

OVERVIEW BY FACULTY CURATOR ABIGAIL C. SAGUY

Obesity Body Size

Faculty Curator Series for Winter 2010 will feature talks by Paul Campos, Katherine Flegal and Marilyn Wann

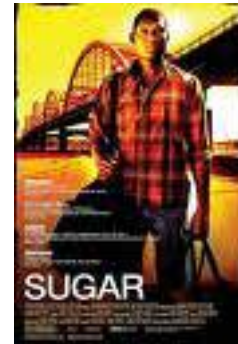
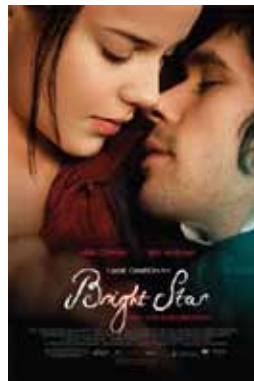
THE PAST DECADE has seen increasingly intense concern that the United States is eating itself to death. News reports typically evoke an impending disaster, such as a news title that blasts, “Bigger Waistlines, Shorter Lifespans: Obesity a ‘Threatening Storm’” (Semuels 2005). Shortly after the terrorist attacks in 2001, then-Surgeon General Richard Carmona went as far as to call obesity the “terror within” and predicted that that “unless we do something about it, the magnitude of the dilemma will dwarf 9-11 or any other terrorist attempt” (Associated Press 2006). As medical researchers and social scientists investigate the possible causes and potential solutions for the so-called obesity epidemic, politicians have been proposing a range of legislation, from “BMI report cards” and “fat taxes” on high-fat and high sugar foods (Chute 2006; Kantor 2007). Meanwhile, several very fat children have been removed

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IN THIS ISSUE

Women Directors in the Buzz Zone

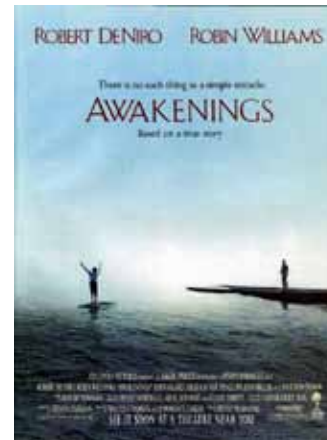
2009 HAS BEEN A BANNER YEAR FOR WOMEN DIRECTORS. A number of them directed major releases or indie favorites this year. Films directed by women include Katherine Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker*, Anna Boden's *Sugar* (co-directed with Ryan Fleck), Jane Campion's *Bright Star*, Claire Denis' *35 Shots of Rum*, Nora Ephron's *Julie and Julia*, Lucretia Martel's *The Headless Woman*, Nancy Meyer's *It's Complicated*, Mira Nair's *Amelia* and Lone Serfig's *An Education*. A few are in the "buzz zone" for major directing or best picture awards. Bigelow and Serfig are definitely in the zone and Jane Campion is in the periphery. As the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will nominate ten rather than five films for the Best Picture Oscar this year, comedies, often shunned, may make the cut, in which case Ephron and Meyer might be recognized—but that is a very long shot. Nevertheless, three women as possible contenders for Best Director, or whose films may



be nominated for Best Picture, do make this a banner year, as sad as that is to say. The strength of three can be measured in the context of certain facts:

In the history of the Academy, only three women have ever been nominated for Best Director: Lina Wertmüller for 1976's *Seven Beauties*, Jane Campion for 1993's *The Piano*, and Sofia Coppola for 2003's *Lost in Translation*. No woman has ever won the award.

In the history of the Academy, only four women have ever had films nominated for the Oscar for Best Picture: Randa Haines in 1986 for *Children of a Lesser God*; Penny Marshall in 1990 for *Awakenings*; Barbra Streisand in 1991 for *The Prince of Tides*; and Valerie Faris in 2006 for *Little Miss Sunshine* (which she co-directed with Jonathan Dayton). None of these films won the award. In the history of the Cannes film festival, only one woman, Jane Campion, has ever won the top prize, the Palme d'Or, which she did for her film *The Piano* in 1993. Chen Kaige also won that year.



The awards season is just beginning and things look very good for Kathryn Bigelow (and better and better as I write this). *The Hurt Locker* won the Best Feature award from the Gotham Independent Film Awards and was recognized as one of the top ten films of 2009, along with Lone Serfig's *An Education*, by the National Board of Review. Bigelow's film made the AFI's 2009 Top Ten Film List announced yesterday, just as she and her film were awarded Best Director and Best Film by the New York Film Critics Circle the same day. And an hour ago, the L.A. Film Critics Association awarded Best Director and Best Film to Bigelow as well. The Oscars loom and she seems a shoo-in for a nomination and a possible win in both major categories. What would make it a truly remarkable year is if two or three women were recognized with nominations. Three may not be a very big number, but this year, for women directors, just one director breaking out of the "buzz zone" and into awards contention will not be enough.

— **Kathleen McHugh**
December 14, 2009

from their homes by child services on the grounds that their girth is evidence of neglect or abuse (Belkin 2001; Eaton 2007).

In many ways, the public health crusade against cigarette smoking has provided a model for addressing the country's suspected weight problem. Yet, unlike smoking, which has been glamorized by Hollywood, in the contemporary United States fatness is extremely stigmatized. For example, children aged ten and eleven who were shown drawings of other same-sex children and asked to rank whom they liked the most, consistently ranked drawings of fat children the lowest, preferring a child with missing limbs or in a wheel-chair (Latner and Stunkard 2003). Girls are even more likely to express negative sentiments towards fat girls than boys are towards fat boys (Latner and Stunkard 2003). Among adults, women are also more likely than men to be penalized, both in employment and in marriage prospects, for being heavy (Puhl, Andreyeva, and Brownell 2008). Given this, it is not surprising that women were more likely than men to have taken the weight-loss cocktail fen-phen that resulted in heart-valve problems, are more

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GENDER and BODY SIZE: WINTER 2010

WEDNESDAY
Jan 20

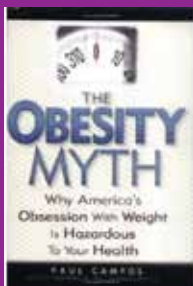
Royce 314
5 to 7 pm

Fat and Identity Politics



Paul Campos
PROFESSOR OF LAW,
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

In his talk, Paul Campos, author of *The Obesity Myth: Why America's Obsession with Weight is Hazardous to Your Health* (Gotham, 2004) will address how the medical establishment continues to support efforts to make fat people thin, through weight-loss diets, drugs, and surgery. This talk will examine the extent to which attempts to cure or eliminate obesity are akin to conversion therapy and if they are equally harmful.



WEDNESDAY
Feb 10

Royce 314
4 to 6 pm

Weight & Mortality

THE POPULATION PERSPECTIVE



Katherine Flegal, Ph.D.

SENIOR RESEARCH SCIENTIST / DISTINGUISHED
CONSULTANT, NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS,
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Katherine M. Flegal, Senior Research Scientist Distinguished Consultant, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will discuss her research related to obesity and mortality. Estimates using nationally representative data will be presented, along with discussion of some of the criticisms that have been raised regarding this research. Flegal is the co-author of "The Burden of Obesity: Estimating Deaths Attributable to Obesity in the United States," *American Journal of Public Health* 94:9 (September 2004): 1486-1489 and "Excess Deaths Associated With Underweight, Overweight, and Obesity," *JAMA* 293 (2005):1861-1867.

MONDAY
Mar 1

Royce 314
4 to 6 pm

The Real F-Word

FIGHTING FAT FEAR
DURING THE WAR ON "OBESITY"



Marilyn Wann
AUTHOR AND ACTIVIST

Marilyn Wann, activist and the author of *Fat! So?: Because You Don't Have to Apologize for Your Size* (Ten Speed Press, 2004), will discuss how weight-related messages permeate so many areas of society, from media and fashion to medicine and legislation, from our inner thoughts to our biggest life decisions. If you've ever spent time or money or effort worrying about what you weigh, her talk offers some liberating options on how to think and act.



likely to diet, and are disproportionately and increasingly likely to have weight-loss surgery (Bish, Blanck, Serdula, Marcus, Kohl, and Khan 2005; Fraser 1998; Santry, Gillen, and Lauderdale 2005). Some public health scholars have argued that much of the negative health effects that are attributed to the physiological effects of “excess adiposity” may in fact be due to *weight-based stigma* (for example, Muennig 2008).

In my own research, I have been examining debates over body size as a medical, public health, and/or civil rights issue. I initially assumed that there were clear health risks associated with being even slightly heavier than current guidelines. Surely, I assumed, being “overweight” must mean more health problems and earlier mortality. As I dug deeper into the research, however, I found that there was considerable debate over these questions (Saguy and Riley 2005). Moreover, I discovered a fascinating social movement called the “fat acceptance” or “fat liberation” movement. Building on the success of new social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, including civil rights, black power, women’s movement, and queer politics, the fat acceptance movement has reclaimed the stigmatized term “fat” as a neutral or positive descriptor and a basis

Some public health scholars have argued that much of the negative health effects that are attributed to the physiological effects of “excess adiposity” may in fact be due to weight-based stigma.

for collective identity. They reject the terms “overweight” and “obesity” as pathologizing and medicalizing what they consider to be normal and often healthy physical variation.

Perhaps because being heavier has more and immediate negative social implications for women, women have dominated the fat acceptance movement. While not all fat acceptance activists or organizations are feminist, important subgroups have developed feminist analyses of fat oppression (Cooper, 1998; Schoenfelder and Wieser, 1983; Wann, 1999; see also Millman, 1980). Whereas many feminist critiques of narrowly defined and unrealistic body standards focus on the plight of women who *mistakenly* believe they are fat due to a fashion industry that promotes images of emaciated female bodies (Bordo 1993; Wolf 1991), fat acceptance activists have specifically addressed the experiences of women who are, by any measure, fat.

The Gender and Body Size series will feature a range of academic and activist speakers, each of whom has played leading roles in public debates over body size. Paul Campos, J.D., a Professor of Law at the University of Colorado and author of *The Obesity Myth*, will kick off

the lecture series on January 20 from 5 to 7 PM, with his talk “Fat and Identity Politics.” Katherine Flegal, Ph.D., epidemiologist and senior research scientist at the National Center for Healthy Statistics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will present her talk “Weight and Mortality: the Population Perspective” on Wednesday, February 10, from 4 to 6 PM. Finally, fat-liberation activist and author of *FAT! SO?: Because You Don’t Have to Apologize for Your Size*, Marilyn Wann will present her talk “The Real F-Word: Fighting Fat Fear During the War on ‘Obesity’” on Monday, March 1, 4 to 6 PM. All talks will be held in Royce 314 and are free and open to the public.

Abigail C. Saguy is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at UCLA.

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Mishuana Goeman

In her work, she explores how poetry and literature intervene in continued erasure of Native presence on the land and the accumulation of Native land and bodies into empire.

Mishuana Goeman recently joined the Department of Women's Studies as an Assistant Professor. Her research interests include Native American Literature, 20th Century American Literature, and Race and Ethnic Theory. She comes to UCLA from Dartmouth College. She completed her Ph.D. at Stanford in 2003.

Can you tell us about your project Unconquered Women, Unconquered Nations: (Re)mapping Race, Gender, and Nation in Native Women's Writing Nations and how you came to write it?

At times, I feel like I have been working on Native women and literature since my first year in college. I graduated from Dartmouth with a BA in English

and Native American Studies (NAS) and when I went on to graduate school continued on that path. Native literature, however, is very difficult to access at the graduate level, so my work began to be influenced by a variety of studies and the interdisciplinarity that my program, Modern Thought and Literature at Stanford, allowed me. I already had a great grounding in NAS and with new

knowledge attained from my class work in other areas of race and gender, I began the first stages of my manuscript. My central question became: How does poetry and literature intervene in continued erasure of Native presence on the land and the accumulation of Native land and bodies into empire? Mapping, as a powerful metaphor with material groundings, quickly rose as the principal method of unsettling imperial geographies. Mapping is metaphorical; here you can think of the symbols on the map needing context and interpretation. Yet they also construct the material; they exert power and bring into being sets of social, political, and economical relationships. From the earliest moments of contact Native people understood the power of European mapping and the importance of their own forms of cartography. This project turns to an examination of the steps that

Native people, particularly women, have taken to mediate the maps of colonial and national imaginative geographies. To begin to (re)map the settler-nation, we must start with Native forms of mapping and consider Native-made spaces which are too often disavowed, appropriated, or co-opted by the settler-state through law, politics, and the terrains of culture. My argument traces various colonial spatial (re)structurings in Settler Indian policies and how they worked to incorporate Native lands and bodies into the state. However, Native women continue to construct their own imaginative geographies that have real world consequences.

Can you tell us about “Native Feminism” and its development?

This is a difficult question! My center

as a Seneca woman comes from a long line of aunts, grandmothers, cousins, stories, and so forth. It also centers my politics. Many tribal traditions position women differently than European gender models and these differ vastly from Indigenous nation to Indigenous nation. Thus while I have been working with a group of Native women from all over to develop an intellectual field that deals with heteropatriarchy and settler-colonialism, we use the plural Native Feminisms to reflect the vast differences of tribal traditions and vast differences in the processes of colonization. The Dutch, French, English, Spanish, Canada, Mexico, United States, and so on, all settled the Americas through various processes of force and coercion. What are shared are common goals to mitigate and eradicate the effects of colonialism and imperialism. There have been

fraught relationships with mainstream feminisms and even women of color feminisms that deal directly with ideas of equality and the state. Developing a field that sees the state as a problem is necessary if you are dealing with settler-colonialism. Native Feminisms has been dealing with the issue of the state longer than most fields of inquiry and is a very rich area in which to examine a variety of contemporary issues. I recently co-edited a special volume in *Wicazo Sa* with Navajo historian Jennifer Denetdale that deals directly with Native Feminisms, its legacies, and some current approaches to Native Feminist practices.

What's the T.R.I.B.E.S. Program?

That was so very long ago! It is a bridge/scholarship program for incoming first-year students developed through C.E.R.T.

Each year has a different experience. Mine was difficult as I was the sole East Coast Native! Most of the tribal nations involved with C.E.R.T. are in the West. Plus there was programming issues. That said, I highly encourage people to attend and have had students who have gained a lot from the experience. It gave me an introduction to tribal politics and government, and I loved participating in the mock tribal court. Of course, that was when I still thought law school was my main goal. This experience was pivotal as it was the first time I was apart from my family. I actually went the day after I graduated from high school. The vast differences in Indian country and even the environment were overwhelming at times. My experience before that was mainly with Wabanaki from Maine and northeastern Canada, Anishinabeg, and Haudenosaunee people. The differences

and similarities provided the largest learning curve!

Where did you grow up? What drew you to Dartmouth? How different was it coming to California?

I grew up as the daughter of a Seneca ironworker—so we travelled all over the East Coast. Our home bases were Tonawanda Rez and Northern Maine. I moved so much; so, those places and my extended family became very important to me. My dad and uncles worked together, and so I often lived with everyone. I first was drawn to Dartmouth because of its Native American Studies program as an undergraduate. I went back to Dartmouth as a professor because of its commitment to Native students and my commitment to teaching them. Dartmouth is unique

in the experience and energy it puts into recruiting and retaining its Native students. In fact, the presence of Native students and the popularity of NAS as a discipline at Dartmouth is felt throughout the campus. Many schools were founded under the premise of educating—read civilizing—Native students but very few have rethought original charters. Even fewer have thought through where the university land grants come from or where the land originated. More universities should try to reconcile these disparities.

I knew California was going to be different as I had done my graduate work at Stanford, but LA is very, very different from the Bay Area! I still flip out a bit when I realize that I live in LA. But I am excited to be in an environment that reflects the sort of intersectionalities I am interested in. LA is also a huge relocation area from a federal Indian policy program

in the 1950s that created diasporic Indian communities. It is exciting for Native film and other arts. I am excited to learn more about LA once I have adjusted more to the differences in driving.

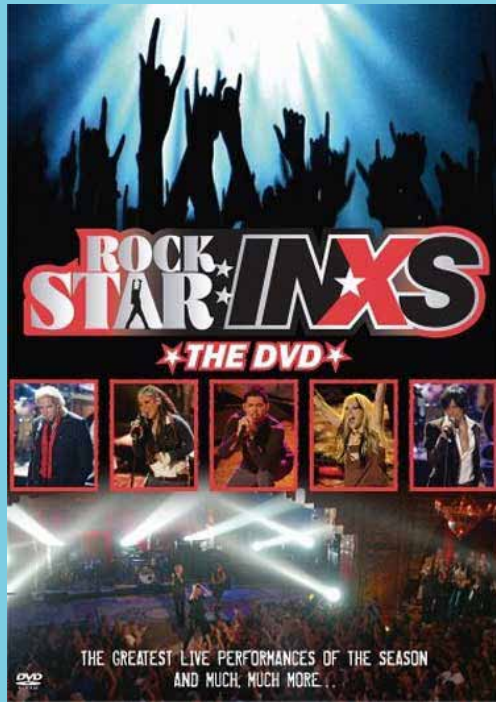
What courses are you teaching this year?

Women of Color Feminisms and Indigenous Women and State Violence.

What do you like about being at UCLA?

I love the Department of Women's Studies and the way it is growing. The intellectual focus and goals are very invigorating! American Indian Studies seems to be experiencing growth as well, and I am excited to see what the new director and other new faculty will come up with! It also is nice that relationships with neighboring Native nations and

even those further away have already been established. This community and university element intrigues me in both WS and AIS! I love the access to so much in the arts, theater, and film. I have been drawn very much into the visual culture field lately, and UCLA strikes me as the place to be! I was also attracted to being in a public university—especially the University of California, which has educated so many who have enriched the world. I can't say I love my immediate furlough though! I also worry for student fee hikes and hope that the damage doesn't eventually detract from the very special place the UCs hold for all of us who work in academia. It is a very special public school system. I have hope because of this that it won't continue to go down this road for much longer.



GENRE TROUBLE

Selecting Hits, Histories, and Bodies
on *Rock Star: INXS* >>>

During the summer of 2005 CBS broadcast *Rock Star: INXS*, a reality television show helmed by Mark Burnett (famously the producer of *Survivor*) in which contestants competed to take the helm of waning rock band INXS following the 1997 suicide of singer Michael Hutchence. Each week contestants performed rock “standards” ranging from songs by the Rolling Stones to recent popular hits by such bands as the Killers. After voting by an at-home audience, the bottom three contestants were called to the stage and asked to perform an INXS song. Based on these performances, the surviving members of INXS made a decision about which contestants would be allowed to stay and which would be sent home. On the surface the show’s parade of midriff-baring divas and leather-clad impersonators seemed to offer little more than a laughable homage to rock culture à la *American Idol*, but *Rock Star: INXS* actually provides a unique barometer of contemporary industrial and cultural trends within rock music and media convergence. Here I concentrate on the show’s performance of complex, and at times contradictory, discourses surrounding rock music as a genre

and rock stardom as a structuring myth of the rock music industry. In attempting to define the meaning of “rock star” in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the show begins by sketching rock as a historical, legitimate, and pluralistic genre, while finally settling for a much narrower definition of the rock star.

To make claims for rock as a genre is no easy task, partly because the word “genre” itself can imply different degrees of essentialism, exclusion, and mobility. Johan Fornäs elucidates two forms of rock as genre: one that is inclusive and indistinct from other forms of popular music, and one which is defined in opposition to non-rock musics such as rap, pop, and country.¹ In selecting songs and singers, the producers of *Rock Star: INXS* and the surviving members of INXS had to engage with both concepts of rock-as-genre in order to define rock in a way which worked for the band, the producers, the network, and the fans.

The efforts to distinguish rock as a genre separate from pop usually has to do with rock’s claims to authenticity, which might be rehearsed in binary oppositions such as rock album vs. pop single, rock interiority vs. pop

The efforts to distinguish rock as a genre separate from pop usually have to do with rock’s claims to authenticity...



The tension between constructing rock as an “open” popular music genre that runs the gamut from Stevie Wonder to Courtney Love, and policing the boundaries of what counts as rock, plays out throughout Rock Star: INXS.



shallowness, and rock’s affective value vs. pop’s commercial value. While such binary constructions of the rock/pop divide are highly problematic, any definition of rock must contend with the pop question. *Rock Star: INXS* sought to distinguish itself from the unabashedly “pop” *American Idol* by having its contestants perform authentically “rock” (read: not pop) songs and, in order to get the rights to these songs (often denied network television productions), those involved with the show had to convince rights holders that the songs would be used for an authentically “rock” (read: not *American Idol*) show. This logic was funneled through claims to rock’s seriousness in relation to conceptions of “pop” music as frivolous. Typical is *Variety* critic Phil Gallo’s characterization of *Rock Star: INXS*: “No auditions, no criticism, no cut-ups—none of the ‘*American Idol*’ stuff that makes [audiences] convulse with laughter. This is serious business from the start.”² *American Idol*’s lack of seriousness, often characterized as “the William Hung factor” after the hilariously untalented *Idol* contestant, is contrasted with the sincerity of *INXS*’s efforts to find a real rock star. Such rhetoric speaks

to popular music scholar Keir Keightley’s idea that, “Pop is understood as popular music that isn’t (or doesn’t have to be, or can’t possibly be) ‘taken seriously’”. Rock, in contrast, is mainstream music that is (or ought to be, or must be) taken seriously.”³ It is precisely this argument that those involved in getting *Rock Star: INXS* off the ground mobilized in their discussions with the artists/rights holders of the songs they wanted to use and this logic was also foundational to the choices the program made in pursuing various songs/artists.

While the show initially had to utilize a narrow genre definition of rock in order to bracket itself off from the most insidious qualities of pop characterized (or perhaps caricatured) by *American Idol*, this work was only the first prong of a two-pronged genre strategy. Having distinguished itself as a rock-oriented show, *Rock Star: INXS* was then free to grapple with the question of what such a categorization entailed, ultimately embracing a concept of rock that was ostensibly open, but which paradoxically mandated a more narrow concept of who could be a “rock star.” During its search for what executive producer David Goffin calls “legitimacy,” the

show was particularly spurred on by obtaining the rights to songs that resonated with a normative white male conception of rock: he states, “When we got the Doors, I believe we obtained legitimacy.”⁴ The tension between constructing rock as an “open” popular music genre that runs the gamut from Stevie Wonder to Courtney Love, and policing the boundaries of what counts as rock, plays out throughout *Rock Star: INXS*.

Johan Fornäs has argued that generic openness is essential to the survival of rock, proclaiming:

Rock will die (petrified into a cliché) if its hegemonic line is strong and stiff enough to repress all Others in its efforts to establish a pure origin and canon. If and when rock can be unambiguously defined, then it will be dead. But as long as various Others (‘Afro-American’ soul, reggae and rap, ‘female’ pop, non-Anglo-American voices, and so on) fight stylistic wars with the male, white, Western rock heroes for the right to rock, the genre will survive as an open and unpredictable field.⁵

Fornäs’ manifesto proves prophetic in the case of *Rock Star: INXS*’s ultimate lineup of songs and performers. One can, indeed, go through the above list and point out performances of Sam Cooke’s “Bring it on Home to Me” (Afro-American soul), Bob Marley’s “No Woman, No Cry” (reggae), Britney Spears’ “Hit Me Baby One More Time” (female pop), in addition to a host of other songs which might qualify as “Other” than rock: Stevie Wonder’s “Superstition” (funk), Elvis Presley’s “Suspicious Minds” (rock’n’roll),⁶ Bob Dylan’s “Knocking on Heaven’s Door” (folk)⁷, and so on. Naturally, *Rock Star: INXS* also includes its share of white male rock, and white male performers, but it is important to note that three of the most popular (and long surviving) contestants on the show were an African American man with a mohawk (Ty Taylor), a white Canadian woman (Suzie McNeil), and a Filipino Australian man (MiG Ayesa).

The apparent diversity of *Rock Star: INXS*’s conception of the rock genre, and the potential for rock stardom seems to be a point of pride for the show, ultimately adding to, rather than diminishing its rock legitimacy. Consider show co-host and “genuine”

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rock star Dave Navarro's description of the show's content: "We have songs from Nirvana, Living Colour, Courtney Love, the Black Crowes, Rolling Stones, the Who, to name a few. The songs they're going to be performing are real, great rock songs."⁸ Navarro is careful here to foreground not only the "white male heroes" of classic rock such as the Stones and the Who, but also black hard rock band Living Colour and controversial female rocker Courtney Love within his definition of "real" rock. Similarly, the media's scrutiny of the show's contestants often favorably emphasized the program's decision to include non-white-male rockers. After the first episode, one journalist remarked, "Nearly half the contestants are women and fortunately, based on just one [performance], several of them are stronger than some of the men. Were they not, their casting would feel like an eye-candy decision and nothing more."⁹ Following a campaign of counter-pop positioning, *Rock Star: INXS* ultimately opened its stage to a highly pluralistic (if not entirely groundbreaking) definition of the rock genre.

The first episode is highly indicative of the first phase of the show, which revolves around remaining "true" to the painstakingly gathered tunes the show has access to. The first episode is somewhat conservative in the choices it offers the rockers. None of the initial fifteen songs (which do cover a significant range of music, tracing rock history from Bob Dylan to Nirvana) rock the boat, so to speak, of rock genre. In the earliest episodes of the show, the primary goal seems to be not so much performing as impersonating the star whose song the contestant has chosen. In the first episode, the would-be rockers are thus praised for their ability to cover rock greats or punished for their inability to do so. The three contestants who receive the highest praise on the first episode, Neal, Ty, and Deanna, also emerge as the best suited for impersonating the singers they have chosen for the episode. Neal, a lanky New Yorker with longish, curly brown hair, is praised for his performance of the Rolling Stones' "Brown Sugar" after convincingly impersonating a swaggering, stomping Mick Jagger. African American singer Ty's performance of Living Colour's "Cult of Personality" is met with even greater praise

by the members of INXS and Dave Navarro. Navarro is so confounded (perhaps partially because of Ty's uncanny resemblance to Living Colour frontman Corey Glover) that he utters of Ty: "He's like modern, he's like classic, he's like timeless." It is difficult to overlook the fact that Ty, the only African American man on the show, begins his *Rock Star: INXS* stint by doing a song by one of the best-known modern black rock bands. Deanna's treatment of Janis Joplin's "Piece of My Heart" is perhaps the most convincing impersonation of all. Deanna's big, bold voice is well suited to "do" Joplin. However, she goes beyond vocal impersonation, opting to leave her long hair down and messy, donning a longish skirt and allowing her midriff to show. She even adds a Joplin-esque "Shut up!" in the middle of a phrase and raunchily grabs her thigh at one point. Neal, Ty, and Deanna's successful performances, or rather impersonations, are thrown into sharp contrast by MiG and Dana's less successful starts.

While MiG eventually placed third in the *Rock Star: INXS* competition, his first performance, Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit," puts him off to a bad start. His

decidedly un-Kurt Cobain stage presence (he cheerfully waves at the audience as he sings “Hello, hello, hello...”) causes Dave Navarro to cringe and mouth the word “no.” MiG is saved from elimination by his ability to sing but is chastised for picking a song that he could not deliver with appropriate reverence.¹⁰ Dana, who attacks Bob Dylan’s “Knocking on Heaven’s Door,” is not so lucky. Her velvet pants and fringed shirt do not match Dylan’s image, just as her voice does not match his vocal style. When the struggling singer lets out a strange growl toward the end of the song, the camera cuts to reaction shots of horrified contestants and the INXS band members, and soon after Dana becomes the first one to be cut. INXS bassist Gary Beers explains that if you are going to do “one of the greatest songs” by “the greatest songwriter,” you must perform it “perfectly.” Perhaps what he means is that you must perform it as Dylan would. Rock history must be taken seriously and a woman (Dana) and Filipino Australian (MiG) are deemed unable to live up to the standards of the white male rock stars they attempt to cover.

ROCK STAR INXS

DANA
 HOMETOWN: STUDIO CITY, CA
 OCCUPATION: MUSICIAN/BARTENDER/YOGA INSTRUCTOR/DANCER
 AGE: 30

TUESDAY, 10:00PM ET/PT
 WEDNESDAY, 9:00PM ET/PT

HOME PERFORMERS EPISODES SHOW PHOTO GALLERY

BRANDON DANA DAPHNA DEANNA HEATHER J.D. JESSICA JORDIS MARTY MIG NEAL SUZIE TARA TY WIL

J.D.'S WITH THE BAND
 With their former housemates looking on, the final three rockers begin the finale by singing covers from the show's roster... [more](#)

WHAT'S NEW

- 9/20 Marty's Final Words
- 9/20 Mig's Final Words
- 9/20 Recap for Episode 32

Check out www.rockstar-auctions.com, featuring auctions to benefit the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

To find out how to register to vote, check out ROCK STAR: INXS on MSN.com

msn

Rock Star: INXS, CBS.com

Had *Rock Star: INXS* continued as an impersonation show, it is likely that fans (both of rock and of television) would have grown tired of the program's mere rehearsing (or rehashing) of rock history. As one journalist notes, "Skilled and big-voiced as they may be, almost all of them have cloned themselves on a specific predecessor... the singers of *Rock Star* have the mannerisms of rock'n'roll performance down pat—the rasp, the raunch, the strut. Their repertoire of hackneyed gestures makes *Rock Star* akin to a TV version of the Jack Black movie *The School of Rock*—except that the humor...[comes from] the contestants' hopelessly uncool rendition of cool."¹¹ Uncool or not, this author's allegations of humor speak to the danger of contestants straining the generic boundaries that the show so carefully sets up. While the performances that begin the show are meant to solidify rock as a genre and demonstrate the contestants' sincerity in their desire to rock, *Rock Star: INXS* must move beyond a somewhat limited definition of rock (great songs by great songwriters/performers) in order to maintain audience interest and avoid ridicule. In the case of *Rock Star: INXS* this

meant dispensing with a somewhat inclusive interest in genre as interpreted by a variety of voices and bodies in favor of an increased focus on white male subjectivity which has, since the 1960s (when white rock largely supplanted black rock'n'roll), been linked to the "authentic" production of rock.

Despite the fact that *Rock Star: INXS* contestant JD Fortune began his career as an Elvis impersonator, he was ultimately chosen to front INXS based not on his ability to rehash classic rock idols, but to do "his own" thing. JD is one of only two performers (both of whom are white men) who wrote and performed single-worthy songs during the run of *Rock Star: INXS*. JD's song, "Pretty Vegas," a collaboration with INXS member Andrew Farriss, became the first single off INXS's post-*Rock Star* album. The gravity of JD's authorship in the context of a show attempting to make claims for the ongoing vitality of rock is explained by Keir Keightley, who says, "Like 'authenticity,' the word 'author' is etymologically related to the 'self.' If the rock musician's 'self' is not involved in originating the text she or he performs, rock believes that self is more likely to be corrupted or alienated

(and that, in turn, the listener's sense of self may be diminished)."¹² JD is authenticated as a rock star by his origination of a song that can be circulated creatively and commercially.

Even when JD does not write his own original songs, he is celebrated for creatively altering the work of others in a way that suits his (and arguably the show's) conception of a rock star. The *Rock Star: INXS* website paints JD as "the rocker who takes the most chances and the most control over his choices."¹³ This is demonstrated by his performance of Alanis Morissette's "Hand in My Pocket," of which the site says, "Above a driving Bo Diddley beat, he pushes the song forward, singing just a little in front of the beat, transforming the original's resignation into something that Dave [Navarro] describes as 'more masculine.' Andrew is impressed with the way JD 'took command.'"¹⁴ Here JD's authorship and authenticity are expressly connected to his masculinity, demonstrating the show's implication that while women can perform rock, only men can master it.

Rock Star: INXS is a complicated document in that it wrestles with the complex history of rock which can be mapped onto skirmishes

between “pop” as frivolous and “rock” as serious, as well as the problematic legacy of racial borrowing and gendered exclusion. The relationship between television (a medium for the masses) and rock music puts further pressure on the show and its mission: to define the rock star in 2005. The show’s early efforts to be inclusive of rock music’s “others” are ultimately given the lie by its privileging of the white male rock star. The show’s “genre trouble,” which plays out in the difficulties of locating particular bodies and subjectivities within the ever-changing confines of genre as a historical and discursive formation, provides a productive case study in understanding the negotiation of race, gender, and sexuality within the culture industries.

Laurel Westrup is a Ph.D. candidate in the Cinema and Media Studies Program in the Department of Film, Television, and Digital Media at UCLA. She received a Center for the Study of Women/Graduate Division Irving and Jean Stone Dissertation Year Fellowship earlier this year.

Notes

1. Fornäs, Johan. “The future of rock: discourses that struggle to define a genre.” *Popular Music* 14, no. 1 (1995).
2. Gallo, Phil. “Rock Star: INXS.” *Daily Variety*. July 11, 2005: 6.
3. Keightley, Keir. “Reconsidering Rock.” In Simon Frith, Will Straw, and John Street, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001: 128.
4. Seibel, Deborah Starr. “The Real Story Behind a Real Turnaround.” *The New York Times*. Sept. 20, 2005: E4.
5. Fornäs, 121.
6. Many critics and scholars, following Charlie Gillett’s work in *The Sound of the City: the Rise of Rock and Roll* (1970), make a generic distinction between 1950s “rock and roll” or “rock’n’roll” and “rock,” which is generally said to begin with the British Invasion of the 1960s.
7. Actually, this song is itself a complicated one to position generically, since many folk purists consider Dylan’s post-1965 electric work to be disqualified from any meaningful designation as folk.
8. Quoted in O’Hare, Kate. “INXS Selecting New Performer on ‘Rock Star.’” *Palm Beach Post*. July 10, 2005: TV Post 3.
9. Gallo. It should be noted, however, that Navarro’s behavior toward the women on the show was often somewhat indistinguishable from sexual harassment. He tells Deanna at one point that after her first performance (of Janis Joplin’s “Piece of My Heart”) that he “needed a cold shower.”
10. Dave Navarro, having come of rock star age during Nirvana’s heyday, is especially critical of the Nirvana performances throughout the show. It might be argued that by demonstrating his reverence to a “real” rock star (the deceased Cobain) Navarro effectively bolsters his own rock authenticity.

11. Press, Joy. “Almost Famous.” *Village Voice*. July 26, 2005: 99.
12. Keightley, 134.
13. *Rock Star: INXS* website: <http://www.rockstar.msn.com/recaps/week2/performance>.
14. *Ibid*. An entire study might focus on the metanarrative of the Rock Star website, which is careful to orient performance recaps (and video footage) not only in the context of the show, but in the context of rock history and criticism.

PENNY L. RICHARDS

RESEARCHING GENDER AND DISABILITY STUDIES

A dedicated historian, an occasional crafter, and a CSW Research Scholar since 1999, Penny L. Richards pursues many projects united by a single purpose: championing what might have been lost or overlooked. The first was, in effect, thrust upon her. In 1994, her grandmother handed her a jumbled bag of about two hundred letters from Scotland, written between 1855 and 1903. The bulk of the letters were from Marion Brown (1843–1915), who lived her whole life in the neighborhood of Sanquhar, Dumfriesshire. Richards transcribed the collection, and in 2001 she found Iain Hutchison, a colleague in Scotland, who was also interested in disability in nineteenth-century Scotland. They have been working on the letters together ever since. Written over four decades, the collection of letters are by a rural Scottish

Letters from Sanquhar

Transcribing a collection of nineteenth-century letters

Useful Links

[Proper Introductions](#)
[Iain Hutchison on Marion Brown](#)
[Memorials of Sanquhar Kirkyard by Tom Wilson \(1912\)](#)
[Dunmore Historical Society](#)
[Sanquhar Knitting at the Future Museum](#)

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RICHARDS
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▼ 2009 (15)
▼ September (2)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2009

Bogg, 10 October 1872

This is a long, eight-sided letter, full of interest, to James Bryden in Dunmore. Marion mentions her burnt hand (three times) and a toothache, but also says that she can walk a distance with minimal assistance, which is a big improvement from past letters. The weather is wet and the crops are bad; the cows aren't producing quite as much milk as they had in the spring; Tam Scott isn't home much, and uncle William's hay still isn't got up. Prices are high and getting higher, so much that Marion worried about keeping a supply of coals for the fire.

It's a busy, hard fall at the Bogg. Marion Brown, however, has her mind on other things--Halloween, marriage, dreams, a ring, apples, and the fervent, repeated hope that James will visit Sanquhar again soon. Her joking about her own romantic prospects here is more blatant than in most letters--she says she's in no hurry (at age 29), that she'll maybe come to America first, that one young man had even offered to give her a glass of brandy and put her to bed. It says something about the intimacy of the friendship between James Bryden and Marion Brown that she'd feel comfortable writing such things to a man not yet kin.

The Bogg

October 10th 1872

Letters from Sanquhar: <http://lettersfromsanquhar.blogspot.com/>.

woman who didn't leave the Scottish homeland like many of her family members and who experienced lifelong disability.

Richards is slowly re-transcribing them for a blog called "Letters from Sanquhar," while following up on various references with links and such. The address is <http://lettersfromsanquhar.blogspot.com/>

Richards has been interested in the history of disability since about 1995. While she was writing her dissertation, entitled "A Thousand Images, Painfully Pleasing': Complicating Histories of the Mordecai School, Warrenton, North Carolina, 1809-1818," her son was born with a rare disorder that brings several significant areas of impairment. She knew her next project would need to explore the history of families like what hers had become. She worked out a postdoctoral arrangement with George H. S. Singer, Professor of Education at UC Santa Barbara, who wanted to do more with the history of disability himself. The two co-authored a journal article about a Southern planter family's response to their son's educational needs in the 1810s and 1820s: "'To Draw Out the Effort of His Mind': Educating a Child with Mental

H-Disability
AN H-NET DISCUSSION NETWORK

H-Disability is a scholarly discussion group that explores the multitude of historical issues surrounding the experience and phenomenon of 'disability.' H-Disability was established in response to the growing academic interest and expanding scholarly literature on issues of disability throughout the world.

Recent Messages **Recent Reviews**

- H-Dis: Replies re history of disability and religion Daniel Wilson <dwilson@MUHLENBERG.EDU>
Author: Elizabeth K...
Reviewer: Ian Miller
Title: [The Body in Medical Culture](#)

H-DISABILITY discussion network: <http://www.h-net.org/~disabil/>.

Retardation in Early-Nineteenth-Century America" was published in the Journal of Special Education (Volume 31, Winter 1998). Fourteen years later, Richards is stepping into a term as president of the Disability History Association for 2010, and well into her ninth year as an editor of H-Disability, a scholarly discussion group that explores the multitude of historical issues surrounding the experience and phenomenon of disability. H-Disability

was established in response to the growing academic interest and expanding scholarly literature on issues of disability throughout the world. Part of the H-Net, the address is <http://www.h-net.org/~disabil/>.

Another of her ongoing projects involves buying purses and backpacks in thrift shops and "upcycling" them with paint, collage, text, ink and whatever else is at hand. She started from the usual very mundane place: a stained

purse of her own that she wanted to rescue. Seeing some collaged and painted shoes in a magazine, she got an idea. She also volunteers teaching art at a local school, and she always has an abundance of art supplies on hand at home. After some experimentation, she eventually found ways to use them on purses to make statements but also allow them to remain of practical use. Then, because people wanted to buy them, she got a seller's permit and a business license and set up shop online! All things she never saw herself ever doing.

Usually, the bags feature historical women—suffragists, scientists, aviators, artists—and often quotations from them, as well as a tag to explain who they are. Purses and backpacks are “out there,” they're meant to be carried and to be seen. Thus each purse becomes a small history moment that prompts users and viewers to think further on the subject, talk about it wherever they go, and maybe even follow up to learn more about the story. The images come from Flickr Commons, where historical photos with a “no known copyright restriction” status are available from the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian, and other archives. “So I'm pointing folks toward those



This purse was commissioned by the George Eastman House and features a photo of Grace Greenwood from their collection.

amazing sources too,” says Richards. Flickr Commons actively encourages such “crowd-sourcing” activities as tagging, commenting, and the “remixing” of their photographs by artists and others. The address is <http://www.flickr.com/commons/>.

Recently the George Eastman House asked Richards to make a purse for their collection. She needed to select a photo from their collection on Flickr. She chose a photograph of Grace Greenwood (1823-1904), who was the first woman reporter on the payroll at the New York Times and who wrote essays, lectures, and poetry. A popular lecturer on women's rights, Sara Jane Lippincott was her real name, but she adopted a pen name for her writing. Both

names are on the purse, a detail to ponder, and she appears in duplicate to echo that aspect of her story. The purse displays this quotation: “The women of the next age will be the stronger and the freer, aye, the happier, for the few brave spirits who now stand up fearlessly for unpopular truth against the world.” “Well, that was referring to some really basic rights for women in Grace Greenwood's time, but it still applies today, doesn't it?” says Richards. “The image itself seems demure at first glance, but when you know her story and read her words, maybe she looks braver, with her focus on the future; or maybe the tensions between her exterior and her interior add to the fascination. It's all meant to prompt these musings.”

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