

Food Politics and Studies Colloquium Report

This project is concerned with the human dimensions of food in our current context. The emphasis is on how certain knowledge work to create understandings about food, society and culture; how we can explore complex social identities in relation to food items, food cultures and food preparation or consumption; and how social relationships and struggles are configured around food systems.

Prepared by Desiree Lewis, with Thembi Bongwana and Ayesha Ludick

Introduction



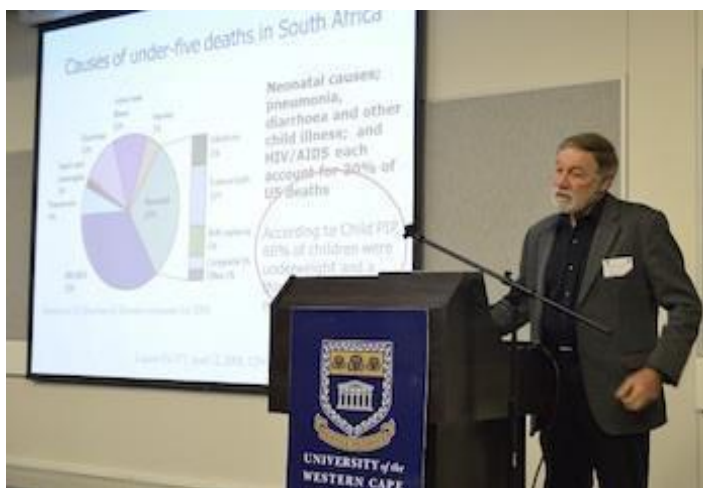
As a start-up colloquium, this event proved to be denser and more comprehensive than anticipated. We were especially pleased by the enthusiastic responses of the various participants - national, local (from UWC and other campuses in the Western Cape) and international participants who were invited to present. We would therefore like to thank all participants, including the many who did not present, and especially those from non-academic organizations such as the Surplus People's Project, for taking part in this event.

As planned, presentations took a variety of forms, with some speakers providing fully-worked out papers, and others offering shorter inputs that elicited extensive conversation among the audience. A number of topics needed to be taken further, and limited time of this two-day event prevented this. However, these will definitely be revisited in the course of the project's expansion over the next few years.

In introducing the content and main aims of the colloquium, Desiree Lewis, the principal researcher for the project, raised the importance of thinking critically about what the "creature we call the humanities" is. With the glut of work on food security studies, much of which is technical and scientific, there is a great temptation to posit "the humanities" as an ideal alternative to scholarship that currently dominates the field. Yet this largely reproduces existing divides

between the natural sciences, the social sciences and the humanities – especially as these divides work to limit productive research and scholarship around food. The University of the Western Cape’s School of Public Health (SOPH), which has long drawn together critical thinkers in the natural and social sciences, is an example of a site that has, in very transdisciplinary ways, engaged with the politics and economics of food systems. In particular, the SOPH has demonstrated how humanities-driven work has been and can continue to be pursued within the natural and social sciences in South Africa, where the need to speak about, for example nutritional security or physical health is necessarily entangled with social and human issues such as resource distribution in class society or inequalities around food access.

In demonstrating this, David Sanders, former director and founder of UWC’s SOPH, gave a short but rich presentation on South Africans’ changing eating patterns driven by the market and rampant capitalism in post-apartheid South Africa.



**David Sanders-Director at School of Public Health (SOPH)
(Photography by Mologadi Makwela)**

Sanders focused especially on the role of neo-liberalism, and the extent to which its agendas now dominate planning and policy-making around communities’ nutritional needs and public health: in their eagerness to open all doors to global capitalism, post-colonial governments in southern Africa (with South Africa often leading the way) encourage supermarkets sell overpriced and unhealthy foods in poor communities. Both food costs and food quality therefore compromise the nutritional security of poor South Africans. In subsequent presentations and discussions, many referred to Sanders’ arguments and statistics, with some participants, like Ashraf Jamal in his presentation, invoking Sanders’ eye-opening findings about the mushrooming supermarkets in Southern Africa’s urban, peri-urban and rural communities.



Food Talk

The first session of the opening day raised the importance of what Desiree Lewis termed “discursive space clearing” in knowledge production about food, and flagged themes paving the way for thinking critically about food studies and explaining the role of humanities approaches to food.



Vasu Reddy (Photography by Mologadi Makwela)

Vasu Reddy’s detailed opening presentation provided a comprehensive overview of what food studies from a humanities perspective actually entails. Explaining various influences in theoretical and philosophical work, Vasu focused on the contributions of literary scholars and anthropologists, especially Claude Levi Strauss, in providing theoretical and conceptual frameworks that allow us to explore food not simply as a basic human resource, but as “language”, as cultural representation, and in relation to social, political and cultural events. Drawing attention to the fact that food studies focuses primarily on *human subjects’ relationships to food*, rather than on positivist notions of human beings’ biological food needs, Reddy provided a solid foundation for discussion that followed.



Yvette Abrahams (Photography by Mologadi Makwela)

Following this, Yvette Abrahams, discussed the need to question Eurocentric and patriarchal knowledges about food growth and consumption. Describing her use of Afrocentric and feminist models, she charted the possibilities for a South African-centered feminist approach to thinking about food.

Abrahams' presentation was valuable in raising the ethical, political and personal dimensions of work on food. For example, in critiquing the dualisms of mind and body that continue to dominate social and natural science work on food, Yvette showed how indigenous knowledge and feminist ideas provide philosophical and theoretical entry points into understanding how to grow better food, how to ensure that food access is democratized; and how to ensure our collective well-being (and the well-being of our planet) in (non neo-liberal) humanistic forms of food production and consumption.

Rounding off the discussion for the first theme, Thandi Pouane from SOPH presented her research on black South African women's perception of their bodies in relation to health and nutrition. This was probably one of the most contentious and provocative discussions, raising much debate about the politics of representation and the ways in which notions of health, wellness and body shape are culturally and discursively imagined. Pouane, working largely from a positivist perspective, argued that many black women, including those employed in public health services, have culturally specific ideas about body image and wellness, and therefore often aspire to be larger than is "healthy" according to scientific standards. Providing statistics and images based on years of personal and collaborative research, she drew attention mainly to the dangers of black South African women's over-eating in the interests of being deemed "well", "beautiful" and "healthy" in culturally specific terms.



Thandi Pouane (Photography by Mologadi Makwela)

The responses to this presentation were animated, with some contesting the speaker's positivist ideas about health, ideal body size and wellness, and some challenging her generalizations about culture and black women. This seems to be one of the most important areas for further discussion in a project that draws together conversation and debates between humanities social science and natural science scholars and thinkers.

Shelley Barry's film screening and the discussion of extracts from her films by Heidi Grunebaum a film-maker and interdisciplinary scholar in UWC's Centre for Humanities Research, and Desiree Lewis followed a lengthy process of consultation and dialogue between Shelley, Desiree and Heidi Grunebaum. Barry's work, which includes narrative film and short experimental documentaries, is not about food, but about a range of psycho-social, political and aesthetic concerns. These include a narrative film dealing with a disabled queer man's suffocating relationship with his over-protective mother, autobiographical snippets in which Barry tells her story and focuses on her creative and political struggles as a black, disabled, lesbian artist.

However, food recurs in all her films through symbols, tropes, narratives and allusions. Some of these include references to spices and her engagement with the work of artist, Berni Searle, the use of food images in peppers and chillies, the use of tropes of digestion, ingestion, constipation and consumption in relation to stories of repression, dispossession and survival, and stories about collective and family experiences in relation to cooking and eating. The conversation following the film screening raised these and other themes, focusing on the intricate ways in which we process and engage with the visual in making comprehensive sense of our world. It is noteworthy that, following the screening and conversation among Shelley, Heidi and Desiree, many participants seemed to prefer silence as a way of thinking through the meanings raised by the films, rather than the animated questions and talk that followed the other presentations.



**Heidi Grunebaum, Shelley Barry & Desiree Lewis Photography
by Mologadi Makwela)**

Representations of Food, Eating and Cuisine

Presentations and discussion in relation to this theme revealed the rich abundance of work that falls squarely within the humanities. Among those presenting were media studies scholars and practitioners, literary theorists and journalists.



Ashraf Jamal (Photography by Mologadi Makwela)

In starting the day with his morning discussion, Ashraf Jamal, novelist, film-maker and cultural analyst, presented a brilliant paper titled, "Junk". Focusing on the consumption of junk food as a trope for our modern neo-liberal age, Ashraf invoked William Burrough's novel *Junky* in exploring connections between young South Africans' consumption of junk food and their addictive responses to current challenges in South Africa. Echoing the theme of the American novelist, Ashraf argued that, in both literal and symbolic ways, the compulsive ingestion of the detritus of our world ultimately crushes the imaginations of young South Africans, especially the students he knows and

works among in the Western Cape. Drawing attention to a culture of consumerism that entails an elite's obscene consumption alongside the near- starvation of many students who often subsist on 'niknaks', Ashraf offered a sobering critique of the current ethos that South Africans inhabit. He explained how pernicious "junk" could be in a South African context where two- dimensional ideas about nation-building or racial solidarity often shut down on more inspiring, productive and humane responses to challenges for social and personal transformation. While Ashraf's pessimism drew some critical comments, many students found his talk inspiring and very sympathetic about where many young South Africans are currently at.



Fiona Moola (Photography by Mologadi Makwela)

Picking up on Ashraf's attention to the symbolic meanings of eating, Fiona Moola's careful textual analysis of two texts by African women novelists clearly revealed the role of literary texts analysis in analyzing food ways. Fiona demonstrated how attention to literary texts yielded fresh insight into colonialism, neo-colonialism, gender and personal struggles: in talking about how socially constituted subjects relate to food items or the history of food items, such as maize in southern Africa, much more can be explored than is often the case with social histories. One of the many discussions following her presentation concerned the gendered, classed and racialized history of maize production and consumption. Maize in southern Africa has a long and complex history. And, as Fiona pointed out, especially in her analysis of Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, also a gendered history. The extent to which attitudes towards, meanings attached to, and practices around maize production reveal various histories from below was powerfully explored.

Like Fiona, Laura Barnard dealt with food ways in literary texts. As a graduate student who has had an abiding interest in food writing and food, Laura demonstrated ways in which graduate students can integrate their personal passions into their academic research. Laura analyzed Hemingway's writing to show how integral processes of consumption and ingestion are to the construction and performance of context-specific masculinities. Raising ideas for valuable study in South Africa, Laura pointed to ways in which scholars and graduates could focus on the consumption of foodstuffs as well as beverages in

their analysis of the intricate yet everyday ways in which gender is scripted, preformed, navigated and contested. Fiona's and Laura's presentations therefore illustrated Reddy's claim that food studies is primarily about human relationships to food: ways in which gendered and other identities are configured and performed through relating to food in certain ways.

An important set of concerns under the second theme revolved around media representations of food and eating. In many ways, this was anticipated by David Sanders' provocative discussion of the impact of supermarket culture and neo-liberalism throughout Africa, and his reminder that children in particular have been hooked in to advertising of sugar-rich products.

Three presenters, Crystal Orderson, Efua Prah and Signe Rousseau, offered thoughtful work on how the media markets and promotes certain cuisines and food items in the present. As a journalist, Orderson shared her first-hand views of how television and text media market "tasteful" food that is linked to conspicuous consumption, Western-centricism, "beautiful bodies" and elitism. Critiquing racist, sexist and elitist cooking and consumption as epitomized by South Africa's famous black woman celebrity chef, Siba Mtonga, she concluded her presentation with a clip portraying the Surplus People's Project's battles for affordable food in the Western cape. Crystal therefore showed how popular (as opposed to mass) media can provide alternative views about food, eating and identity.



Crystal Orderson (Photography by Loga Makwela)

Crystal's attention to the mass media's fixation with celebrities in relation to food was developed in a paper presented by Signe Rousseau, the author of several studies on food, the mass media and celebrity chef culture. Signe shed fascinating light on how current media messages around food, especially celebrity chefs, position viewers as helpless and hapless consumers of

knowledge and over-priced products. Her nuanced analysis therefore foregrounded the important argument that the media currently plays a largely mystified or unrecognized role in creating public passivity or acquiescence in the face of dominant capitalist and consumerist agendas.



Efua Prah (Photography by Mologadi Makwela)

That the media in South Africa and globally is playing a powerful role in disempowering the public about their relationship to food was made abundantly obvious in discussions at the colloquium. Efua Prah, an anthropologist at UWC drew further attention to ways in which media representation of food reinforce cultural and social meanings. Efua focused on American stereotypes about Africans in relation to their attacks on the food that “Africans” eat. By drawing attention to the persistence of deeply racist ideas about food and Nigerians, Efua demonstrated that racisms in the present can often be conveyed indirectly, for example, through attitudes towards the food or dress of “Others”. The three presenters therefore raised the significance of meanings attached to food in an age where it is experienced, imagined and understood extremely powerfully through media such as the internet, you-tube, magazines, advertisements and television programmes.

Food Struggles, Social Justice and Human Dignity

Presentations in this theme were strongly interactive and dialogic. In a panel which needed to be cut short because of limited time, Mary Hames, Moenieba Isaacs and visiting scholar, Arundhati Kundal, presented their action research on working with groups around food sovereignty at the local level. Mary’s work with students at UWC demonstrated the need to take the challenge of food scarcity among South African students seriously. Mary strongly contested the idea that food scarcity in South Africa is a feature only (or even primarily) of rural areas and is experienced solely by obviously “poor” South Africans. Confronting ways in which the academy depersonalizes and disembodies students, she drew attention to the prevalence of hunger among certain students at universities like UWC. Most importantly, she argued that responses to hunger should not involve welfarist efforts among those who “have” to feed the hungry; instead it should entail collective efforts among all staff and students to deal with

hunger among certain groups as a collectively experienced injustice which also puts in place psychosocial responses such as shame, fear and dependency. From this perspective, then, the hunger of certain groups is therefore our collective “shame”.



Mary Hames (Photography by Mologadi Makwela)

Linking up with Mary’s emphasis on the indignities experienced by those who struggle for their rights to produce, sell and buy affordable food, Arundhati drew valuable comparisons between informal food sellers in Cape Town’s urban and peri-urban areas and those in Indian cities. She also focused on how researchers should conduct ethical feminist qualitative research on women from subordinated groups. Describing her efforts to undertake research on Cape- Town based informal food sellers, she focused on her own location as an Indian, middle-class woman academic relying on translation in beginning to listen to her research participants’ complex life narratives. As she showed, when researchers deal with the complexity of groups’ struggles for food sovereignty, the researcher’s struggles with her own positionality (and choosing appropriate methods) should be as central to the research process as her intellectual engagement with her research findings.



Moeniba Isaacs



Arundhati Kundal

(Photography by Mologadi Makwela)

Like Arundhati, Moeniba Isaacs from PLAAS at UWC concentrated on her own location. Discussing her position as an “insider-outsider”, she argued that her biographical experience (originating from the fishing community among which

she now works) has played a valuable role in allowing her to conduct ethical and politically responsive work. Moeniba focused on the extent to which her work has informed advocacy and policy recommendations that work to enhance the rights of South African women in the fishing community. Moeniba's discussion was also significant in highlighting the intricacies of gendered, class and racial dynamics in relation to fishing: showing that women continue to be rendered invisible in the world of fishing rights and struggles, she drew attention to their centrality in the fish processing industry, and the conditions (including being poorly paid and contracted, working under precarious conditions, receiving limited employee benefits) that they face. Considering the long history of women's invisibilised work in the fishing industry in the Western Cape, Moeniba's insights are significantly connected to interdisciplinary work on gender, fishing and food sovereignty elsewhere.

The discussion of food sovereignty was the only colloquium segment that took the form of a panel discussion. And the panelists gave colloquium participants a compelling sense of the thought-provoking comparative work that can be pursued by analyzing the gendered, economic, and racialized dimensions of injustices around food access and distribution. For scholarship on food sovereignty, this nuanced attention to context-specific battles and struggles, whether these occur in universities among students, or in fishing industries or in the streets of Cape Town or Delhi, are important in thinking through what current food sovereignty struggles entail at a global level but within local contexts.

The colloquium ended on a sublimely celebratory note. Gabeba Baderoon, a food studies scholar skyped in from her home in the United States in the early hours of her morning, shared provocative and thoughtful insights into food, culture and identity in a closing session where participants, in order to make up time, ate their evening meal while listening to her presentation. Gabeba pursued an autobiographical approach with which many other presenters began their presentations. Telling the story of her own encounters with food items and food cultures, Gabeba teased out complex dynamics around gendered, class and racialised subjectivities in relation to attitudes towards, responses to and behaviour around food. Her rich presentation provided participants with a vivid sense of how to make personal sense of their own food and eating experiences from cultural, sociological and political points of view: in thinking through the concepts, theories, tools and textual sources that facilitate sense-making about human and social behavior. She also threaded together autobiographical fragments that revealed how memory can be triggered and reconstructed through recollections of the sensory, material and aural experiences of food events and eating within families and communities. Gabeba encouraged, in particular many of the students present to think more carefully about their everyday food and eating experiences.

We would like to thank

Ms Mawada Abrahams, whose administration and coordination were essential to the success of this event, Prof Julian May, Director of the CoE for his support and

participation, and Loga Makwela for her incredibly supportive role as media person in the CoE.

RSVP Ayesha Ludick: ayesha.ludick@yahoo.com

Scholarship and policy research on food is often pursued in silos. This colloquium provides a forum for exploring, sharing and debating interdisciplinary work, especially work-in-progress and exploratory work, with the aim of mapping out possibilities for humanities –related research on food and food systems.

Presenters and the chairs for their sessions will lead discussion in relation to the following key themes:

- Theme 1: Epistemological Interventions into Food Studies
- Theme 2: Social rituals, cultural processes and human subjectivities related to food preparation and consumption.
- Theme 3: Food systems and sovereignty in relation to local, national and global power relations.

This Colloquium is hosted by the Department of Women and Gender Studies at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), under the leadership of Professor Desiree Lewis (head of department). The colloquium is also made possible thanks to support from the DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in Food Security (CoE-FS), which is co-hosted by UWC and the University of Pretoria.



DST-NRF
**Centre of
Excellence**
in food security
PROGRAMME

09h00 – 09h10: Welcome by **Prof Uma Mesthrie**: Deputy Dean, Faculty of Arts (UWC) and **Prof Julian May**: Director, CoE-FS

09h10 – 09h25: Introductory Reflections on Food Studies & the Humanities: **Prof Desiree Lewis**

Desiree Lewis, head of the Women's and Gender Studies Department from 2012 to June of this year, is the Principal Researcher of a recent Mellon-funded project focusing on humanities approaches to food systems. She has published and taught extensively on gender, feminism and human development, with her ongoing research interests in topics including popular culture, visual culture, literary studies, the mass media and new media intersecting with her current interest in food studies.

09h25 – 09h45: **Working on Food in the Natural and Social Sciences: Prof David Sanders**

David Sanders is an Emeritus Professor in the School of Public Health at UWC. A paediatrician qualified also in public health, he founded SOPH and headed it from 1993 to 2009. Prof Sanders has had wide practical and academic experience in public and primary health care in Zimbabwe and South Africa, with his research interests focusing on nutrition and social justice. As Principal Researcher on projects focusing on food access and nutrition, he has been actively involved in the Centre of Excellence in Food Security since its inception.

Theme 1: Food Talk: Epistemological Interventions

How has much of the current talk about food been balkanized by national and global elites, neo-liberalism, corporate capitalism and managerialist discourses? And how can marginalized knowledges - including indigenous

knowledge systems - offer liberating ways of exploring the growth, preparation, control, distribution and eating of food in relation to the historical, social and cultural contexts of these acts? A growing range of scholars are focusing on ways in which dominant scientific knowledges about food are discursive constructed. Why should this work both inform and transform practical attention to questions about food sovereignty, social justice and human development?

09h45 – 11h00: Dr Yvette Abrahams (UWC) followed by Discussion

Yvette Abrahams is an Associate Researcher in the Women's and Gender Studies Department at UWC. A former CGE Commissioner, Dr Abrahams has worked extensively on feminism, women's livelihoods and social justice. She has had particularly extensive experience around policy design and scholarship on climate change. She has also worked extensively on women, gender, colonialism and indigenous knowledge systems. Dr Abrahams is the senior researcher on the humanities project, "Food Cultures and Systems: A Humanities Approach to Food and Food Systems".

Chair: Prof Desiree Lewis

11h20 – 12h15: Prof Vasu Reddy (University of Pretoria) followed by discussion

Prof Reddy will shortly be taking up a position as Dean of Humanities at the University of Pretoria. He has had extensive research experience at the HSRC, and has focused on sexual and gender justice and rights scholarship and networking. Prof Reddy has had an abiding interest in food studies and is currently guest editing an issue on food for the *Journal of Literary Studies*.

Chair: Dr Yvette Abrahams

12h15 – 13h30: Prof Thandi Puoane (School of Public Health, UWC) followed by discussion)

Prof Puoane's research addresses nutritional security in relation to local and global legacies histories of food management and control. She has worked on body image and cultural perceptions of nutritional and physical "health" among African-American women and within South Africa.

Chair: Prof Vasu Reddy

14h00: Screening and Discussion of Documentaries and Narrative Film made by Ms Shelley Barry

Shelley Barry is an award-winning Cape Town based film-maker. Food metaphors and imagery are central to her work. Her documentaries use innovative visual approaches to storytelling about raced, gendered and sexualized bodies. Many convey complex narratives about belonging, sexuality, embodiment, with tropes of food creation and consumption being central to her filmic vision of personal and collective resistance, fulfillment and freedom.

This screening will be followed by conversation with **Shelley Barry, Desiree Lewis & Heidi Grunebaum.**

Heidi Grunebaum works in the Centre for the Humanities. An interdisciplinary scholar with eclectic and adventurous research interests, Dr Grunebaum has worked on memory, aesthetics and politics, critical theory and film. She is the author of *Memorializing the Past: Everyday life in South Africa after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, and the narrator and writer of the award-winning documentary, *Village Under Forest* (2013), directed by Mark Kaplan.

16h00: Prof Monica White: Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, (US) followed by discussion

Professor Monica White teaches at Spelman University and has played a leading role in establishing its Food Programme. She has published extensively on gender, food and feminism, and has a particular interest in methodological and theoretical questions related to food sovereignty and distribution. A sociologist who has consistently combined radical scholarship with community engagement, Prof White is the winner of several awards for her work on food sovereignty..

Chairs: Prof Vasu Reddy & Dr Yvette Abrahams

Theme 2: Representing food, eating and “cuisine”

Food acquires collective meaning through being imagined, symbolized and ritualized. Through this theme, we unpack how processes ranging from advertisements of eating practices and food items, to literary or visual representations of food and cuisine illuminate diverse historical processes, societies, subjectivities and world views.

09h00 – 09h45: Prof Ashraf Jamaal (CPUT) followed by discussion

Ashraf Jamal is a Professor in the film and Video Technology Department at Cape Peninsula University of Technology. A writer of fiction, an academic and a film-maker and critic, Prof Jamal has worked innovatively on visual, literary and popular culture. He has produced several talks and writings about food cultures in contemporary South Africa.

Chair: Prof Vasu Reddy

09h45 – 10h30: Dr Fiona Moolla (English, UWC)

Dr Moolla, author of a recently published book on Nurridin Farrar, teaches in UWC's English Department. She has a special interest in postcolonial literatures and foodways, and is the co-editor of a book on literary studies and food which will soon be published by Wits University Press.

Chair: Prof Ashraf Jamal

11h00 – 11h45: Ms Crystal Orderson (journalist)

Crystal Orderson is a journalist currently working as the southern African correspondent for the pan-African magazine focusing on politics and economics, *New African*, and previously worked for the SABC and ETV. She has had extensive media experience throughout Africa, and has always sought to connect her activist and social justice concerns to her work as a critical journalist and feminist scholar. As a recipient of the Ruth First Fellowship at Wits in 2010, Ms Orderson is committed to promoting intellectual and political rigour in public knowledge about gender, resource access and women's experiences.

Chair: Ms Mary Hames

11h00 – 11h45: Dr Efua Prah, (Anthropology, UWC)

Dr Prah, who has recently been appointed as a lecturer at UWC, works broadly around issues of embodiment, and human subjectivity. Her PhD research focused on the embodied struggles for livelihood and survival of young children in the city of Cape Town. Her postdoctoral research has been focusing embodiment, pregnancy and attitudes towards reproduction. Much of her work indirectly engages with theories and conceptual work on food consumption.

Chair: Dr William Ellis, Social Anthropology

11h45 – 12h30: Ms Laura Barnard, (English, UCT)

Laura Barnard is a postgraduate student in the English Department at UCT. She realised that she could follow her interest in food into literary works, allowing her to develop arguments relating consumption to forms of masculinity represented in those texts.

Chair: Dr Fiona Moolla

12h30 – 13h30: Dr Signe Rousseau (School of Management Studies, UCT)

Dr. Rousseau teaches critical literacy at UCT, where she also completed her doctoral work on the topic of why chefs have become the new superstars. She has since published two books on food media, and is a contributing author to numerous publications covering media-representations of food and eating, including notions like food “porn”, and various public health debates.

Chair: Dr Heidi Grunebaum

Theme 3: Food Struggles, Social Justice and Human Dignity

Struggles for and about food are enmeshed in many networks of power and battles for human dignity. How can research on food explore these dynamics and avoid stereotyping “hungry victims” or projecting simplistic solutions to “food crises”. Amartya Sen’s efforts to link poverty to shame have drawn attention to the cultural relativity of poverty and hunger, as well as the need to address culturally constructed notions of hunger, helplessness and empowerment. How can critical social science research expand on these paths of inquiry?

12h00 – 14h30: Panel Discussion Mary Hames (UWC), Dr Arundhatie Kundal, UWC, Prof Moeniba Isaacs, PLAAS, UWC

Ms Mary Hames is the Director of the Gender Equity Unit at UWC. A feminist intellectual activist who combines her research on education and social justice with working with students and the wider community, she launched a food programme for students on campus several years ago. She has had an ongoing interest in encouraging UWC students’ critical literacy and activism in action research and practice outside of the classroom.

Dr Arundhati Kundal is a visiting researcher from India. Currently affiliated with the CoE-FS, she is interested in comparing informal trading in food in peri-urban Indian contexts with those in the Western Cape. Dr Kundal is a social scientist with expertise in researching gender, women’s livelihoods and women’s labour.

Prof Moeniba Isaacs: As a researcher with experience on marine conservation and the exploitation of workers in fishing communities, Prof Isaacs has developed cross-disciplinary insights into the fishing industry as one of the world’s key

sources of food. Working with communities, Prof Isaacs has explored the gendered and class implications of particular economic systems, government policies, global relations in terms of socially engaged research.

Chair: Prof Vasu Reddy

15h00:
discussion

Prof Gabeba Baderoon, Penn State, followed by

Gabeba Baderoon is a joint professor in the Women's Studies and African and African American Studies Departments. The author of *Imagining Muslims* (2014), Prof Baderoon has worked on representations of food, food cultures and cuisine among social subjects and communities in Cape Town for several years. Both her recent book, as well as several published articles on South African literary and cultural studies reflect this interest.

Chairs: Prof Vasu Reddy & Prof Desiree Lewis

17h30 – 19h00: Finger Supper and Networking