Violence, Sexism and the Media: The Fight for Women’s Rights in Contemporary Italy
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Incidents of violence against women in Italy have been consistently on the rise for the past decade. Only this past summer did the Italian government ratify a Council of Europe treaty making violence against women illegal. Yet, prior to this past decade, Italy has had a history of women’s rights activism and feminism that reached its peak in the 1970s and 1980s. During the peak of the women’s rights movement in Italy, women succeeded in passing divorce law and overturning laws that forced them to marry their rapists, in addition to eliminating sentencing statutes that penalized murderers with no more than three years imprisonment if their victims were deemed to be adulteresses. Yet, the great strides of the 1970s toward Italian gender equality have slowed exponentially in the 40 years since. My research is seeking to understand what has hindered the Italian women’s movement in the last forty years and if these hindrances are connected to the increase in violence against women and sexism within the country. I draw on qualitative interviews with Italian women, scholarly essays and books on Italian feminism, media, government and the Italian women’s movement, as well as autoethnography from my own study abroad programs in Italy. I consider how the cultural traditions and the autocratic media mogul and former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi have encumbered the movement for Italian women’s rights in Italy. My project attempts to draw attention to the disparities in the rights and treatment of Italian women from the late half of the 20th century to today.

Becoming with Youth Homelessness: Misrepresentations and the Politics of (In)visibility
David Chen, Senior, Comparative History of Ideas
Mary Gates Scholar
Mentor: Maria Elena Garcia, Comparative History of Ideas

I will argue that youth homelessness and society are intertwined existences and that we should move beyond narratives of blame and silence in order to find a more unconditional compassion for homeless youths. I will draw from my experiences volunteering at ROOTS Young Adult Shelter over the past three and one-half years, as well as from interviews conducted there during Summer 2013. The material gathered with be analyzed through Timothy Pachirat’s (2013) “politics of invisibility” and Donna Haraway’s (2007) “becoming with.” The narrative we use to structure our opinions of homeless youths, what I call the personal agency narrative, attributes their situations to their laziness, addictiveness, and/or generally disagreeable behavior. However, an examination of the encounter with the homeless youth, which informs the personal agency narrative, reveals that the economic, political, and cultural contexts of youth homelessness, as well as the personal experiences (before and after becoming homeless) of homeless youths are left invisible. This, I believe, is a microcosmic analog to the broader pattern of dealing with youth homelessness as a society, within which we find a conditional compassion—we only are able to empathize with certain homeless youths— which is tied to the personal agency narrative. I will argue that we should move beyond this conditionality, recognizing the multiple ties that bind society to youth homelessness, and vice versa, to see that society is in a state of becoming with youth homelessness. We therefore have a responsibility to youth homelessness.
Phonic Earth connects communities of the modern world through music, a language that is understood globally on emotional and physical levels. Melody, voice, instruments and timbre hold history within them and also redefine and transform our cultures throughout time. Through music we are able to understand each other’s communities on intimate and transcendent levels. Phonic Earth traveled to Puerto Rico, The Faroe Islands and the Northwest to produce films that depicted social and political histories through musical contexts in different regions. Each location reveals unique cultural stories and information. In Puerto Rico we investigated how the diverse blending of eighteenth century Afro-Caribbean, European and Indigenous groups led to the creation of the musical genres bomba and plena which influence Salsa and Hip Hop. Phonic Earth explored the relationships of music to land, culture and emotion through Faroese contexts. The Kingo Gregorian chant sung in the Faroe Islands preserves the history of French, Norwegian and other North American countries where this historical music has disappeared. The final part of Phonic Earth’s cinematic project, will be filmed in collaboration with NW Native American/Indigenous communities to document the influence of historical music and storytelling on current Native American music culture. Each community in the world holds a complex identity made up of the individuals of the region. Phonic Earth focuses on empowering these individuals with resources to tell their stories, showcase their music and document local events through film. While the world is made up of an infinite amount of faces, backgrounds and cultures, music is a familiar medium that people connect to on a global scale. It is our aim to connect the viewer to the community on an intimate level which is why Phonic earth looks at the world through sound.

The Truth Beneath the Surface: Mining Narratives, Native Bodies, and the State in Peru
Lizzy Jansen, Senior, Public Health-Global Health
Mary Gates Scholar
Mentor: Maria Elena Garcia, Comparative History of Ideas
Mentor: Matthew Sparke, Geography, UCSC
This paper analyzes the juxtaposing narratives between various documents and media portrayals from mining corporations, the Peruvian government, and the affected indigenous populations, focusing on how many of the more dominant narratives can often be misleading in reflecting the serious health effects from mining. Peru’s mining industry significantly influences the health of surrounding indigenous communities due to high levels of air and water pollution. Unfortunately, there is not a great deal of sincere concern for the wellbeing of these communities from either the corporations exploiting their land or the Peruvian government. Despite their efforts to express their suffering through protests, indigenous communities have seen few results. The mining industry and its detrimental health effects are often overlooked, and therefore many of these dominant corporate narratives and our own capitalist desires are all that we have to shape our understanding of how mining industries operate in other countries, such as Peru. However, the subaltern counter-narratives from indigenous populations concerning their health and rights can more accurately shape our understanding of the severity of these health effects caused by the mining industry.

Injecting Racist Hysteria: How Media Coverage of the 2009 H1N1 (Swine Flu) Virus Raises Questions about Border Security, NAFTA, and Mexican Representation in U.S. Culture
Vincent Quang (Vincent) Pham, Senior, English
Mary Gates Scholar, UW Honors Program
Mentor: Maria Elena Garcia, Comparative History of Ideas
In 2009, the World Health Organization declared swine flu to be the first global flu pandemic in 40 years as a result of the outbreak of cases in Mexico. Although the mortality rate of the disease was lower than predicted, the narrative constructed around the disease offers important takeaways re-
Regarding how an outbreak is perceived and what groups become associated as disease carriers. Incorporating knowledge of Mexican-American relations, past and present, in the analysis of the media coverage broadens the understanding regarding the roles that racism and xenophobia play in responses to swine flu. However, the U.S media’s blaming of Mexico, especially when connecting to issues of immigration and borders, draw attention away from American culpability in the H1N1 experience. Using my digital medium as a holding space and synthesis for different thought provoking articles, imagery, and videos about this subject will allow the audience to understand the systematic conditions that influence the spread of diseases like H1N1. For example, by unpacking the capitalist economic imperatives of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), a policy signed off by Canada, the US, and Mexico to create the world’s largest free trade area, I examine how its neoliberal policies encouraged transnational corporations to open up industrial pig factories and its impacts on the environment, human health, labor practices, animal welfare, and immigration. I argue that these factors are symptoms of a “NAFTA Flu”, which shaped unequaled disease development conditions and unequal access to treatment in Mexico, a perspective that anti-Mexican media ignore. Therefore, critiquing the U.S media framings of the outbreak undermines the stigmatization and blaming of the specific populations in traditional outbreak narratives.

SESSION 2A

OUTBREAK! REIMAGINING DEATH AND LIFE, DISEASE AND HEALTH
Session Moderator: Luke Bergmann, Department of Geography
171 MGH
3:30 PM to 5:00 PM

* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

Reconnecting Amid Crisis: Mourning in the Context of Ebola
Mollie Holmberg, Senior, Biology (Ecology, Evolution & Conservation)
Mary Gates Scholar, UW Honors Program
Mentor: Maria Elena Garcia, Comparative History of Ideas

When animals (humans among them) mourn, they honor the emotional bonds that make social living both desirable and possible. Ebola, one of the most virulent primate diseases, wreaks havoc within this sociality, bringing death and triggering isolation. Here I examine spaces of mourning - instances when mourning does or might occur - in the context of Ebola to explore how we can protect social connection in the face of disease. Previous Ebola narratives have often portrayed mourning as an obstacle to public health. Journalists and academics have largely ignored how isolating people from dying loved ones and depriving families of traditional mourning rituals affects the grieving process or how forcing people to quell grief as they exterminate Ebola-infected lab monkeys affects humans. Only recently have scholars begun to explore difficulties Ebola survivors face grappling with grief amid stigma-induced isolation. Here, I explore what it means to reread outbreak narratives in light of theories of mourning. Drawing upon Judith Butler’s concepts of grievability and precarious life, I challenge narratives touting extermination as the sole means of stopping Ebola from crossing species. Together, these accounts highlight the shared vulnerability and capacity for social suffering uniting humans with other primates. Through this work I explore how recognizing the significance of relationships within and between species vulnerable to Ebola might change human responses to this disease. If we embrace this approach for Ebola, it opens new possibilities for handling other infectious diseases and for deciding which lives (among individuals of all species) count as grievable.

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After Swine Flu: Exploring Xenophobic Sentiment in U.S. Immigration Policy
Louie Tan (Louie) Vital, Junior, Political Science
Mary Gates Scholar
Mentor: Maria Elena Garcia, Comparative History of Ideas

How was U.S. immigration policy shaped by the 2009 Swine Flu outbreak? My project will explore the relationship between immigration policy, xenophobia, and Swine Flu. The uproar in the US stemming from the 2009 Swine Flu (H1N1) outbreak revealed a racialized narrative that targeted and stigmatized Mexican immigrants. Rising xenophobic sentiments were exploited to further the cause of anti-immigrant groups and to justify immigration limits. For example, xenophobia was so prominent that some citizens blindly advocated for the closing of the U.S. - Mexican border without considering the economic effect of such an action. As part of this project I will explore xenophobia itself as an outbreak linked to the Swine Flu outbreak. How did this xenophobia outbreak infiltrate the U.S.? Were U.S. immigration policy makers susceptible to xenophobia? Were they “infected” by the xenophobic outbreak? Is xenophobic sentiment evident in immigra-
tion policy? I will draw on empirical data (like immigration statistics and public opinion polls), analyze rhetoric used in immigration debates, and explore media representations, to reveal the connections between Swine Flu and U.S. Immigration policy. I argue that Swine Flu, and the xenophobic discourses surrounding it, had a profound effect on contemporary immigration narratives.