

**PANEL INTRODUCTION AND SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES,  
10.21.17, 4PM, IMAGES OF WOMEN IN FILM AND TV  
SARA L. RUBIN, MODERATOR**

Welcome. I'm Sara Rubin, Artistic Director Emerita of The Boston Jewish Film Festival and a Board member of the Women's Suffrage Celebration Coalition of Massachusetts, dedicated to commemorating the upcoming centennial in 2020 of the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, guaranteeing women the right to vote -- though it took until passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to help ensure that women – and men — of color, could vote.

I want to thank Valéry Freland, Consul General of France in Boston, former Cultural Attaché Emanuelle Marchand, who invited me to moderate this panel, and Mélanie Villar, who has done amazing work pulling the pieces of this two-day program together. Thank you to Sciences Po and to Wellesley College for hosting us.

We've been asked to talk about images of women in film and television. Those forms of popular culture are such important cultural touchstones. We all have different touchstones and this Symposium is in part a way to introduce one another to different reference points. As an American woman "of a certain age," as the French say, I remember portrayals of women from *I Love Lucy* to *The Donna Reed Show* to *Mary Tyler Moore*. They reflected a certain vision, a very narrow picture of the U.S. as it was seen – but not as it was – in the 1950s and 1960s. Like many of you, I've done my share of binge watching of the TV series that have entered our lives in recent years. I discovered one of my favorites, *Børgen*, which portrays a fictional female President of Denmark before there was a

real one, on French television, with all the Danish roles dubbed into French.

In recent years, terms that we thought we knew, like independent films, have taken on different meanings, as studios began to imitate indies; and delivery systems have made celluloid obsolete and shifted our viewing to smaller and smaller screens, blurring the lines between new and old media.

Some of us can answer the questions posed to the panel easily, in terms of portrayals of women. Others like to apply the Bechdel test to films. That test first appeared in 1985 in the comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For*, by Alison Bechdel – whose graphic novel was the source for the musical “*Fun Home*” currently playing in Boston. The basic test: “Does a film feature at least two women, who are given names (in one version of the test) and who talk to each other about something other than a man?” How many films do you think meet these requirements? About half.

I’m delighted to moderate this panel of incredibly talented women. I will introduce each before her opening remarks, but I encourage you to take the time later to view the speaker bios on [educationandgenderequality.com](http://educationandgenderequality.com)

Our speakers today range from a Hispanic American whose research in TV has impacted a number of storylines – for the better; a Japanese American who studies Asian American women through film, photography and popular culture – and also analyzes Elvis Presley’s impact on gender; and two French women, one of whose specialties is American TV series; and the other, a French-German woman, who hosts a national TV show on the lives of women throughout the world.

Let's get started. Each panelist will speak for no longer than 10 minutes. We'll signal each panelist at the 7-minute point, because, like the Oscars, the orchestra will play them off the stage if they exceed their limit.

Q&A: Questions, rather than talk, to which our experts can respond. Try to ask a question of everyone on the panel.

### SHORT INTRODUCTIONS OF EACH PANELIST FOLLOW:

Sandra Laugier is Professor of Philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris, where she directs their Center for Contemporary Philosophy, and a senior member of the Institut Universitaire de France. She has also created the Institut du Genre, a national network on gender studies, and is involved in interdisciplinary approaches to gender at the CNRS or Centre national de la recherche scientifique.

She has studied at the Ecole normale supérieure and at Harvard University, and her extensive publications run the gamut of various aspects of philosophy, gender studies, popular culture (TV series) and democracy and civil disobedience. She has translated most of the work of the noted Harvard University philosopher Stanley Cavell. In addition to having authored numerous books, including *Buffy tueuse de vampires*, she is a columnist at the French daily *Libération*.

Sandra de Castro Buffington is the Founding Director of UCLA's Global Media Center for Social Impact (GMI) and Principal Investigator of the Hollywood & Youth Sexuality, Reproductive Health and Rights project.

Sandra works extensively with Hollywood and other entertainment capitals to inspire and develop storylines that have profound impact on knowledge and behavior. Her research measures the impact of storytelling on viewers and maps the positive social content on top TV shows. For twenty years, Buffington's pioneering work focused on women's sexual and reproductive health in developing countries. She has won numerous awards for her work, including a campaign encouraging vasectomies that won numerous international advertising awards, including a Bronze Lion in Cannes.

Elena Tajima Creef is Professor of Women's and Gender Studies here at Wellesley College. She is engaged in research on Asian American visual histories in photography, film, and popular culture.

She is currently finishing a book on Japanese/American women and photography that begins with a look at the small delegation of Japanese Ainu, a little-known indigenous population, at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, and ends with an autoethnographic examination of her mother's 1952 postwar Japanese war bride family photo album. She developed courses in Asian American women's studies—which remains her personal, intellectual, and theoretical passion. I love her statement: It always feels like a privilege to teach my course on Asian/American women in film.

Virginie Herz is editor-in-chief at France 24 and news anchor for the program ActuELLE, "News on the International Situation of the Rights of Women."

Previously an intrepid reporter, she covered crises around the world, including revolutions in Arab countries, attempted coups in Africa, and humanitarian catastrophes in Asia. Of French and German heritage, she has applied her studies to both sides of that border, as well as in Spain and the United Kingdom. She was valedictorian at the «Institut d'études politiques» (IEP) in Strasbourg, where she received her bachelor's degree. She received Master's degrees in European politics from Bath University and the «Centre d'études journalistique» in Strasbourg.

#### ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF STATISTICS ON WOMEN WORKING IN FILM AND TV (FROM Q&A SESSION):

Women in Film, <https://womeninfilm.org>

More up-to-date is: San Diego State Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, [womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu](http://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu)

University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, Media Diversity and Social Change Initiative (USC Annenberg MDSCI),  
<http://annenberg.usc.edu/research/mdsci>