

Sociology of the Body & Embodiment

Message from the Liaison

Salvador Vidal-Ortiz
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I write with much satisfaction, as the current liaison to the section-in-formation, and aware that we are at a point of movement forward: within the next months, Body & Embodiment will be ratified as a new section, accompanying 47 others. At some point next year, the notes in this column will be written by a recently elected section Chair. Once officers are elected, themes for section panels are determined, and the section is up and running, we will be talking at business meetings about the direction of the section. There is an enormous amount of work, but also of growth, ahead. While this inaugural newsletter issue lets me share great news with you, there is a small history telling needed.

The section on the Sociology of the Body & Embodiment was a dream that Lisa Jean Moore and Judith Lorber, along with some other colleagues (including the 100 names of active members), thought and developed into an early proposal to ASA, a couple of years ago. The association asked for revisions in 2008 and it was at that point that I stepped into the role of convener for what has continued to be an amazing collaboration. At the revision stage, there were six other people (Lisa Jean and Judith, as well as Betsy Etorre, Nancy Naples, Amy Sorensen, and Vania Brightman Cox), and later, dozens became involved: in sharing ideas for the

future of the section, in wanting to join and recruit others, and in forming committees. While senior faculty members have shown much support, the weight of the work has been on the shoulders of Ph.D. students and recent graduates. We must thank them for their work: Sergio Mobilia, Maura Kelly, Eve Shapiro, Danielle Hidalgo, Rene Almeling, and Kristen Barber. *(Continued on page 2)*



Photo of Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada (School of Mechanics of the Navy) in Argentina (See page 3)

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My goal with this column is to ignite that collaborative sense, so that the section, once officially named, can shape the course of our program at ASA, but also, collaborations across sections. Bringing visibility will require participation in the other ASA sections through a Body & Embodiment lens, and the leadership to pursue projects (for instance, collaborations between ASA's Body/Embodiment and ISA's The Body and the Social Sciences; the pursuit of a special edited issue of the journal *Body & Society*; and sponsoring preconference institutes of workshops for Body/Embodiment members). These goals and others we collectively decide cannot be achieved unless we sustain the foundational collaborative quality of this section.

I envision that you and I all will bring our passions and topics to the table: some of the things I bring to

sociology through this section are: critical race studies, feminist and queer theorizing, a body-in-sociology work (including autoethnography), work on body and phenomenology (including transgender and transsexual studies), and critiques of canonical sociology. Make a note of what you bring, and share it with your colleagues at the business meeting in Atlanta, in 2010. These are the small steps that will make this section one for people to thrive. And congratulate each other on making this section make history.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter. Please send us your suggestions. Make this your section.

With great appreciation,

Salvador Vidal-Ortiz

Contact us: BodyNewsletter@gmail.com

Rationale for the ASA Section on Body & Embodiment

“At the dawning of the 20th century, sociology emerged as a method of inquiry aimed at explaining the social causes and effects of seemingly personal acts. Importantly, sociology offered an alternative to biological, psychological, and individualistic definitions of human action, as we saw in the treatment of women (and biased diagnoses such as hysteria), gender identity and gender roles, homosexuality, and transsexuality. In the intellectual history of sociology, particularly in classical sociology, the focus on the social tended to treat the individual as a rational, disembodied, decision-making agent, a kind of talking head with no recognizable body. In many ways, this line of inquiry against the biologically determined notions of social order meant that corporeality—or the flesh, bone, functions, physiology, sensations and materiality of the body—was for over a century ignored or merely taken for granted. But within the past three decades, social science, spurred by feminist theory and practice, has contributed robust analyses to academic explorations and explanations of the human body, its enmeshment in social interaction, and its cultural

representations. It is through this feminist infused sociological lens of theorizing the body that we resubmit this proposal for the formation of a section on body/embodiment. Major themes of contemporary sociological studies of the body consider how bodies become social entities through membership in communities and how these bodies are valued according to their gender, social class, age, religion, racial-ethnic, and national status. Certain bodies survive and thrive depending upon economic resources and social power—for example, men's bodies are at risk of military, athletic, and industrial exploitation, and, for disadvantaged men, imprisonment, while women's bodies are controlled by institutions dominated by men, namely, medicine and religion, but that knowledge gives women increased autonomy. Recent scholarship on social movements and social change demonstrate how it is possible for the marginalized – the elderly, those with disabilities, intersexed and transgendered people – to forge communities that give their bodies value.” (From the *Section on Body & Embodiment Proposal*)

Essay: Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada

Barbara Sutton,
University at Albany, SUNY

I took the pictures at the ESMA (Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada/School of Mechanics of the Navy) in Argentina, my country of origin. The pictures are meant to draw attention to a bodily issue that continues to have relevance today and that I hope members of the section on Body & Embodiment will consider: the effects of political violence, and more specifically, state terrorism on the body as permeated by gendered ideologies, relations, and practices.

This facility functioned as a clandestine detention center/concentration camp during the last military dictatorship in Argentina (1976-1983), which claimed to be defending Western and Christian civilization from the threat of “subversive” forces in the country. Thousands of people—including militants, artists, students, teachers, workers, and members of groups with social justice ideals—were illegally detained, tortured, and “disappeared” in this and other centers disseminated throughout the country.

The silhouettes that can nowadays be seen on the fence of the ESMA (currently transformed in a memorialization site operated by human rights organizations) evoke the memory of a time in which politics was violently fought on the body. In the absence of the fleshly, live corporeality of people disappeared by the dictatorship, these silhouettes symbolically bring their bodies back in art form. The figure of a pregnant woman with names inscribed all over her body signifies the vicious types of gendered torture that women were subjected to, especially pregnant women who gave birth to children in captivity and had their children taken away from them by the military.

In contemporary United States, as torture is glorified on popular TV shows such as *24* and as some political commentators featured in the news justify government use of torture in the name of national security, the body politics of abusive interrogation

techniques throws into stark relief the flaws of such logic. It is my hope that the traumatic legacies of this insidious practice in Argentina and elsewhere become compelling lessons so that the tortured body “never again/nunca más” becomes the means by which governments strive to achieve their political goals.



A complete photo-essay I produced to make visible women’s embodied presence among the disappeared by state terrorism in Argentina can be found at:

http://hemi.nyu.edu/journal/4.2/eng/en42_pg_novak.html

Members' New Books

Burr, Viv, and Jeff Hearn (eds.) 2008. *Sex, Violence and the Body: The Erotics of Wounding*. Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Crawley, Sara, Lara Foley and Constance Shehan. 2008. *Gendering Bodies*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Dworkin, Shari L., and Faye Linda Wachs. 2009. *Body Panic: Gender, Health, and the Selling of Fitness*. New York: New York University Press.

Franks, David. Forthcoming. *Neurosociology: The Nexus between Neuroscience and Social Psychology*. The Springer Press.

Kang, Miliann. Forthcoming 2010. *The Managed Hand: Race, Gender, and the Body in Beauty Service Work*. University of California Press.

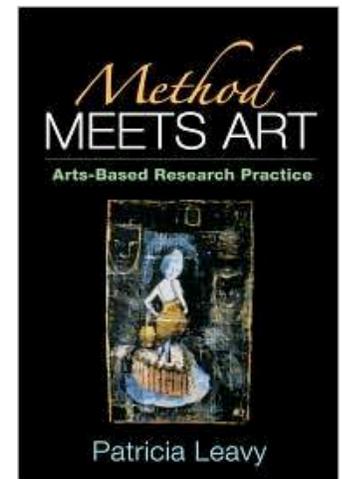
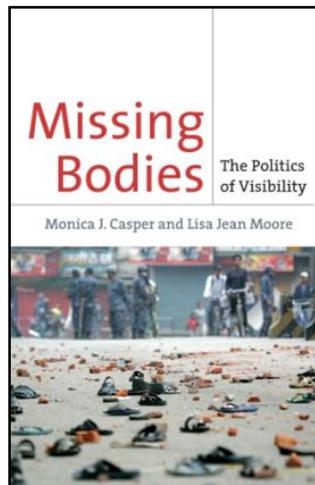
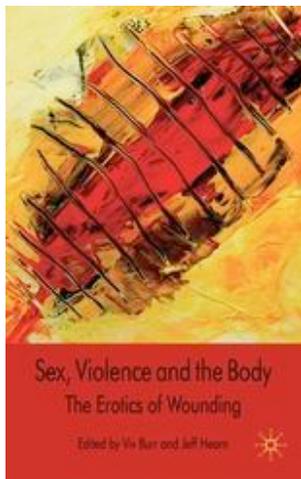
Leavy, Patricia. 2009. *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice*. Guilford Press.

Moore, Lisa Jean and Mary Kosut. 2010. *Key Readings in the Social and Cultural Studies of the Body*. New York: New York University Press.

Moore, Lisa Jean and Monica J. Casper. 2009. *Missing Bodies: The Politics of Visibility*. New York: New York University Press.

Sutton, Barbara. Forthcoming Spring 2010. *Bodies in Crisis: Culture, Violence, and Women's Resistance in Neoliberal Argentina*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Of interest: Monica Casper and Lisa Jean Moore are editing a new book series at NYU Press http://www.nyupress.org/biopolitics_series.php



Members' Recent Articles and Book Chapters

Bakehorn, Jill. 2009. "Women-Made Pornography" in *Sex for Sale: Prostitution, Pornography and the Sex Industry* 2nd ed, Ronald Weitzer (ed). New York: Routledge.

Casanova, Erynn M. 2008. "No hay mujer fea: conceptos de la belleza entre las adolescentes guayaquileñas [There Are No Ugly Women: Concepts of Beauty among Adolescent Women in Guayaquil, Ecuador]" in *Estudios sobre sexualidades en América Latina*, Kathya Araujo

and Mercedes Prieto (eds). Quito, Ecuador: FLACSO.

Franks, David. Forthcoming "Emotions on a Continuum" in *Emotion Review*.

Pagis, Michal. 2009. "Embodied Self-Reflexivity." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 72:265-83.

Wells, Susan. 2008. "Our Bodies, Ourselves: Reading the Written Body." *Signs* 33: 697-723.

Conferences

Forgotten Bodies: Identities, Practices and Representations

January 9, 2010 in Exeter, United Kingdom. Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Sexuality and Gender in Europe Third Annual Postgraduate Conference. Forgotten Bodies will provide a forum in which postgraduate researchers can explore often overlooked discourses, representations and practices relating to embodiment, sexuality and gender. Previous research into this field has often urged overly simplistic hegemonic models of practices, desires and identities, which this conference hopes to reassess. Our main objective is to explore the challenges of not only researching, including but also re-positioning so-called 'forgotten bodies' in academic programmes. This interdisciplinary conference encourages papers from all disciplines, including, but not restricted to, cultural studies, gender studies, history, literary studies, media studies, modern languages, psychology, sociology and those taking an experimental format or approach. The themes the conference wishes to address and reflect upon include the following:

- How can bodies be forgotten?
- What modes of representation are most useful for reclaiming these forgotten bodies?
- What types of methodology could be helpful?
- Who forgets about these bodies?
- 'Normative' and 'non-normative' sexual practices
- Remembering the other letters in LGBTQI (bisexuality, transgender and intersex)
- Heterosexuality Studies
- Masculinity Studies
- Disability Studies
- Sexuality and ageism
- Fat Studies
- Cosmetic surgery and intentional body modification
- The relationship between representations and lived experiences
- Western representations of non-European practices

Proposals are invited for individual papers of 20 minutes (including any video clips or other visual presentation) followed by 10 minutes discussion, or for panels (3 speakers, 20 minutes presentation plus 10 minutes discussion each) on any area of research related to the idea of Forgotten Bodies. Proposals (150-250 words in Microsoft Word format) and a brief biography (150 words max.) should be sent by October 30, 2009 to Caroline Walters at cjw222@exeter.ac.uk. We intend to have a variety of creative pieces (short films, artwork and sound installations, etc.) on display alongside the more traditional academic papers. Please send a sample with a short covering letter to Caroline Walters at cjw222@exeter.ac.uk.

Sociologists for Women in Society

February 4-7, 2010 in Santa Barbara, CA. Theme: *Left Coast Feminisms: Reimagining Borders, Bodies and the Law*. SWS members are invited to submit proposals for panels and abstracts that interrogate concepts of borders, bodies, and the law within the rubric of left coast and all engaged feminisms. Please submit abstracts 250 words or less to meeting@socwomen.org by November 15, 2009.

CUNY Conference on Mothers, Mothering, and Motherhood

A day-long conference on Friday, February 26th at the Martin Segal Theater, Graduate Center, City University of New York, featuring scholars and poets writing about mothers, mothering, and motherhood. The conference celebrates a special issue of *WSQ (Women's Studies Quarterly)*, guest edited by poet Nicole Cooley and sociologist Pamela Stone. Co-sponsored by the Center for the Study of Women and Society (CUNY) and the Feminist Press. For more information, contact Zoe Meleo-Erwin at wsqeditorial@gmail.com.

Conferences (continued)

Eastern Sociological Society

March 18-21, 2010 in Boston, MA. Theme: *Economic Crisis and New Social Realities*. Submission Deadline is October 30, 2009. To submit an abstract please visit the ESS homepage at: www.essnet.org

Breastfeeding and Feminism 2010: Rethinking Public Health Approaches

Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC, on March 20, 2010. Our 5th Breastfeeding and Feminism symposium will be based on an edited collection of papers. In addition, there will be a poster session. To celebrate our 5th symposium milestone and in light of the economy, our 2010 symposium is only one day and the cost is only \$25.00!! We invite you to consider submitting an abstract to be considered for authorship of a chapter and presentation and/or to submit an abstract to present a poster on a related topic.

1. Book chapters: We invite 250-word abstracts on the specific chapter topics to be considered for invitation to prepare the chapter for the book and to present at the meeting. The abstracts and your brief resume will be accepted as two pdf attachments emailed to Paige Hall Smith (pshsmith@uncg.edu) by October 15.

2. Poster Presentations: We invite 250-word abstracts for poster presentations at the meeting on related topics and issues. The abstracts will be accepted as pdf attachments emailed to Miriam Labbok (labbok@unc.edu) with the subject line "Poster abstract" by December 15. Notification of acceptance to the symposium by January 15. All poster presenters will be expected to register for and attend the meeting.

For more information please visit www.uncg.edu/hhp/cwhw.

Or contact: Paige Smith (pshsmith@uncg.edu),
Miriam Labbok (labbok@unc.edu),
Bernice Hausman (bhausman@vt.edu).

Pacific Sociological Association

April 8-11, 2010 in Oakland, CA. Theme: *Revitalizing the Sociological Imagination: Individual Troubles & Social Issues in a Turbulent World*. Sessions include: Aging and the Body; Sociology of the Body; Sexual Bodies and Identities in a Technological Age; and Embodying Academia: Theoretical, Methodological & Practical Reflections. The submission deadline is October 15, 2009 and more information is available at www.pacificsoc.org.

American Sociological Association

August 14-17, 2010 in Atlanta, Georgia. Theme: *Towards a Sociology of Citizenship: Inclusion and Participation and Rights*. The call for papers will be posted October 30 at www.asanet.org. The online submission system will open December 1.

Body & Embodiment Sessions at ASA

INVITED SESSION: "Theorizing the Body Sociologically," organized by Judith Lorber (jlorber@rcn.com) and Salvador Vidal-Ortiz (vidalort@american.edu)

OPEN SESSION: "Inequality of the Body," organized by Alison Better, Brandeis University, (alison@brandeis.edu) and Lisa Jean Moore, SUNY-Purchase (Lisa-Jean.Moore@purchase.edu).

ROUNDTABLES: Organized by Amy Sorensen, Virginia Tech (asorens@vt.edu) and Vania Brightman Cox, University of Minnesota (brigh009@umn.edu)

See also the THEMATIC SESSION: "(Re)Theorizing 'Bios': On Embodied Citizenship," organized by Lisa Jean Moore, SUNY-Purchase (Lisa-Jean.Moore@purchase.edu) and Monica J. Casper, ASU (monica.casper@asu.edu)

Call for Papers

Midwifery Special Issue “Safety in Maternity Care”

We would like to invite authors from a range of backgrounds to submit their full manuscripts for consideration to Midwifery at <http://ees.elsevier.com/ymidw/> by February 1, 2010. When asked to choose article type, authors should select “Special Issue: Safety in Maternity Care,” and

in the “Enter Comments” box any further acknowledgements should be inserted. All submissions should meet Midwifery author guidelines. For more information contact guest editors Jane Sandall (jane.sandall@kcl.ac.uk) and Christine H. Morton (cmorton@stanford.edu).

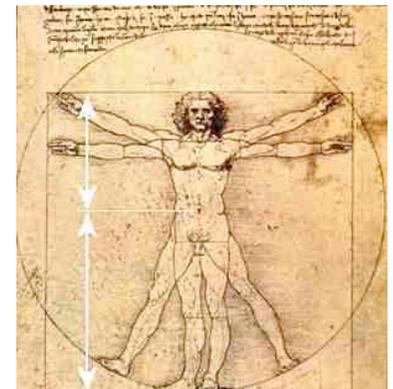
Teaching Resources

“Teaching the Sociology of the Body: A Collection of Syllabi, Assignments, and Other Resources,” edited by Susan J. Ferguson and Erin K. Anderson. The volume is available in e-book format from the ASA bookstore.

<http://www.e-noah.net/asa/asashoponlineservice/ProductDetails.aspx?productID=ASAOE380B07E>

Members’ News

Erynn Masi de Casanova has accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Cincinnati, beginning in Fall 2009.



ASA Body & Embodiment Section-in-Formation Committees

Liaison to the Section-in-Formation

Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, American University

Listserv Manager

Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, American University

Membership and Recruitment Committee

Kristen Barber University of Southern California

Alison Better, Brandeis University

By-Laws Committee

Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, American University

Eve Shapiro, Westfield State College

Elise Paradis, Stanford University

Newsletter Editors

Sergio Mobilia, University of Connecticut

Maura Kelly, University of Connecticut

Danielle Antoinette Hidalgo, UC Santa Barbara

We will soon have our first elections as a regular section. Look for the call for nominations on the Body & Embodiment listserv in December and the ballots in early 2010.

Submissions for the Spring Newsletter

Look for the call for submissions for the next newsletter on the Body & Embodiment listserv in Spring 2010. Please send all newsletter submissions to at BodyNewsletter@gmail.com. If you have comments or ideas you would like to contribute, please feel free to contact us!