



SIMPSON CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES FUNDED PROJECTS FOR 2009-2010

SOCIETY OF SCHOLARS

Kiko Benitez (Assistant Professor, Comparative Literature)
Filipino Literary Selfhoods

Benitez examines the ways Filipino novelists struggled against the pressures of changing imperial conditions as the Philippines moved from Spanish to U.S. rule. Focusing primarily on literary subjectivity, he looks at how exemplary narratives respond to, resist, or accept the contradictory imperial injunction to create (but in fact defer) national citizenship. He compares versions of Filipino selfhood from metrical romances, socialist, nationalist, and diasporic novels to look at how the implantation of imperial modernity through literature in the Philippines has consequences for how we read transnationalism and cosmopolitanism in today's imperial moment.

Amy Bhatt (Dissertator, Women Studies)
Social Reproduction and Transnational Migration among 'Temporary' Indian IT Workers

Bhatt's dissertation is a cultural study of migration focusing on the subjectivity and representation of Indian information technology workers and their partners living and working in the United States on temporary H-1B visas. Bringing together ethnographic narratives from IT workers, media accounts of Indian migration, and readings of immigration legislation, Bhatt explores how these Indian workers imagine and negotiate innovative life-worlds in light of transnational migration and the constraints of restrictive visas. Bhatt shows how these workers enact strategic and creative ways of belonging that have implications for such gendered practices as finding love, friendship, and forming families beyond visa restrictions.

Margaret Laird (Assistant Professor, Art History)
Inscribed Cities: Statues, Bases, and Civic Networks in Ancient Rome

Laird examines how inscribed monuments (portrait statues, their monumental supports, and their public lettering) commissioned by ex-slaves functioned as protagonists in ancient Roman cities. Analyzing inscribed monuments in their urban and social contexts, Laird argues that beyond simple commemoration and civic adornment, they created webs of association, transforming places of display into semantically charged sites of local histories and individual and community relationships.

Shaun Lopez (Assistant Professor, History)
Making Egypt Moral: Gender, Crime, and the Mass Media, 1920-1955

Lopez examines the relationship between the rise of mass media and the development of a national moral discourse during a pivotal period in Egypt's modern history. In a period when the British occupation in Egypt faced increasing pressure from an indigenous nationalist movement, Lopez concentrates specifically on domestic crime stories (*akhbar al-hawadith* in Arabic) as gendered moral crises. A central preoccupation of Egyptian news and entertainment coverage between 1920 and 1955, these true crime stories were taken from the lives of Egyptians of all social classes, religions, and genders and dealt with the kinds of everyday events that attracted the attention of a wide audience that transcended the bounds of literacy, class, and religion in modern Egypt.

Madhavi Murty (Dissertator, Communication)
Textures of Representation

Murty examines how neoliberalism in India is materialized within popular culture through stories that give it form and shape. Her study reveals that far from being excluded, women from the most marginalized sectors of the nation (the lower caste, dalit, poor and Muslim woman) are central to the elaboration of neoliberalism. She argues that through the figure of the subaltern woman neoliberalism gives express form to its central tropes of cosmopolitanism, developmentalism, and modernity and simultaneously advances implicit arguments about gender, subalternity, caste, religion, and ethnicity.

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Jentery Sayers (Dissertator, English)

Media Ecology and Its Cultural Histories

Through a genealogy of the relationships between modern Anglo-American literature and sound technologies such as the telegraph, phonograph, magnetic tape recorder, and MP3 player, Sayers historicizes media interaction as a culturally embedded, aesthetic practice. Rather than articulating a history where the perception of sound and print remain constant over time or where technology determines cultural change, Sayers stresses differences in perception across contextualized media ecologies and demonstrates how the intersections of sound reproduction with literary production enable critical interpretations of media and technology.

David Spafford (Assistant Professor, History)

Senses of Place in Late Medieval Japan, 1455-1555

Spafford examines Japan's long sixteenth century of civil war and the new political localism it eventually produced. The new practices of local rule are understood to have provided the foundation from which contending warlords launched ambitious programs of reform as well as military campaigns aimed at pacifying the country. Uncovering the diverse forms of attachment to place inherited by warlords and local magnates, this study analyzes the cultural and political dynamics that made the new localism so difficult to achieve and the civil war so resistant to conclusion.

Matthew Sparke (Professor, Jackson School of International Studies and Geography)

Imaginative Geographies of Global Health

Sparke examines how different visions of the *global* in global health shape the ways health problems are understood and plans for intervention envisioned. In doing so, Sparke seeks to show how humanistic scholarship on the cultural politics of representation, on the biopolitics of governmentality, and on the changing geopolitics of biomedicine can contribute to interdisciplinary and representationally-reflexive inquiry into the possibilities of global health. Four biomedical aspects of global health form the foci of the four main parts of the study: the interdependencies of infection, the connections of code, the transfers of tissue, and the movements of medicine.

Amanda Swarr (Assistant Professor, Women Studies)

Sex in Transition: Apartheid and the Remaking of Gender and Race

Swarr's research explores the racialization of gender variance in apartheid and transitional South Africa, analyzing why some South Africans at the borders of gender have been subjected to forced and botched sex reassignment procedures, legalized discrimination, and community ostracism while others have received state-funded medical treatment and legal support. In this project, Swarr reconceptualizes apartheid as reliant on gendered disjuncture, theorizes the violent paradoxes of raced gender in contemporary South Africa, and challenges trends in Gender and Transgender Studies that rely on hegemonic and monolithic Northern concepts.

Lynn Thomas (Associate Professor, History)

Race, Skin Lighteners, and Transnational Commerce

Although skin lighteners have generated significant profits and controversy in the United States and much of sub-Saharan Africa over the past eighty years, they have garnered scarce historical analysis. Through tracking the movement of commercial skin lighteners from the United States to South Africa, and into Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, this book project examines the intersection of racial ideologies with capitalist commerce and desires for self-transformation and explores how such entanglements emerged through imperial, transnational, and gendered political processes.

Richard Watts (Associate Professor, French & Italian Studies)

Water Narratives: Imagining Global Environmental Change in the Francophone Post/Colonial World

Written at the intersection of post/colonial studies and ecocriticism, *Water Narratives* considers fundamental changes in relations to life's most fundamental element, fresh water, over the course of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first and details the cultural effects these changes produce. *Water Narratives* argues that increasingly prevalent phenomena—the pollution, manufactured and naturally occurring scarcity, privatization, and commodification of fresh water—have radically transformed its cultural meaning and, further, that this has happened in ways intimately connected to French colonialism and its legacies.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR INITIATIVE

Andrea Woody (Associate Professor, Philosophy)

Connecting to the Audience: Representation and Embodiment in Contemporary Artistic Performance

Woody's project investigates how best to conceptualize self-conscious presentation of the body in contemporary performance artworks (performance art, dance, theater), asking to what extent the body functions as a vehicle for representation, or alternatively, how the body may function in an essentially non-representational manner, evoking reactions in audience members

through something more akin to an unconscious awareness of and relationship to performed embodiments. **Jurg Koch** (Dance) will support this project through his experience as choreographer, performer, and teacher, drawing in particular on his artwork integrating disabled and non-disabled performers as well as live and recorded performers.

Rick Bonus (Associate Professor, American Ethnic Studies)

Making Meaning in Schools: Race and the Politics of Mentorship

Bonus investigates the relationships between structural inequalities in schools that exclude or produce low retention rates for underrepresented students—disproportionately students of color—and the efforts such students mobilize to address these inequalities. In consultation with **Gene Edgar** (Education), Bonus will analyze the production of meaningful schooling that fundamentally identifies inequality, retention, and mentorship as political and social phenomena as well as sites of transformation.

PUBLIC HUMANITIES

The Great Depression in Washington State

*Organized by **Jim Gregory** (History), **Mark Jenkins** (Drama), and **Sarah Nash Gates** (Drama)*

This project will create a multimedia website exploring the impact of the Great Depression on Washington State, providing easily accessible resources for educators and citizens who seek to understand the relationship between that era and the current economic crisis. The grant will also facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations involving students and faculty in the History Department, the School of Drama, the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, and the Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest. The School of Drama will stage a series of readings of Depression-era plays in Winter 2010. The grant supports a public event that will launch the website and the performances.

Symposium on Indigenous Representation at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition

*Organized by **Robin K. Wright** (Burke Museum and Art History)*

This one-day public symposium in November 2009 will examine the portrayal of indigenous cultures at the *Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition* (A-Y-P) and other world's fairs of that time. Speakers will include UW faculty and graduate students from Art History, American Indian Studies, and History, as well as artists and scholars from other institutions. The symposium is held in conjunction with an exhibit at the Burke Museum, three UW classes, and the city-wide centennial activities for the A-Y-P.

Stafford Creek Reading Group

*Organized by **Georgia Roberts** (English)*

The *Stafford Creek Reading Group* is a monthly reading group at Stafford Creek Correctional Facility, a men's prison in Aberdeen, WA. The eleven-person reading group focuses primarily on African American history and has been meeting for the past two years around the theme of Feminism, Marxism, and Historiography.

CROSSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH CLUSTERS

Dangerous Subjects: Contention, Violence, and Control in Latin America

*Organized by **Cynthia Steele** (Comparative Literature), **María Elena García** (Comparative History of Ideas), **José Lucero** (Jackson School of International Studies), and **Adam Warren** (History)*

Despite the decline of dictatorships and internal wars, for many observers Latin America is still a land of "dangerous subjects" like indigenous people, Afro-Latin Americans, the poor, the mentally ill, and other subjects that are "out of place" in the dominant imaginaries of modernity and progress. Through a faculty-graduate student workshop and speaker series, the cluster will explore how emerging subjectivities, modes of surveillance, and transnational flows shape the contours of danger in Latin America.

Media in the Early Modern Age

*Organized by **Geoffrey Turnovsky** (French & Italian Studies)*

The *Early Modern Research Group* (EMERGE) provides a crossdisciplinary forum for exploring the meanings and histories of modernity. EMERGE will run two complementary programs: a series of formal lectures by prominent visiting scholars, and an informal works-in-progress group through which UW faculty members and graduate students in a range of disciplines can share their research. Together, these programs will explore media in the early modern age.

Local Communities and Global Identities in Asian American Studies

Organized by **Joseph Bernardo** (History), **Symbol Lai** (History), **Christopher Patterson** (English), **Kim Trinh** (English), **Kayomi Wada** (Interdisciplinary Studies)

Local Communities and Global Identities in Asian American Studies is a year-long project by the Asian American Studies Research Collective. Expanding on the collective's 2008-09 (*dis*)*Orientalizing Asian American Studies*, this project will continue to explore comparative race and hemispheric studies methodologies—but now emphasizing the production and resolution of tensions between local and global manifestations of social processes. Negotiating localities and globalities will inform the visiting lecture as well as the collective's ongoing reading and writing group.

The Race/Knowledge Project

Organized by **Christian Ravela** (English), **Jed Murr** (English), **Jason Morse** (English), **Sooja Kelsey** (Independent Scholar), **Kate Boyd** (English), and **Sydney Fonteyn Lewis** (English)

The Race/Knowledge Project is an interdisciplinary research cluster exploring the contemporary articulations and contradictions of race and culture as they mediate the production of global and local imaginaries within and beyond the university. The cluster's 2009-10 activities include discussion groups, quarterly colloquia, and a spring symposium. *Race/Knowledge* aims to build coalitional and intellectual relationships amongst graduate students and faculty from multiple disciplines while strategically reaching out to and including others whose positions and perspectives are necessary to inform the project's commitment to thinking about the stakes of an anti-racist praxis.

Queer + Public + Performance

Organized by **Jason Morse** (English), **Ed Chang** (English), **Joshua Heim** (Cultural Studies), **Anne Dwyer** (English), **Lindsay Russell** (English), and **Jessica Johnson** (Anthropology)

Queer + Public + Performance will engage the intersection of queer scholarship, performance, art, and technologies to mobilize queer and allied scholars, teachers, artists, and activists in cross-disciplinary, cross-platform public cultural and intellectual work. This year will focus specifically on queer practices, projects, and lived experiences situated on the peripheries of official publics and explore how these counterpublics are constituted and complicated by changes (both conservative and transgressive) in regional and global political, economic, academic, and cultural interchanges.

CONFERENCES, COLLOQUIA, SYMPOSIA

Feminist Legacies / Feminist Futures: Hypatia 25th Anniversary Conference

Organized by **Alison Wylie** (Philosophy and Anthropology)

In 2010 the journal *Hypatia* will publish its 25th volume. This is a significant event for the journal and for feminist philosophy, the flourishing field that *Hypatia* has helped to crystallize and that has sustained the journal since the mid-1980s. The editors and the Simpson Center (where the editorial office is currently housed) will mark this anniversary with a major conference October 22-24, 2009, that explores *Hypatia's* significance for the future of feminist philosophy as it has taken shape across a range of disciplines.

Science Studies Network: Representations

Organized by **Simon Werrett** (History) and **Andrea Woody** (Philosophy)

Representations, a year-long speaker series accompanied by colloquia, will explore the practices of representing nature in the sciences and the ways science represents diverse communities and cultural perspectives in the study of the natural world. The series will consider how practices of visual and textual representation relate to questions of political representativeness and how these practices and their effects impact issues such as climate change, AIDS, and the development of biotechnology. *Representations* will also offer a graduate micro-seminar and provide continued momentum for the *Science Studies Network* with programming that engages scholarship in the sciences and humanities.

Alternative Voices and Histories in Viet Nam: Colonial Modernities and Post-colonial Narratives

Organized by **Judith Henchy** (UW Libraries) and **Christoph Giebel** (History and Jackson School of International Studies)

The third in a series of conferences and workshops, *Alternative Voices and Histories in Viet Nam* will focus on the disparate margins of Vietnamese identities. The conference and workshop will explore ways Vietnamese historiography can engage American Ethnic Studies and Cultural Studies scholarship in its articulations of and concerns about the particular and multiple histories of Vietnamese migration and exile. Jack Yeager (Louisiana State University) and Mariam Lam (University of California, Riverside) will help frame the workshop with perspectives from the French and American Vietnamese diaspora..

Legacies of Unification: Twenty Years of German Unity

Organized by **Steven Pfaff** (*Sociology and International Studies*)

Legacies of Unification will be held November 19-20, 2009, the twentieth anniversary of the peaceful revolution in the former German Democratic Republic that paved the way for German unification in 1990. Drawing scholars from across the United States and Europe, the conference will examine the consequences of German unity for culture and the arts, social policy, and European integration in the recast "Berlin Republic."

New Universities

Organized by **Bruce Burgett** (*Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences, University of Washington, Bothell*)

New Universities, a symposium to be held at UW Bothell May 7-9, 2010, marks the twentieth anniversary of the University of Washington as a multi-campus institution. Speakers and commentators will address questions of corporatization and globalization (Chris Newfield, University of Santa Barbara), digitalization (Tara McPherson, University of Southern California), and public-private partnerships (David Maurrasse, Columbia University and Marga, Inc).

Social Science and the State: Global Histories, Contemporary Echoes

Organized by **Jordanna Bailkin** (*History*)

Held in conjunction with a graduate seminar on Global Histories of Social Science, this lecture series will consider how we might conceptualize the changing public face of the social sciences. Speakers will address ways the disciplines of anthropology, economics, political science, psychology, and sociology have been entrenched in collusion with and resistance to state authorities in different local and global contexts. Speakers will also address ways the historical emergence of these disciplines continues to shape structures of knowledge within and outside the university today.

OTHER: DIGITAL AND PRINT PUBLICATIONS

e-Keywords: Keywords for American Cultural Studies

Organized by **Bruce Burgett** (*Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences, University of Washington, Bothell*)

e-Keywords furthers the development of an interactive website, <http://depts.washington.edu/keywords/>, launched in 2007 through a partnership between the Simpson Center and New York University Press. Coordinated by **Deborah Kimmey** (English), the site extends the research and essays published in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* (edited by Burgett and Glenn Hendler, Fordham University), provides a platform where courses and other groups can collaborate on keywords projects, and extends digital humanities scholarship initiatives at the Simpson Center.

Inventions of the Imagination: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Imaginary since Romanticism

Richard Gray (Germanics)

This publication emerges from a Simpson Center-funded conference of the same name, held on the University of Washington, Seattle, campus in May 2007. The volume is composed of selected papers from the conference which represent a significant contribution to debates about the historically evolving relationship between reason and imagination from Romanticism to Modernism.