Call for Papers

Transparent: A Multi-Disciplinary Symposium
Susan B. Anthony Institute for Gender, Sexuality & Women’s Studies

(cosponsored by: American Studies, Film & Media Studies, English, Jewish Studies, Modern Languages & Cultures, and Religion & Classics)

December 1-2, 2016
University of Rochester

Created by Jill Soloway, Transparent debuted its first season in full in September of 2014 on Amazon.com’s streaming service. Transparent intimately tracks a family of secular Jewish Angelinos, the Pfeffermans, in the aftermath of the patriarch’s transitioning from Mort to Maura. The series has garnered much attention, including Golden Globes for both “Best Television Series—Musical or Comedy” and for “Best Actor in a Television Series—Musical or Comedy” (for actor Jeffrey Tambor as Maura).

Dubbed by the New Yorker’s Emily Nussbaum a “stealth masterpiece,” Transparent captures the psychological, social and historical dynamics of being transgender at precisely the moment that transgender individuals have come out to American mass culture. Simultaneously, in the Pfeffermans, Transparent presents the most substantively and recognizably Jewish family in the history of American television. Especially with the ambitious second season addition of a second temporality—1930s Berlin—the show offers intersecting genealogies of gender and Jewishness in America. These genealogies are rich, but gestural, and as such, the show cries out for critical engagement.

This two-day multi-disciplinary symposium aims to bring together scholars, writers, and critics to discuss all things Transparent. We anticipate conversations taking place at the nexus of sex and gender studies, Jewish studies, American studies, and media studies. Possible presentations might address, but are not limited to the following subjects related to the show’s content, production, and reception:

- Boundaries of identity
- Class, privilege, and transitioning
- Sexuality, selfhood, performativity
- Families, intimacies, aging
- Trauma, memory, secrets
- Psychoanalysis and epigenetics
- Secular Jewish culture off and on TV
- Transgression, atonement, and ritual
- Queer Berlin and Queer Hollywood
- The female gaze
- Historical and normative feminisms
• The use (and uses) of Eileen Myles’ poetry
• The show’s score and soundtrack
• Streaming services, and changing patterns of viewing

The above list of topics suggests a few possible ways to consider *Transparent*, but it is by no means comprehensive. Other approaches to discussing the series are certainly welcome, and we invite scholars from all disciplines to submit research on questions related to the symposium theme. If you have questions about the suitability of a potential topic or approach, please email Nora Rubel at nora.rubel@rochester.edu.

**Submission Details:** Please send a 250-word abstract (or a proposal for a multi-paper panel) to the organizing committee at sbai@rochester.edu as a Word or PDF document, including name, institutional affiliation, email address, a brief biographical statement, and a list of any equipment needed for your presentation. Presentations will be 20 minutes.

**Submissions are due no later than August 1st, 2016.** You will receive the committee’s decision by mid-September.

The Susan B. Anthony Institute is dedicated to addressing curricular and scholarly issues important for understanding the role of gender and sexuality throughout history and in contemporary society. The Institute is supported by over one hundred faculty associates who represent a broad range of disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences.