



Roanoke College Women in Public
Affairs Presents:

Gender, Politics, and Society Conference

March 25 and 26, 2011
Wortmann Ballroom, Roanoke College

Friday, March 25, 1:00-2:45 "Women's Agency, Subjectivity, and Public Policies"

Hurdles for Women in Politics: Zoe Baird and Kimba Wood's Influence on Women's Roles in Politics
Olivia League, Katie Haugen, Maggie Anderson, Meghan Sigurdson, and Heath Brown; Roanoke College

Online Mobilization and Maintenance: A Study of Women's Interest Groups
Anne Whitesell; Roanoke College

Women's Roles, Pesticide Use, and Health Risks, in the Philippines
Devon Prater; Virginia Tech

Friday, March 25, 3:00-4:45 "Oppression, Masculinity, and Sexuality"

A Universal Analysis of the Five Faces of Oppression
Patrick Dolan; Roanoke College

Consuming Phallogentrism: Discourses of Gender, the Media and Society in the Anglo-Caribbean
Damion Blake; Virginia Tech

Orlando and Gender Trouble: A Literary Drag Show
Brooke Lestock; University of Virginia

Discerning Transformative Moments During the Refugee Trajectory: An Ethnographic Study of One Woman's Experience
Michele James-Deramo; Virginia Tech

Friday, March 25, 5:00-7:00

Keynote Address by Drucilla Cornell
"Ethical Feminism: Rethinking Feminist Theory and Practice in the 21st Century"

Friday, March 25, 7:00-9:00

Reception

Saturday, March 26, 10:00-11:45 "Identity, Sex Trafficking and Teenage Girls"

Sita Sings the Blues
Lily Beauvilliers; University of Virginia

Sex Trafficking Industry: Health and Human Rights Implications
Molly Milliken; Roanoke College

Teenage Girls, Internalized Sexism, and Ageism
Rachel McCarthy-James; Hollins University

Saturday, March 26, 12:00-1:00

Lunch

Saturday, March 26, 1:00-2:45 "Gender in the Professional World"

Maria Pirone, Senior Business Development/Account Manager, Harris Communications.

Carrie Harris, Associate, Spillman, Thomas & Battle, PLLC.

Dr. Dolores Flores-Silva, Associate Professor, Department of Foreign Languages, Roanoke College.

Saturday, March 26, 3:00-5:30 Movie: *The Contender*

Women in Public Affairs thanks: Roanoke College Colket Center, the Fowler Program and Dr. Bill Hill, Judith Pinckney and the Public Affairs Department, Stephanie Garst, Drucilla Cornell, Dr. Claudia Leeb and all the chairs, participants, and discussants for helping us put together this conference—the first of its kind at Roanoke.

Keynote Address by Drucilla Cornell
“Ethical Feminism: Rethinking Feminist Theory and Practice
in the 21st Century”



Drucilla Cornell received her B.A. in philosophy and mathematics from Antioch College, and her J.D. from UCLA Law School. She has written on a wide variety of topics, including feminism, critical theory, and political philosophy. She has published numerous books, including *Beyond Accommodation: Ethical Feminism, Deconstruction and the Law* (1991), *The Philosophy of the Limit* (1992), *Transformations: Recollective Imagination and Sexual Difference* (1993), *The Imaginary Domain: Abortion, Pornography, and Sexual Harassment* (1995), *At the Heart of Freedom: Feminism, Sex, and Equality* (1998), *Just Cause: Freedom, Identity, and Rights* (2000), *Between Women and Generations: Legacies of Dignity* (2002), *Defending Ideals: War, Democracy, and Political Struggles* (2004), *Moral Images of Freedom: A Future for Critical Theory* (2007), and *Clint Eastwood and Issues of American Masculinity* (2009). Her most recent book, *Symbolic Forms for a New Humanity*, was co-authored with Kenneth Michael Panfilio and published in 2010. She is currently a professor of political science, women's studies, and comparative literature at Rutgers University.

Women's Agency, Subjectivity, and Public Policies

Chair: Harry Wilson

Discussant: Harry Wilson

Hurdles for Women in Politics: Zoe Baird and Kimba Wood's Influence on Women's Roles in Politics

Olivia League, Katie Haugen, Maggie Anderson, Meghan Sigurdson, and Heath Brown; Roanoke College

The role played by groups representing women and women's issues has grown dramatically over the last four decades. This collaborative paper aims to examine different non-government and government association's relationships with women issues in the Department of Justice, especially after the failed appointments of Zoe Baird and Kimba Wood. This paper will specifically examine the Senate Judiciary Committee's role in confirming appointments made by the president for female attorney general's; the influence of White House offices (specifically the council on Women and Girls) have on policy making decisions; the Office of Violence Against Women's role in influencing women in politics; as well as women's interest groups influence on justice policy. While these entities are very different, this paper will examine each individual role in influencing the potential nomination of women in the Department of Justice. The failed appointments of Zoe Baird and Kimba Wood are particularly pertinent to each entities role in advocacy for or against women in politics as a result of the controversy raised after the dismissal of the nominees. This paper will ultimately expose the difficulty that women face in politics as is evidenced by the controversy that occurred in the Zoe Baird and Kimba Wood example.

Online Mobilization and Maintenance: A Study of Women's Interest Groups

Anne Whitesell; Roanoke College

New communications technology, including social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter, has fundamentally altered the way in which individuals organize and mobilize themselves according to common interests. While social networking for the purposes of political mobilization is a relatively recent phenomenon, interest groups have been using the Internet to mobilize and maintain their organizations since the 1990s. Women's organizations, which represent a diverse constituency, are just one subset of interest groups that have moved some of their functions to an online forum. These organizations, roughly divided into the three "waves" of feminism, include groups such as the American Association of University Women to CODEPINK, a women's organization advocating for peace. This research analyzes the strategies employed by interest groups through their organizational websites. It specifically studies the websites of approximately 50 women's interest groups, looking for differences among interest groups representing different waves of feminism and the affects of an interest group's internal characteristics on their approach to the Internet. This research fills an important gap in the study of interest groups politics, which has only begun to explore the role of the Internet in group formation, maintenance, and member mobilization.

Women's Roles, Pesticide Use, and Health Risks, in the Philippines

Devon Prater; Virginia Tech

Since the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, pesticides and food production have gone hand-in-hand. However, pesticides have serious, negative health impacts, especially for those who work with them. Since rural women in developing countries are responsible for 60 to 80 percent of food production worldwide, they are most at risk. This paper addresses these risks for women in the Philippines. In particular, the paper considers (1) how gender roles affect exposure, (2) the consequences of pesticide use for women, and (3) a brief overview of current policies and possible policy design alternatives. The results are based on a review and analysis of relevant general and Philippines-specific data in the literature of women in agriculture and pesticide use and health risks. Findings from this study indicate pesticides have affected Filipino women negatively for several reasons. Women typically work the most hazardous jobs, and work in greater numbers. Yet, extension programs often exclude female farmers, and instead focus on the needs of male heads of households. Health care for female agricultural workers is particularly poor. They typically lack access to general health care and maternity-related care. Women's invisibility in the field of agricultural research has contributed to the comparatively lax pesticide-use policies that exacerbate these issues. New policies from both the Filipino government and aid organizations focusing on mitigating pesticide-related risks have the potential to improve the situation.

Oppression, Masculinity, and Sexuality

Chair: Srikanth Mallavarapu

Discussant: Srikanth Mallavarapu, Monica Vilhauer

A Universal Analysis of the Five Faces of Oppression

Patrick Dolan; Roanoke College

While the traditional form of oppression meant the exercise of tyranny by a ruling group seen historically through Colonial domination, the new modern form of oppression refers to the disadvantages and injustices some people and groups suffer as caused not by tyranny, but the systemic and structural forms of oppression within society. But what's difficult, is how to accurately define and identify just who is oppressed and who is not, and based on what standard? Iris Young, the author of *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, indicates that because of different factors, or combinations of factors, determine the oppression of different groups, Young believes that one standard definition of oppression is not adequate enough in order to account for the various factors and variables associated with oppression. Therefore, Young argues that when determining if a group is oppressed we should not simply look at one standard, universal definition, but rather we should examine the five faces of oppression: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. Young's logic for the five faces of oppression is that by "applying these five criteria to the situation of groups makes it possible to compare oppressions without reducing them to a common essence or claiming that one is more fundamental than another" (Young 1990, 63). Young's unique criteria for evaluating and determining whether a person or group is oppressed by using the five faces of oppression, allows for greater inclusion of groups who are oppressed, but might not have fit the standard universal definition of oppression.

Consuming Phallocentrism: Discourses of Gender, the Media and Society in the Anglo-Caribbean

Damion Blake; Virginia Tech

Gendered power imbalances and differentiation are evident in key institutions of our societies today; in the family, the economy, political institutions, media, schools and religious organizations. In this paper I deconstruct the discursive, sociological and institutional manifestations gender imbalance and inequality. I argue that to break the phallogentric stronghold that now pervades different segments of our societies, a better understanding of how masculinity is defined, produced, reproduced and more importantly, how it is consumed, is necessary. To support this probe, I examine an Anglo-Caribbean case study of gender socialization and masculine consumption patterns. The case study is drawn from research done by the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus in Jamaica in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF 1998]. This case study foregrounds how Anglo-Caribbean boys and men are socialized to think and behave within the constructs of masculinity. Breaking phallogentrism, I hypothesize, necessitates a thorough understanding of what masculinity is, and how gender roles and identities are socio-culturally, ideologically and politically produced, re-produced and consumed.

Orlando and Gender Trouble: A Literary Drag Show

Brooke Lestock; University of Virginia

Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, published in 1928, begins with a sixteen-year-old English nobleman in the late sixteenth century and ends with a thirty-six-year-old woman in 1927, but the two are one in the same character, Orlando. At the age of thirty, Orlando undergoes a transformation from male to female that initiates a detailed exploration of the nature of gender, emphasizing the role of clothing and performance in the establishment of gender identity. About sixty years later, Judith Butler would address the same fundamental issues in her book, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. *Gender Trouble*, a milestone in feminist theory, gender studies, and a founding text of queer theory, explores the ways in which gender is socially constructed and reinforced through repeated, performed acts. Butler asserts that gender identification establishes a problematic male/female binary and calls for an end to identity politics, which can only be enacted by exposing identity as a construct and thus destabilizing both the male/female and interior/exterior binaries. Butler cites drag performances as one powerful method of gender subversion in which culturally accepted notions of gender and sex are parodied and undermined. In this paper, I will argue that Woolf's *Orlando* can be considered an effective literary drag performance according to Butler's terms, in which one entity "Orlando" performs the role of both "Lord Orlando" and "Lady Orlando," exposing the social, cultural, and temporal contingencies of gender identity.

Oppression, Masculinity, and Sexuality (Continued)

Discerning Transformative Moments During the Refugee Trajectory: An Ethnographic Study of One Woman's Experience
Michele James-Deramo; Virginia Tech

This study presents the life history of a Somali Bantu woman who has resisted the effects of historical, social, cultural, and structural oppression in order to emerge as a leader in her community. Using ethnography and dialogic observation occurring through my voluntary and professional work in refugee resettlement, I analyze the subject's narrative, which reveals the critical sources of agency contributing to her identity and status. I employ Standpoint Theory as a framework for analyzing the ethnographic data, considering in particular the interplay of socially and culturally constructed categories such as race, class, and gender in shaping and institutionalizing oppression and inequality, as well as, in this case, citizenship, attachment to place, and traumatic events. Preliminary findings show that access to education, the conveyance of collective identity, and social reproduction are predominant themes in the construction of this woman's agency and identity. The chosen research methodologies reflect current tendencies in feminist studies of forced migration, emphasizing the complexity of women's lives over rhetorical constructions that erase women's subjectivities, presenting them as undifferentiated victims. Further, the research demonstrates agentic potential by focusing more on women's response rather than reaction to the fact of trauma and displacement. This shift in focus is critical in recognizing for this particular subject that the refugee trajectory, while transformative to her social, political, and gendered status, is not the master narrative for her life.

Identity, Sex Trafficking, and Teenage Girls

Chair: Kirsten DeVries Discussant: Kirsten DeVries, Meeta Mehrotra

Sita Sings the Blues

Lily Beauvilliers; University of Virginia

Nina Paley's 2009 animated film, *Sita Sings the Blues*, centers around Paley's real-life traumatizing divorce and the stories which helped her cope – the tale of Sita, from the Indian epic *The Ramayana*, and the torch-songs of twenties jazz singer Annette Hanshaw. Paley combines these elements into a re-telling, through a Western, heartbroken, feminist's eyes, of the national epic, and a re-visioning, through the same eyes, of a traumatizing but otherwise banal American breakup. This combination has stirred much controversy, as many devout Hindus take offense to Paley's irreverent use of Sita and Rama, and many intellectuals take issue with her problematic use of a subaltern epic, without proper acknowledgment of the power differential at play. While I agree that Paley's use of *The Ramayana* is not ideal, it does generate a model of identity formation which interestingly incorporates affective attachment to the other, as can be traced through the lens of Jonathan Flatley's concept of affective mapping, laid out in his book *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism*. Through *Sita*, Paley visualizes for the audience such a map in the process of its development, illustrating how she experienced heartbreak through her own life and the stories she identified with – *The Ramayana* and Hanshaw's songs. This identification with Sita, far from being appropriative, I argue, actually manages to keep an important distance between Paley (or at least the character Nina) and Sita through its animation style, and *The Ramayana* and the film's audience through its content.

Identity, Sex Trafficking, and Teenage Girls (Continued)

Sex Trafficking Industry: Health and Human Rights Implications

Molly Milliken; Roanoke College

This paper focuses on the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and the human rights violations of sex trafficking of women in Asia concentrating on India. Sex trafficking is a global issue that compromises the health and human rights of sex workers in the industry. Sexually transmitted diseases, spread of communicable diseases, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and drug and alcohol addiction are broad descriptions of what is involved in being a sex worker. The complexity involved in human trafficking due to Asia's large population, increasing urbanization and high poverty rates, makes combatting the associated health implications difficult in the long term. Increased globalization of people, and the rise of sex tourism across the world contributes to the difficulties health organizations are managing. Beyond the health ramifications, human rights are violated on a daily basis throughout the sex trafficking industry. Women are subjugated, oppressed and sometime forced into sex slavery. Many different factors such as coercion, dishonesty, and threat among others account for this. In order to try and stop the illegal transportation of men, women and children from countries all over the world who are becoming trapped in this industry there are certain aspects of economy and social structures that need to be examined. The groups that are at highest risk are those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged and uneducated. Many of the risk factors could be targeted through education, empowerment, and prevention. In order to prevent one aspect of human trafficking, the focus should be targeting the source and root of the problem such as social inequality and poor allocation of resources to the lower class.

Teenage Girls, Internalized Sexism, and Ageism

Rachel McCarthy-James; Hollins University

Teenage girls are at an intersection of sexism and ageism that makes them a heavily marginalized class. Teen girls are thought of as less than full people, not worthy of respect or esteem. The things that teen girls and young women like, from boy bands to Twilight, are widely mocked. Sexism is a major part of this marginalization; young teen women are heavily sexualized and women regardless of age consistently experience undervaluation of their intelligence and opinions.

But this is not perpetuated only by the typical rich, white, generally over-privileged men who have the largest voice in society. It's also exercised by women out of their teens and teens themselves. Women hating on women is not a new phenomenon. But when women hate on teenage girls, they are not just reacting to the internalization of sexism; we are also punishing ourselves for the trauma we experienced, perpetuating our self-hate. The hate directed from every angle towards teen women creates a cycle of internalized sexism made more potent by ageism.

This presentation would focus first on the sexism engendered towards teen girls. Then, I would take a step back to explain ageism and its relevance. Lastly, I would take a close look at the mechanics of internalized sexism and how it intersects with ageism and past trauma. This would utilize both personal experience from the presenter and audience alongside well-sourced research and theory.

Gender in the Professional World

Chair: Courtney Cooper

Maria Pirone, Senior Business Development/Account Manager, Harris Communications. *One of four children and the only girl, Maria Pirone was the first in her family to attend college, and is now in a high-level position at Harris Communications.*

Carrie Harris, Associate, Spillman, Thomas & Battle, PLLC. *A 2005 Roanoke graduate, Carrie Harris attended the College of William & Mary's Marshall Wythe Law School and is now an associate on Spillman, Thomas & Battle, PLLC.*

Dr. Dolores Flores-Silva, Associate Professor, Department of Foreign Languages, Roanoke College. *Originally from Mexico, Flores-Silva obtained her Ph.D. in from the University of Kentucky in 2001 with a concentration in Latin American literature and now teaches Spanish at Roanoke.*