Transnational Conversations on Human/Animal Entanglements

Earlier this year, Maharashtra, a state in India, banned the slaughter of cows and the selling of beef. This legislative enactment received a flurry of attention. While some see it as a great incentive to counter climate change and meat production, protect the interests of Hindus, and boost the sale of vegetarian food products, others describe it as a blow to secularism and democracy as the people who sell and eat beef are primarily Muslim and low-income Hindus. The situation is complex, multi-layered, and demands attention on many grounds, one of which is the transnational political-economy of food and human/animal entanglements.

Food is an intrinsic aspect of identity and relational ethics. Communities frame themselves and others through food practices and their relation to non-human animals. Postcolonial studies have devoted consistent attention to colonialism’s incessant animalization of the “other” and definition of the “human.” Ecofeminists have written extensively about the political-economy of meat-eating built within systemic fabrics of violence on women and nature. The example from Maharashtra reiterates the need to continue the conversation on food and Human/Animal interfaces through national and trans-national signifiers which unwrap the differences and similarities on conversations about food and identity. How do we frame and talk about vegetarianism from a transnational prism? What does veganism entail as we travel across borders? What are different kinds of “meat” seen through transnational signifiers? How does nation interact with race, class, sex, gender, disability, and empire to frame a conversation on the politics of food? Understanding and responding to the spatial and temporal enlargements of the transnational requires an intersectional approach that is able to discern the complex confluence of varied identities in configuring Human/Animal entanglements.

Possible trajectories of investigation include, but are not limited by the following topics:

- An intersectional political-economy of veganism, vegetarianism, meat-eating.
- Transnational identities and food.
- Postcolonial and Decolonial perspectives on Human/Animal binary-thinking and its criticisms.
- Transnational social movements on environmentalism.
- Transnational ecofeminisms.
- Transnational interventions on the gendered and sexual politics of food justice.

Please submit 200 word abstracts by November 20, 2015 to be considered for the People of Color Caucus panel at SEWSA. Abstracts not selected for the caucus are sent forward for consideration to the general conference.