

UC Center for New Racial Studies Presents

Darkening Mirrors: Images of Black Imperial Performance

Stephanie Batiste, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, English and Black Studies Departments
UC Santa Barbara



African American culture and identity are overwhelmingly associated with resistance to racial and national oppression. Stephanie Batiste's recently released book *Darkening Mirrors: Imperial Representation in Depression Era African American Performance* complicates this notion by proposing that African American cultural producers in the early 20th century showed an identification and complicity with imperial modes of U.S. power. In some cases African Americans accomplished this by consenting in imperial forms like expansion and in others by performing primitive representations of black people in the diaspora. This concept of black cultural production as consenting in representations of power insists on a re-examination of oppressed populations' relationships to national identity and of subaltern populations conceptions of themselves as so-called

others. Batiste contends that examining complicity with power broadens a conception of black humanity and of how the oppressed use and manipulate the very tools that have defined their social exclusion. In this presentation, Batiste explores the relationship between self-identification and power through visual examples from her research on black performance.

UC Santa Barbara
Social Science and Media Science (SS&MS) Building 3145
Thursday, February 28th, 12-1pm
Refreshments will be provided



The University of California Center for New Racial Studies (UCCNRS), a Multi-Campus Research Program funded by the UC Office of the President, supports UC researchers' work on race and racism, creates networks among race scholars, and seeks to intervene in debates about race in support of racial and social justice — locally, statewide, nationally, globally.