

WOMEN'S CONSULTATION ON CONSTRUCTIVE THEOLOGY

- Topic: Women's Labor Under the Forces of White Supremacy and Colonialism: Two Theological Intersectional Analyses
- Conveners: Elizabeth L. Antus, Boston College
Kathryn Lilla Cox, University of San Diego
- Treasurer: Jessica Coblentz, Saint Mary's College (Notre Dame, Indiana)
- Secretary: Jennifer Owens-Jofré, Lexington Theological Seminary
- Moderator: Julia H. Brumbaugh, Regis University
- Presenters: Amey Victoria Adkins-Jones, Boston College
Neomi De Anda, University of Dayton

Amey Victoria Adkins-Jones opened the consultation with her presentation, "Mistaken Identities: Reading the Traffic(king) Signs of Sex, Race, and Theology in the United States." She began with images from common narratives about young girls of color detained for sex trafficking, asking those gathered to consider the economic vulnerability many of these young girls and their families experience. In these young girls, Adkins-Jones invited the audience to recognize the mother of our Lord. She noted that women and girls constitute less than 20 percent of those trafficked for forced labor and offered examples of how anti-trafficking organizations connect narratives about these young girls of color to white Christian theological discourse on prostitutes, harlots, and jezebels, with white evangelical Christian anti-trafficking organizations often conflating sex trafficking with all sex work in their literature. Adkins-Jones asked, "Are all women and girls vulnerable? Is the issue of race here only a superfluous luxury? What bodies are perceived as at risk? Which are worthy of "being saved"?" She introduced the historical example of Sarah Baartman, a South African woman who took part in circus side shows in England. As Adkins-Jones re-told Baartman's story, she questioned narratives about Baartman that present her as a victimized subject, just 22 years of age when Dutch and Scottish men smuggled her into London. Adkins-Jones offered a counternarrative that paints a strikingly different portrait of Baartman, in which the performer lived a rich and full life, having chosen to travel to England in her 30s of her own volition, having been a mother who birthed and miscarried, having worked as a performing artist who sang and negotiated her own contracts, ultimately having been abandoned by Christian women against trafficking when she refused to testify that she had been taken advantage of. Through this re-telling of Baartman's biography, Adkins-Jones demonstrated that how such narratives are re-told and remembered shapes our understanding of them. In closing, she argued that Mary embodies the least of these, especially those gendered and sexed as women.

Neomi De Anda's presentation on "Latinas, Labor, Catholic Teaching, and *Cars*" began with a review of five principles that guide Catholic teaching's approach to migration and noted that Pope Francis' recent encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* mentions women but does not include sexism among sins. At the outset, De Anda cautioned that she would not tell of the myriad of abuses of immigrant women and she was not working in a nonbinary way because she was drawing on government data that pushes transpeople to the margins and assumes an artificial hegemony among Latinas. She reminded those gathered that, as of October 2020, Latinas make fifty-five cents for

every dollar paid to white men for the same work, and Latinas are heavily represented in industries most affected by COVID-19 shutdowns. She drew on recent survey data to explain that in higher education in the United States today, there is one Latina lecturer for every eight white men serving in the same position and one Latina for every fifty-plus white men who are full professors. De Anda offered the example of the animated character Cruz Ramirez in the Pixar film, *Cars 3*, based on the lived experience of Cristela Alonso, a comedienne raised in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. She contrasted Cruz's character, who is flawed and lacks confidence, and white Disney princesses who are portrayed as perfect, outspoken, and exercising their agency. De Anda sees parallels between such portrayals and the kind of discriminatory gaslighting described by historian Christy Pichichero. Pichichero argues that discriminatory gaslighting is designed to prevent people of color from trusting themselves and their experiences of reality, and De Anda, in turn, questioned the impact that such discriminatory gaslighting has not only on the *imago Dei*, but also on the *imago Christi*. She argued that structures of society, especially in the academy, that enable discriminatory gaslighters must be exposed for what they are and how they affect people of color. In closing, De Anda suggested that the speech lay ecclesial minister Daisy Flores Gámez gave during Pope Francis' recent visit to the US–Mexico border provides a roadmap of where the church might go in addressing such disparities within its walls.

This year's recipient of the Ann O'Hara Graff Award is Susan Abraham. Elena Procario-Foley, Jessica Coblenz, and Jaisy Joseph spoke about the impact she has had on their vocations as a colleague and a mentor, and her own comments celebrated the gifts and lamented the challenges of doing Catholic feminist theology today.

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