

# Victoria Sork

DEAN OF LIFE SCIENCES PURSUES INNOVATIVE  
PLANT RESEARCH AND ADVANCES INTERDISCIPLINARITY  
AND DIVERSITY IN THE DIVISION



february 2013

# CSWupdate



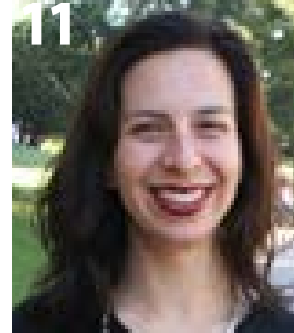
**Director's Commentary**  
BY RACHEL LEE



**Victoria Sork**



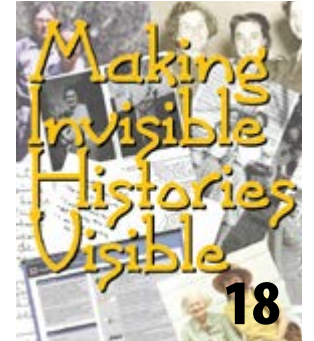
**Vandana Shiva**



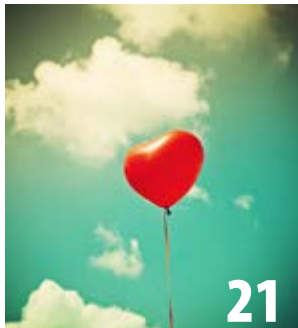
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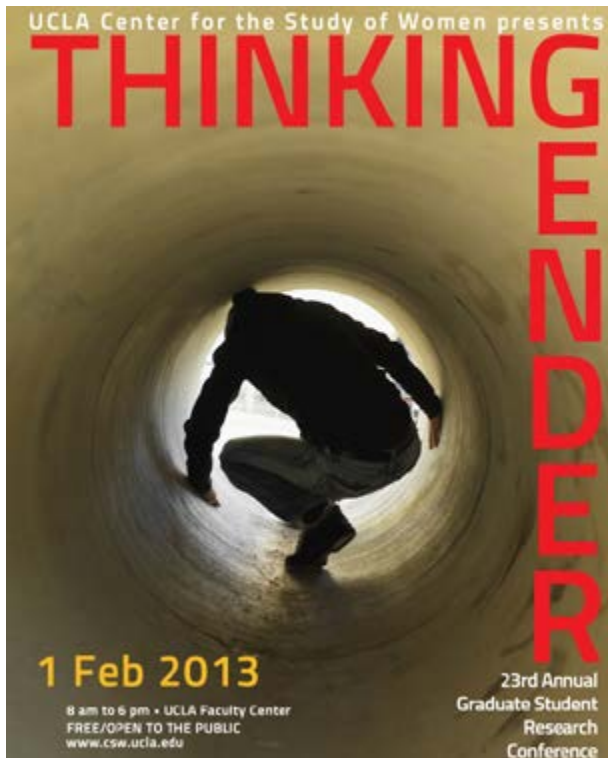
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## UN-THINKING GENDER?

incubator of rigorous interdisciplinary exchange. Thinking Gender represents a genuine collaborative effort of faculty and graduate students, the latter running the conference and disseminating their research, the UCLA feminist and LGBTQ faculty volunteering their time and expertise by providing written feedback on papers by graduate students from around the globe. This year—the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Thinking Gender, CSW hosted over 200 attendees from Germany, the United Kingdom, Austria, Norway, Canada, as well as the United States. A highly competitive conference, it features the cutting-edge research of younger scholars who are arguably among the select few most likely to obtain tenure-track positions, making the volunteer labor of already overburdened faculty rewarding enough to keep signing up, year after year, to chair and

discuss. Making this conference possible is our unique partnership with UCLA's Graduate Division, provider of funds for a graduate student coordinator who in addition to the more specialized training in the vetting of research abstracts and plenary paper selection—gains translatable real-world skills in project management and events programming.

During a lunch chat with Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education Robin Garrell and Vice Chancellor of Academic Personnel Carole Goldberg at this year's conference, I hazarded that the range of research on women, gender, and sexuality reflected in the program represents a significant expansion and diversification of women's issues and feminist activism beyond the days of our early assistant professorships. Garrell shared that it was

February, the shortest month, has traditionally been one of the most ambitious, most exhausting, and most rewarding for CSW. Our signature conference, Thinking Gender, opens the month, as we host graduate students from snowier regions to balmy southern California lured by the conference's well-earned reputation as an

not uncommon in those days to see pin-ups in the labs in Chemistry. Indeed, if we think of this year's Thinking Gender as a laboratory of collaborative exchange on the topic of gender, sexuality, and women, it is striking that our program and poster image for the conference—our pin-up, as it were—has come what seems full circle: a gender-indeterminate figure dressed in jeans, hoodie, and athletic shoes, crouched in a culvert with back to the camera. This gender-indeterminate figure, one body length from emerging into the sunlight, might be considered on the cusp of naissance, entering a (hopefully) nurturing new environment after, let's say, a 23-year-long labor down the canal. This figure doesn't displace or serve in quite the same way as the pin-up in the organic chemistry lab, which might have been a visual pun on that other meaning of "chemistry"—sexual attraction, the erotic connection or intimacy lived definitely outside the lab even as its amino acid, peptide, and amine components might be studied inside it as molecules. Nevertheless, I extend the laboratory conceit because Thinking Gender

has functioned precisely as an experimental space of bringing together organic components—here, graduate student and faculty researchers—mixing and crossing them in conventionally controlled as well as surprising, even volatile combinations to yield new discoveries and unexpected results. To wit, the figure on our poster would most likely not have been the combinatory result expected for those casting about on the subject of women's rights (with a very middle-class white presumption of who that woman was) in the mid twentieth century.

It is sometimes difficult for those, conceiving of labs and studios as high-cost repertoires of action occurring in brick and mortar spaces, to perceive the more nimble and periodic structure of *Thinking Gender as a crucial laboratory infrastructure* that gathers individual researchers and cross-pollinates humanistic, social scientific, life, and physical science research. My mission for this commentary is to illuminate the role Thinking Gender plays and to propose that its documented success in generating interdisciplinary collaboration needs to be expanded fur-

ther to more tangible outcomes level. One way to do this would be to select plenary panelists for extended research collaboration facilitated by CSW across the year. Tangible here also refers to the inputs (the necessary funding of innovation) for these synergies in cross-training and collective results making. Concretely, these students would be enrolled in weekly Google-hangout meetings, share the results of their work, and collaborate on a multi-authored project that experiments in a networked and blended approach. Happily, this mission aligns with current priorities in bringing more parity to the distribution of funding for graduate students across campus. CSW looks forward to partnering with Grad Division and with private and public foundations to inaugurate this second phase of our exciting, innovative, and renewed laboratory experiment: Un-Thinking Gender—decidedly not; rather, Gender Lab: TG 2.0.

—Rachel Lee





# Victoria Sork

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DIVISION

**S**INCE TAKING over as Dean of UCLA's Division of Life Sciences in 2009, Victoria Sork has developed a set of initiatives that delineate her objectives for the division and her understanding of the role of the university in meeting the challenges facing society. These initiatives reveal her conviction that interdisciplinary research collaborations will be the engine for generating fresh approaches and innovative methodologies. These efforts include the development of a robust computational biosciences program to create a research infrastructure, health research focused on interdisciplinary research collaborations, biological conservation projects, and mentorship programs to advance diversity in the division.

The mentorship initiative reveals her firm and lasting commitment to promoting diversity at UCLA. In an interview with *UCLA Today* when she was appointed Dean, she affirmed that maintaining a focus on diversity grew out of her own experience as a young scientist: "Early in my career, when I realized there were not many women in science, I decided that if I got in the door, I had to keep the door open for others. We also need to keep the doors open to underrepresented minorities. They need to know they are wanted here and what a great place this is for their careers to flourish." The mentorship program in Life Sciences is focused on recruiting, mentoring, and motivating underrepresented students and faculty. She emphasizes that her



**Dean Sork's current research uses genomic tools to study the valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) in California**

belief in the importance of promoting access and opportunity for all groups was shaped in part by her experiences teaching women's studies in previous positions.

With a passion for science that began at age 10, Sork has never stopped doing experiments. A pioneer in landscape genetics and genomics of plants, she has spent the last decade as a professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, which she chaired from 2004 to 2009, and the Institute of the Environ-

ment and Sustainability. She arrived at UCLA in 2000 as a fellow for the American Council for Education, working as Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Academic Initiatives until she received a faculty appointment in AY 2001/2. Before coming to UCLA, she was the founding director of the International Center for Tropical Ecology at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Sork is a senior associate editor of *Molecular Ecology* journal and has served on many editorial boards, advisory

groups, and academic program review boards. A native Californian, she received her bachelor's of science degree with honors from UC Irvine and her Ph.D. from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor.

While being Dean keeps her very busy, Sork continues to pursue her own research, which examines ecological and evolutionary processes in plant populations that will shape the ability of trees to respond to human-caused landscape change and climate warming. Her current research uses genomic tools to study the valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) in California. She has collaborations on other tree species in Mexico, Ecuador, and China. Sork's research is a model for how innovative research can be applied to a contemporary social problem.

Dean Sork recently recognized CSW's own innovative approach to fostering interdisciplinarity by providing support—along with the UC Humanities Research Institute, the Institute of American Cultures, the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, the Institute for Society and Genetics, the Division of Humanities, and the Department of English—for CSW's upcoming "Cultural Politics of Seeds" symposium, which is on May 17th..

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Photo credit: Valley oak by Philip Bouchard, Flickr





update  
FEBRUARY 2013

***“You are not Atlas carrying the world on your shoulder. It is good to remember that the planet is carrying you.”***

**VANDANA SHIVA**

# VANDANA SHIVA



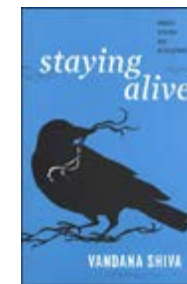
***To celebrate International Women’s Day, CSW is hosting a lecture by the world-renowned philosopher, environmental activist, ecofeminist, and academic researcher on agricultural and women’s empowerment issues.***

*We are either going to have a future where women lead the way to make peace with the Earth or we are not going to have a human future at all.*

– Vandana Shiva

**B**ORN IN INDIA IN 1952, Vandana Shiva is a world-renowned environmental leader and theoretician. Director of the Research Foundation on Science, Technology, and Ecology, Shiva is a leader in the International Forum on Globalization, along with Ralph Nader and Jeremy Rifkin. She addressed the World Trade Organization summit in Seattle, 1999, as well as the World Economic Forum in Melbourne in 2000. In 1993, Dr. Shiva won the Alternative Nobel Peace Prize (the Right Livelihood Award). In 2010, she was awarded the Sydney Peace Prize for her commitment to social justice. The founder of Navdanya (“nine

seeds”), a movement promoting diversity and use of native seeds, she also set up the Research Foundation for Science, Technology, and Ecology in her mother’s cowshed in 1997. Its studies have validated the ecological value of traditional farming and been instrumental in fighting destructive development projects in India.



Dr. Shiva is the author of many books, including *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development* (South End Press, 2010); *Soil Not Oil: Environmental Justice in an Age of Climate Crisis* (South End Press, 2008); *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sus-*





## Act for Seed Freedom: Join the Fortnight of Action 2-16 October 2012

Seed is the source of life and the first link in the food chain. Control over seed means control over our lives, our food and our freedom.

[Learn more about the Seed Freedom Fortnight >>](#)

### JOIN THE SEED FREEDOM MOVEMENT



#### *Join the Movement*

Sign the Declaration on Seed Freedom  
Join the Seed Freedom Fortnight



#### *Become a Seed Saver*

Check out Navdanya's Seed Kit and learn  
how to setup your own community seedbank



#### *Become a Seed Defender*

Join the seed satyagraha to stop  
patents on seed and protect seed sovereignty.



#### *Share your ideas and actions*

Share with us your ideas, actions, thoughts,  
efforts & experiences about seed freedom



#### *Donate*

Even a little support goes a long way



#### *Spread the Word*

*Globalized industrialized food is not cheap: it is too costly for the Earth, for the farmers, for our health. The Earth can no longer carry the burden of groundwater mining, pesticide pollution, disappearance of species and destabilization of the climate. Farmers can no longer carry the burden of debt, which is inevitable in industrial farming with its high costs of production. It is incapable of producing safe, culturally appropriate, tasty, quality food. And it is incapable of producing enough food for all because it is wasteful of land, water and energy. Industrial agriculture uses ten times more energy than it produces. It is thus ten times less efficient.*

–Vandana Shiva



*tainability, and Peace* (South End Press, 2005); *Water Wars: Pollution, Profits, and Privatization* (South End Press, 2001); *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge* (South End Press, 1997), *Monocultures of the Mind* (Zed, 1993), and *The Violence of the Green Revolution* (Zed, 1992).

In addition to celebrating International Women's Day, her talk will serve as keynote address for a conference titled "Global Ecologies: Nature/Narrative/Neoliberalism," organized by Elizabeth DeLoughrey, UCLA; Jill Didur, Concordia University, Canada; and Anthony Carrigan, Keele University, UK, and will take place at UCLA on March 8 and 9, 2013.

Dr. Shiva's lecture, which is presented by the Vice Provost of the Office of Faculty Diversity and Development, the Center for the Study of Women, and the organizers of Global Ecologies, will take place March 8, 2013, at 6 pm in Broad 2160 E. The event is free and open to the public. Tickets are required. For more information, visit: <http://www.csw.ucla.edu/events/vandana-shiva>.

For more information on Dr. Shiva's work, you can visit <http://www.navdanya.org>



Marissa López is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English and the César E. Chavez Department of Chicano/a Studies at UCLA. She received a CSW Junior Faculty Development Grant in 2011.



# Sentimental Mexicans in Nineteenth-Century California

BY MARISSA LÓPEZ

*No es la raza Mexicana diferente de la Americana para que se crea que solo en nuestro cuerpo se recontaran las enfermedades.*

(The Mexican race is not different from the American race and one should not think that disease only takes hold in our bodies.)

– Mexican Laborers’ Petition to the Mexican Consul in the United States  
(quoted in Molina, 67)



I AM VERY GRATEFUL to the Center for the Study of Women for awarding me a Junior Faculty Development grant to fund my research for “Feeling Mexican: Ruiz de Burton’s Sentimental Railroad Fiction,” an article about *The Squatter and the Don* (1885), the English-language novel by María Amparo Ruiz de Burton (*shown at left*) about the aftermath of the Mexican American War, the building of the Southern Pacific Railroad, and the racialization of Mexican Americans in California. When I began this work on Ruiz de Burton, I intended to investigate the correlation the novel sketches between the railroad’s re-shaping of Mexican land in the 1870s and the re-making of the Mexican American body as raced and debased in the Anglo American imaginary during this same period. *Squatter* posits a womanly sentimentality against male physicality in making its argument for ethical citizenship and racial reconciliation, so I was particularly interested in whether Ruiz de Burton sees gender and race as immutable, physical characteristics, and if so, how these ideas might fit into

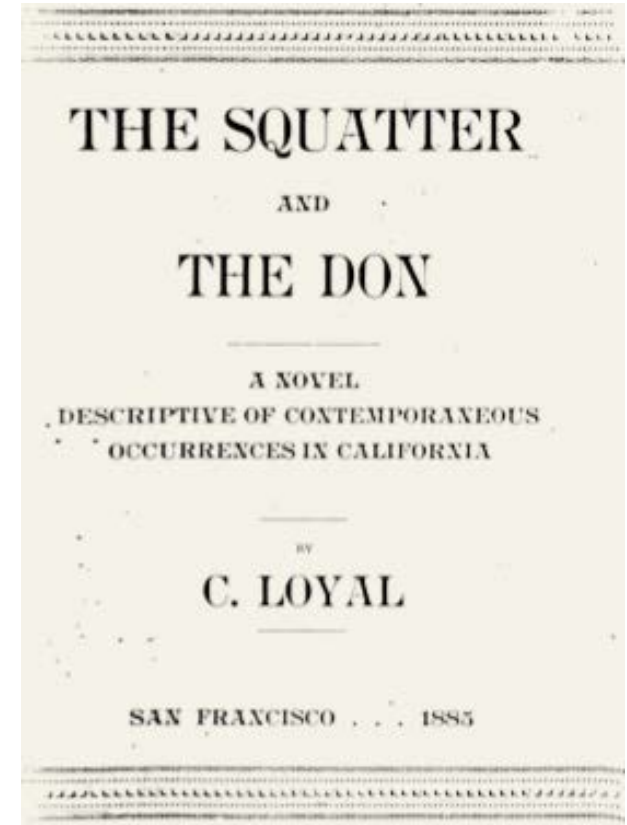
broader discourses of citizenship and Mexican American community at the turn of the last century.

While I did get the chance to explore those questions, my research plan hit a few bumps in the road and some dead ends. I applied for the grant to fund a research assistant who would help me with what I imagined was going to be the core of the project: archival research into public health policy and popular discourse about the railroads in late-nineteenth-century California. Initial explorations at the Huntington yielded interesting discoveries, but nothing that helped me dig deeper into Ruiz de Burton's text, and records of the Public Health Departments of Los Angeles and San Diego counties yielded no information about Mexican Americans for the latter part of the nineteenth century. Reading Natalie Molina's excellent study *Fit to Be Citizens*, I learned that Mexican Americans made no appearance in official public health documents until the twentieth century, which helped explain my fruitless archival sleuthing, but meant that I needed to find another way, besides emergent public health discourses, to explain Ruiz de Burton's conspicuous attention to the body.

Scholars before me had written about the body in *Squatter* largely in sentimental terms. They used the linkages between whiteness and

feeling, forged by such canonical sentimental authors as Helen Hunt Jackson and Harriet Beecher Stowe, to argue against a reading of *Squatter* as a resistant text, a turn that David Luis-Brown complicates in *Waves of Decolonization*. Though Luis-Brown calls sentimentalism a "highly protean form" (47) whose politics shift with the social location of its author, a key assumption with which he must contend, and which *Squatter* blithely reinforces, is that the capacity to feel is congruent only with whiteness. Thus, sympathetic as he is with Ruiz de Burton's project, Luis-Brown, along with others who have written about it, reads *Squatter* as complicit with, rather than resistant to, Anglo American imperial racism.

Their readings of *Squatter's* sentimental turn as meant to align the Alamar family with Anglo gentility, to reify, rather than unsettle, whiteness, are not incorrect, but such arguments are made wholly within the confines of the sentimental, and a playful, tongue-in-cheek tone lurks beneath the surface of the novel's dalliance with it as well as with the tidy resolutions of the historical romance, its sister form. "Really, I think our romance is spoiled," jokes one character after a couple have overcome the girl's mother's objection to their relationship. "It would have been so fine—like a dime novel—to have carried you off bodily," he quips,



**The Squatter and the Don was published in San Francisco in 1885 by María Amparo Ruiz de Burton using the pseudonym of C. Loyal. The English-language novel addresses the aftermath of the Mexican American War, the building of the Southern Pacific Railroad, and the racialization of Mexican Americans in California.**



Anachronistic though it may have been, and despite Mexicans' absence from nineteenth-century public health discourses, I remained convinced that the railroad was my way into understanding the corporeality of *The Squatter and the Don*. This feeling was fueled by an incident that Molina documents: in June of 1916 a Mexican laborer living in a camp for railroad workers in Palmdale, California, came down with a case of typhus. This caused no small amount of anxiety in the city, spurring a rash of hygiene education programs aimed at the laborers, and providing ammunition to those arguing for tighter controls on Mexican immigration...

playfully diffusing the melodramatic potential of the scene (132).

*The Squatter and the Don* thus keeps the sentimental at arm's length, simultaneously seeking access to its white privilege while conceiving itself as generically distinct in key ways. The reader is meant to take *Squatter* seriously, which begs the question: what work is the body doing in *Squatter* if we are to consider it beyond the confines of the sentimental? As both John González and Jesse Alemán have noted, the novel deploys the body—specifically, as González argues, the body's ability to blush—in order to assert the Alamares' whiteness, but the novel's assertions are fraught and not entirely successful. In turning to public health as a lens through which we might read Ruiz de Burton, my aim was to radically shift the ways in which we understood the racialized body to be working in the novel.

Anachronistic though it may have been, and despite Mexicans' absence from nineteenth-century public health discourses, I remained convinced that the railroad was my way into understanding the corporeality of *The Squatter and the Don*. This feeling was fueled by an incident that Molina documents: in June of 1916 a Mexican laborer living in a camp for railroad workers in Palmdale, California, came down with a case of typhus. This caused no small

amount of anxiety in the city, spurring a rash of hygiene education programs aimed at the laborers, and providing ammunition to those arguing for tighter controls on Mexican immigration (Molina 61). As several of the laborers noted, however, in a petition to the Mexican consul from which I take my epigraph, disease is not a feature endemic to Mexican bodies at the exclusion of Anglo Americans. Poor sanitation and squalid living conditions, rather than a genetic tendency towards slovenliness, rendered the Mexicans in Palmdale more vulnerable to typhus, the laborers argued. These petitioners were seeking help ameliorating the situation in the camp, while also objecting to the ways in which public health programs had taken control of the socio-political meaning of *mexicanidad*. To be Mexican, at this moment in Palmdale, was to be diseased.

Such a convergence of race and rail in the Southwest has a long and multifaceted history. It does not begin in 1916, nor does it affect only Mexicans. I see *Squatter* as offering a prehistory to this linkage as well as a means for combatting it through its deployment of the feeling body; feeling, in *Squatter*, is emotional as well as physical, and it crosses conventional, nineteenth century, gendered boundaries of sentiment. Situating *Squatter* in the broader context of U.S. literature, as I do, deviates from

the fair amount of critical attention *Squatter* has received in terms of the novel's relation to later Chicana/o literature. While some scholars have attended to the novel as a work of sentimental fiction, fewer have discussed *Squatter* specifically as a railroad novel.<sup>1</sup> In the article I ultimately completed, with the invaluable support of CSW, I do just that, asking what we learn about the nineteenth century when we consider particular kinds of genre fiction from a Mexican American perspective.

Certainly the genteel Mexican American protagonists at the heart of *Squatter* appear far removed from the Mexican workers in Palm-dale, but are they really so very different? One might assume, as the characters in *Squatter* do, a clear distinction between the laboring bodies of the rail workers and the feeling bodies of *Squatter's* protagonists, but both find themselves in a similar philosophical bind. In asserting their humanity—the universality of the physical, against corporate objectification—the rail workers can only reify corporate power as the agent of public discourse about the raced, Mexican body. Similarly, though *Squatter's* protagonists would be loath to associate themselves with the rail workers, setting the feeling

1. Amelia Montes is a notable exception, reading *Squatter* against Frank Norris's treatment of the railroad in *The Octopus*. "Whereas [Norris] plows the literary landscape clean of everything except the Anglo-American voice," writes Montes, "Ruiz de Burton embodies and embraces—fuses their cultures into her own brand of what contemporary Chicana scholars have now termed "mestizaje" (209).

body in opposition to apathetic capital serves only to codify rather than dismantle the categories with which the novel takes issue.

This is, in fact, the crux of critiques that have been leveled against *The Squatter and the Don* since its republication by Arte Público Press in 1992. The novel has, however, had its champions. In their introduction to the 1992 edition, for example, Beatriz Pita and Rosaura Sánchez read *Squatter* as resistant to the encroachments of Anglo America, and they depict Ruiz de Burton's as an oppressed voice speaking truth to power. José Saldívar takes a similar approach in *Border Matters* where he reads *Squatter* as offering "readers a subaltern literature of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands" (168). Saldívar acknowledges Ruiz de Burton's own conflicted connections to Anglo power but values *Squatter* nevertheless for its ability to "track the almost forgotten histories of the cultures of U.S. imperialism" (183). Marcial González, likewise, argues that a text's self-consciousness should not limit our readings of it (54). Because it "initiate[s] a tradition of novels that respond specifically to the racialization of Mexican Americans in the United States," González considers *Squatter* a resistant, Chicano text (65).

*Squatter's* response to this racialization is admittedly uneven, though, as scholars like Jesse Alemán have pointed out. Alemán ar-

gues that *Squatter* "relies on strategies of class distinctions and regional alliances to naturalize the whiteness of Californios [the wealthy class of ranchers to which Ruiz de Burton belonged] against Indians and blacks," (59). He and others have noted that *Squatter* takes pains to identify the Alamares, the Mexican family at the center of the novel, as white, and to align them with the Anglo Americans of whom the novel approves. The novel does little to dismantle racial hierarchies, instead spending its energies proving the whiteness of Mexicans who, as one character notes, look English or German (Ruiz de Burton 85). Even so, in its conscious drive towards assimilation, *Squatter* reveals a Mexican American particularity. In this way, the recuperation of novels like *Squatter* does not just expand and bolster the literary history we already think we know; instead, these novels invite a fundamental rethinking of basic analytic categories such as, in *Squatter's* case, nations and nationalism.

Parallel to the novel's desire for the Alamares to be fully incorporated into U.S. social and political life is its desire to be understood in the context of U.S. literature, a desire manifest in its participation in the conventions of railroad and sentimental fiction. This literary turn reveals the impossibility of such integration, not in the overt workings of the plot, but



in the physical details of the bodies that hover along the plot's margins. In putting pressure on these bodies my reading attempts to move discussions of *Squatter* away from a focus on the particularities of Mexican American experience and towards a theoretical focus on dismodernity. As Lennard Davis has defined it, the dismodern relies on the malleability of the human body and identity (239). If postmodernity destabilizes the self, in other words, dismodernity destabilizes the body, emphasizes physical difference and disability as a unifying, ethical norm from whence new subjective categories and political identities will emerge. Dismodernity disavows the intact, self-sufficient human body, arguing instead for an ideology of connected, interdependent bodies enjoying a symbiotic relationship with technology (240). Considering the bodies in *Squatter* as instances of a Latino dismodern enables a categorical reconsideration of U.S. literature wherein the frailty of characters' bodies is a direct reflection of the frailty of nations.

*The Squatter and the Don* is only indirectly about national unity, however, concerned as it is with the impact of the Central Pacific on the elite Mexican American *ranchero* class. These genteel families are figured in opposition to the new social institution of rail primarily in terms of their feelings, their capacity for an

emotive humanism meant to offset rail's rapacious capitalism. Attention to the body and feelings in *Squatter* is a means to assert clear distinctions between human and machine. In my article, however, I pay the most attention to places where the opposition of body and machine breaks down, particularly in moments of human frailty and illness. For scholars of nineteenth-century Latina/o literature and for readers of *The Squatter and the Don*, dismodernity makes possible such a metahistorical reading of the physical travails of *Squatter's* characters. That is, rather than reading Mariano's, the Alamar patriarch, death or his son Tano's crippling as Mexican American political grievance, an ethics of the dismodern means that we can read *Squatter's* broken bodies and sympathetic machines as arguments about the frailty of nations. The body is always already imperfect, and the nation is always already composite, multiform, and interdependent.

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## POLICY BRIEFS PUBLISHED ON “LGBT YOUTH AT RISK: HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SAFETY”

TO ADDRESS the need for comprehensive policies that are sensitive to the needs of this vulnerable population, CSW chose “LGBT Youth At Risk: Education, Health and Safety” for the second volume in our series of publications rethinking public policy on gender, sexuality, and women’s issues. A generous anonymous donor provided support for a competitive award program to recognize outstanding applied feminist scholarship by graduate students, and a call for submissions was distributed to campus departments and units. Five briefs were selected for publication. In a brief titled *Preventing Discrimination in Services for Homeless LGBT Youth*, Lauren Permenter recommends that the Runaway Youth and Homeless Act be revised to include language that protects LGBT youth from discrimination based on sexual orientation in public services for homeless youth. Ashley



DeBaun, in her *Ensuring the Safety of LGBT Students at School* brief, shows how anti-bullying programs that



include actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity would benefit all students. In their brief, titled





*Ensuring Compliance and Accountability Will Make Schools Safer for LGBT Youth*, coauthors Steven Carrasco, Saba Malik, Alexander Martos, and Jeffery Williams suggest ways to address the accountability of school officials for continued harassment of LGBT youth. In her brief, titled *Facilitating Family Acceptance Through Intervention Programs to*



*Avert Displacement*, Patty Chung calls for programs that educate families of LGBT youth on how negative behaviors adversely affect young family members. Finally, Marisol Sanchez suggests that LGBT-inclusive sex education in schools will help reduce the rates of sexually transmitted infections in the LGBT youth population in her brief on



*Providing Inclusive Sex Education in Schools Will Address the Health Needs of LGBT Youth*.

These policy briefs will be distributed widely to agencies, legislators, organizations, and interested parties and will contribute to public dialogue on a topic vital to the welfare of all of us.

## ESTER BENTLEY COLLECTION

The best thing about working with a large number of different collections is that you never know what you're going to discover next. In the past year I've worked with collections featuring lesbian and feminist comic books, boxes full of T-shirts from music festivals, passionate love letters, and organizational materials from different activist groups. Because the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archive has such a generous collection policy, the materials not only represent individual people but also provide snapshots of communities and political movements. Many of the collections come to us with no contextual information; in some cases, we may not even know a donor's real name. Sometimes the collections are in conversation with one another, giving us a broader picture of a time or place or movement than any individual could. The Ester Bentley Collection functions simultaneously as an individual collection and as connective tissue between a handful











of other collections containing letters, photographs, and journal entries referencing or involving other donors to the collection. These overlaps and interweavings don't come as a complete surprise, given that Ester Bentley was an active and integral part of the lesbian activist community in Los Angeles for many years.

Born in Louisville, Kentucky, on October 24, 1915, she attended the University of Louisville but completed her Bachelor's of Science at Catherine Spalding College (also in Louisville, Kentucky). She completed her Master's in Social



Work at two institutions, beginning at Kent School of Social Work and finishing it at the National Catholic School of Social Service at Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. She also acquired a real estate license from the Scadron Business College in San Bernardino, California, and attended San Bernardino Valley College part-time. She spent the bulk of her career as a social worker in both administrative and field capacities. Upon her retirement, she focused on local lesbian activism and Catholic ministry. A large part of her collection is made up of photographs



documenting friends, family, and community life. My favorite photographs in the collection come from a series of road trips Ester took with her partner, mostly photos of landscapes along their way. She had an eye for capturing not just a moment but a mood in time. Her photographs provide a deep sense of time and space both of her own life but also of the communities of which she was a part.

—Stacy Wood

*Stacy Wood is a graduate student in the MLIS program at UCLA and a GSR for the NEH/Mazer project.*



## DOLL POWER: FEMALE ACTION FIGURES AS MULTIMEDIA TIE-INS

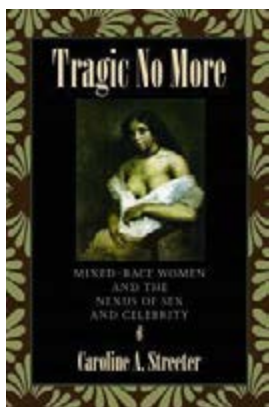
*Exhibit by UCLA Arts Library from February 11 to April 14, 2013*

Particularly since the 1970s, action figure tie-ins have served as an integral part of the merchandising strategy for cross-platform multimedia entertainment, including comics, film, television, and gaming. While initially designed for and marketed to children, many figures are now geared just as often to adult collectors.

This exhibit is devoted to female action figures tied to action-centric, fantasy, and superhero narratives. The figures in this exhibit, from the private collection of librarian Diana King, demonstrate a range of marketing and design features. They depict female characters

and the female form itself through a variety of cultural and industry lenses. The exhibit also includes a selection of books on media paratexts, tough women in popular culture, and comics history.

## NEW BOOKS BY AFFILIATED FACULTY



### TRAGIC NO MORE: MIXED-RACE WOMEN AND THE NEXUS OF SEX AND CELEBRITY

Caroline A. Streeter, Assistant Professor in the Department of English and the Ralph J. Bunche Cen-

ter for African American Studies at UCLA, has published a new book, titled *Tragic No More: Mixed-Race Women and the Nexus of Sex and Celebrity* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2012). According to the publisher, the book “examines popular representations of biracial women of black and white descent in the United States, focusing on novels, television, music, and film. Although the emphasis is on the 1990s, the historical arc of the study begins in the 1930s. Caroline A. Streeter explores the encounter

between what she sees as two dominant narratives that frame the perception of mixed race in America. The first is based on the long-standing historical experience of white supremacy and black subjugation. The second is more recent and involves the post-Civil Rights expansion of interracial marriage and mixed-race identities. Streeter analyzes the collision of these two narratives, the cultural anxieties they have triggered, and the role of black/white women in the simultaneous creation and undoing of racial categories—a charged, ambiguous cycle in American culture.” INFO: <http://www.umass.edu/umpress/title/tragic-no-more>



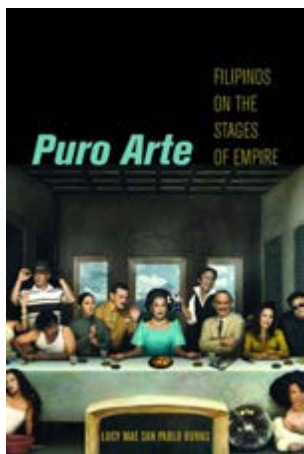
### OPERA AND THE CITY: THE POLITICS OF CULTURE IN BEIJING, 1770-1900

Andrea S. Goldman, Assistant Professor in the Department of History at UCLA, has published *Opera and the City: The Politics of*

*Culture in Beijing, 1770-1900* (Stanford University Press, 2012), which uses opera as a lens through which to examine urban cultural history. The study offers a new approach to Chinese opera history; it contributes to our understanding of Qing urban culture; and it employs gender as a critical category of analysis in examining state-society relations under Qing rule. INFO: <http://www.sup.org/book.cgi?id=11454>



## NEW BOOKS BY AFFILIATED FACULTY



### **PURO ARTE: FILIPINOS ON THE STAGES OF EMPIRE**

Lucy Mae San Rablo Burns, Assistant Professor of Asian American Studies at UCLA, has a new book out. *Puro Arte: Filipinos on the*

*Stages of Empire* (NYU Press, 2012) explores the emergence of Filipino American theater and performance from the early twentieth century to the present. It stresses the Filipino performing body's location as it conjoins colonial histories of the Philippines with U.S. race relations and discourses of globalization. Puro arte, translated from Spanish into English, simply means "pure art." In Filipino, puro arte however performs a much more ironic function,

gesturing rather to the labor of over-acting, histrionics, playfulness, and purely over-the-top dramatics. In this book, puro arte functions as an episteme, a way of approaching the Filipino/a performing body at key moments in U.S.-Philippine imperial relations, from the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, early American plays about the Philippines, Filipino patrons in U.S. taxi dance halls to the phenomenon of Filipino/a actors in Miss Saigon. Using this varied archive, Puro Arte turns to performance as an object of study and as a way of understanding complex historical processes of racialization in relation to empire and colonialism. INFO: <http://nyupress.org/books/book-details.aspx?bookid=10855#.UMoejcx1GCI>



### **WHAT'S WRONG WITH FAT?**

Abigail Saguy, Associate Professor and Vice Chair in the Department of Sociology and Associate Professor in the Department of Gender

Studies at UCLA, has a new book out called *What's Wrong with Fat* (Oxford University Press, 2012). It presents each of the various ways in which fat is understood in America today, examining the implications of understanding fatness as a health risk, disease, and epidemic, and revealing why we've come to understand the issue in these terms, despite considerable scientific uncertainty and debate. INFO: <http://www.oup.com/us/catalog/general/subject/Sociology/SocialProblems/?view=usa&ci=9780199857081>



## UCFEMTECHNET

*Feminist Infrastructures and Technocultures:  
Cross-Disciplinary Legacies and Future*

The UCHRI working group UCFemTechNet is proud to host “Feminist Infrastructures and Technocultures: Cross-Disciplinary Legacies and Futures” an assembly at University of California, San Diego from the evening of April 18 through the morning of April 20, 2013. This event is hosted by UCFemTechNet, a UC-wide interdisciplinary working group supported by the UC Humanities Research Institute, the the University of California, Santa Barbara Center for Information Technology and Society, and at UCSD the Science Studies program, the Department of Communication, the Critical Gender Studies program. Below a description of the event.

The working group UCFemTechNet has more than 60 members. There were more than thirty participants at the brainstorming session which took place last October at the UCLA Center for the Study of Women, where the seeds were planted that have resulted in this assembly.

Register, see the program, see the speakers, and get more information at: <https://quote.ucsd.edu/feministit>



*You can save energy and money by reducing your utility usage. If you are a homeowner, how do you determine out which home improvements are most cost-effective for your home? Do a home energy audit, or hire a contractor to perform one for you. Many websites have tips on how to evaluate your home's energy usage. Try <http://www.thedailygreen.com/green-homes/latest/DIY-home-energy-audit> or <http://energy.gov/energysaver/articles/do-it-yourself-home-energy-audits>*



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*supporting innovative research on women, gender, and sexuality*



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CSW Update is the newsletter of the UCLA Center for the Study of Women. It is published monthly during the academic year. UCLA faculty, staff, and students are welcome to submit articles for inclusion. If you have questions, please email the publications staff at [cswpubs@women.ucla.edu](mailto:cswpubs@women.ucla.edu)

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