

Beyond the Centre

Fall 2005

Newsletter of the Centre for Research in Women's Studies & Gender Relations
The University of British Columbia, Canada

Update from the Director

Sneja Gunew

Our first news is how pleased we all were at the tenor of the external review report. The gist of it was that the Centre was praised for all it had accomplished and the graduate program was singled out for special accolades. Not surprisingly, the reviewers expressed astonishment at the fact that our achievements were so stellar in spite of being so inadequately resourced (e.g. we only have one .5 faculty position). Comments included: (CRWSGR) "has served as a pioneering unit in putting a concrete face on the university's mission statement...It

is also explicitly committed to the equity goals articulated in Trek 2010, both to ensure increased access and diversity of the student body and the faculty...particular commitment to the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students, and to prepare students to become exceptional global citizens. The Centre is an exemplary unit in the Faculty of Graduate Studies... the Centre is unique in international academe. The research record of the Centre is outstanding. ... launching what is now a highly successful graduate program and for doing so with limited resources. UBC is to be highly commended on moving actively in institutionalizing



Sneja Gunew with Visiting Scholar Sreedevi Nair, N.S.S. College for Women, Kerala, India.

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The Newsletter of the Centre for
Research in Women's Studies &
Gender Relations

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a faculty whose responsibility it is to initiate and support interdisciplinary studies. The university is a significant pioneer in this development, where a number of other universities in the US, for example, are now trying to play catch-up. Diversity and equity are key themes." We are confident that the Provost and Dean will note these comments and help us to build on our accomplishments. Members of the Advisory Committee, including graduate student representatives, met to consider the recommendations and we have several new strategies planned, including closer collaboration with our colleagues at Simon Fraser University.

During the Summer I attended conferences in Australia, and one in particular stands out: "Generations of Feminist Studies," a celebration to mark the hand-over, after twenty years, by the founding editors Susan Magarey and Sue Sheridan of the journal *Australian Feminist Studies*. While we applauded the achievement and welcomed the new generation of feminist scholars it was also clear that many of the achievements feminists had struggled for over those two to three decades were once again under siege, as they are in this part of the world as well. The fight for social justice and equity evidently continues and there is no chance to assume the stability of any of the gains we had taken for granted.

During the Summer months the Centre was renovated and Jane and Wynn kept things going by migrating to SAGA for some of this time. Our thanks to Wendy Frisby for coordinating this task and keeping our spirits cheerful. The wait was certainly worthwhile and we now inhabit splendidly burnished surroundings. During July we welcomed delegates from the Taiwan Gender Equity Education Association and our thanks to Hui-Ling Lin who was our liaison person for the visit. A

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Congratulations to Sara Koopman who received her MA in Women's Studies at Congregation, November, 2005

Graduate Advisor's Roundup

Margery Fee

This year, we admitted 2 new PhD students (Eunkyung Choi and Sally Menhill) and 7 new MA students (Kathleen Gamble, Heather Hanrahan, Razia Husain, Roseann Larstone, Laurie Parsons, Susie Roman and Manuela Valle). This brings our student numbers up to 9 MA students (Paola Arboleda and Itrath Syed are continuing from last year) and 19 PhD students. Congratulations to Sara Koopman who

received her MA in the November convocation. Almas Zakiuddin advanced to candidacy this fall as did Jade Boyd. The fall was the usual flurry of applications for scholarships and we are keeping our collective fingers crossed. Our thanks as well to the Faculty Associates who have agreed to be on supervisory committees. We will publicize this invisible labour as much as we can since without it our program could not be sustained.



Students Rupa Bagga, Itrath Syed, Almas Zakiuddin and Sanzida Habib with Sanzida's children, Maisha (7), and Adib (4), at the Centre's Welcome Back Party, September 23rd.

*Visiting Scholar's Report***Sofia Trilivas**

Department of Psychology, University of Crete

The Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations provided a 10-month (September 2004 through June 2005) transitional space for me to work and personally flourish in. By the use of the term transitional space, I am referring to the Centre's quality of being an academic's dream context, as both a stimulating and vibrant intellectual hub and a supportive and facilitative environment to work and just be in. The people who work in and for the Centre (Sneja Gunew, Valerie Raoul, all of the professors, Visiting Scholars, Graduate Students, and of course, Jane and Wynn) do a brilliant job of nurturing a scholarly, rigorous, and emotionally positive atmosphere. The atmosphere that permeates the Centre, the SAGA carrels, and all of the activities undertaken under their auspices allows for open dialogue, opportunities for reflection, and for creative intellectual connections and possible actions. I tried in the months that I was in the Centre to profit from all the opportunities afforded me.

Given all this, the period of my stay at the Centre was a very productive one for my research and writing. The transcribing machine that Valerie Raoul shared with all of us at SAGA proved to be invaluable in working on over 200 hours worth of tapes for my research on arranged marriages in Greece. The facilities at Koerner Library and in the web of libraries at UBC supplied me with literature and references so that I submitted 7 papers for publication (three have been accepted) and 4 papers for oral presentations in international conferences (all accepted). I was also able to work on two books for publication and one



Sofia Trilivas and son Emmanuel at the farewell party, Spring 2005.

will be published in September. The first book is an updated volume of an earlier publication. The second book could only have been written while staying and thriving in the wonderful environment of the Centre and on the University of British Columbia campus. It is a book for children written with the aim of fostering and nurturing children's capacities for reflection and mindfulness. This latter project has been in the making for many years, but it could not have come to fruition without the stimulating dialogues of the interdisciplinary setting of the Centre, the intellectual space, and the inner calm that the entire ten months conjured up for me personally.

All of the activities (Wednesday lunchtime lectures, Undergraduate Conference, Workshops, and every-

day conversations) at the Centre were a precious resource for me. Their variety, diversity, and interdisciplinary nature provided me with opportunities to reflect upon new ideas, methods, and questions and to weave them into my work. As a consequence, some new seeds for my research, teaching, and community work have germinated in my mind and hopefully will find fertile soil on the Island of Crete where I live and work. Indeed, I am returning to Crete with new and open outlook that was developed during my stay at the Centre and that came about by the wealth of information and the collaborative atmosphere that I found in Canada.

The tolerance for difference and the celebration of personal and cultural

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Rita de Grandis and Manuela Valle



Almas Zakiuddin and Xin Huang



Becki Ross and Kirsty Allen

Welcome Back Party Sept. 23, 2005



Chris Shelley and Bianca Rus



Paola Arboleda and Sneja Gunew

Our thanks to Xin Huang for sharing her photos of this event



Margery Fee and Philip Holden



Sneja Gunew and Gernot Wieland



Xin Huang, Mel Scheuer and Paola Arboleda



Nora Angeles



Rupa Bagga and Eunkyung Choi



Dec. 6th National Day of Remembrance

Killing us not so softly

Kim Snowden

In my undergraduate women's studies class, my students and I have been discussing representations of violence against women and the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, December 6th. One of the articles we have read is by Canadian writer, Daphne Marlatt. She talks about a social backlash against feminist visibility and the ways in which violence and discrimination against women have become part of our culture's visible invisibility - momentarily public but quick to leave our collective consciousness. Writing in 1991, Marlatt uses the example of the Montreal Massacre and, in my class, we connect these issues to the murdered and missing women from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Many of my students were 4 or 5 years old on December 6th 1989 when 14 women were killed by a gunman in Montreal and, for some, this is the first time they are hearing about it. Likewise, many of my students were not aware of the details of the Robert Pickton case and the gruesome reality of how many women had to lose their lives before we started paying attention.

As I mark papers this week, I find essay after essay that discusses violence against women, disposable women, and all the small ways that society condones these acts. My students are outraged and informed and I am happy that they will be aware from now on, that they will remember. When they see a memorial for the missing women, they will know what it represents and they will remember. Every December 6th, they will see the memorials to commemorate the women who

lost their lives in the Montreal Massacre and they will remember. On March 8th, they will recognize International Women's Day and they will remember. But, is it enough?

Our collective remembering of violence against women is a way to raise awareness and ensure that these women will not be forgotten. But I can't help thinking that our annual memorializing of this violence is simply another way of killing women. It seems that more often, women's issues and feminism are now considered disposable,

*"...My students are
outraged and informed and I am
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remember...."*

shoved aside and only brought out and paraded around on certain days of the year when it is acceptable to have feminist politics.

On December 6th, violence against women will be on Canada's mind, it will be a vital and important issue, a fight that is still worth having, feminists may even be on the news - but only momentarily. While days of remembrance briefly dramatize violence against women, especially large scale violence, it is a reality that is being faced every day by many, many women. Women who have no resources, no help because, if they live in British Columbia, their local women's centre

and shelter were probably closed down due to BC government cutbacks. Just another way of killing women. And, we are disappearing elsewhere, too. There are only a handful of women's bookstores left in North America. Most mainstream stores carry only a small selection of books on women's issues. There are fewer and fewer women's studies sections for these books, even in university bookstores - they will be shelved somewhere in the sociology or politics section, if you blink you might miss them. Women's Studies programs are being encouraged to change to Gender Studies, articles on the popular Salon.com call feminism the "F-Word" and suggest that a name change might be in order to make it more appealing. There is a general belief that feminism, is no longer necessary yet, in the US, women's reproductive freedom hangs by a precarious thread. Just more ways of killing women. Again.

On December 6th, I will attend my local memorial service and remember the women who lost their lives in 1989 to an act of senseless violence. I will also remember that Mark Lepine, the gunman in Montreal, claimed his hatred of feminists as one of the reasons for his actions. If Daphne Marlatt was afraid of a feminist backlash in 1991, we should be even more afraid now in a culture that only wants to remember once a year. There is a general cultural perception that there is no longer a need for feminism, particularly a feminism that speaks to a collective need to fight for women's rights. Yet, on certain days of the year, collectivity is encouraged - we are allowed to celebrate and remember women - all of us, at once, for one day only - a memorial to feminism. For the rest of the year, post-feminist

philosophy suggests that our politics should be about individual responsibility rather than a collective call-to-arms. Perhaps we should be thinking individually - a day of the year for each individual woman who has been a victim of violence. Of course, there are not enough days in the year, and so on December 6th we will remember them all - but in a world where we have National Smile Day and Eat a Red Apple Day does it really mean anything? Or is it just another way of killing women?



*Grad student Naomi Lloyd outside the Centre during a snowfall last January.
Photo: Xin Huang*

Visiting Scholar Report

Ana M. Fraile

English Department, University of Salamanca, Spain

I have been a visiting scholar at the Center for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations during the first fortnight August 15, 2005. As the recipient of a Faculty Enrichment Award offered by the Foreign Affairs Canada to start a Program in Canadian Studies in my University, I have divided my stay in Canada between Toronto and Vancouver. I must express my gratitude to Dr. Shirley Geok-Lin Lim, from Santa Barbara University, who visited us in Salamanca in the Spring and ardently recommended me to come to UBC. As my main research interest is in women's writing and transculturalism, I did not hesitate to contact Dr. Sneja Gunew, who replied promptly to my inquiries, even though she was in Australia at the time, and told me to contact the Administrator for the Centre, Jane Charles.

This period of time, though brief, has proven extremely fruitful and satisfying to me, not only because I have found SAGA the perfect space to conduct research and collect material but also, —and probably as important— because I have felt most welcomed from the very first day. SAGA provides

the adequate environment to meet other fellow scholars and share ideas and projects. In fact, I have been so fortunate as to coincide here with my Spanish colleague Eva Darias-Beautell, who has been most kind and helpful. My special thanks to Sneja Gunew, who, besides kindly introducing me to other faculty and scholars, had sorted out all the necessary details before my arrival so that I could start working from the very first minute—something I really appreciate given my short stay. In this respect I must also thank Wynn Archibald for her efficiency and generosity. I could not meet Jane Charles, but she also had a hand in the preparations, and I wish to thank her too. Finally, thanks to Margery Fee for her presence.

Besides my work at SAGA, and on behalf of the University of Salamanca, I have also contacted the Spanish and the English Departments at UBC with the proposal of extending the existing recent exchange agreement between both institutions to include a Language Assistant exchange. Both Departments have shown an interest and I hope that the existing links are reinforced and we



Visiting Scholar Ana Fraile

may expect a fruitful collaboration in the future.

All in all, I have found a vibrant nurturing academic community and look forward to coming back for a longer period of time.

Sofia Trilivas

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diversity that is apparent at the Centre, the University, and British Columbia were welcoming and qualities to be cherished for both me and my son. We both found the naturally beautiful Province of British Columbia and the wonderful country Canada to be heart-warming and we basked in this delightful environment for our entire stay. There were many activities that we took part in: swimming at the aquatic centre, tennis at Thunderbird Boulevard, concerts at the Chan Centre, and performances at the Queen Elizabeth and the Orpheum theatres, and lots more. Our week-long trip to the majestic Canadian Rockies was another highlight of our stay. Living in such an inspiring and impressive setting will be an unforgettable experience for both of us.

I feel extremely lucky, privileged, and grateful to have spent such a personally and professionally rewarding stay at the Centre. Overall, this has been an ideal academic year for me and it is with some trepidation that I return to the 'realities' of Greece (the proposal for a tenure position at the University of Crete will be evaluated in the coming months). I would like to thank Sneja and everybody involved with the Centre for having accepted my application to come here and for being so gracious and helpful. My thanks are also extended to Valerie for the SAGA carrel space and for having opened up her home for the parties and get-togethers we all shared in during the past ten months. Last but not least, my thanks are extended to Jane, Wynn and Hui-Ling for always helping and for making my stay comfortable. I would like to reciprocate such kindness and hospitality to all the people involved with the Centre some day soon on Crete.



Some of the results of the Women's Studies grad students' annual pumpkin carving contest, held Oct. 27th at the Centre.

Visiting Scholar Report

Lucy Delap

History Department, King's College, Cambridge, UK

My visit to the Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations was extremely productive for me, in terms of research and contact with colleagues. I very much appreciated the assistance with getting set up with a library card, IT and copying resources so painlessly at the beginning of my stay, and the warmth of the welcome at the Centre.

I was able to complete a draft of my book, Avant Garde Feminism: Transatlantic Encounters c.1900-1920s during the first two months of my visit, leaving the third month for the pursuit of my other research interest, in the history of domestic service in twentieth century Britain. The contacts I made at the Centre, both with visiting scholars

and with UBC staff and students, were extremely helpful, as were the contacts I made in the English and History departments. Being located in the SAGA centre for the final month really allowed me to benefit from the graduate community of that workspace, as well as getting to know the other visiting scholars over there.

Especially helpful to my research were the excellent microfilm collections held by the Koerner library – I was able to access some relatively rare UK material which would be difficult to visit here in the UK, but was held by that library – the Edward

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A Review of *Field*, a benefit evening for the Philippine Women Center of B.C

Lauren Hunter

"Visually spectacular" is a compliment often applied to dance productions in the way that novels are praised with the ubiquitous expression "fantastic – couldn't put it down." However, in the case of Alvin Erasga Tolentino's latest production *Field*, the phrase "visually spectacular" could not be more well deserved. Conceptualized, choreographed and performed by Tolentino himself, this one hour solo dance highlights the complexities of the Philippine

"...a symbolic but also strikingly material commentary on the separation of a community and their means of survival"

people's relationship to rice production. *Field* depicts the Philippine people's modern day division from rice harvesting as a symbolic but also strikingly material commentary on the separation of a community and their means of survival – bodily, culturally and in terms of heritage. Tolentino conceived of the production during a return visit to his childhood home in the Philippines, where he was deeply disturbed by his family's abandonment of the land and rice production. As Tolentino says, "The simple gesture in everyday life, we forget to understand that this is who we are... Land is an identity."

As Artist-in-Residence at the Scotiabank Dance Centre, Tolentino is entitled

to host an annual charity event. He quickly selected a benefit evening for the Philippine Women Centre of B.C. The Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations at UBC was one of the evening's sponsors, and was represented at the event by Lauren Hunter. The May 14th performance was held as a fundraiser for the Purple Rose Campaign, where the Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations' own Marilou Carrillo spoke as a panel member about the quest to end the trafficking of Philippine women and children. Also speaking was activist and award winning author Ninotchka Rosca, whose latest book is entitled Jose Maria Sison: At Home in the World, Portrait of a Revolutionary. The evening was hailed as a great success by organizers and attendees alike.

A tricolour story told in darkness, punctuated by striking moments of rice white and paddy green, Tolentino's production integrates contemporary multimedia images with visually simple, centuries old tools for rice harvesting. During a particularly intense moment in the dance, a waterfall of rice cascades from the ceiling, highlighting the enormous and all-too-overlooked beauty of the mundane. Tolentino's movements, combined with the raining rice and images of paddies in flood, create the impression that the stage is a land in turmoil. The dance brings the organic from the inorganic, the timelessly spectacular from the banality of the everyday.

True art arises from the genuine, that which allows us to abandon ourselves in the power of someone else's surrender. Tolentino's stunning and



Tolentino at a performance July, 2005.

powerful performance evokes exactly this – the perfect balance of forgetting and experiencing that allows an audience to walk away emotionally moved, mentally engaged, and educationally more aware.

Korea Conference Report : Women's World 2005

Hui-Ling Lin, Rupa Bagga, and
Sirijit Sunanta

This past summer the three of us (Hui Ling, Sirijit, and Rupa) planned a visit to Seoul, South Korea to participate in the 9th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women (IICW), the "Women's World 2005" at Ewha Womans University, from June 19th to 24th, 2005. The conference was co-hosted by the Korean Association of Women's Studies¹ and Ewha Womans University.² Ewha, meaning "pear blossoming", is the first school for women in Seoul established by Methodist missionary, Mary F. Scranton in 1886, and in the twenty-first century has become the leader of women's education in Korea and abroad.

Under the theme, "Embracing the Earth: East-West, North-South," the congress discussed various themes of how women's lives are affected by the increasing economic disparity between North and South, and by the contesting values of East and West. It aimed to generate discussions on complexities pertaining to East-West/North-South divisions, and the resulting challenges faced by feminist studies and movements.

While the three of us represented the Centre for Women Studies at UBC, we also stood as a symbol for three different nationalities and cultures from the diverse yet uniting Asia Pacific. All three of us were very excited to be a part of this Congress, which was not only the first to be held in Asia, but also the largest International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women. It attracted and brought together more than three thousand feminist scholars, researchers, and activists in the field of women's studies and gender issues from over eighty countries. During the



Students and faculty at the conference in Korea.

six-day event, more than two thousand and five hundred papers were presented in about five hundred and fifty sessions. According to the conference statistics, about half of the papers and workshops were delivered by Korean feminist researchers and activists accentuating the continuously evolving Korean feminist movements with bold and vivid colors in the present century.

Being the first Asian host country, South Korea focused on showcasing the outstanding caliber and creativity of its women to the world. Given its distinct environment, Korea demonstrated the ways in which fast-paced urbanization and industrialization have affected the lives of Korean women. It further brought together dialogues and discussions among feminist scholars and activists around the world.

The Seoul Congress aimed to

provide the participants with information on the cultural backdrops, social movements, identities and policies specific or peculiar to Asia. It also drew attention to the differences in the historical manifestations of patriarchal rules, highlighting the evolution and cultural diversity of the Asian regions. It further addressed the issues of gender and globalization from an Asian perspective. Dr. Chang Pil-wha, the convenor of the Organizing Committee in her inaugural speech emphasized that, "we hope that this focus will bring about a richer understanding, paving the road for integration of Eastern and Western perspectives".

We were all impressed with the warm hospitality and enthusiasm from both the organizers and student volunteers who worked endlessly in assisting the participants on every step. The opening ceremony started

with stunning visual arts and live electro-acoustic performances. This amazing combination of technology and tradition symbolized the transition and progress of Korean culture and society in the twenty-first century. Following the performances the First

"...Korea demonstrated the ways in which fast-paced urbanization and industrialization have affected the lives of Korean women...."

Lady Kwon Yang-suk's presence and inaugural speech marked a historical moment reflecting on the preferment of feminism in South Korea. President Gertrude Mongella of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) delivered her keynote speech on "Leadership in the International Women's Movement to Achieve Equality, Development, and Peace." Her speech encouraged young women to participate and involve themselves actively in political movements in various forms and at various occasions. Mongella was given an honorary doctorate degree by Ewha Womans University for her deep commitment to human right issues, development, and justice for women.

Each morning, the conference started with a plenary session providing in-depth presentations designed to share expertise on various topics. Some of them included "Violence, Intolerance and the Culture of Peace," "Globalization: Economic Values and Poverty," "The Changing Paradigms for the State, Health and the Environment," and "Celebrating Women's Leadership: The Way Forward." Besides the

sessions, the Seoul Congress also provided various side events such as a media art exhibition, the Women's World 2005 Fair, a film festival and an art fair.

Attending paper presentations and discussion panels of eminent feminists from across national borders gave us new perceptions in understanding the complexities behind the issues of gender, race, migration, and identity. Among various Canadian scholars, Becki and Gillian's presentations were well received. Hui-Ling gave a talk on Asian queer film in contemporary Canada.

There were a wide range of themes and topics covering our research interests ranging from inter-racial marriages, international adoptions to sexuality, media and visual art. Along with engaging in lively and informative discussions on our own research themes, we also learned about global feminism, activism and women's em-

powerment, trafficking in women, and Korean comfort women.

Being together in Korea, we explored various aspects of traditional Korean lifestyle, culture, food, dance, and music. We also visited the World Heritage Buddhist temples, royal tombs and palaces. We all joined a local excursion called Herstory Tour. It was led by a female tour guide giving us the historical background of one of the oldest palaces highlighting the lives of women of the court. It was a trip and a conference to remember.

(Footnotes)

¹ www.kaws.or.kr

² www.ewha.ac.kr



Photo exhibition on Korean Comfort Women at the Women's World Conference in Korea, Summer 2005.

Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations

Fall 2005, WMST 500

Lecture Series

Sept 14: Lipi Ghosh, South & Southeast Asian Studies, University of Calcutta
Women of Thailand in Japan: The Realities of Trafficking

Sept 21: Miseli Jeon, Comparative Literature, UBC
Hanryu (Korean Cultural Export) TV Drama Series and Korean Women's Autobiographical Narratives

Sept 28: Philip Holden, English Language and Literature, National University of Singapore. *Anxious Masculinities: Autobiography, Decolonization, and Gendered Modernities*

Oct 5: Sreedevi Nair, N.S.S. College for Women, Kerala, India
Women and Censorship: The Scenario in Malayalam Literature

Oct 12: Meenakshi Thapan, Sociology, University of Delhi, India
Habitus, Performance and Women's Experience: Understanding Embodiment and Identity in Everyday Life

Oct 19: Helen Hok-Sze Leung, Women's Studies, Simon Fraser University
Sex and the Postcolonial City

Oct 26: Elizabeth Philipose, Ruth Wynn Woodward Endowed Chair, Women's Studies, Simon Fraser University (This talk is co-sponsored by RACE.)
The Politics of Pain and the Uses of Torture

Nov 2: Gillian Creese, Anthropology and Sociology, UBC
From Africa to Canada: Bordered Spaces, Border Crossings and Imagined Communities

Nov 9: Jerilynn C Prior, Centre for Menstrual Cycle and Ovulation Research, University of British Columbia
Controversies in Perimenopause

Nov 16: Juanita Sundberg, Geography, UBC
Feminist geopolitics and the making of cultural and political boundaries in the United States-Mexico borderlands

Nov 23: Jan Mennell, Spanish and Italian Languages and Literatures, Queen's University, Ontario
spaces of the Self: Filmic Topographies in the Mexican film Novia que te vea (May I see you as a Bride) by Guite Schyster

Nov 24: Rhoda Asikia Ige, Dept. of Jurisprudence & International Law, Faculty of Law, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria
Feminism, Pan-Africanism and Christianity: The Convergent Reflections of an Aspiring Feminist

Nov 30: Judy M. Taguiwalo, Women and Development Studies, University of the Philippines. *From Welfare Concerns to Women's and National Liberation: 100 years of the Women's Movement in the Philippines 1905-2005*



Elizabeth Philipose



Meenakshi Thapan



Helen Hok-Sze Leung

Taiwan Gender Equity Education Association

Visit to UBC, Summer 2005

In August 2005, approximately 20 members of TGEEA visited Canada. Since one of the goals of TGEEA is to build international networks with gender equity educators, we like to implement this goal on a regular basis. Our first such trip was to Sweden in 2003; the trip to Canada was our second one.

At UBC, we visited The Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations (CRWSGR), UBC childcare center, First Nation House of Learning and the Equity Office. Here we would like to depict our visit to CRWSGR and Equity Office.

The Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations:

The Director, Professor Sneja Gunew, gave an introduction about the center and her research interests. The Graduate Chair, Professor Margery Fee, then talked about the First Nations and multiculturalism for us. The introduction helped us not only to know more about the research center, but also to obtain a historical background of the First Nations in Canada.

In the discussion, we talked about the difficulties of reviving a language that has been suppressed for a long time. In Canada, there have been tensions between English-speaking and French-speaking people. During 1900 - 1970s, people of the First Nations were forced to leave their own land between the age of 4 and 6 and were sent to boarding schools, the purpose being to segregate these children from their own culture, language and community life. In this sense, the multicultural language policy is the result of the efforts of the French-speaking people, the First Nations and different immigrant groups in Canada to keep/revive their own languages. However, the belief in "multiculturalism" is not to

preserve "dead" cultures from a hundred years ago, but to notice the wide range of cultures of many groups. It is also useful to use post-colonialism as a framework to understand the process of racialization and not to presume that there is a "pure" traditional culture or to attempt to essentialize culture.

From the discussion, we also learned that a university classroom could be a site to make social movements and theories more accessible for ordinary

"...we also learned that a university classroom could be a site to make social movements and theories more accessible for ordinary people..."

people. When we teach, we should set the social justice as one of the essential goals of teaching. By doing this, we are changing the world.

We had another discussion with Professor Wendy Frisby of the Undergraduate Women's Studies program and were also greatly inspired by her participatory action research with both gender and race perspectives. Her research on "Women Organizing Activities for Women" emphasized the importance of sports and the empowerment of women, especially the poor women. Although we have launched a gender equity education movement in Taiwan since 1988, we need more research and discussion on such issues

as women in communities, gender/sexuality and sports or recreation.

Equity Office: During the meeting with senior equity advisor, Margaret Sarkissian, and the equity advisor, Parker Johnson, we learnt about the goals of the office and how the office functions when they deal with related cases. In Taiwan, we also had some experiences in dealing with cases of sexual harassment on campus; it was very important for us to discuss the difficulties and the experiences we were facing, especially after the Gender Equity Education Law was passed in 2004,

We noticed that in UBC there have been very few cases that dealt with formal procedures since it takes a huge amount of time and money to go through the formal procedures. Since there are only two full-time and two part-time staff at the office, the Equity Office usually relies on the administrative head of the department to deal with the cases that happen in that department. We discussed the different situations in Taiwan and the difficulties that we faced. It was a very fruitful discussion and we learned various strategies in educating those accused in order to prevent them from harassing or discriminating against other people in the future. Furthermore, we notice that there are "blue lights" on the UBC campus and facilities for a safer environment on campus, with some projects such as "safe walk" at night. Only with professional staffs at the office, together with environment facilities and an educational campaign, can the awareness of students and staff/professors on the issues of discrimination, harassment, equality and difference be enhanced.

Visiting Scholar Report

Sue Hendler

Visiting Associate Professor, School of Urban and Regional Planning,
Department of Women's Studies, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario

I arrived in Vancouver on January 8, 2005, after an exciting and spectacular five-day drive across the United States from Kingston, Ontario. Along with my computer, books and boxes of data, I quickly got settled into a bright, cozy apartment just east of campus.

It was, I found, about a thirty-five minute walk from my new 'place' to the office space I shared with other visitors and Isabel Dyck in the Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations (CRWSGR).

My goal for the winter term was to complete a draft of my book on women's contributions to planning and the planning profession in Canada. I brought the literature I needed to review, transcripts of interviews between me and women planners, and much in the way of miscellaneous 'stuff' I thought I might need.

In between chapters and parts thereof, I presented my work at both the CRWSGR's weekly seminar series and in the School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP).

I attended and participated in a Ph.D course in SCARP on planning theory. I also heard a number of the speakers who visited the University of British Columbia (UBC) as part of the Metropolis Speakers Series at St. John's College and listened in on some SCARP lectures and thesis defenses. The multi-disciplinary seminar series in the CRWSGR was a rare opportunity to hear about research from a new area (to me, at least) each week. I also secured the University of British Columbia Press as the publisher of my book and began to develop a good working relationship with my editor.

In attending these talks and getting to know people at UBC, I had many opportunities to discuss my work with colleagues. These chats helped me to refine and further the arguments I put forward in the draft of my book. I was especially grateful for ideas and suggestions about gender history, feminism and the body, the importance (and challenges) of identifying tangible impacts resulting from women's presence in planning organizations, and similarities between the planning profession and other professions such as education.

Aside from scholarly events on campus, I heard actor Whoopie Goldberg, musicians Chris Williamson, Lucie Blue Tremblay and Wishing Chair, mindfulness guru Jon Kabat-Zinn and comedian Betsy Salkind. I also saw several plays, went on a sea lion tour on the Fraser River and had opportunities to catch up with old friends and former students who now live in British Columbia and the Yukon. Before I leave British Columbia, I plan to go on whale watching and grizzly bear tours and see some of the countryside on Vancouver Island.

This list illustrates some of the strengths of the Visiting Scholars Program in the Centre.

Not only is the Centre itself a supportive, dynamic and stimulating place in which to write and think, but it is also located on a campus and in a city that have unlimited amenities and spectacles. Together, they combine to create an environment in which one can be as isolated or as sociable as one wishes - and as productive or distracted as one allows. I chose to find a balance



(my word for the decade) between writing and taking part in at least some of the activities the region had to offer, and I will return to Queen's University with renewed energy, enthusiasm and ideas for research and teaching, as well as a stack of 240+ pages of text which represents well over three-quarters of my book.

For this, and for the friendly and scholarly environment offered by the Centre, I offer my thanks.

Feminist book donations sought

Visiting Scholar Rhoda Asikia Ige, who has just returned to Nigeria, has asked us to collect and send feminists texts for the School of Law at the University of Lagos. If you have copies of any of the following you are willing to donate we will forward them on to Rhoda:

- basic texts on feminism
- basic texts on gender (for a new course in Gender and the Law)
- basic text on Women's Studies
- journals

OISE Roundtable on Faith-based Arbitration in Ontario

Itrath Syed

After 18 months of intense public debate, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty issued a statement on September 11, 2005, suspending all faith-based arbitrations in Ontario. It is very likely that the Premier took this decision in hopes of extricating his government from an often vicious debate that gave no signs of abating. His decision, however, has not put an end to the debate.

On November 12th, Dr. Sherene Razack from OISE and Dr. Amina Jamal, a post-doctoral student at Concordia, convened a Roundtable discussion in Toronto to discuss the ways in which the public debate around Islamic Arbitration in Ontario was polarized and simplistic. This public debate took

place not only in the media but also through the interventions of feminist groups and legal organizations.

The convenors invited 20 people from across Canada ["scholars, activists, lawyers and teachers"] with varying positions on the issue to begin the process of a critical analysis of the debate and the ways that it was structured. Dr. Sunera Thobani and I were among the invitees and flew out to Toronto to attend. Dr. Thobani was invited because of her continuing critical work on racism in Canada and I was invited because my MA paper is an examination of the media discourses surrounding this debate.

While there was no particular consensus reached on the issue of

Islamic Arbitration, there was agreement that the ways in which the arguments, for and against the proposal, were structured in the public debate made it very difficult to intervene with any kind of a nuanced position. Many of the attendees spoke about the frustration they felt in having no space for any informed discussion of the issue. The Roundtable was convened as a response to that frustration and in hopes that it would provide the beginnings of a more inclusive discussion on the issue without forcing people into either side of the limited polarized debate.

The discussion was transcribed by a court reporter and will form the basis

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Visiting Scholar Report

Eva Darias-Beautell

University of La Laguna. Tenerife. Spain



My stay at the Center for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations, University of British Columbia, has been fruitful and rewarding both in academic and personal terms. The Center provides the visiting community with the material infrastructure needed to conduct research in a comfortable context: some kind of office space, ac-

cess to computing facilities for email, internet, and databases, and a library card with borrowing privileges. It also fosters relations with other scholars, professors, graduate students and the administrative staff, all of whom have been helpful and friendly.

As soon as I arrived, early in June, my email address was on the list for information on campus events, such as workshops and lectures. Because of my stay being conducted during the summer months, the amount of academic events being held was not large. Even so, I had the chance of participating in a workshop on philosophy and feminism, listened to two lectures by two visiting scholars, and attended a journal launch on native Canadian women.

Being at SAGA for part of my stay (due to renovations in the CRWSGR)

was also useful in terms of my research, for it enabled me to be working near the collections, books, maps, CDS, databases and DVDS in the Koerner Library. Additionally, I had the chance of meeting some of the professors, at the Center and/or the Department of English, working in the field of Canadian literature and the environment, such as Laurie Ricou, Margery Fee, and Rebecca Raglon, to whom I am very grateful for their hospitality and their academic advice.

Finally, I am specially indebted to Sneja Gunew for her efforts to make visiting faculty at home, and for her kindness and support throughout.

I look forward to returning to the Center again soon.

Conference Report on Sexualities, Genders, and Rights in Asia: The First International Conference of Asian Queer Studies

Hui-Ling Lin

An international conference on studies of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, bisexual, and queer (LGBTQ) cultures and communities in Asia was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from July 7-9, 2005. It was organised jointly by the Office of Human Rights Studies and Social Development¹ at Mahidol University in Bangkok and the AsiaPacifiQueer Network². This conference held a significant place in Asia for several reasons. It was the first international, interdisciplinary queer conference ever held in an Asian region. Its main purpose was to develop diverse linkages between research about Asian LGBTQ cultures and communities and to promote recognition and respect for sexual and gender diversity in the region. Another parallel goal of the conference was also to support and defend the academic legitimacy of research and teaching about LGBTQ peoples in Asia.

The three-day conference panels

OISE Roundtable

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of an article that the convenors will be publishing in order to “foster more critical thinking on the issue”. I hope that this is only the beginning of a entirely new debate on the issue – one that is more conscious of the broader issues around the ways in which Muslims in Canada are currently being racialized and how that fits into the larger history of the racialization of First Nations people and people of colour in Canada.

contributed from more than 300 papers included several thematic streams: Cinemas and Media, Gay Cultures, Diasporas, Health, Rights and Activism, Transgenders, and Women Who Love Women.

Professor Josephine Ho from National Central University in Taiwan as one of the notable keynote speakers gave an inspiring talk, “Is Global Governance Bad for Asian Queers?” She addressed two main issues: “(1) the emerging global hegemony of morality that has quantum-leaped its forces of persuasion against queer representations and interaction by bringing into place new legislation and litigation against the latter; and (2) the construction of child protection as a universal imperative that in actuality works both to re-enforce heterosexual monogamy and to debunk cultural diversity as inherently confusing and thus harmful for children” (Ho, p.149)³. Her talk generated vigorous discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of the national and international funding support for Asian queer NGOs. Some NGO workers and queer activists supported her ideas as being essential in creating alternative ways for private funding sources outside global governance.

There were two recurrent discussions on the terminology (mostly regarding defining the word “queer”) and the “Americanness” of queer theory. The conference organisers addressed their usage of the word “queer” in both its current senses highlighting that “queer is both a shorthand for the full diversity of homoerotic, transgender, and transsexual behaviours, identities, and cultures as well as a term describing critical forms of theory that draw on poststructuralist and postcolonial analyses... [To] emphasise the need to



Hui-Ling Lin with a member of the gay NGO Rainbow Sky Association.

rethink queer theory in Asian contexts, simultaneously critiquing homophobic discourses and practices in Asia and questioning the Eurocentrism of Western accounts of sexuality and gender.”⁴ However, researchers or NGO workers from different geographical and cultural backgrounds also defined the word, “queer” differently. As a participant, it occurred to me that when we don’t have a similar understanding or definition of these words, the focus of the relating discussion fades easily. As part of my own research interest, I continue to wonder about what defines a queer film? In my understanding, there is no doubt in recognizing a queer film when it is about queer issues and produced by a queer filmmaker. But there are more complexities behind the definitions and interpretations. For instance, how does one define a film made by a queer filmmaker when the theme is being totally unrelated to queer issues? Or what about a film that discusses straight relationship made by a queer filmmaker? Or what happens if it is a film of queer issues produced by a straight filmmaker? During the conference, while talking to some filmmakers, similar discussions arose regarding what defines a woman’s film? Can male filmmakers who make films about and for women

be included in the category of women's films? This was even an issue in the Women's Film Festival in Taiwan last year. Some board members insisted that the festival should be a space for women only, therefore, no male filmmakers' work should be screened.

The second focus of the discussion evolved around the "Americanness" of queer theory. More sociologists and

"...The conference organizers made efforts to bring in the local Thai queer community and culture through various sessions and events...."

policy makers in Asia seem interested in discussing the "Americanness" of queer theory and how it would affect the family law and immigration policy in Asia. Further, its relationship to existing social, political and legal theory in Asian countries was also of a great concern at the conference. Although I agree it is an important issue to look at, we haven't paid enough attention to the impact of western-imported (not just American) queer theory on the interaction within and between Asian countries. The discussions at the conference often eventually fell into the binary debates of "West and Asia". In my understanding, not only does this ignore the vigorous exchanges of queer cultures among Asian countries, but it often reinforces the simple binary oppositions of East/West, which often fails to address the diversity of Asian countries and cultures. Examining these intra-

Director's Report

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number of graduate students attended conferences over the summer, including the 9th Congress on Women in Seoul and their reports are included in the newsletter. We also had a number of visiting scholars over the Summer and during the Fall term: Sofia Trilivas (Crete), Lucy Delap (Cambridge, UK), Eva Darias-Beautell (Spain), Christiane Harzig (Winnipeg), Ana Fraile (Spain), Lipi Ghosh, Meenakshi Thapan and Sreedevi Nair, all from India. Some of their reports are included. Sadly, Hammed Shahidian, who was a visiting scholar last year, lost his battle with cancer and I participated in a memorial service held by his friends and family at UBC in November. We also lost long-time supporter of our community Daphne Strong-Boag and she will be sorely missed.



Reluctant Halloween Mascot is Grad Student Heather Hanrahan's dog Geronimo, here for the pumpkin carving contest, Oct. 27th.

We fare-welled longtime members of the Advisory Committee, including Madeleine MacIvor, Susan Boyd, and Ann Condon (all on sabbatical) and welcomed new members Catherine Dauvergne (Law), Gillian Creese (Sociology), Rachel Kuske (Medicine), and Jerilynn Prior (Medicine). Further news from members of our network: we congratulate Yvonne Brown for completing her PhD in Education (UBC) and Patrick Cerf (a former visiting scholar) who also completed his PhD in Social Anthropology with the 'highest honours'. Celia Kitzinger, another former visiting scholar, sent us news that she and partner Sue Wilkinson were in the process of challenging Britain's refusal to acknowledge same-sex marriage. We wish them well in this brave endeavour.

Finally, while we await the injection of resources to help sustain and build on our graduate program in particular, we have, alas, been forced to suspend the UBC Scholar program for the time-being. We hope that this will be a temporary measure.

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Asia interactions will bring attention to recognizing the local history and daily experiences of Asian queer people.

The conference organizers made efforts to bring in the local Thai queer community and culture through various sessions and events. For example, there were Thai language panels for local Thai people who don't speak English. However, there were volunteer English translators available to English-speaking participants who wanted to join these panels. From my past experiences, in other international conferences where English has been used as the only language for communication, the Thai language panels reflected respect for the language of the host country. One of the Thai language panels: "Vocabulary: The terminology used by Women-who-love-women in Thailand," extensively discusses the power of language upon queer community. The presenters believed that language reflected social perceptions of the roles and status of so called non-normative sexual identities and relationship. Therefore, learning and creating vocabulary and language was shown to be essential in changing social attitudes towards sexuality and minorities.

Unlike most other conferences, participants in Bangkok only received important reminders or information occasionally before the events took place. During the conference preparation process, the organizing committee communicated extensively with all of the participants with the difficulties they faced or the progress they were making. This made me feel as though as I was not just a presenter at the conference, but I was an active participant in the process of conference organization. This brought me a sense of belonging to the conference community. Among various challenges, funding was a big issue for both the

conference organizers and the participants (since most of us needed to apply for the conference scholarship). The organizers explained to us that because there were researchers on the advisory board from North America, this conference was not eligible to apply for funding reserved for conferenc-



NGO Rainbow Sky Association's dance performance at the Welcoming Party.

es that were held exclusively by and for "Asians". Knowing the obstacles they faced, I was extremely grateful to have received a partial scholarship to attend the conference.

I feel really honoured to have presented a paper on, "From Enter the Dragon to Enter the Mullet: Exploring Filmic Representations of East Asian Butch Dykes in Contemporary Canada". Dr. Chris Berry, an eminent scholar in transnational Chinese queer cinema in Pacific Rim, chaired the session along with two other panelists. Many positive responses and good feedbacks encouraged me in taking my research to a broader perspective. For example, a question from Dr. Audrey Yue from the University of Melbourne, was especially stimulating for my paper. She raised the issue

concerning the problems and limits for diasporic Asian dykes in identifying their female masculinity with Bruce Lee's masculinity. Overall, it was very exciting in attending the talks by scholars such as Richard Fung (Canada), Helen Leung (Canada), Judith Halberstam (USA), Chris Berry (Australia), Fran Martin (Australia), Audrey Yue (Australia), and many professors from Taiwan including Antonia Chao, Wen-Chen Chu, and Josephine Ho whose works have long inspired my research endeavours.

Another valuable experience from this conference is that of learning some new terms and issues emerging in different LGBTQ communities in various parts of Asia. A Filipino researcher, Beatriz Torre, gave a talk on "fag hags", referring to straight women who associate with gay men and participate in gay culture activities. She argued that this "fag hag" phenomenon has taken place both in Western and Filipino queer culture for some time. Her research explores these haggish women's identities from the perspective of personality psychology further investigating their experiences in the context of Filipino and possibly other Asian queer cultures. An NGO Chinese researcher, Xu Bin, talked about the emerging lesbian movements in China and the challenges they face. Additionally, she also talked about how the cyber-community and international network of Chinese queer organizations contributes to the booming of physical public space in coastal cities in China. It was very encouraging to know that she successfully hosted a semi-public "lala"⁵ conference and film screening in Beijing in June, 2005, with more than 150 participants.

Part of the two side events for the conference that included a lesbian gathering with about five hundred local Thai lesbians, organized by Lesla, a Thai lesbian organization, and a "go-go-bar" tour organized by the local

gay community, Rainbow Sky, I had an opportunity to explore the local queer night-life culture. These experiences also allowed me to learn more about how the local queer organizations develop and promote their events.

In her closing remarks, Dr. Ho mentioned, the conference was truly a "historical" milestone for the queer studies and queer movements in Asia. The collaborations among the Asian regions in making this event happen is a manifestation of the conference's purpose: to connect researchers and NGO workers among Asian regions and elsewhere. However, the conference organizers recognized that this is a fledgling event, with plenty of room to grow and evolve. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation toward my colleague, Sirijit Sunanta, for being a warm and caring host during my stay in Thailand.

(Footnotes)

¹ <http://www.humanrights-mu.org/>

² <http://apq.anu.edu.au/>

³ This is cited from the conference programme.

⁴ This note is quoted from the conference website: <http://bangkok2005.anu.edu.au/>

⁵ This is a Chinese expression referring to lesbian.



Kate Johnson has been working on cataloguing and organizing our Reading Room at the Centre. Kate recently completed her master's at UBC's School of Library and Information Science. She was still busy with her own studies when she came by the Centre last winter and volunteered to help with this project, and we couldn't believe our luck. Thanks, Kate!

Update on the Women's Studies Undergraduate Program

Wendy Frisby, Chair

We are offering an exciting array of interdisciplinary courses from various feminist perspectives to undergraduate students this term including courses in computer science, history, aboriginal women in Canada, qualitative research methods, theories of representation, women in literature, globalization and international politics, popular culture, and gender relations. Our instructors are highly committed to teaching and continue to receive among the highest teaching evaluations in the Faculty of Arts. As an example of the exciting

learning experiences provided to our students, Deanna Reder and her students organized a panel discussion in conjunction with the course on aboriginal women in Canada about Amnesty International's recently released progress report on Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada. The panel was held at the First Nations House of Learning on November 22, 2005 with special guests Ernie Crey, the co-author of the award winning book *Stolen From*

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Visiting Scholar Report

Lipi Ghosh

Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, Calcutta University, India

Professor Mandakranta Bose first told me about the Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations & about their scheme of offering Visiting Scholarships to faculties across the world. Professor Bose encouraged me to apply for the position after she came to know about my areas of interest, my research, & my book on Prostitution in Thailand : Myth & Reality.

My book focused on the issues of prostitution & trafficking in Thailand. It looks into the historical evolution of female prostitution in Thailand and discusses the social, social, economic, political, institutional and ideological factors which underpin the growth of the Thai sex industry in historical & contemporary times. While working on Thailand, I have developed a long-standing interest in sex sectors in different parts of the world and so decided to apply for the Visiting fellowship in Canada so that I could get an insight into the situation in that part of the world.

Although I was awarded the scholarship some time ago I could not accept the offer before Sept. 2005.

I had two objectives in mind. One was to collect research materials on Thailand from the remarkable library of UBC and secondly I planned to explore the issue of sex trade, prostitution and other dimensions of Canadian society & make a comparative study of the Canadian & Thai situations.

Because of regulations in my own university in India, I could stay in UBC

for only 24 days. During this period I participated in some of the varied programs of the Centre.

I gave a talk on "Women of Thailand in Japan : The Realities of Trafficking". In the context of the recent phenomenon of women's mobility as sex workers in the global arena, my paper talked about Thai women's role in Japan's sex industry. My presenta-



Sneja Gunew and Lipi Ghosh

tion was the first of the Lecture series for the Fall 2005 programme and I was a bit surprised to see that the house was well-packed with many eager to listen to an Indian scholar talking about the Thai and Japanese situations. There were many good and extensive questions at the end of the talk. I was made well aware of the Canadian intellectual approach to Asian situations. There were scholars and students from different disciplines and so the interaction was extremely lively.

No doubt such discussion enriched my analysis and understanding.

The excellent library resources of the Centre as well as UBC's Koerner library enabled me to access some literature which so far I had not been able to find anywhere, not even in many renowned libraries of the world. I not only collected some new research data on Thai society and politics, but

just sitting in the Centre's own library, I was able to enrich my understanding of the sex trade of Canada and, on the basis of my study, could prepare a short monograph entitled: "Prostitution, Sex Trade & Its Multiple Dimensions: A Look into the Canadian Profile".

The most fruitful part of any academic visit was to meet local scholars and to interact with them. In CRWSGR, I was fortunate to meet and talk with Professor Becki L Ross and our academic chat turned into warm friendship. Becki was nice enough to give me her own publications and both of us shared many academic parts and parcels of our research interests. She is the scholar working in the same field so it was both lovely and enlightening to talk about various issues of our common interests.

On the last day of my stay I met Ms Marilou Carrillo, a doctoral candidate at CRWSGR, who is from the Philippines. Although very short, it was very nice to meet and talk with this scholar. We promised to keep contact and continue our academic talk in the future.

So my short academic visit to CRWSGR at UBC was a precious chapter in my professional life. I was

fortunate to spend time in different renowned institutions / universities of the world & I am really impressed with the warmth with which I was received at UBC. I shall always remember the intellectual cum friendly ambience with which I was received at CRWSGR.

Finally I must say a few words about Professor Sneja Gunew, the Director of the Centre who with her very elegant & charming presence takes care of the visitors to the Centre. She has an excellent team of workers of whom I should say special thanks to Jane Charles and Wynn Archibald. It was also nice meeting Dr Margery Fee, the Graduate Advisor & young scholars like Rupa Bagga & Hui Ling Lin.

So, I must round up my report with a very good and charming memory of my very short but very fruitful stay in CRWSGR.

Lucy Delap

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Carpenter papers were particularly useful.

I very much enjoyed the productive atmosphere of the Centre, and UBC in general – a great many colleagues there shared their work with me, recommended other colleagues to contact and lent me books to read. Those contacts enabled me to gain some new perspectives on my work, of an interdisciplinary nature, and I feel that has been the most valuable aspect of the trip. I would welcome any members of the Centre who are visiting Cambridge to get in touch with myself and the Centre for Gender Studies here, and hope that we can sustain contacts between the two Centres. Many thanks again for all your help and support, it made the months in UBC possible and a great pleasure for me.

Call for Papers

5th Annual Conference of
Researchers and Academics of Colour for Equality (R.A.C.E.)

In conjunction with the
Centre for Social Justice and Anti-Oppressive Education

University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan

May 4-6, 2006

The Race/Culture Divide in
Education, Law and the Helping Professions

A growing number of critical professionals, led by individuals and organizations of colour, are seeking ways to achieve more equitable outcomes in schools, hospitals, courts and social services through an attention to both cultural differences and racism. Such professionals believe that stigmas are attached to minority cultures (thus necessitating an anti-racist response), but simultaneously, the cultural context of minorities has an impact on how the needs of such individuals might be met (necessitating a cultural difference response). Others maintain that an attention to culture and notions of "cultural difference" are too risky given the multiple ways in which issues of racism are avoided through these discussions. Egregious examples of inequality in areas of public practice have been routinely attributed simply to misunderstandings or a lack of cultural awareness. This is a conference devoted to exploring these issues in education, law and the human services.

Suggested themes for conference papers:

- The culture/race debate in schools: Black-focused schools and Aboriginal education
- Separate justice systems, culturally sensitive legal strategies; attending to culture versus attending to colonization
- Working while marginalized: the racialized body in white classrooms and courtrooms
- Training professionals on issues of race and culture: what white teachers, workers in law and social services should know
- Policies and practices that designate certain bodies as belonging to the realm of culture, e.g., multiculturalism
- The effects of knowledge construction that reference culturalism and authenticity
- Education, law reform and minority youth

Proposals

We invite single and panel presentations for an international and interdisciplinary audience focused on anti-oppressive theories and practices in keeping with the theme of the conference. Please submit proposals for presentations of not more than twenty minutes in length. If you wish to organize panel presentations of three or more participants, include an abstract for each paper.

1. Provide (a) the title of your presentation, (b) a one-paragraph abstract, and (c) the name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, telephone number, and email address of each presenter.
2. Send this information in the body of an email (not as an attachment) to justeduc@uregina.ca. Please write "2006 Conference Proposal" in the subject line of the email. Deadline for submissions: December 15, 2005.
3. Notification of acceptance/rejection of proposals will be sent via email by mid-January.

Please direct inquiries to any of the conference organizers:

Verna St. Denis verna.stdenis@usask.ca

Sherene Razack srazack@oise.utoronto.ca Carol Schick carol.schick@uregina.ca

Report on the “No More Stolen Sisters” Panel, UBC First Nations Long House

Poster design: Aaron Mallin

Deanna Reder

Among the texts on our syllabus, students from WMST 301 (Roles of Aboriginal Women in Canada) are assigned to read the Amnesty International report, “Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada”, released in October of 2004. Early on in the semester one of my students, Christine Boyle, mentioned that she and two other students in Poli Sci 373, Nakisa Shafiee and Verity Buskard, were volunteering for the BC Chapter of Amnesty International as part of a practicum. Charged by Amnesty’s regional director, Don Wright, to publicize the upcoming first anniversary of the Stolen Sisters document, Christine came to talk to me about possible speakers at an event she and her partners had entitled “No More Stolen Sisters”. We quickly saw how well this call to action fit within our course outline and began to imagine how we could include our class. While we were nervous about the turn-out for an event planned so near the end of term, we were confident that the relevance and importance of such a discussion would attract the greater community.

We first contacted the First Nations Longhouse, to ask them for their support of this event and they very quickly responded with the offer of Sty-Wet-Tan Hall as a venue. While Political Science, First Nations Studies, AMS and AUS enthusiastically sponsored the panel, Women’s Studies also offered the talents of research assistant Kathleen Gamble, to help get the word out. A flurry of activity ensued to ensure that this meeting of academy and community was open to as many as possible: a poster and program were designed and

**NO MORE
STOLEN
SISTERS**

**ENDING VIOLENCE & DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN IN CANADA**

Panelists will include:

Ernie Crey
Geni Manuel
& Special Guests

Free Admission
& Refreshment

Tuesday, Nov. 22, 2005 at 3:30 pm
First Nations Longhouse 1985 West Mall

Presented by students from Poli 373 & Amnesty International
Co-sponsored by the Arts Undergraduate Society, UBC First Nations
Studies Program, First Nations Long House, Political Science Department
Womens Studies Department, and the UBC Alma Mater Society.

ABORIGINAL
WOMEN ARE
LOVED
AND
VALUED

distributed; speakers were confirmed, transportation was arranged, refreshments were ordered and the media was contacted; points of Coast Salish protocol were reviewed out of respect for the visiting elders and local nations in attendance.

Last Tuesday, November 22nd, WMST 301 student and Musqueam elder Rose Point welcomed everyone in prayer; Cree and Anishnaabe FNLH counselor, Alannah Young, greeted a packed house of over 250 members with a traditional longhouse welcome followed by introductions by the students of Poli Sci 373. Then our guest speakers addressed the audience. Geni Manuel, Shuswap and program director for Helping Spirit Lodge, a society dedicated to alleviating family violence in Aboriginal communities, described how drama therapy helped her program participants articulate the violence they have experienced as Aboriginal women. She introduced a portion of a play these women had written in honour of friend and DTES missing woman, Bel Williams.

Ernie Crey, Sto:lo and co-author of the award winning book, Stolen from Our Embrace - The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities, recalled his decades old memories of missing Aboriginal people on the Downtown Eastside whose absence was rarely investigated by authorities. He remembered the escalating threat to women, particularly Aboriginal women, in the early 1990's on the DTES and the disinterested response by police. He remembered being told that a taskforce was being formed to investigate what we now know to be the beginning of many murders, a taskforce he doubts ever really existed. All of this became exponentially more tragic and frustrating when he suffered the loss of his own sister, Dawn Crey, one of whom we now call "the Missing Women," whose DNA has since been found

at the Pickton farm in Port Coquitlam.

Finally, Skundaal, the Haida name for Bernie Williams, from the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, described her own work on the front-lines and her frustration with the slow response to pleas for help. She told the story of a woman whose early warnings to po-

"...Elder Reta Blind spoke movingly about her own experience of internalized racism and the need for kindness...."

lice about evidence that she saw of a murderer was discounted because she was considered an unreliable witness, only to have her become one of the Missing Women herself. Carol Martin described the needs of DTES women and the evidence of racism that she sees everyday and elder Harriet Nahane challenged the youth to remember their responsibilities to their communities. Elder Reta Blind spoke movingly about her own experience of internalized racism and the need for kindness.

Throughout the meeting the speakers encouraged action. Geni Manuel invited audience members to support the initiatives of Helping Spirit Lodge Society. Ernie Crey pressed audience members to contact their local MP's and MLA's and demand support for Aboriginal women's organizations as well as accountability to Indigenous women. Skundaal invited university classes and audience members to join her in a tour of the DTES, encouraging them not to ignore the issue and look away. Inspired by these calls to action, David Daniels from United Native

Nations welcomed audience members to take the remaining seats on the bus that he and his organization were taking to Kelowna in time to petition the Prime Minister at the First Ministers' conference. Don Wright, on behalf of Amnesty International, invited participants to sign petitions and become involved in Amnesty's ongoing efforts.

As for the relationships that began, it is clear that they need to be continued. Geni Manuel would like to have the opportunity to view the play on video with students and members of the community. In fact, as I've had the great privilege of seeing the original play performed in April of 2005, I strongly believe that it is ready for publication and so suitable for teaching in the university classroom that if possible, I plan to teach it next fall. Skundaal and the elders of the DTES women's centre also want another forum, this time on their home turf, to continue a conversation that on November 22nd was only warming up.

check it out.

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Visiting Scholar Report

Rhoda Asikia Ige

Dept. of Jurisprudence and International Law, Faculty of Law, University of Lagos, Nigeria

This is my second visit to the centre, the first having been in the Fall of 2002. Having not completed my term in 2002, I had promised to return. This second visit is the last lap of my Program at the centre.

I wish to thank Professor Valerie Raoul who initiated this program in 2002 and was director at the time. Special thanks to Professor Sneja Gunew, current Director at the centre, who was instrumental in my second visit. Sincere appreciation to Wynn and Jane who've been extremely pleasant and wonderful. I must also thank Veronica Strong-Boag for the accommodation; it was a good experience staying with Nikki and the boys.

The Wednesday lecture series were extremely informative & educating. I learnt much from the presentations and discussions. I am really fascinated by the array of cultural diversity of the presenters. My stay at the centre was very productive and I got acquainted with a lot of literature that is not normally found in Nigeria.

My Lecture at the centre on: Feminism, PanAfricanism, and Christianity: The Convergence Reflections of an Aspiring Feminist, helped me to garner a lot of further research materials and new friends, especially at Regent College.

During my four weeks visit, I met



Gloria Onyeoziri and Robert Miller, both of French, Hispanic and Italian Studies, with Rhoda Asikia Ige (centre).

with the African-Awareness group in UBC and was given the opportunity to do some paper work towards the establishment of a Centre for African Studies. I also had contact the Liu Institute for Global Issues.

I must not fail to state that this visit is two-fold, involving women's studies & feminist legal studies. I am grate-

ful to Kim Brooks, Acting Director of CFLS, and Professor Susan Boyd, my friend & colleague, for all her support towards enhancing my career.

Finally, special thanks to Valerie and Susan for this great opportunity.

I remain your Ambassador in Nigeria.

Holiday Closures

A reminder that the Centre will be closed at noon on Friday, Dec. 23rd and will re-open on Tuesday, January 3rd. Happy Holidays!

Women's Studies Graduate Student Report

Sam Semper
Paola Arboleda Rios

Despite our best efforts at denial, the end of the Fall semester is fast approaching. This means graduate students everywhere are locked in their houses working diligently to finish their final seminar papers (i.e. procrastinating in ever new and innovative ways), or struggling to find their way through mountains of marking, all while dreaming of a semester break that will pass without their realizing it anyway. At least solace can be taken in the fact that funding applications are finished for the year.

This semester has seen a flurry of activity at the Centre. This year's incoming graduate students are an eclectic and lively group from all over the world who are settling in and making their presence known. We welcome them, and their energy and ideas. There have been a few important changes to the Women's Studies Graduate Student Association over the last few months. Long time PhD representative Kim Snowden has stepped down from her position to concentrate on her many other projects. Kim is more often than not the first person to respond to questions and concerns that arise for students at the Centre. We all appreciate her work and continuing support. The PhD representative role will be filled by Sam Semper. Sadly, MA representative Paola Arboleda Rios will be leaving us at the end of this semester. She will be missed very much. An election will be held in the New Year to fill her position. Nominations can be emailed to the PhD representative. Annual WSGSA elections were held in October and Xin Huang has been named to the

new position of Academic Events Coordinator, Manuela Valle has taken the role of Social Events Coordinator, and Sirijit Sunata and Roseann Larstone will serve as International Student Liaisons. Lauren Hunter will continue in her position as the GSS representative for Women's Studies.

In the next few weeks the WSGSA will be holding its final meeting of the semester. The focus of this meeting will be community building. We will be addressing the need for WSGSA to have wider and more active relationships with organizations who are involved in

"...This year's incoming graduate students are an eclectic and lively group from all over the world who are settling in and making their presence known...."

related or complementary work both on campus and the larger community. All Women's Studies graduate students who are interested in helping forge these links or who have ideas, issues, or concerns to raise, are encouraged to attend.

This effort at community building is already beginning to gain momentum. The WSGSA has been approached by representatives from the undergraduate programme in Women's Studies and the Women's Studies Undergraduate Student Association to co-produce a mentoring workshop in January and extend our relationship

through regular joint initiatives. In a similar vein, UBC Women's Studies graduate representatives met with their Simon Fraser counterparts earlier this month to discuss how we might improve communication between the programs and the possibility for future collaborations. These are both exciting prospects for the WSGSA and will hopefully function as key connections in this effort.

This semester also saw a number of things happen worthy of note. Congratulations are in order to both Almas Zakiuddin and Xin Huang for successfully completing their comprehensive exams. They are both noticeably more relaxed people. A number of our graduate students are also completing or beginning sessional teaching positions. Next semester Almas will be reprising her role of instructor at Simon Fraser and Bianca Rus will be teaching a seminar at UBC. Good luck to both of them. Cecily Nicholson recently completed a semester as instructor at SFU. Congratulations to her for a successful seminar, and to all the graduate students teaching this year at UBC (Lauren Hunter, Chris Shelley, and Kim Snowden). Finally, a special congratulations to Sara Koopman for completing her Master's Degree in Women's Studies and graduating this November. Sara will continue to be a presence at UBC and the Centre as a doctoral student in the Geography Department. We wish her the best of luck.

Happy holiday season to everyone and see you in the New Year.

Update on the Women's Studies Undergraduate Program

Continued from 19

Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities, Harriet Nahanee and Carol Martin from the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, and Geni Manuel from the Helping Spirit Lodge Society.

Our faculty, instructors, staff and students are also contributing to the program in a number of other important ways, for example, through committee work on the Women's Studies Coordinating Committee (WSCC). April Tam and Krista Jones are the student reps on the WSCC and they organized a viewing of the film from our very successful Consuming Women Undergraduate Conference held last year. We have plans to distribute the film in DVD format for student recruiting purposes to various units within UBC and to the colleges and high schools to promote our program. April and

Krista have a number of other exciting ideas for Women's Studies student activities. Dr. Nora Angeles is heading up another committee for a certificate for international students on Women, Gender and Development that we hope to launch next year. Another initiative that we are working on is an affiliation with the Critical Studies in Sexuality Program that is co-chaired by Dr. Lisa Loutzenheiser from Curriculum Studies and Dr. Becki Ross from Women's Studies and Anthropology/Sociology.

Our faculty and instructors are also involved in a number of interesting research projects, and just few of these are listed below.

Lauren Hunter - her research focuses on the intersection between cultural performance in public space and the role of government. She is interested in how state conceptualizations of ethnicity in multicultural and immigration discourse shape community level prac-

tices, and how they facilitate or hinder efforts to create anti-racist Canadian realities.

Valerie Raoul - is co-editing a volume of essays from the Wall project titled "Unfitting Stories: Narrative Approaches to Disease, Disability, and Trauma". She is also working on a book entitled "Life Savings: posthumously published diaries by French Women 1830-1920" and an oral life history project on women and war.

Becki Ross - is currently writing a chapter for Routledge on the performativity and working conditions of professional striptease dancers and professional female golfers, figure skaters, and tennis players, 1950-1975. In another paper, she is analyzing the efforts of striptease dancers to unionize in Vancouver, 1960-1980.

Bianc Rus - her broad areas of interest are feminist epistemologies, psychoanalytic and literary theories, and postmodern/poststructuralist discourses. Her current focus is on the dialectic between theory and fiction in Julia Kristeva's work.

Elizabeth Seaton - continues to pursue research and writing on her "Physiology of Culture" project, which inquires into ways in which social embodiment and indeed, bodies themselves, change in fidelity with changes to social, cultural, and natural environments.

Nikki Strong-Boag - her newest publication is entitled "Making Families, Making Ourselves: English Canada Confronts Adoption from the 19th Century to the 19th Century", forthcoming in May 2006 with Oxford UP.

Sunera Thobani - her current research examines media representations of women and gender relations within 'western' and 'non-western' contexts.

We hope you will drop by to say hello, to hear more about activities in the Women's Studies program, and to visit our newly renovated building.



Undergraduate Program Chair Wendy Frisby (fourth from left, top row) with a group of visiting educators from Taiwan. See story page 13.

Visiting Scholar Program 2007-2008

The University of British Columbia offers a Visiting Scholar Program as an integral part of its Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations. Scholars working in these areas are encouraged to apply to spend leave time (one to six months) in affiliation with the Centre. The goal of the Centre is to stimulate feminist research and to facilitate interchange of ideas and collaboration among scholars, at UBC and elsewhere. Scholars will be expected to participate in the activities of the Centre and to give a public lecture during their term.

The Visiting Scholar programme is open to faculty, both untenured and tenured, as well as to independent scholars who are engaged in critical work on women and gender, who are not currently working on a higher degree at any institution and preference

will be given to those who reside in areas outside the B.C. Lower Mainland. Scholars from "developing" countries are encouraged to apply. In its selection of visitors, the Centre hopes to create a diverse community of junior and senior scholar-researchers. The Centre is particularly interested in applicants who are situated within existing Women's Studies centres which might be interested in forging future international links.

Funds are extremely limited and are not available for salary. Their permanent geographical location and their other forms of supports will determine the level of assistance available to successful applicants. Normally, scholars from North America, Australia, New Zealand, and the European Union, will not be eligible for funding.

Scholars will normally be provided



Visiting Scholar Meenakshi Thapan, University of Delhi, at our "Welcome Back" party, Sept. 23rd with Prof. Sunera Thobani and PhD Student Rupa Bagga.

with shared office space at the Centre itself, phone, a computer workstation in the SAGA Centre, Koerner Library and secretarial assistance. The University's academic year runs from September to April; therefore applicants are encouraged to schedule the majority of their visit to the Centre during these months. Scholars will normally only receive funding on one occasion.

Applications must include:

- Curriculum vitae
- A detailed statement of research plans for the time period
- The length of stay proposed and the dates
- An indication of required funding needs

The applicant must also arrange to have two referees forward their assessments to: Visiting Scholar Program, UBC Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations, 1896 East Mall, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V6T 1Z1.

The closing date for receipt of applications is December 1, 2006.



Rhoda Asikia Ige from the Faculty of Law, University of Lagos, with UBC students Ruth Situma and Jo-ann Osei-Twum of the Africa Awareness Group.

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN WOMEN'S STUDIES AND
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Catherine Dauvergne, Law
Margery Fee, English
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Sneja Gunew, Director CRWGR
Rachel Kuske, Mathematics
Madeleine MacIvor, Associate Director, FNLH
Jerilynn Prior, Medicine
Valerie Raoul, Director of SAGA
Kim Snowden, PhD Student Women's Studies
Veronica Strong-Boag, Educational Studies
Sunera Thobani, Women's Studies
Amanda Vincent, Fisheries Centre

The Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations is a part of the Faculty of Graduate Studies at The University of British Columbia. Our primary purposes are to:

- Highlight the significance of research in Women's Studies or Gender Relations and feminist research in all fields;*
- Encourage UBC faculty graduate students and others to meet together in multi-disciplinary groups for discussion and research in these areas;*
- Bring UBC researchers together with activists and researchers from other institutions in Canada and abroad, and from within the community; and*
- Communicate support for women's studies, gender analysis and feminist research to governments, institutions, community groups and the public in British Columbia, Canada and elsewhere.*

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