EDU

PUBLICATIONS UNIT

BOX 951504
2210 ROLFE HALL
LOS ANGELES, CA 90095-1504

CAMPUS MAILCODE: 150402

310-206-5487
CSWPUBS@WOMEN.UCLA.EDU

From the Director

Kathleen McHugh



Activists, Archives, and Politics

On March 12, CSW joined with the Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC) to celebrate Lupe Anguiano's donation of her papers to the CSRC archive. Ms. Anguiano has been a longtime activist for women's rights, the rights of the poor, and the protection of the environment. A former nun, she was a national organizer for the United Farm Workers and the founder of the National Women's Employment and Education Model Program, which helped single mothers move beyond welfare poverty. The CSRC's acquisition of these papers is a significant accomplishment. Gloria Steinem and Henry Cisneros, both longtime friends of Ms. Anguiano, were on hand to honor her and both spoke with great eloquence and wit (Steinem borrowed a page from David Letterman to list the top 10 reasons why the Anguiano archive coming to UCLA was a wonderful thing). I had the distinct pleasure of being seated next to Ms. Anguiano and Ms. Steinem at dinner and sharing in their conversation. When the discussion turned to national politics, both Ms. Anguiano and Ms. Steinem expressed their enthusiasm for presidential candidates and Senators Clinton and Obama, but they were particularly enthused



Photo by Reed Hutchinson

Lupe Anguiano and Gloria Steinem

about Clinton. They both remarked that she was clearly the most qualified candidate for the job, with the most experience, connections, and political savvy. No matter what our opinions of Clinton or Obama or any of the candidates, certainly the 2008 presidential election may produce the first woman or African American candidate with a fighting chance of winning the office. Next fall, UCLA's Burkle Center and the L.A. Times will be bringing in all the leading presidential candidates, one at a time, to talk to the UCLA community and to encourage everyone's participation in the next election.

Does this BMI make me look fat?, *continued from page 1*
remind women (and men) that eating food is often a source of guilt and shame.

This literature has been extremely important in identifying body weight as a political and feminist issue. Yet, with a few notable exceptions (Schoenfelder and Wieser 1983; Millman 1980), feminist scholarship has generally not examined body size from the perspective of women who would be categorized as medically obese nor queried how those medical categories are constructed and with what implications. Instead it has focused on anorexia and bulimia and has largely taken medical definitions of unhealthy weight for granted. My work fills these holes in the literature by examining how medical science and news media define the upper and lower limits of “normal” body weight and how they discuss underweight/overweight issues, eating disorders, and obesity. The talk I will be giving at the Center for the Study of Women next month examines cross-issue and cross-national differences in how the U.S. and French news media frame eating disorders and overweight/obesity as medical issues and public health priorities.

Normal or ideal weight is increasingly being defined through a medical and public health lens, in which only 2% of the U.S. population is defined as too thin while 2/3 is defined as too fat. This has far-reaching consequences for women’s (and men’s) tendency to engage in self-surveillance and for medical and policy interventions and political priorities. Medical expertise about ideal weight has gendered implications: women are more likely than men to try to lose weight and to be advised by their doctors to lose weight (Bish et al. 2005). Strikingly, over 80% of weight-loss surgery patients in 2002 were women (Santry et al. 2005). As childhood obesity emerges as a pressing political issue, parents are often blamed. One article opined that “parents who do nothing to prevent obesity in their children are guilty of abuse, if not legally then morally” (Lovric 2005). In that women are usually held responsible for childcare responsibilities, they often bear the brunt of this blame. For instance, an “open letter to conservative Americans,” ran as a paid advertisement in several major newspapers during the summer of 2005, warned that “thirty plus years of feminist careerism created our exploding obesity-driven child and adult diabetes epidemic. With most mothers working, too few



adults and children eat balanced, nutritious, portion-controlled home cooked meals.” Discussions of overweight and obesity as a disease or a self-induced health risk may increase the stigma and blame associated with heavier bodies, worsening the weight-based discrimination that women face (Conley and Glauber 2005; Schwartz, Chambliss, Brownell, and Billington 2003; Puhl and Brownell 2001). Additionally, since African-American and Mexican-American women and the poor tend to be heavier, these discussions may also reinforce and justify existing ethnic and class inequalities. For all these reasons, current discussions of weight in the news media are an important object of scholarly inquiry.

The United States and France provide an especially fruitful comparison among large Western, industrialized democracies. While rates of obesity in France lag behind those of the United States, these rates have increased dramatically in the past few decades, especially among children. French public officials and the French news media increasingly discuss obesity as a major public health crisis. As in the United States, eating disorders are also a problem in France (Darmon 2003).

Previous comparative work on social problem construction suggests that how national presses frame social problems is informed by several factors including dominant cultural repertoires (Benson and Saguy 2005). In both of these countries, thinness has been regarded as a sign of prestige, virtue, and health since the early twentieth century (Stearns 1997). This is expected to lead journalists in both countries to consider overweight/obesity

more of a concern than underweight. Yet, historian Peter Stearns (1997) has shown that body weight is more moralized in the United States than in France, which might lead to more individual blame for obesity in the United States compared to France. In that France has stronger political traditions of socialism, it may be more likely to blame obesity on systemic social factors. In that it has a stronger state, the French news is expected to be more likely to stress state responsibility for the "obesity crisis."

Despite the greater global power of the United States, France is commonly regarded as the most consistent and forceful First-World voice of resistance to American political and cultural hegemony, expressing concerns about American imperialism and unchecked capitalism that many other Western and non-Western nations share less vocally. Moreover, many French and Americans alike consider France (and Europe more generally) to be culturally superior to the United States and look to France as a model for artistic (including culinary) and intellectual innovation (Lamont 1987; Clark 1987). Given the relative position of the United States and France in a "global field of nation states" (Benson and Saguy 2005; Bourdieu 1998:41), the French press is expected to be more likely to refer to the United States in its discussions of obesity than vice versa, and also to use this issue to discuss larger concerns regarding American cultural imperialism and the decline of French values and culture. Thus the French press is expected to use the U.S. as "other" ("look at how fat they are!") and as a cautionary glimpse of France's future ("if we don't change course, we will soon be as fat as they!"). In contrast, based on comparative research on moral boundaries (Lamont 2000), racial and ethnic boundaries are expected to be evoked more frequently by the U.S. press. For the findings of this research and a discussion of their implications, attend the CSW talk on May 15 at 4 pm in Royce 314!

REFERENCES

- Benson, Rodney and Abigail C. Saguy. 2005. "Constructing Social Problems in an Age of Globalization: A French-American Comparison." *American Sociological Review* 70(2):233-59.
- Bish, Connie L., Heidi M. Blanck, Mary K. Serdula, Michele Marcus, Harold W. Kohl III, and Laura K. Khan. 2005. "Diet and Physical Activity Behaviors Among Americans Trying to Lose Weight: 2000 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System." *Obesity Research* 13:596-607.
- Bordo, Susan. 1993. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1998. *On Television and Journalism*. London, England: Pluto Press.
- Chernin, Kim. 1995. *The Hungry Self: Women, Eating, and Identity*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Clark, Priscilla P. 1987. *Literary France: The Making of a Culture*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Conley, Dalton and Rebecca Glauber. 2005. "Gender, Body Mass, and Economic Status." *NBER Working Paper Series*. Working Paper 11343.
- Darmon, Muriel. 2003. *Devenir Anorexique: Une Approche Sociologique*. La Decouverte.
- Hesse-Biber, Sharlene. 1996. *Am I Thin Enough Yet?: The Cult of Thinness and the Commercialization of Identity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lamont, Michel. 2000. *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration*. Russell Sage Foundation and Harvard University Press.
- Lamont, Michele. 1987. "The Production of Culture in France and the United States." Pp. 167-78 in *The Role of Intellectuals in Liberal Democracies*, ed. Alain G. Gagnon. New York, NY: Praeger.
- Lovric, Lydia. 6 Jun 2005. "Child Obesity a Form of Abuse." *Winnipeg Sun*.
- Millman, Marcia. 1980. *Such a Pretty Face: Being Fat in America*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Nichter, Mimi. 2000. *Fat Talk: What Girls and the Parents Say About Dieting*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Puhl, Rebecca and Kelly D. Brownell. 2001. "Bias, Discrimination, and Obesity." *Obesity Research* 9:788-805.
- Santry, Heena P., Daniel L. Gillen, and Diane S. Lauderdale. 2005. "Trends in Bariatric Surgical Procedures." *JAMA* 294(15):1909-17.
- Schoenfelder, Lisa and Barb e. Wieser. 1983. *Shadow on a Tightrope: Writings by Women on Fat Oppression*. Iowa City: Aunt Lute Book Company.
- Schwartz, Marlene B., Heather O. N. Chambliss, Kelly D. Brownell, and Charles Billington. 2003. "Weight Bias Among Health Professionals Specializing in Obesity." *Obesity Research* 11(9):1033-39.
- Thompson, Becky W. 1994. *A Hunger So Wide and So Deep: a Multiracial View of Women's Eating Problems*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Wolf, Naomi. 1991. *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.



Abigail C. Saguy (Ph.D., Princeton 2000; doctorat, l'EHESS, Paris, 1999) is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at UCLA. She has a longstanding interest in social problem construction and how subordinate groups are sometimes able to redefine cultural

meaning in ways that increase their control. Her book *What is Sexual Harassment? From Capitol Hill to the Sorbonne* (2003), studied how and why sexual harassment has been defined very differently in the United States and France and across national institutions. She is currently studying scientific and news framing of body weight in the United States and in France. Saguy has published her work in the *American Sociological Review*, *Law and Society Review*, *European Journal of Women's Studies*, and the *Journal for Health Politics, Policy and Law*, among other journals. She recently received a Faculty Development Grant from the Center for the Study of Women.



READING FROM THE MARGINS

SIOBHÁN MCELDUFF

ONE DAY IN THE 1780s, an irate English poet sat down to write a scathing reply to one of her critics. This in itself is not particularly startling: the cantankerous relationships of writers and critics were neither novel nor newsworthy in the eighteenth century, which produced literary quarrels in almost exhausting abundance.

But this particular quarrel resonates for several reasons. One is the social status of the writer. Ann Yearsley was born not into the upper or middle classes but into a laboring family; at the time of her discovery by her first patron, Hannah More, she and her family were living in abject poverty in a barn—the two came into unlikely contact when Yearsley arrived at More's house to collect pigswill. However, when questioned about her literary influences, Yearsley said that amongst her favorite writers was the Latin poet Virgil. This might not seem so shocking to us, but it was then an astonishingly bold claim: historically Classics has been the quintessential masculine, elite discipline. This was especially true in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, when classical education formed “a central re-

source for the self-recognition and social closure” (Stray 1998: 29) for the upper and middle classes.

Yearsley was forced to “learn” much of her classics by from looking at prints in shop windows, staring hungrily at the knowledge from which she was formally excluded. But in her 1786 reply to her critic —*To Ignorance, Occasioned by a Gentleman's desiring the Author never to assume a Knowledge of the Ancients*—she exuded contempt for those who tried to wall off Classics as an elite subject by presenting the heroes and authors of the classical past reborn as broken-down English laborers now forced to work for their daily bread. In effect, she transferred them from the elite world into the one which she herself inhabited, erasing the distance between these writers and herself—and opening up a chasm between them and the very class that laid claim to them as their heritage. In *Homerides* (1716), Thomas Burnet and George Duckett warned that thanks to Pope's translation, “every Country Milkmaid may understand the Iliad as well as you or I”; Yearsley proved that that might be true of other Latin and Greek classics

as well, something which no doubt would have equally horrified those gentlemen.

Reading the history of my own discipline is sometimes a frustrating experience, as it privileges certain traditions, often erasing or ignoring those outside the male elite—even aristocratic women who wrote in Latin remain “buried in oblivion” (Stevenson 2005: 1). Yet Yearsley shows the possibility of writing an alternative history, one that looks not at readings generated from the center, but from the margins of society—a project which I hope my research on her and authors like her will be a part of.

REFERENCES

- Stevenson, Jane (2005) *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender & Authority from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford.
- Stray, Christopher (1998) *Classics Transformed: Schools, Universities, and Society in England 1830–1960*, Oxford.

Siobhán McElduff received her Ph.D. in Classics from UCLA in 2004. In the fall, she will be an Assistant Professor in the Department of Classics at the University of British Columbia. She is currently a research scholar at the Center for the Study of Women.

The scholars featured in this symposium are contributors to a collection of essays of the same title, co-edited by Roderick Ferguson and myself. To give some context for both this event and the edited volume around which it is organized, let me explain the intellectual and political rationale of this project. “Comparative racialization” in its most basic definition refers to scholarship that addresses African American, Asian American, Native American/indigenous and Chicana/o racializations as occurring in relation to each other. Yet this work does not merely articulate commonalities between communities of color but poses a more complex question about how a focus on differences between and within racialized groups might enable us to imagine alternative modes of coalition.

In this collective intellectual project, we turn to women of color feminism and queer of color critique as intellectual and political traditions for comparative methodologies directed toward understanding the important differences between racialized communities. In so doing, this project also highlights the comparative aspects of women of color feminism and queer of color critique that have been heretofore undertheorized. Women of color feminism and queer of color critique emerged out of the contradictions of racialized communities which are not monolithic nor unified, but always already differentiated. Women of color feminism and queer of color critique thus offer methodologies for understanding racialized communities as always constituted by a variety of racial, gendered, sexualized, and national differences. These intellectual traditions highlight the importance of an analysis that centers the *intersection* of race, gender, sexuality, and class, and thereby establishes a methodology for understanding coalition as emerging out of this difference. Accordingly, this panel and the edited collection from which it emerges centers gender and sexuality as important analytics for comparative race scholarship.

Roderick Ferguson’s presentation takes up women of color feminism as a comparative methodology in order to reimagine an African American studies organized not around a singular and monolithic narrative of enslavement, emancipation, and civil rights, but one that can take into account recent African migration to the United States. Ruby Tapia’s presentation implicates a form of “feminism” in neo-liberal erasures of racialized violence in her reading

of both parts of Quentin Tarantino’s “Kill Bill.” These two films, Tapia argues, “ironically” celebrates violence against racialized female subjects as a form of (white) female empowerment. I believe these presentations demonstrate the depth and range of contemporary comparative race work, and the far-reaching implications of this field.

In so doing, these scholars take up alternative modes of imagining coalition in order to advance new modes of comparative race analysis that situate contradiction and contestation as the basis for a collective anti-racist politics. Thus, these presentations do not merely take up “African American,” “Asian American,” “Chicano,” and so on as knowable and internally coherent, nationally based categories that can be compared. Rather, these presentations fundamentally question nationalist and identitarian principles and suggest new methodologies for understanding how such racial categories and the intersections between them can be defined. *Strange Affinities* advances out of an understanding that these racial formations are never uniformly produced but are internally contradictory and uneven.

The title, *Strange Affinities*, registers the complexity of comparative racializations. While creating and recognizing new modes of affinity is the purpose of this project, doing so means recognizing the strangeness at the heart of this enterprise. The scholarship collected in this volume will examine instances of what Angela Davis has termed “unlikely coalitions” across a variety of differentiated histories. In so doing, this scholarship suggests a methodology by which contradictions, conflicts, and disidentifications emerge as the ground on which cross-racial relations informed by anti-racist, feminist, and queer critiques are forged. This panel, I hope, will give a sense of the range and depth of scholarship that centers queer and feminist analysis within comparative race methodologies, and provide an opportunity for the CSW community to engage with this exciting line of inquiry.

GRACE KYUNGWON HONG graduated from UCLA with a B.A. in English and an M.A. in Asian American Studies. She received her Ph.D. in Literature at UC San Diego. She was an Assistant Professor at Princeton University and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Hong joined the UCLA faculty as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian American Studies and the Program in Women’s Studies in 2005.

UCLA CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WOMEN *presents*

The Experience of Being a Girl in a Man's World

***How Discouraging
Comments and Sexual
Harassment Shape
Adolescent Girls'
Achievement,
Aspirations, and
Self-Concept***



©Michelle Malven

Christia Spears Brown

Assistant Professor, Developmental Psychology

TUESDAY, APRIL 24 • ROLFE 2125, 4 PM

www.csw.ucla.edu

Law, Women, Children, and HIV/AIDS

Moving from Theory to Practice: a case study of Uganda

JENNY KUPER

London School of Economics and Political Science

This talk will discuss the process of bridging the gap between legal theory and practice, using law creatively to implement policy change. In this case the body of law that will be examined is international human rights law, especially as it applies to women and children – and the practical context is the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Uganda up to about 2004. Among other things, this topic explores the tension between international legal norms and local realities, and the intense debate within Uganda on this issue.

MONDAY

APRIL 23

UCLA LAW SCHOOL

12 NOON

FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN

PRESENTED BY THE UCLA
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WOMEN

Feminist Philosophy of Science

mini-conference organized by **SANDRA HARDING**
Professor, GSEIS, UCLA

Standpoint Matters:
Epistemic Injustice and Epistemic Advantage

ALISON WYLIE
Professor, Philosophy, University of Washington

Reason, Values, and the Politics of Knowledge

HELEN LONGINO
Professor, Philosophy, Stanford University

Feminist Values and Philosophy of Science

ELIZABETH POTTER
Alice Andrews Quigley Professor of Women's Studies, Mills College

FRIDAY, May 18 ■ 1 to 4 pm ■ Moore 3340