

## DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY

# *STEM and New Majorities*

## *CSW 2010–2011*

**The highly acclaimed film,** “The Social Network,” depicts the scene where the company behind Facebook was created. In a Harvard dorm room in 2003, Mark Zuckerberg designates his best friend, Eduardo, the CFO and two other guys in the room the programmers. He concludes, “I’m the CEO.” One of the two women sitting with them asks, “What can we do?” and Zuckerberg barks out as he walks off camera, “Nothing!” Women in this otherwise very interesting film are the consumers of Facebook, the eye candy, and, once the company is up and running, underage interns. In 2010, there are few industries or fields where such an extreme gender differentiation could credibly be depicted.

In spring of this year, CSW’s will address some of those remaining fields in our Faculty Curator Series, “Stereotype Threat and Gender Disparity in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).” Jenessa Shapiro, Assistant Professor in the Department of Psycholo-

gy at UCLA, has put together an impressive line up of speakers to explore factors that result in these significant gender disparities. Also notable this year is the bi-coastal event that CSW is hosting with NYU’s Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality (CSGS) which will focus on conceptual and institutional best practices for research, teaching, and institutional affiliations in the areas of gender, sexuality, LGBT, ethnic, women’s, and postcolonial studies. CSW will host its part of the event, “New Majorities, Shifting Priorities: Difference and Demographics in the 21st Century University,” on March 4th and 5th; NYU’s event will be held on April 28th and 29th—mark your calendars!

Other new developments: In keeping with CSW’s support for green policies, we are introducing a new feature to the

newsletter. We will be running a “Keep it Green!” column for anyone to share environmental tips with the CSW community. Send us your tips and techniques (and be sure to read this month’s tip about how you can get rid of those plastic dry-cleaning bags!).

Last, but not least, CSW seen big changes this summer. In July and August, we welcomed new staff members Julie Childers as Assistant Director, Erma Acebo as Administrative Specialist, and Emily Walker as Administrative Assistant. Brenda Johnson-Grau continues as the head of the Publications Unit. If you have not met them yet, please stop by and say hello at the CSW offices at 1500 Public Affairs Building. We look forward to a wonderful year!

- Kathleen McHugh

# october 2010

# CSWupdate

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***“Aren’t you a little short to play basketball?”***

# Gender dynamics within Japanese American youth basketball leagues

BY CHRISTINA CHIN

*I walk into the stuffy high school gym to see a 6th grade boys' basketball game already in progress. I take a seat on the bleachers next to a group of lively parents who are shouting words of encouragement and clapping their hands in excitement. With only a 4-point difference on the scoreboard, the two teams are battling it out fiercely on the court, neither side willing to give up a single rebound or loose ball. One of the boys shoots a basket from the three-point line. It falls short and ricochets off the rim, dropping into the crowd of players below. I cringe after two boys collide into one another as they leap into the air to grab the loose ball. Both come crashing down to the gym floor but both boys seem unfazed and quickly regain their balance to lunge after the ball before it bounces out of bounds. As I breathe a sigh of relief that no one is hurt, one of the mothers leans toward me and says, "That was nothing! You should watch the girls play – they're way more aggressive and physical!"*

Sports have played a large part in the fabric of Japanese American history, shaping the lives and experiences of players, their families, as well as the ethnic community as a whole. In this regard basketball leagues have held a particularly long and influential history, offering a unique window into the Japanese American community (Niiya 2000; Regalado 2000). Today, Japanese American (JA) basketball leagues are thriving cultural and athletic organizations involving over 10,000 youth and adults participating in year-round leagues and tournaments in Northern and Southern California (Nakagawa 2001). Given the continued legacy and the growing popularity of sports leagues in the Japanese American community, I wanted to examine the construction and negotiation of gender dynamics within JA youth basketball leagues.

Previous studies have documented how sports have been a common arena for the construction of gender identities and meanings, often replicating broader gender systems of inequality where women, particularly female athletes of color, experience more barriers in their access to sports than their male counterparts (Brake 2000/2001; Duncan 2006; McDonagh and Pap-

## Do these leagues reinforce traditional gender notions or are they cultural spaces for the emergence of new and empowering identities within the Japanese American community, and the larger Asian American community as a whole?

pano 2008; Messner 2002, 2009). Sports often reinforce traditional feminine and masculine notions in which men appear to be well-muscled, strong, unemotional, and hyper-competitive. Women, on the other hand, should appear uninterested in sports, but if they do engage in sports, they are discouraged from exhibiting so-called masculine traits of independence, assertiveness, competitiveness, and must emphasize their femininity (Fine 1987; Hanson 2005; Lee 2005; Lovell 1991; McDonagh and Pappano 2008; Messner 2002, 2009; Thorne 1983). With few studies that have examined the impact of sporting activities on Asian American youth, my study investigates the intersection of race and gender among young third- and fourth-generation Japanese American athletes. Specifically my research examines how members in these leagues shape their own racial and gendered identities, both on and off the court. Do these leagues reinforce traditional gender notions or are they cultural spaces for the emergence of new and empowering

identities within the Japanese American community, and the larger Asian American community as a whole?

To explore these questions and to better understand the people, practice, and culture within these community organizations, I immersed myself within a local JA youth basketball league, the Pacific Coast Youth League.<sup>1</sup> Started in the 1960s as a purely volunteer-supported organization in Southern California, the PCY league currently sponsors over thirty male and female basketball teams with players ranging from 7 to 18 years old. The organization also hosts an annual basketball tournament which is one of the largest in the region, drawing up to four hundred participating teams from the Northern and Southern California regions. Although the PCY league does not hold or enforce any formal rules of racial or ethnic eligibility or quotas, the league is overwhelmingly Asian American with over half of its participants having full or partial Japa-

1. All names have been changed to protect the identity of participants and the organizations involved.

nese American heritage. For a year and a half, I followed eight different teams—one male and one female team in the 3rd, 6th, 9th, and 12th grades—for one basketball season. As a participant observer, I regularly attended weekend practices, games, tournaments, and committee meetings. I also interviewed several players, parents, coaches, former players, and league founders.

During my time at the PCY league, I found that these sporting spaces were active sites for the construction and negotiation of gendered identities. This was especially evident when members challenged racial and gendered stereotypes associated with Asians. Regarding some of these stereotypes, one parent comments, “Oh you know, they think Asians are just good at school – that we’re smart and we should just be hitting the books, not the courts.” One of the 6th grade boys laments, “A lot of people think that Asians are a lot weaker, shorter, and we’re only good at stuff like martial arts.” These racial stereotypes were

also gender specific as well. As a 12th grade female player explains, “I think a lot of people underestimate Asian basketball players.... Because you look at them and especially women, they’re shorter, skinny - a lot of people don’t really think they could muscle up on anyone.” Comments such as these highlight how Asians, females in particular, are stereotypically seen as being physically smaller, weaker, more submissive, un-athletic, and generally only book smart.

Some members saw participation in these leagues as a means to contradict some of these common negative Asian stereotypes. Especially for Japanese American female players, who are racialized and gendered simultaneously, league participation has been an outlet to challenge stereotypes of passivity, weakness, and submissiveness. Jenn, a current freshman at a private college in Southern California, takes great pride in challenging some of these Asian, female stereotypes. She recounts:

*Sometimes my friend and I will go to the park near my house and we’ll walk around and if there’s a game going, we’ll be like ‘Hey, can we jump in?’ It’s great when it’s guys playing, cause they’re just like ‘umm, ok, yeah, whatever.’ And they expect less from us because we’re girls – Asian girls. Especially ‘cause a lot of the guys who play out there are tall, white guys and*

*they’re like ‘Oh whatever, just let them play - they’re not gonna do anything.’ So it’s fun when we go out there and we’re dribbling around them and scoring all the time.*

For players like Jenn, the league offers a chance to develop and showcase their physical strength and skills, challenging assumptions that Asians are not athletic and only excel in academics or traditional Asian sports like karate, kendo, and other forms of martial arts.

Moreover, leagues have also been an outlet for parents to subvert these stereotypes as well. Nadia, a third generation Japanese American mother, wanted her daughter Wanda to play basketball rather than continue hula lessons because she believed her daughter would benefit in the long run from the greater physical activity and competitiveness in basketball - “I want her to be scrappy – not just a pretty dancer.” For both players and parents, participation in JA leagues offers members an outlet to rebuff negative stereotypes targeting Asians.

In addition to challenging the existing Asian stereotypes, players and parents are in many ways forging new sporting identities that are empowering and offer some players greater athletic opportunities and achievement. One of these new identities has been a growing trend of successful female JA “ballers” within the organization.

I should note here that these youth leagues are not pipelines into the NBA or WNBA, but several of the players, especially the female athletes, do go on to continue very successful and competitive careers at the high school and collegiate level. While basketball is generally considered a male-dominated sport in terms of its popularity, size, and success rate, JA female players are finding greater athletic achievements outside the league than male players. Coach Ken, the 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls coach, highlights a “glass ceiling” that seems to negatively impact male players:

*A whole chunk of PCY kids will play high school ball – frosh/soph, JV for sure. But by the time you get to varsity basketball, it drops quite a bit. And then there’s an even smaller percentage that will go onto to play college ball. But you won’t see as many PCY boys playing varsity. ... The girls can get by being short because they have the skills, the fundamentals. Whereas with the boys, you just can’t teach height and you need that if you’re going to play [boys’] varsity.*

In other words, more PCY female players will go on to have active participation and successful performances on teams outside the PCY league while their male counterparts fall short in their high school or college teams. One of the league com-





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mittee members half joked, “If the organization was smart, we would be pushing our girls to do better – they probably have a better chance of making it to the pros than our boys do.” The league’s success among JA female players could also be a reflection of the larger trend of Asian American players in NCAA Division I basketball teams. For example, in the 2006-07 Season, Asian American female players comprised 1.2 percent of all players while Asian American males comprised only 0.4 percent (National Collegiate Athletic Association 2008).

While the league has created outlets and opportunities for the emergence of empowering athletic identities, these youth leagues have also produced role models and athletic icons for PCY players and arguably, the larger ethnic and racial community as a whole. This is especially important given the general lack of Asian Americans in U.S. professional sports, especially basketball. When asked about how she felt about Asian American athletes in the NBA, Janet, a freshman at college commented:

*Yeah there’s Yao Ming - he’s biggest Asian person in the NBA. And there’s the Chinese ‘Magic Johnson’ who plays on the Lakers, but he didn’t even step on the court this year. You saw him sitting there in his suit, but I think he played in a game once and everyone*

was cheering. But he hasn't even done anything. I kind of wish we had someone there that was a true Asian American just there. I wish that we were more well represented.

Janet's words express her frustration for the lack of Asian representation in professional sports, especially "true Asian Americans" rather than Asian-born athletes that young players can relate to and aspire to be. In some cases, female players in the league have turned to their former PCY players as role models, especially since they grew up learning to play basketball on the same courts. For example, when asked to name some of her basketball role models, Janet responded:

*Diana Kowanami! She is just one of the best players you'll see! She can shoot, she can drive, she's a great defender, and you know, a lot of people are like, 'Oh well if she were a guy, she would have the height and all that stuff.' But she doesn't need to be. She's already proven herself – she's broken records at her university. And she's the same height as I am! She's great!*

While young Japanese American boys and girls are learning the fundamentals of basketball, including dribbling, shooting, rebounding, and boxing out, they are also actively constructing and negotiating

notions of race and gender within these sports leagues. Especially for female players, these basketball leagues offer spaces for youth to reject Asian stereotypes of weakness and passivity. In doing so, they are also creating empowering images and identities that challenge traditional feminine ideals. And as more female JA players find success on the court, their accomplishments could have a growing impact on inspiring future generations of Japanese and Asian American girls in search of role models, both on and off the court.

**Christina Chin is a graduate student for the Department of Sociology at UCLA. She was awarded a CSW travel grant to present her dissertation findings regarding Japanese American youth basketball leagues at the Association for Asian American Studies Annual Meeting in Austin, TX.**

**Photo credits:** All photos courtesy of Rafu Shimpo (Los Angeles Japanese Daily News) Online.

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# Think and Drink at SCT

**BY PATRICK KEILTY**

**I**T IS IMPOSSIBLE to separate sociability from inquiry at the School of Criticism and Theory (SCT) at Cornell University. Friendships and conversations form on the first day and continue long after the sojourn in Ithaca ends. They begin in a classroom or a large lecture auditorium, but soon find themselves taken up amid the cacophony of a local bar, at a reception of endless food and wine, at an intimate restaurant in The Commons, on a stunning hiking trail through the hills of Ithaca, at a picturesque swimming hole near a gorge, or within the halls of Cascadilla. It is no wonder that attendees frequently refer to SCT as "theory camp" – a site for critical inquiry and a

getaway from our everyday lives during the summer months. At SCT, knowledge production is a social event, not an autodidactic endeavor.

I imagined, as I arrived in Ithaca, an entirely different set of social and intellectual relations for the proceeding six-weeks. I doubted that anything more than superficial connections could form in such a short period of time: faculty would impart their sage knowledge at a decorous distance; lectures and seminars would take the form of a spectacle with fixed sight-lines and specially prepared questions and ideas; my fellow participants would retreat to their apartments alone in the evenings





**School of Criticism & Theory's summer institute that offers faculty members and graduate students in the humanities and social sciences a chance to work with preeminent figures in critical thought.**

for something like monastic contemplation. Coming from Los Angeles, I imagined the sweltering heat of the Ithacan summer would only allow for a sedate and sober lifestyle. I had prepared for a quiet, low-key, bookish vacation—a pleasure that was gladly denied me. By the last day of SCT, I found myself dancing to Lady Gaga at Pixel, a local bar, alongside Timothy Murray, who taught my six-week seminar, surrounded by my fellow participants, wishing the experience of SCT would never end. Over the course of six-weeks, I realized, faculty had become friends as well as participants, helping to cultivate a generous intellectual environment.

In our multimedia seminar, entitled “Digital Discourse: Theory, Art, Archive,” Tim set the tone for social and critical inquiry. At the beginning of each class, we discussed our engagements with a broad array of new media art from Cornell’s Rose Goldsen Archive. Doing so had the effect of creating a shared experience from which we could draw for class discussion, by combining the technesexual with Lyotard, cyborg feminism with Heidegger, and a cave automatic virtual environment with Mark Hansen. Such pedagogy also moved toward praxis, as it insisted that engagements with new media did not necessarily mark a complete break from analogous procedures of cinematic shared experience. In the ensuing conversations, Tim employed the first person, not as an unreliable narrator, nor even as a simple, congratulatory “I,” but rather as a powerful heuristic, an antidote to objective accounts of our engagements with technology. As a result, each participant, including Tim, brought particular (and sometimes personal) instances and experiences to our discussions, which opened up (rather than closed down) our understanding of the always social entailments with others.

These broad and deep conversations gave way to broad and deep friendships. Over the course of six-weeks, I formed

friendships with scholars from around the world, including China, Australia, Romania, Denmark, Germany, Turkey, and France, and from a wide variety of disciplines, including film studies, history, rhetoric, performance studies, musicology, and architecture, to name only a few. Each participant brought a unique perspective, eclectic tastes, and rigorous thoughts. The convergence of such diverse backgrounds and nationalities helped to create an active and galvanizing event, which offered us new ways of seeing, new connections, and new questions. SCT was not at all the spectacle I had imagined, but a kind of global and dynamic rialto of common lending, borrowing, indebtedness, and exchange. I will never forget the time I spent there, among my best experiences in graduate school.

**Patrick Keilty is a PhD candidate in Information Studies with a concentration in Women’s Studies. He is a AY 2010-2011 Center for the Study of Women/ Graduate Division Irving and Jean Stone Dissertation Year Fellow. His dissertation is titled “Seeking Sex: Embodiment and Electronic Culture.”**





*from left to right, Diane James,  
Marcia Inhorn, and Bonnie Rose  
Schulman at Yale. Photo by  
Amaar Al-Hayder*



# *JMEWS Moves to Yale after Four Years at UCLA*

BY DIANE JAMES

**P**ICTURE THE BALLROOM of a big hotel in a major American city, where the plenary session of an international academic conference on the Middle East has just concluded its formal business. Egyptian strings cast an Orientalist spell and finger cymbals foretell the entrance of a belly dancer. As she makes the rounds of the room, the boldest of those she approaches tuck legal tender into her bra and girdle. Some of the women in the audience, dismayed by the choice of entertainment, gather at the back of the hall and somehow disrupt the proceedings.

This was in 1984, I believe, and though I was not there I have been told that it was a seminal moment for the *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, a leading scholarly research journal that is now entering its seventh year of publication. *JMEWS* is

the result of grassroots organizing by feminist scholars who founded the Association for Middle East Women's Studies (<http://www.amews.org>) in 1985 in the wake of the belly dance incident. The founding president was Suad Joseph, then Associate Professor of Anthropology at UC Davis where she later developed the Middle East/South Asia Studies Program and launched the *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*.

With a mission to advance the study of women in the Middle East, stimulate scientific research in the field and facilitate communication among scholars, an early and primary goal was to establish a research journal. The *AMEWS Review* was the first step. Self-published and distributed to AMEWS members two or three times a year, the 12–30 page newsletter was ed-

ited by Eleanor Doumato (1997–1999) and Jennifer Olmsted (1999–2004) until *JMEWS* was launched in 2005. The project was interdisciplinary from the start and pedagogy was a recurring focus, as teachers and graduate students collaborated to develop curricula for the burgeoning fields of Women's and Middle East Studies. The *Review* was a place to network too. AMEWS formed connections with women's research organizations overseas, such as the Women and Memory Forum in Cairo and the Women's Library and Information Center in Istanbul. In this environment much knowledge and many good works were generated.

Around 2000, AMEWS began to focus on realizing *JMEWS*. The publication committee (miriam cooke, Sondra Hale and Sherifa Zuhur) drafted a proposal, made



**From the back of the hall to the podium. From a shared idea to a journal, to research programs, academic departments, new ideas, and the next generation of scholars. These are the accomplishments of a generation of activists, organizers, researchers, teachers, and students.**

contacts, and started negotiating with prospective publishers. The organization contracted with Indiana University Press to publish *JMEWS* three times a year, and the first issue appeared in Winter 2005. The business plan reinforces the journal's independence. *JMEWS* maintains ownership of *JMEWS* and appoints the editors. The press handles distribution and makes the articles accessible to students via Project Muse and ProQuest. The editorial office is itinerant, hosted by academic deans and departments for a specified term and then moving on to a new host-site in a relay sustained by faculty grant-writing and networking.

*JMEWS* was supported by the University of Wisconsin–Madison and the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor during its first two years. At UCLA for four years, it was supported by the Dean of Social Sciences, the International Institute, the Center for the Study of Women, the Center for Near Eastern Studies, and the Women's Studies Department, plus the Divisions of the

Humanities and Fine Arts and the Social Sciences at UC Santa Barbara.

The journal came to UCLA in 2006 under co-editors Sondra Hale, Departments of Anthropology and Women's Studies at UCLA and Nancy Gallagher, Department of History at UC Santa Barbara. A research associate at the Center for Near Eastern Studies at UCLA, I joined the team as managing editor. Lara Deeb, then at UC Irvine and now at Scripps College, was recruited as reviews editor. UCLA graduate students Rana Sharif, Fiaz Shuayb and Naazneen Diwan were hired as editorial assistants.

The Center for Near Eastern Studies hosted a conference to welcome *JMEWS* to the UCLA campus in July 2006. *JMEWS* followed up with a Research Roundtable in February 2008, where Southern California faculty and grad students from UCs Irvine, LA, Riverside and Santa Barbara and CSUs Long Beach, San Bernardino and Northridge discussed their research trajectories and took questions from the audience (see Azza Basarudin's report in *JMEWS* 4:2).

*JMEWS* also collaborated with Duke University and the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill to organize an East Coast conference on "Marketing Muslim Women" in April 2008. A special issue focusing on mass media, fashion and advertising geared toward Muslim women emerged from that conference (*JMEWS* 6:3).

The editors inaugurated the *JMEWS* Distinguished Lecture series at UC Santa Barbara in April 2007, with UCLA Professor Susan Slyomovics addressing the topic of communal memory through the trope of "Mary's Well in Nazareth." Professor Lila Abu-Lughod of Columbia University presented the second Distinguished Lecture, speaking on "The Social Life of Muslim Women's Rights" at UCSB in February 2009. (Her paper, expanded with case studies of Egypt and Palestine, was published in *JMEWS* 6:1). Professor Suad Joseph presented the third Distinguished Lecture in May 2010, this time at UCLA. Joseph, whose long-term research program focuses on the interface of gender, family, and state in the Middle East, discussed "Rethinking Arab Women as Subjects." She surveyed and assessed the productivity of various theoretical approaches and proposed a new conceptualization of the subject at the center of a network or a web of claims. Her lecture, like most *JMEWS* events, was followed by a lovely reception with all in attendance breaking bread together and sharing conversation.



In order to encourage graduate research and writing, the editors organized a biannual *JMEWS* Graduate Student Essay Competition. The first one in 2007 attracted 20 manuscript submissions, of which the reviewers recommended two for publication, and these appeared in *JMEWS* 4:2. Entries doubled in 2009, with 40 submissions from 30 different universities in Armenia, Canada, Egypt, Iran, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey, the UK and the US. The winning paper by Sunny Daly of the American University in Cairo, “Young Women as Activists in Contemporary Egypt: Anxiety, Leadership, and the Next Generation,” was published in *JMEWS* 6:2.

I’ve been told that it was a real challenge to launch *JMEWS* back in 2005, as the founding editors scrambled to recruit papers and then to recruit scholars to critique the papers in the journal’s rigorous double-blind peer-review process. But as its reputation spreads, *JMEWS* receives more and more manuscripts. Last year the ratio of articles published to articles submitted was 25 percent, and now it’s approaching 20 percent. Over 150 authors have contributed articles, reviews, field studies and brief communications. The material is extremely diverse, covering women from Morocco to Indonesia and from Turkey to Sudan, and in their diasporas as well. Special issues have focused on “Women’s Activism and the Public Sphere” (2:2); “Transnational Theory, National Poli-

tics, and Gender” (3:1); “Early Twentieth-Century Middle Eastern Feminisms” (4:1); “War and Transnational Arab Families” (5:3), which is being translated into Arabic for online publication by the Women and Memory Forum; and “Marketing Muslim Women” (6:3), which just dropped at <http://inscribe.iupress.org/loi/mew>.

Managing a journal is like riding a bike without breaks. It takes nine months to a year to produce a print issue, and the production stages of each one overlap those of the next. Articles are coming in at about one a week, being sent for review, critiqued, rejected or accepted, revised, copyedited, queried and finally finalized; books and films are coming in and going out to reviewers; issues are being sent for composition, returned for proofing, printed, and finally distributed, and on to the next one. The editors rely on hundreds of people who voluntarily contribute their time, energy, research, writing and critical skills to produce *JMEWS*. The managing editor interacts with them all. It’s intense — and I’m so grateful to new managing editor Bonnie Rose Schulman who took over the bike at speed when *JMEWS* moved to Yale University in June under new editor (and founding editor) Marcia Inhorn.

Schulman is a recent graduate of the Columbia School of International and Public Affairs where she was an editor of SIPA’s *Journal of International Affairs*. Inhorn is Professor of Anthropology and In-

ternational Affairs and Chair of the Council on Middle East Studies in the MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale. A medical anthropologist specializing in the social impact of infertility and assisted reproductive technologies in the Middle East and Arab America, she has conducted multi-sited research here and abroad and has also taught at the American University of Beirut and the American University of Sharjah.

This fall, the Association for Middle East Women’s Studies celebrates its 25th anniversary in San Diego at the annual conference of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA, of which AMEWS is an affiliate organization). Another cause for celebration is the fact that Suad Joseph, the original president of AMEWS, will be introduced as the president-elect of MESA.

From the back of the hall to the podium. From a shared idea to a journal, to research programs, academic departments, new ideas, and the next generation of scholars. These are the accomplishments of a generation of activists, organizers, researchers, teachers, and students. I thank all who joined hands to manifest these prodigies.

**Diane James was the managing editor of *JMEWS* from 2006 to 2010.**

# queer studies

OCTOBER

conference 2010

# Susan Stryker and Kara Keeling

PANEL REVIEW BY HEATHER COLLETTE-VANDERAA

TWO LEADING SCHOLARS in transgender and queer studies, Susan Stryker, Associate Professor in the Gender Studies Program at Indiana University, Bloomington, and Kara Keeling, Associate Professor in the Critical Studies Program of USC's School of Cinematic Arts, were the featured speakers in the plenary session of this year's UCLA Queer Studies Conference. Organized by the UCLA Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies Program, the annual conference showcases a rich variety of queer research and provides a chance for students, faculty, and independent researchers to share work and insights. Stryker and Keeling were

critical of existing paradigms or ontologies but were also optimistic, engaging with the liminal spaces of queer-and trans-potentialities, situated within a broader context of current political and social discourses concerning lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities.

## IT DON'T WORRY ME?

Susan Stryker is an internationally recognized Emmy Award-winning filmmaker and independent scholar whose theoretical writing and empirical research have helped shape the field of transgender studies. She earned a Ph.D. in United States History from the University of California at Berkeley in 1992, and later held a

post-doctoral fellowship in sexuality studies at Stanford University. Her projects include *Gay by the Bay: A History of Queer Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area* (Chronicle Books, 1996), *Queer Pulp: Perverted Passions from the Golden Age of the Paperback* (2001), the special issue on transgender studies in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* (1998) and the documentary film *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria* (Victor Silverma and Susan Stryker, 2005)

Her plenary presentation, entitled, “(You Might Say that I’m Not Free But) It Don’t Worry Me: Transgender Theory Covers Queer Affect, Punk Rock, and Alternative Country Music,” seeks to problematize

categorical systems that delimit identity formation and political action. She noted that since the 1990s, queer and transgender studies academic and popular culture relationships to each other can be contentious—frequently troubled by the same tired binary structures of gender and sex in hierarchies of privilege. As such, Stryker is invested in the alliances between affective states of queerness, trans-ness, and music, which (in)form political and social unions while also mobilizing cross-identifications that can potentially destabilize fixed states of being. Stryker asserts that much in the way cover songs rework and transform musical iterations to produce new affective and literalized meanings, the term “queer” needs—in our historical moment—to be reworked and reshaped to remain relevant. In her words, “in order for queer to be politically effective, it needs to have a lot of trans in it.” The cover song poses, Stryker argues, a unique model to understand “the concept of covering” moments from the past in re-iterations that generate “a difference that matters.”

In research that seeks to mingle transgender theory with alternative country musical styles and queer affect with punk rock, Stryker began with an examination of the social dynamics co-constituted among diverse groups performing the song “It Don’t Worry Me” in the closing scene from Robert Altman’s 1975 film *Nashville*. To illustrate her point, Stryker showed a brief

clip of the performance of “It Don’t Worry Me” as an anthem and aural through-line evoking cross-over of “counterculture hippie sensibility” with that of white and black working-class Southerners. The song in this case operates as “a prototypical expression of alternative country music,” bringing together diverse groups of people who together form an alliance in the shared performance of “unfreedom.” The lyrics, “you may say that I’m not free/but it don’t worry me” register notions of “unfreedom” in a sociopolitical context that resonates and reverberates shared notions of oppression across gender, race, and class differences. Stryker argues, most convincingly, that “music offers opportunity to affectively rework the many social divisions” between apparently disparate communities.

“Music encourages identification with others” through affective states it produces, and in this case can also encourage linkages between historical eras. Stryker notes the link between the political and economic situations in the 1970s—an era marked by fiscal crisis and a recession, with the musical modes of country music and punk rock—and our current recession and right-wing populist movements, notably the Tea Party. Punk rock was in many ways fueled by a desire to respond to the neoliberalism in the 1970s but carries with it, Stryker argues, notions of fixity that trouble the relationship between “queer valorization of punk” and the respective sociopoliti-

cal aims. “Whereas queer and punk share what could be called an ‘aggressive passivity’ in which aggression is predicated on the acceptance of the prior condition that enables and motivates it,” she argues, “transexuality can be characterized as ‘active receptivity’ whose predicate is not a fixed position at all but rather a dynamic flux within which identificatory structures of self and other, difference and sameness can be reformed and respatialized.” Positing alternative country music as a model that can be “covered” to address right-wing reactionary politics in a more fluid, dynamic, and affective engagement, Stryker demonstrates the potential to mobilize a flexible, rather than fixed, resistance. Stryker is careful to note, “I’m not saying one (queer or trans) is better than the other, just that they do different kinds of work” to mobilize trans-identification with others.

## STAR SHINE AND CLAY

Keeling’s research focuses on Third Cinema and feminist film, representations of race, sexuality, and gender in cinema, critical theory, cultural studies, and African cinema. Her book, *The Witch’s Flight: The Cinematic, the Black Femme, and the Image of Common Sense* (Duke University Press, 2007), explores the role of cinematic images in the construction and maintenance of hegemonic conceptions of the world and interrogates the complex



relationships between cinematic visibility, minority politics, and the labor required to create and maintain alternative organizations of social life.

Addressing the recent queer youth suicides in her opening remarks, Keeling noted that “they are a severe and painful indictment of our society and perhaps most chillingly of our inability so far to bring into widespread existence a world in which queer youth are valued and can express themselves in their marvelous variety.” In her presentation titled “Between Star Shine and Clay: Transduction and Queer Politics,” she went on to consider the “radical refusal” of entrenched social orders, of which youth suicides in particular mark as dysfunctional systems of gender, sexuality, racial, and class oppression. Keeling thus seeks to address politics of queer youth and queer and non-queer adults through notions of translation, transcoding, transduction, and transliberation. By signifying movement and crossing over, “trans-” activates queer landscapes of identity formation as collaborative processes of mutual becoming and “world making.” “Queer theory, queer studies and queer activism,” she argues, “are at their best when they are forms of and enable queer world-making.” It is in the formation of a sustainable material and existential environment that fosters rather than represses open, diverse, fluid, and flexible queer expression with which the notions of transduction and

transliberation offer up to queer politics, to trans-radicalize queer states of becoming rather than static reiterations of normative states of being. A bridge, then, seems an apt metaphor.

The title of Keeling’s presentation is borrowed from a line in Lucille Clifton’s famous poem, “Won’t You Celebrate With Me.” Inspired by Clifton’s formulation of the “spatial and temporal genesis” of self creation, Keeling looks to the generative properties of transduction as a bridge toward new potentialities of queer embodiment and subjectivities. Transduction, a term more common to life sciences than to queer theory, denotes “the idea that something conducts itself” or is “a self-propagating movement,” and thus appropriate to connect to notions of subjectivity and political movements where individual and collective agency are essential to efforts of liberation.

Transduction, Keeling asserts, mobilizes dynamic and “transindividual” queer identity formations, rather than universal and static models entrenched in prevailing gender, race and sexuality binaries. Noting the historicity and spatiality that are brought to bear upon subjectivity, Keeling asks, “Who or what is already becoming there” on the bridge “between starshine and clay?” What existing epistemologies, ontologies and sensibilities of self-becoming can be utilized to “ethically anchor” queer world-making in ways that make

it up as we go? Keeling suggests that we strip down layers of sedimentary meanings of assigned gender, sexuality, and racial identity accumulated through historical and social forces.

Dominant social paradigms that reinscribe dichotomies of heterosexuality and homosexuality onto bodies and discourses are ruptured by queer transduction, which moves forward, pushes outward and reaches inward, energizing its own exigencies and contingencies. It is queer on queer’s terms. Transduction entails a transfer of energy, rather than a usurping of it; signaling the creation of subjectivities in continual motion and flux, rather than a collision between two opposing forces, and the self-generative power in such transfers. Transduction, Keeling asserts, contains within it the notion of collaboration rather than confrontation. Thus, the transliberatory potential of queer transduction is to form, as Keeling noted, “another world, not a new world, but another world,” between the “starshine and clay” of existing models and movements and endless possibilities of personhood.

This vision of queer world-making, through the process of transduction, implies collaboration, rather than confrontation, as its collective mode. Keeling noted, “collaborations are difficult because they are always bound up with power” but a re-animation of queer entailing invention includes collaboration among people who



do not “properly belong to queer,” forging what Keeling describes as “unlikely and unexpected alliances.” Transduction then is another way of looking at the potential for cross-identifications among and between different groups and to locate trans-liberatory strains in other social movements. Queer transduction energizes the co-creation of meanings along multiple axis of subjectivity and political activism, transforming ourselves and our environment in mobile, malleable modes of becoming.

Heather Collette-VanDeraa is a grad student in the Department of Cinema and Media Studies at UCLA and a writer for CSW Update.

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

# **NEW MAJORITIES, SHIFTING PRIORITIES**

## **DIFFERENCE AND DEMOGRAPHICS IN THE 21ST CENTURY UNIVERSITY**

**March 4 and 5, 2011  
Royce Hall, UCLA**

The **UCLA Center for the Study of Women (CSW)** and **NYU Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality (CSGS)** have undertaken a year-long project to address the challenges currently facing the fields of gender and sexuality studies, women’s studies, **LGBT studies**, ethnic studies, and postcolonial studies. As the relevance of the work being done in these fields is being questioned, both curricular units and research units have seen budgets cut and many face the threat of downsizing or closure. As part of this project, the **CSW** will be hosting a two-day conference that will include public panels related to the way we define our programs, as well as how they are organized.



# *On the Ballot* California Propositions

**ELECTION DAY IS NOVEMBER 2!**

## PROPOSITION 19

Proposition 19 also known as the Regulate, Control and Tax Cannabis Act of 2010, if passed will allow a person over the age of 21 to have up to one ounce of marijuana, allow that person to use the substance in a non public place like a home or designated area, and that person may cultivate cannabis in a private property of up to 25 square feet for personal use. The local government may approve the retail sale of up to one ounce of marijuana per transaction and enforce restrictions to the hours and location of the business. Local governments can increase the amount of marijuana cultivated, possessed, transported, and sold according to its discretion. Interstate and international cannabis transport is still controlled by the federal government and will adhere to existing laws. If someone 21 or older sells to an individual younger than 21 heavy fines and jail time will be enforced. California Legislature projects that legalizing marijuana could produce \$1.4 billion in revenue a year. Oregon, Arizona, and South Dakota all have marijuana legalization on their ballots as well.

## PROPOSITION 20

Proposition 20 takes the duty of redistricting California's congressional districts from the State legislature. The commission was established through proposition 11 in the 2008 elections and created the "Citizens redistricting commission," to make district boundaries for the state assembly, state senate and BOE after the 2010 census. The commission every ten years will be made up of 14 registered voters, 5 Democrats, 5 Republicans, and 4 others who go through an application process and are chosen according to specific regulations. Proposition 20 will amend the constitution by transferring the authority of redistricting from the legislature to the Citizen's Redistributing Commission. The commissions cannot practice favoritism towards candidates or parties, and should uphold the geographical integrity of the region. In addition proposition 20 clarifies what "community interest" implies as stated in proposition 11. It is defined as "a contiguous population which shares common social and economic interests that should be included within a single district for purposes of its effective and fair representation."

It is important to note that Prop 27 also concerns redistricting, if both measures pass the proposition receiving the higher number of "yes" votes would be the one that will be put into effect.

## PROPOSITION 21

Proposition 21 imposes an \$18 annual vehicle license surcharge which will aid in funding state parks and wildlife programs. With this, vehicles will be granted free admission into state parks. The deposit of the surcharge will be placed in a trust fund which will only be used to manage state parks and protect wild life and the environment. Commercial vehicles, trailers, and trailer coaches are exempt from the cost. An annual check will take place by the State auditor and be reviewed by a citizen's oversight committee. State revenue is projected to increase to about \$500 million annually and the revenue would be used to offset the \$50 million of loss in park day fees, and replace the existing \$200 million annually used by the state for state parks and wildlife conservation. In result of proposition 21 an increase of \$250 million annually will go to state parks and wildlife conservation.

## PROPOSITION 22

Proposition 22 is a constitutional amendment that bans the state from borrowing or removing funds that are used for transportation, redevelopment, and local government projects and services. Currently the state has jurisdiction to control tax money that is provided for transportation projects, local government or local redevelopment agencies that manage projects in urban communities. This ban continues even during a time of severe fiscal hardship. This will result in a reduction in general fund programs, and increases in funding for state and local transportation programs and local redevelopment.

## PROPOSITION 23

Proposition 23 will suspend AB 32 that requires major sources of emissions to repost and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change until unemployment drops to 5.5 percent or less for a full year. It suspends the plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the levels of 1990 by 2020. It suspends comprehensive greenhouse gas reduction programs that include the increase of renewable energy and cleaner fuel requirements, and mandatory emissions reporting and fee requirements for major emissions sources including power plants and oil refineries. With the suspension of AB 32 there may be a small increase in economic activity. Conversely, a possible loss of state revenue that was received through the auctioning of emissions allowances from the state government to businesses.

## PROPOSITION 24

Proposition 24 repeals previous legislations that allowed for businesses to lower their tax liability. The proposition would stop businesses from being able to shift operation losses to prior tax year and this would extend the time permitted to shift operating losses to the coming tax years. Also, it would repeal legislation that let corporations share tax credits with related corporations. This proposition would also ban multistate business to use a sale based income calculation instead of a combination of property, payroll and sales based income calculations. This is projected to increase state revenue to about \$1.3 billion each year from the increase of taxes paid by businesses.

## PROPOSITION 25

Proposition 25 is a constitutional amendment that alters legislation vote requirements to pass budgets and budget related items from two thirds to a simple majority, but a two thirds vote will still be required for taxes. Also, if the legislature does not pass a budget bill by June 15th every member of the legislature will permanently forfeit any reimbursement for expenses for everyday until they pass a budget bill.

## PROPOSITION 26

Proposition 26 mandates that certain state and local fees should be approved by a two thirds vote. Fees include those that address adverse impacts on society or the environment caused by the fee payer's business. This increases the legislator's vote to a two thirds vote for some tax measures that is currently subjected to majority rule. This would potentially decrease state government revenues due to higher approval requirements for new revenues.

## PROPOSITION 27

Proposition 27 eliminates the 14 member redistricting commission. This regains the power of the legislature to establish the assembly, state, and board of equalization district boundaries. It places a restriction on the amount of money legislatures may spend on redistricting. Voters will have the ability to reject the proposed legislative boundaries. It also requires that the population must be the same for all districts with the same office.

**Research by Aylin Kuzucan, a fourth-year undergraduate political science major at UCLA.**

# *FACULTY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS*

*for AY 2010–2011*

# FACULTY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

*for AY 2010–2011*

*Each year, CSW awards a set of grants to faculty who are doing research in our mission areas. These are the recipients for this academic year.*

## FACULTY RESEARCH COMPLETION GRANT



**Rebecca Jean Emigh**

Professor, Department of Sociology

### ***Poverty, Ethnicity, and Gender in Eastern Europe***

Emigh's project examines the interaction between the economy, poverty, and welfare benefits during times of market transition, as well as the relationship of these variables to women and minorities. Of particular interest to this project is the effect of welfare payments on women and the Roma (Gypsies) in post-Socialist Eastern Europe, a time of social and economic change.

## FACULTY RESEARCH SEED GRANT



**Jessica Gipson**

Assistant Professor, Department of Community Health Sciences, School of Public Health

### ***Investigating Tibetan Women's Pregnancy Care Preferences in Rural China: A Collaborative Pilot Study to Promote Safe Motherhood***

Gipson's project investigates prenatal care and childbirth in rural, western China, an area where an overwhelming majority of women do not seek medical care during delivery. It also develops data correction systems for a regional study in the area. The regional study will focus on women's choices on pregnancy care and will test methods of pregnancy care to reduce the maternal mortality and morbidity rate.

## FACULTY RESEARCH SEED GRANT



**Susanna Hecht**

Professor, Department of Planning, School of Public Affairs

### ***Amazons in the Amazon: Elizabeth Agassiz, Emilie Snethlage, Odile Coudreau***

Hecht's project explores the accomplishments of three women of science: Elizabeth Agassiz, Emilie Snethlage, and Odile Coudreau and the influence of the Amazon upon these women. She argues that the Amazonian culture may have brought about the invention of feminism in these women and seeks to expose a hidden history of these women explorers and their travels.



## FACULTY RESEARCH SEED GRANT



**Claire McEachern**

Professor, Department of English

### ***The Intellectual Daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke, 1526–1609***

The intellectual daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke, 1526-1609 is a cultural biography of four influential Englishwomen; sisters whose lives intersected with many of the most formative events of sixteenth-century England. Specifically, the project focuses on the contributions of Mildred, Anne, Elizabeth and Catherine Cooke to the religious and political reformation of the time, as well as their intense devotion to Protestantism and ability to disregard seemliness in the name of religious reform.

## FACULTY RESEARCH SEED GRANT



**Brooke Scelza**

Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology

### ***Female Social Support in Productive and Reproductive Domains among the Himba of Northwest Namibia***

Female Social Support in Productive and Reproductive Domains among the Himba of Northwest Namibia seeks to understand supportive relationships among women and behavioral outcomes using the framework and methods of human behavioral ecology (HBE) practitioners. It specifically examines the support relationships of Himba women in villages in Namibia's Omohongo Basin. This study provides an anthropological perspective to the study of social support within sociology and public health, and will be useful for improving community programs such as public health and education in Africa.

## JUNIOR FACULTY RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT GRANT



**Robert Chi**

Assistant Professor, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures

### ***Stage Sisters: A Cross-Cultural View of Chinese Cinema***

Stage Sisters: A Cross-Cultural View of Chinese Cinema employs a case study of the Chinese film Stage Sisters and its actual and imaginary representations of women in cinema. The film revolves around two Chinese opera actresses during 1935 to 1950, examining old-fashioned 'feudal' society and values, the materialistic temptations of one woman and the political awakening of another. Using cinema, the study cross-culturally examines Chinese modernity and the influence of popular culture.

## JUNIOR FACULTY RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT GRANT



**Marissa Lopez**  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of  
English

### ***Making the Mexican-American Body: Ruiz de Burton's Political Economy***

Making the Mexican-American Body: Ruiz de Burton's Political Economy explores how the language of bodily and racial health can be understood in the political economy of 1870s California, and is expected to mature into an analysis about the intersections of language and the body in Chicana/o literature. Specifically, the project examines the correlation between the Southern Pacific Railroad's re-shaping of Mexican land and the racialization and debasing of the Mexican American body during the 1870s, as illustrated in de Burton's *The Squatter and the Don*.

## JUNIOR FACULTY RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT GRANT



**Sung-Deuk Oak**  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of  
Asian Languages  
and Cultures

### ***American Missionaries and Nursing in Korea, 1895-1915***

American Missionaries and Nursing in Korea, 1895-1915 examines the introduction of modern nurses in Korea. Previously unstudied, the project explores the first American Missionary Nurses in the region and their work, the first Nurses Training Schools, and finally the relationship between the Japanese colonial system and American and Korean hospitals and nursing systems. The project is intended to not only study the important roles of Korean women, but explore the significant contributions of American women in Korea.

# Students & Spirituality

## SENIOR FACULTY FEMINIST SEMINAR

*featuring*

**Helen S. Astin**

Distinguished Emerita Professor of  
Education at UCLA

*with respondent*

**Christine Littleton**

Vice Provost for Diversity and  
Faculty Development

WEDNESDAY

**December 8**

4 to 6 pm  
Royce 314

RSVP by November 29, 2010, to:

Emily Walker  
emilyw@women.ucla.edu  
310 825 0590

# ***Keep it Green!***



# Keep it Green!

## SUSTAINABILITY TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

### One Bag for the Many!



*I recently asked at the nontoxic dry cleaners that I frequent whether they would stop putting the clothes in individual clear plastic bags. Not only are these bags wasteful but they are very bad for clothes, causing them to yellow if they are not removed right away. The counter person agreed that the bags were bad for clothes and the environment, but she said they had to use them because otherwise the cleaned clothes might get dirty on the holding racks where they held for pickup. She then told me that I could purchase for a small fee a sturdy clothing bag like the garment bags made for travel. Now I use the bag every time I bring clothes in. It works perfectly. And every time I go to the drycleaners, I notice more and more blue bags and less and less plastic. Join us!*

– Kathleen McHugh



# ucla center for the study of women



<b>DIRECTOR</b>	<b><i>Kathleen McHugh</i></b> PROFESSOR, ENGLISH AND CINEMA AND MEDIA STUDIES
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UCLA CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WOMEN  
1500 PUBLIC AFFAIRS BUILDING/BOX 957222  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90095-7222  
  
CAMPUS MAILCODE: 722203  
  
310 825 0590 / 310 825 0456 (FAX)

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**EDITOR/DESIGNER:** *Brenda Johnson-Grau*

**EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS:** *Palash Agrawal, Heather Collette-VanDeraa, Hao Dieu, and Lindsey McLean*