2024 Paula J. Giddings Best Article Award

Winner

Zeynep K. Korkman for her article “(Mis)Translations of the Critiques of Anti-Muslim Racism and the Repercussions for Transnational Feminist Solidarities”

Meridians 22:2

Bio: Zeynep K. Korkman is assistant professor of gender studies at University of California, Los Angeles. Her research explores the gendered relationships between affect, labor, religion, and feminist politics, with a focus on Turkey. Her book, Gendered Fortunes: Divination, Precarity, and Affect in Postsecular Turkey, was published in 2023 by Duke University Press.

Abstract: As critiques of anti-Muslim racism travel transnationally, they get translated in relation to complex histories of imperialism, colonialism, postcolonialism, and nationalism. These (mis)translations produce unexpected uses and abuses of anti-Muslim racism as an academic and political concept, with significant consequences for transnational feminist solidarity. This article explores, as a case in point, the emergence of a “Black Turk” identity in millennial Turkey where pious Muslim identity, once marginalized under a secularist state, has reasserted itself by deploying an analogy of Black to pious Muslim. Obscuring the nuances of local power relations, the pious Muslim/secular fault line was oversimplified and mistranslated into the resonant American idiom of the Black/white binary. This analogy and the progressive critiques of anti-Black and especially anti-Muslim racisms were then instrumentalized by an increasingly authoritarian and gender-conservative Islamist Turkish government to legitimize its repressive agendas, even succeeding to garner unexpected sympathy from some feminist politicians and academics in the United States. Naïve confidence that such dichotomous racial/religious categories and familiar political vocabularies can guide feminist analyses and politics risks employing a seemingly transnationalist and anti-imperialist but in truth U.S.-centric understanding of non-U.S. struggles for social justice and thwarting potential transnational feminist solidarities.

Read the article: https://read.dukeupress.edu/meridians/article/22/2/267/382324/

Mis-Translations-of-the-Critiques-of-Anti-Muslim
2024 Paula J. Giddings Best Article Award

Honorable Mention

Grace L. Sanders Johnson for her article “Picturing Herself in Africa: Haiti, Diaspora, and the Visual Folkloric” Meridians 22:2

Bio: Grace L. Sanders Johnson is assistant professor of Africana studies at the University of Pennsylvania. She received her PhD in history and women's studies at the University of Michigan where she specialized in modern Caribbean and Latin American history, transnational feminisms, oral history, and African diasporic studies.

Abstract: This essay explores the relationship between imaging, archival cataloging, and African diasporic belonging through the developed and undeveloped photography of Haitian anthropologist Suzanne Comhaire- Sylvain. Using her family correspondences and research on folklore to contextualize her image-based archive on Haiti, the Belgian Congo, and Nigeria, the author proposes that Comhaire-Sylvain’s visual catalog is rendered legible through her undeveloped images taken in Africa. Tracing Comhaire-Sylvain’s contortions in front of and behind the camera, the author shows that her undeveloped and unpublished imaging practices of play and experimentation exemplify a medium of scholarly and personal reflexivity that troubled the authority of her professional research practice and enlivened the range of her diasporic expression. With particular attention given to photos taken during her time in the Belgian Congo between 1943 and 1945 and her long-stay return to Haiti in 1957, the author argues that Comhaire-Sylvain’s imaging catalog is most provocatively read as an assemblage bound by her use of folklore as a unique technology for crafting meaning between overlapping sites of diasporic belonging and intellectual inquiry.

Read the article: https://read.dukeupress.edu/meridians/article/22/2/348/382327/Picturing-Herself-in-Africa-Haiti-Diaspora-and-the