

Director's Message



Adieu!

Five years have gone by with such rapidity that writing this note of departure seems rather unreal.

Today, the Women and Gender Studies Institute stands out as one of the finest, most exuberant places to study, teach, research, and work on women and gender related matters. To achieve this status, a collective is required whose aim is to continuously challenge its own organizational structure and its theoretical and pedagogical goals. It also requires a collective feminist resiliency in demanding resources and in envisioning bold feminist scholarship and classrooms. I am honored to have been a member of this collective over the last five years and have been humbled by this invaluable experience. We experienced moments of despair, frustration, and disagreement, but managed to navigate the massive institutional bureaucracy with great success and, most importantly, remained dedicated to the delivery of a renewed women and gender studies program.

In the last year alone, the Institute's faculty complement increased, a new and dynamic MA program was launched, curriculum revision continued to meet the demands of theoretically complex transnational feminist research and pedagogy, and finally, a new endowment was awarded to the Institute. I inherited an Institute which required much internal and external building, though, the firm foundation and infrastructural requirements were put into place by my predecessor, the very capable Professor Margrit Eichler. The unwavering support of Professor David Clandfield, the former Principal of New College, paved the way to an autonomous Institute. David was my mentor. He showed me the 'trick' of being a committed academic administrator, but more significantly, he taught me how to interweave humanity into an often soulless organizational structure by paying attention to relationships and collective needs. I remain grateful to both Margrit and David for all their personal support as well as their contributions to the WGSi institutionally.

Two colleagues, Professors June Larkin and Alison Keith, were key intellectual leaders with whom I had the pleasure of working closely. June is the embodiment of a kind, caring, sincere and dedicated scholar and colleague. Her wealth of institutional knowledge and memory makes her contribution to building and revising the Women and Gender Studies Undergraduate Program essential and invaluable. Alison has become the Chair of the Department of Classics, and is surely a very fine and capable academic administrator who contributed enormously to the building of the MA program and the Women and Gender Studies Graduate Collaborative Program. Working with these two superb and super women was most enjoyable.

WGSJ is one of the unique units at the University of Toronto where staff members enjoy a much respected position across the campus. Angela Fleury, Marian Reed, and Luci Mok's contribution to the administrative and intellectual life of the Institute is indispensable. It has been a real pleasure working with them. Each distinctively plays a major role in managing and administering the Institute. I cherish our trust and friendship.

As I am moving on, I am delighted to see that the Institute will be led by a very dedicated and dynamic new administrative team; Professor Bonnie McElhinny as the Director, Professor Michelle Murphy as the Graduate Coordinator, and Professor Judith Taylor as the Undergraduate Coordinator. For the first time in the history of the WGSJ, the entire management team consists of members of the Institute, a sign of growth and capability. I wish all of you much success.

This year, the graduate programs of the Institute were reviewed by two distinguished feminist scholars, Inderpal Grewal (University of California, Irvine) and Audrey Kobayashi (Queens University). Both observed that the WGSJ should 'slow down' in taking on new initiatives, and recommended that it is a moment of strengthening the inner core of the programs. This insightful comment corresponds with the intellectual commitment of my colleagues at the WGSJ. Notions of interdisciplinarity, transnationality, or post/coloniality constitute the frame in which women and gender analyses are being shaped. It is with this analytic where matters such as sovereignty, imperialism, nationalism, fundamentalism, neoliberalism, war, violence, occupation and security could be placed at the core of feminist theorization and pedagogy. This critical feminist lens also opens spaces for innovative classroom practices as well as interrelated and multilayered disciplinary conversations including aesthetics and cultural production. It is in this context that I also would like to extend my warmest welcome to the newest member of the WGSJ; Professor Dina Georgis who is joining the Institute to develop the gender and cultural studies/production component of the program.

Finally, let me end by deeply thanking all of you for five years of intellectual nourishment and constructive administrative and political challenges.

S. Majab

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Faculty Awards and Grants

Kay Armatage

2007 SSHRC for “International Film Festivals”

Ramabai Espinet

2008 Caribbean Philosophical Association’s Nicholas Guillen Prize for “philosophical literature” awarded to an author whose contribution to Caribbean thought is through the medium of the novel, poetry, theatre, or cinema

June Larkin

2007 Community Based Research Award of Merit, the Centre for Urban Health Initiatives and the Wellesley Institute

2007 City of Toronto: Access, Equity, and Human Rights Awards
Constance E. Hamilton Award on the Status of Women

2008 The Canadian Institute of Health Research Grant for “Building capacity to Conduct Community-Based Research on Evaluating Youth Sexual Health Peer Education Programs”, in partnership with Children’s AID Health Program, Planned Parenthood, York University

2008 Centre for Urban Health Initiatives Grant for “Performed Ethnography, HIV/AIDS & Aboriginal Youth” in partnership with Native Child and Family Services, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, York University, McGill University

Shahrzad Mojab

2008 Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Teaching Excellence Award for Distinguished Contributions to Teaching

Kerry Rittich

2008 SSHRC Standard Research Grant for “Governing Labour Markets for Development: Informality, New Governance and Distributive Justice at Work”

Judith Taylor

2007-2010 Munk Centre Halbert Faculty Network Grant for “Diasporic Engagements: The Multiple Encounters of Taglit-birthright”

Dr. Krista Hunt won a teaching award from the University of Toronto Students’ Union and the Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students for the course, WGS425Y: Women and Issues of International Development. Dr. Hunt was honored at an awards ceremony Monday April 28, 2008 at Hart House.





The Hammed Shahidian Legacy

The Women and Gender Studies Institute is the recipient of the Hammed Shahidian Legacy Initiative Fund. This generous endowment is dedicated to both a Graduate Award and a Lecture Series in women and gender studies. The Lecture series will attract some of the world's finest critical feminist scholars and provide a platform for graduate students to engage in debates and discussions on themes that are particularly relevant to the current condition of women internationally.

The untimely death of Professor Hammed Shahidian in October 2005 left the feminist studies and Iranian studies scholarly communities with a huge void. He was a brilliant intellectual with a profound commitment to social justice. His scholarship consists of a diverse body of critical literature on social movements, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, exile, immigration and diaspora. He contributed to debates in all of these areas in North America, Europe and the Middle East.

Professor Hammed Shahidian's books, *Women in Iran: Gender Politics in the Islamic Republic* (2002, Greenwood Publishing) and *Women in Iran: Emerging Voices in the Women's Movement* (2002, Greenwood Publishing), are seminal contributions to the highly controversial debates on women in Muslim majority states; he documented and analysed the gender politics of the Islamic state of Iran and women's resistance to theocratic regimes of patriarchy. In his first book, *Gender Politics in the Islamic Republic*, for example, he undertook a detailed study of institutions such as paid work, domestic labour, law, politics, sexuality, and culture in order to demonstrate the role of state coercion in the construction of gender relations. He demonstrated that despite women's resistance and partial legal reform, the juridical-political order did not visibly change. This study challenges some feminist theoretical claims, which overemphasize the flexibility of state generally, and the theocratic state, in particular.

In his second book, *Emerging Voices in the Women's Movement*, Hammed embarked upon another significant theoretical challenge. While cultural relativism is a step forward in so far as it allows more diverse feminist theoretical perspectives

and emphasizes the particularity of women's lives, Hammed emphasized its limitations in accounting for patriarchal domination in non-Western, Muslim majority contexts.

Professor Shahidian's feminist research has shaped critical approaches in women's studies of the Middle East. The vast repertoire of his publications, research, lectures and conference presentations around the world on the topic of social movements, feminism, women and revolution, activism, and women's experience of exile indicates his dedication to enhancing theoretical knowledge in these areas. This is a body of committed research, which promotes that cause of gender equality and justice. Some of his published articles in this area are first-hand and unique contributions to exilic life and the emerging field of diaspora studies.

Hammed had tireless energy for envisioning new areas of inquiry. As one of his last projects, he encouraged his colleagues to collaborate with him on an anthology of critical studies of secularism and democracy. This research was an effort to make visible an old, yet overlooked, trend in Iranian culture and politics. He wanted to explore areas of political contestation in Iran waged by writers, youth, and human rights activists that have not yet received adequate research attention. His proposed book project was the first on this subject and combined theoretical frameworks with personal narratives by secular activists in Iran. This approach reflects Hammed's emphasis on the study of social movements from below, an approach he took both in his published works and in developing another manuscript on the underground leftist movement in Iran.

- *Compiled by Shahrzad Mojab*

Hammed Shahidian's Biography

Hammed Shahidian left us at the age of 46, on October 1, 2005 after two difficult years of struggle with cancer. He was an Associate Professor of Sociology and Chair of the Sociology and Anthropology Program at the University of Illinois at Springfield. He also was Honorary Research Fellow at Glasgow University (2000-2001), a research affiliates at the Centre of the Study of Socialist Theory and Movements, and Visiting Scholar at the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies at the University of British Columbia (2004).

He was one of the founding editors of *Iran Bulletin – Middle East Forum*, a member of the editorial board of *Sexualities*, and editor of *Critique: Journal for Critical Studies of Iran and the Middle East*. In 2006, the Iranian Women's Studies Foundation inaugurated the Hammed Shahidian Critical Feminist Paper Award.



On previous page: Professor Shahrzad Mojab and Nahid Shahidian, sister of Hammed Shahidian, at the announcement of the Hammed Shahidian Legacy

On this page: Edith Hillian, Vice-Dean Academic, Faculty of Arts and Science, presents the Hammed Shahidian Legacy plaque to Nahid Shahidian at the MA Launch in March 2008

Books

- *Women in Iran: Gender Politics in the Islamic Republic* (2002, Greenwood Publishing)
- *Women in Iran: Emerging Voices in the Women's Movement* (2002, Greenwood Publishing)

Articles

- "The Iranian left and 'The Woman Question' in the Revolution of 1978-79," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 1994, 26: 223-247.
- "Islam, politics, and writing women's history in Iran," *Journal of Women's History*, 1995, 7(2): 113-144.
- "The politics of the veil: Reflections on symbolism, Islam, and feminism," *Thamyris: Mythmaking from Past to Present*, 1997, 4(2): 325-337
- "Women and clandestine politics in Iran: 1970-85," *Feminist Studies*, 1997, 23 (1): 7-42.
- "The metamorphosis and emancipation of the exiled," *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 1998, 7(4): 411-417.
- "Saving the savior," *Sociological Inquiry*, 1999, 69 (2): 303-327.
- "Sociology and exile: Banishment and tensional loyalties," *Current Sociology*, 2000, 48: 71-99.
- "'To be recorded in history': Researching Iranian underground political activists in exile," *Qualitative Sociology*, 2001, 24 (1): 55-61.

Graduate Program Report

The New Master's Program in Women and Gender Studies (MWGS). In September 2007, WGSJ was thrilled to welcome its first cohort of MA students. There were 12 students in the class: Anastasia Alexopoulos, Jill Andrews, Jessica Chandrashekar, Christine D'Angelo, Danielle Edwards, Sabine Finkenauer, Donna Hakimian, Rachel Lavrisa, Sarahjane Macdonald, Helen O'Connor, Sara Rozenberg, and Talayeh Saghatchian. Because of our enthusiastic support for collaborative programs, WGSJ has also become a participating program in 10 Collaborative Programs (Addiction Studies, Aging, Palliative and Supportive Care Across the Life Course, Asia-Pacific Studies, Bioethics, Environment and Health, Environmental Studies, International Relations, Sexual Diversity Studies, South Asian Studies and Women's Health), so that our Master's students can also have the benefit of participating in interdisciplinary discussions in other parts of the university. The launch of the new M.A. was celebrated in a day-long series of events on March 6th, events which also served to celebrate International Women's Day. In the morning, there was a rich and stimulating series of comments on the future of women and gender studies from Jacqui Alexander (WGSJ, UT), Yi-Chun Tricia Lin (Women's Studies, Southern Connecticut State University) and Sunera Thobani (Women and Gender Studies, UBC). This was followed by our annual research symposium (description below) and the celebration of the new Hammed Shahidian Legacy (described elsewhere in this newsletter).

Collaborative Program in Women and Gender Studies (CWGS). The Graduate Collaborative Program changed its name this year, from the Collaborative Program in Women Studies, to the Graduate Collaborative Program in Women and Gender Studies, a name which more accurately reflects the range of approaches and topics covered in the program. This collaborative program remains one of the largest and most popular collaborative programs at the University of Toronto. A unique, multi-faculty program, the CWGS currently includes 33 programs across 7 faculties (Arts and Science, Law, Library and Information Sciences, Medical Sciences, Nursing, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and Social Work) with over 100 cross appointed faculty members. There are currently 35 Master's students and 75 doctoral students in CWGS.

Events for and by Graduate Students in Women and Gender Studies. The WGSJ regularly sponsors a series of events for graduate students in the Collaborative Program in Women and Gender Studies. This year we sponsored four special workshops: (1) a workshop on advanced on-line search techniques and databases for feminist researchers held in the Robarts library computing laboratory by Patricia Serafini, the librarian liaison for Women and Gender Studies at the University of Toronto, (2) a workshop on activism and the academy, with participants Christianne Collantes (Sociology and Equity Studies, & the Collaborative Program in Women and Gender Studies), Joan Simalchik (Women and Gender Studies, UTM), and Judith Taylor (Sociology and WGSJ), (3) a workshop on feminist publishing, with comments from Bonnie McElhinny (Anthropology and WGSJ, UofT) and Franca Iacovetta (History, UofT) (4)

Graduate Awards

an interactive workshop on feminist pedagogy with Roxana Ng (Adult Education and Counselling Psychology, OISE/UT) that included an instructional demonstration on Qi Gong. The WGSJ also sponsored three workshops (one at UTM, UTSC and St. George) on applying to graduate studies in women and gender studies, each of which was conducted by Bonnie McElhinny (at St. George, in conjunction with June Larkin), as well as a workshop on applying for grants.

In addition, the two Graduate Women's Studies Student Association (GWSSA) representatives and Bonnie McElhinny organized this year's Graduate Research Symposium around the theme "Patriotism and Patriarchy: Transnational Perspectives", as part of a day-long series of events celebrating the launch of the MA Program. The symposium included 19 papers, organized into panels on Representing and Resisting Hegemonic Heterosexualities, Gender and Imperial Discourse in Canada, Transnational Perspectives on Body, Sexuality and Reproduction, Violence, Memory and Activism, Pressing in on Patriotism: Gender, 'Internal Others' and Nationalism, and Border Crossing: Human Rights, Migration and Development.

Willa Liu and Shaista Patel organized a Saturday brunch and social on April 26th for all students in the collaborative program at a local restaurant. Although the social unfortunately coincided with the date of the TTC strike (and thus some prospective attendees had to cancel) a stalwart group of 10 students from a range of disciplines enjoyed the opportunity to meet one another and discuss their research interests.

Thanks to all others involved in events throughout the year, including Shaista Patel and Willa Liu, our out-going GWSSA representatives, Marian Reed, for her cheerful and energetic support of all the graduate programs, and Luci Mok for her support of events.

- Bonnie McElhinny

Top photo: The first cohort of WGSJ MA Students pose with the Director and Undergraduate and Graduate Administrator (l-r, top-bottom) Jessica Chandrashekar, Sabine Finkenauer, Donna Hakimian, Sara Rozenberg, Shahrzad Mojab (Director), Marian Reed (Ugrad and Grad Administrator), Christine D'Angelo, Talayeh Saghatichian, Helen O'Connor, Tasia Alexopoulos, Rachel Lavrisa, Sarahjane MacDonald
Missing: Danielle Edwards and Jill Andrew

Bottom: Margrit Eichler, Former Director of the IWSSGS (now WGSJ), and June Larkin, Undergraduate Coordinator, at the MA Launch in March, 2008

City of Toronto Graduate Women's Studies Scholarship, Fall 2007

Priscilla Lezard, PhD, Sociology & Equity Studies in Education, OISE/UT

Janka Seydegart Scholarship in Feminist Studies, Fall 2007

Rachel Deutsch, M.S.W, Faculty of Social Work

Graduate Women and Gender Studies Entrance Prize, Fall 2007

Shaista Patel, PhD, SESE, OISE/UT.

Margrit Eichler Graduate Leadership Award 2007-2008

Shaista Patel, PhD, SESE, OISE/UT and Willa Liu, PhD, SESE, OISE/UT.



Students in this year's MA cohort have been actively involved in feminist knowledge production at a number of conferences, with the support of travel grants from the WGSJ, and have received significant recognition for their intellectual accomplishments.

Fellowships and Awards

Jill Andrew was awarded the 2008 Michele Landsberg Award. This annual national award, presented by the Canadian Women's Foundation, recognizes feminists 30 years of age and under working in the area of media and/or activism to help empower the lives of women and girls.

Jessica Chandrashekar received an Award from the York Centre for International and Security Studies. She was one of twelve scholars selected from over 50 applicants from across Canada. Jessica also received the University of Toronto's WGSJ MA Award for Excellence, a faculty-nominated award for excellence in research, teaching and service.

Danielle Edwards, Helen O'Connor and Sarahjane Macdonald received the Kathleen Coburn Graduate Admission Award from the University of Toronto, in recognition of outstanding performances as undergraduates and promise for graduate studies in women and gender studies.

Conference Presentations and Other Research News

29th Annual Pop Culture and American Studies Association Conference at Albuquerque-New, Mexico, February 24-28, 2008

Alexopoulos, Anastasia. 2007. "Knocked Up and Big Love: The Victories and Defeats of Traditional Masculinity."

Macdonald, Sarahjane. 2007. "Gardasil: a feminist phenomenon?"

WGSJ Annual Graduate Student Research Symposium at the WGSJ, University of Toronto, March 6, 2008

Chandrashekar, Jessica. 2008. "Canadian State Reformations Post-9/11: A Continuation of Colonial Law."

Hakimian, Donna. 2008. "No Place of Refuge: The Ordeal of Iranian Baha'I Women Prisoners."

Lavrisa, Rachel. 2008. "Las Madres y Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo: An Exploration of Voice, Memory and Silence."

Jill Andrew is editing submissions for *Phat Girls In Search of A Pretty World: Hot Lil' Fat Chicks Speakin' Out!*, an anthology on women's body image issues. She welcomes additional submissions. Contact her at www.jillandrewmedia.com.

Chandrashekar, Jessica. 2008. "Post-9/11 State Reformations: A continuation of Colonial Law and the Creation of the Tamil Terrorist". Human Condition Series Conference on Terror, Laurentian University, May 2-3, 2008.

Chandrashekar, Jessica. 2008. "Post-9/11 Amendments to BillC-36 and its Impacts on Sri Lankan Tamils". Graduate Conference of the Collaborative Program in Ethnic and Pluralism Studies, University of Toronto. April 14-15, 2008

Undergraduate Program Report

The undergraduate experience was enhanced in 2007-2008 by the addition of the inaugural group of WGS MA students who took up TA positions in undergraduate courses, offered an activist workshop to first year students, and were a strong and welcome presence in the everyday activities of WGS. The appointment of Dr. Rachel Gorman, a contractual hire for 2007-08, was a further enrichment to the student experience of WGS undergrads. Dr. Gorman taught courses in gender and disability, feminist theory, post-colonial studies, gender and violence. She also coordinated the Advanced Research Seminar which includes the Undergraduate Student Research Colloquium, a forum where students from the research seminar present their work. This year, eight students presented their work at the undergraduate colloquium. (Please see feature on next page)

Our undergraduate curriculum continues to expand. Professor Jacqui Alexander taught a new course, WGS380H: Aboriginal, Black and Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars, which examined the gendered effects of white settler colonization on/in 21st Century Canada and traces the formation of multiple settlements by examining black and immigrant populations. The course examines solidarity movements within and across the communities. In response to student requests we have introduced another new course, WGS: Gender and Neo-Liberalism, which will be taught for the first time in 2008-09. These courses fit with our overall plan of offering a curriculum that provides an interdisciplinary and culturally inclusive approach to understanding gender in a variety of individual, institutional and transnational contexts.

In the summer 2007, WGS students Amy Willis and Tej Saini traveled to Namibia as the New College Gender and HIV interns for the University of Namibia/University of Toronto Collaborative Student Program. The program provides opportunities for UNAM and UofT students to collaborate on projects on the social

and cultural aspects of HIV/AIDS. Amy worked with Project HOPE (Health Opportunities for People Everywhere), a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization that provides health education and microfinance loans to women caring for orphans and/or vulnerable children the northern regions in Namibia. Tej was involved in a project designed to examine the needs of people participating in the informal economy in the capital city, Windhoek and conducted a gender analysis of the lending processes of microfinance institutions. At the end of the internship, students involved in the UNAM/UT collaboration presented their preliminary findings at a forum held at the northern and main campuses of UNAM. On returning to Canada, the students wrote up their findings in a major paper.

Our two annual undergraduate professional development seminars: the Going to Graduate Workshop (fall, 2007) and the Careers Workshop (spring, 2008) continue to be a draw for students who want advice in planning their future career and/or academic goals. In the graduate school workshop, Alison Burgess, a student in the WGS collaborative graduate program, offered tips for making the application process a less daunting exercise. At the Careers' Workshop, WGS alumni Ceta Ramkhalawansingh, Manager at Diversity Management and Community Engagement, City of Toronto and Attiya Khan from the Women's Counselling, Referral and Education Centre, shared stories of their student life in Women's Studies (now Women and Gender Studies) and the ups and downs of the careers paths that have led to their gender work in policy (Ceta) and front-line service (Attiya).

Over the year WGS students participated in a number of activities including a photovoice workshop on HIV/AIDS, feedback sessions on WGS curriculum, World AIDS Day events, and numerous talks and workshops offered by WGS.

- June Larkin

Undergraduate Awards

The City of Toronto Undergraduate Women's Studies Scholarship 2006-2007

Rahi Bahreini

Toronto Women's Bookstore Prize, 2006-2007

Donya Ziaee

Jewish Immigrant Mother's Prize 2006-2007

Christine D'Angelo

The Elsie Gregory MacGill Prize in Women's Studies 2006-2007

Christine D'Angelo

The Gordon Cressy Student Leadership Award 2006-2007

Cynthia N'Geleka-Kazadi

The Helen Gregory McGill Prize in Women's Studies 2006-2007

Maya Chacaby

Women and Gender Studies Grant, Fall 2007

Michelle Herbert

Undergraduate Colloquium *Tuesday March 25, 2008*

On March 25, undergraduate thesis students in Women and Gender Studies presented their research to friends, family, and faculty members. Seven presenters delivered two-hours of politically and theoretically engaged work ranging from geopolitics to local services and economies; from multiculturalism and settler colonialism, to war in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Southern Sudan.

Tejpreet Saini connected her nuanced research on family, trans/national, and colonial histories to the university's current legal actions against student protesters. Tej's thesis "Where are you from? Unmapping Aboriginal, immigrant and settler relations in Williams Lake, British Columbia" was supervised by Stan Doyle and Arnold Itwaru.

Mariam Aslam's thesis "Negotiating community: Diverse women's reflections on university disability services" explored family and institutional relations around gender and disability through participatory research project with AccessAbility Services users at the UTSC campus. I supervised Mariam's thesis, with John Purcell as a second reader.

Judith Taylor supervised **Michelle Poirier**'s timely thesis on "The non-profit industrial complex: A radical activist perspective of Canada's third sector". Michelle has been invited to submit parts of her work to *Upping the Anti*.

Also supervised by Judith Taylor, **Patricia Mulhern** surveyed the possibilities for ethical business practices in "A stitch in time: An exploration of third wave feminism, D.I.Y., and fashion entrepreneurs in Toronto". Trained in fashion design, Patricia will be putting her research into practice as she launches her own business.

Supervised by Ashwini Tambe, **Diana Chang Hum** presented a textual analysis of government websites in her critique entitled "Challenging multiculturalism: The capitalist and cultural realities of Canadian diversity".

Stella Abiyo Mona interwove feminist critiques of militarization with narratives of war and displacement in her powerful presentation "Where were the women? An analysis of the southern Sudanese conflict in relation to nationalism, militarism, and gender". Stella's thesis was supervised by Jacqui Alexander.

Annie Kashamura Zawadi's presented a sophisticated geopolitical analysis of the US involvement in, and media distortion of, the war in the DRC. Annie's thesis "Gained interests and silenced women's stories: Western media and war in the Democratic Republic of Congo from 1994-2004" was supervised by Mary Nyquist.

Unable to attend the colloquium was **Amy Willis**, whose thesis "Development, intervention and the new imperialism: Re-thinking the global response to HIV/AIDS" was supervised by June Larkin.

As the course instructor for WGS460, Advanced Research Seminar in Women and Gender Studies, it was a pleasure and an honour to work with this talented and dedicated group of emerging scholars. My best wishes to each of you in your future endeavors.

- **Rachel Gorman**

Students of the WGS Advanced Research Seminar at the Undergraduate Colloquium in March 2008

(l-r) Michelle Poirier, Diana Chang Hum, Mariam Aslam, Tricia Mulhern, Annie Zawadi, Stella Mona. Absent: Tej Saini & Amy Willis



Sabbatical Report - Michelle Murphy

I spent my sabbatical in the San Francisco area as a Senior Research Fellow at the Clayman Institute for Gender and Science at Stanford. While there I worked on a collaborative project with Kavita Philip (Women's Studies, University California, Irvine) theorizing the relations between technoscience, sex, and formations of capital in circuits between the United States and South Asia. Much of this collaboration concerned tracing multiple genealogies of the relationships between reproduction and production. In many of these conversations, we were joined by Lochlann Jain (Anthropology, Stanford) and Cori Hayden (Anthropology, UC Berkeley).

One of the questions that emerged from these conversations was how to sustain such in-time collaborative theorization across distance. The conventions of print publication within academia -book and journal formats - do not allow response from readers and are often incredibly slow when a book can take a decade to finish and a journal article a year to come out. We decided to start an experiment with a blog format

-- *Red Technoscience: Giving TechnoScience the Re-Boot*
-- as a way to continue collaborative theorizing at a distance, as a future alternative to print

publication that reaches a larger audience, and as a timely media, both in terms of time to print as well as in terms of tracking rapid change. As tenured professors, we thought it particularly important to embrace such experiments with these new media. In terms of content, *Red Technoscience* hopes to bring together with theorizing about epistemological practices within Technoscience Studies with transnational feminist theory and Marxian traditions of political economy.

Most of the sabbatical, however, was spent finishing my book, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction*. Unsurprisingly, collaborating with Kavita inspired the addition of unexpected new chapters, perhaps most interestingly a chapter on "protocol feminism" defined as feminist projects that politicize the terms of practices, as is now common in domains of health and development projects.

While San Francisco has been lovely and following the U.S. election at close proximity "fascinating," I won't miss the commuting.

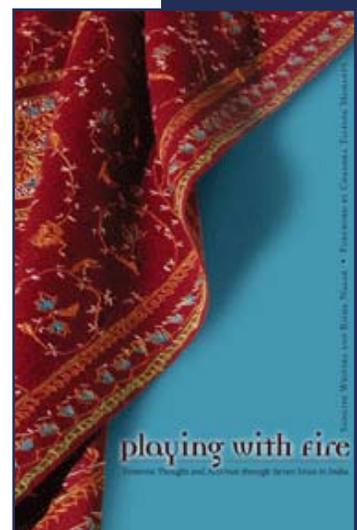
Visit *Red Technoscience* at <http://redtechnopolitics.wordpress.com>

The Perils of NGOization and the Pleasures of Collaboration

On April 10, over twenty graduate students in three courses across campus had the opportunity to participate in a public conversation with Richa Nagar, author of *Playing with Fire*. Prof. Nagar (Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, University of Minnesota) co-authored this book with the Sangtin Writers, a group of grassroots workers in a prominent women's organization in rural Uttar Pradesh, India.

Playing with Fire embarked on a collective autobiographical exercise that eventually turned into a very public critique of how NGOization functions in our time. Prof. Nagar fielded questions about the process of collaborating across regional, class and caste divides. The audience asked questions about the process of writing collectively, the politics of building social movements, and the role of the academic in activist movements. Prof. Nagar passionately argued for greater accountability in the way academics position themselves, and also presented many concrete examples of how she learned alternately to be led by, and lead, the women she worked with.

- Ashwini Tambe



Sabbatical Report - M. Jacqui Alexander

Last summer I tracked backward to retrace a journey of sorts to one of the arbitrary starting places of African diaspora, called Nigeria on the world map. To say that I went to Nigeria is a bit inaccurate; the same kind of inaccuracy that is displayed when, for instance, we say we went to Africa. So I really went to western Nigeria home of the Yoruba peoples searching; traversing the vast geography of Osi-Ekiti, Oshogbo, Ile Ife, Irolu Remo and points in between searching; interviewing elders and spiritual practitioners both women and men, searching; following the silt of meandering rivers, searching; attending festivals and ceremonies, searching to understand whether globalization acted to undermine women's spiritual practices and to see the ways in which women's spiritual technologies wrestled with some of the most egregious forms of political and economic hardship.

Signs of decades of severe neglect both national and international everywhere in sight; evangelizing crusades taking hold in every nook and cranny, blocking the flow of already congested traffic in places like Ibadan and Lagos, promising deliverance and a new day. And a crisis in confidence where millions of people no longer believed in the capacity or will of the state to create conditions where they lived with dignity. But beneath it all, perhaps through it all, the memory of those spiritual technologies shaped women's daily lives challenging the divide between sacred and secular that exists in mainstream feminism. For me this search has revealed a new question: It's not so much how globalization undermines women's spiritual practices; rather it has to do with how women's memory of these practices are rehearsed in a way that transforms the conditions under which they live, one ceremony, one festival at a time.

Sabbatical Report - Kay Armatage

In the fall of 2007, while on research leave, I accepted the offer of a visiting professorship from Kwansai-Gakuin University in Japan. This was the second time for me. I was visiting professor in Canadian Studies five years ago in the spring – a wonderful time to be in Japan. In 2007, I arrived for the beginning of the September term just in time for Ontario August: beautiful hot days and cool nights. October, November and December were also wonderful, with flowers in bloom until January (5 degrees).

I was accommodated in the same university house as last time. In the first few minutes after my arrival, I found my Italian espresso stove-top coffee pot in the cupboard, and set up my futon in the tatami bedroom upstairs. I was back at home, I felt. On my second visit, I was much more comfortable. I knew the train system, remembered where to get good coffee in Kobe (only 30 minutes away), and felt OK about not knowing the language. Five years later, there seemed to be more English speakers (globalization) and at worst I knew that I could ask for help with sign language. I just didn't worry so much.

Also, unlike the first time, when I just accepted the teaching schedule assigned,

I had asked for consecutive teaching days, which allowed me 5 days to write and travel. And this time I had a research project supported by a grant. I hopped to Korea, Beijing, Shanghai, and Tokyo for 5 days each, to give papers or do research. The fall term required me to be back in Japan in January, so I spent Christmas in Thailand. Great!

When the Kwansei-Gakuin ads come out again, I recommend that you all consider applying. The houses they supply are convenient for families, and how otherwise are you going to spend quality time in Japan? Teaching is hard, no question. Basically, you're giving them an opportunity to speak in English, and it's a different student culture from what we're used to in Canada. Talk to me if you think you would like to apply, but if you ask me, I'll tell you that I intend to apply again.

Interrogating Sex Trafficking

Over the past decade, the issue of sex trafficking has received much attention from governments and NGOs. It is also a topic that students at the University of Toronto often identify as an important social problem in their course papers and extra curricular activism. The event 'Interrogating Sex Trafficking,' held on Thursday March 13, sought to intervene in prevalent discourses about this problem and provide the campus community with an opportunity to discuss alternative approaches. It featured two film screenings and an exchange between three scholars who have written about the history, politics and representation of sex work in a transnational context: Professor Kamala Kempadoo, (York University), Professor Ashwini Tambe (WGSJ/ History), and Oishik Sirkar (Fellow, Faculty of Law).

The evening began with samosas and a screening of *Taking the Pledge*, produced by the Network of Sex Worker Projects, which examines the adverse impact of the US-backed anti-prostitution pledge on public health organizations in South and Southeast Asia. The film vividly set the tone for Prof. Kempadoo's talk titled 'The contemporary anti-trafficking policy climate,' which reviewed the rise of the US State Department's anti-trafficking regime over the past few years-- a regime that monitors, ranks, and sanctions countries on their level of policing of trafficking. Prof. Kempadoo presented a compelling case against this regime, and its attendant implications for sex workers. The full-length film *Tales of the Night Fairies*, directed by Shohini Ghosh, followed, exploring in a highly personal voice the unionizing efforts of sex workers in Calcutta. It presented accounts of how and why women engaged in sex work, and their difficulties in seeking greater legitimacy. As many audience members concurred in the discussion that followed with Prof. Tambe and Oishik Sirkar, the film dismantled common assumptions about the motivations and lives of those who work in the sex trade, with a focus on their dreams, pleasures and critiques. In particular, it recounted the stories of those who were introduced to the trade unwittingly, but who did not see themselves as targets for the kinds of rescue efforts organized by anti-trafficking organizations. With the attendance over thirty students, teachers and local activists, the event, which was sponsored the New College Principal's Innovation Fund, was a resounding success.

- *Ashwini Tambe*



Sabbatical Report - Alissa Trotz

With Toronto as my base, I spent a busy sabbatical year working with colleagues in and on the Caribbean, both inside and outside of academia. I have continued my exploration of Caribbean feminist trajectories, participating at a special roundtable on Latin American and Caribbean feminisms convened by Rhoda Reddock and Helen Safa at the Latin American Studies Association annual meeting in Montréal (out of this I am completing a short study that examines where the local and transnational intersect and figure in a counting women's work campaign in Guyana). I gave a public lecture at the College of Charleston, South Carolina, and in November I was invited by the Centre for Gender and Development Studies to give the Dame Nita Barrow (Women Catalysts for Change) Annual Memorial Lecture at the University of the West Indies in Barbados, which has recently been published (March 2008) as the Centre's Working Paper #4, titled 'Gender, Generation and Memory: Remembering a Future Caribbean.'

Aaron Kamugisha and I put the final touches to a co-edited special issue of the British based journal *Race and Class* to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the British slave trade, which came out in October. This led to a number of really great conversations, one of which resulted in my involvement in organising a response to challenge the Caribbean's signing of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Community (which institutionalizes a shift from the principle of preferential trade to one of reciprocity), and helping in the early stages to co-ordinate a website with one of the Caribbean's leading economists, Norman Girvan (www.normangirvan.info). I have become interested in thinking about how the EPA negotiation process in the Caribbean pre-empts meaningful involvement, as well as the gendered ramifications of the agreement.



Partly with support from a small grant from the Department of Sociology and Equity Studies, I spent much of the year working with Red Thread, a women's organization in Guyana that I am a member of, on internecine disturbances that tore the country apart in the 1960s and that have left a lasting imprint. This involved gathering oral histories, carrying out archival research and recording public commemorative activities; we have just completed a major report and are now thinking about the kinds of public interventions that might be possible. This spring I participated in a wider discussion on violence in the Caribbean at the Centre for African Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, and am completing some additional work this summer to prepare a research proposal on gender, violence, silence and memory for the fall. And finally, interested in expanding the space for voices in the public sphere, I started a weekly newspaper column, "In the Diaspora", in one of Guyana's independent dailies, the *Stabroek News* (www.stabroeknews.com), where I both contribute and solicit short essays on a variety of issues.

Easily the best thing about the sabbatical year was that it helped me find a meaningful space, finally, for public intellectual work that draws on, and is in dialogue with, the Caribbean. That's been hugely satisfying, and I plan to sustain and extend this engagement. Plus of course, I was able to spend way more time with my kids. Absolutely invaluable. They're not at all happy it's coming to an end!

CKA Event: Transnational Domesticity Film Series

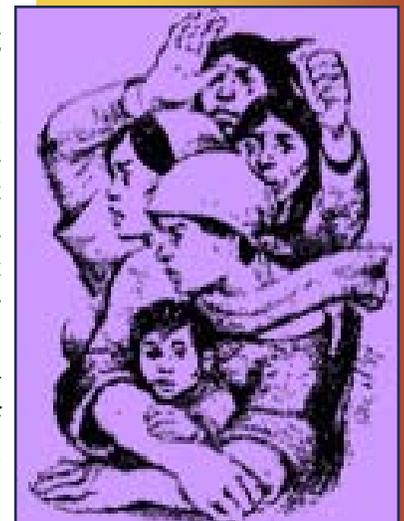
The plight of women who work as live-in caregivers in Canada, and who are predominantly Filipino, is well-known in feminist academic and activist circles. Indeed, the film *Brown Women, Blonde Babies* (on the live-in caregiver program in Vancouver and Toronto) has become something of a stand-by in many women and gender studies classrooms. This year Bonnie McElhinny co-organized a film series with Joy Sison and other members of the Philippine Women's Centre to broaden and deepen student and community understandings of the implications of transnational domesticity by looking not only at the live-in caregiver program in Canada, but also at the forms domestic work takes in other countries and the implications it has for their families when they are reunited after long absences, by looking at related problems ("mail-order" brides, prostitution around military bases), by considering the long-standing practices of globalization and imperialism that have made migration as live-in caregivers necessary, and by looking at documentaries on feminist organizations that work on these problems in the Philippines, and internationally. To this end, film screenings were organized on four evenings in Feb., March and April. Discussants with related academic, family, activist and/or work experiences provided commentary on each film.

The first evening focused on the experiences of Filipino domestic workers and their families, by screening *Paper Dolls* (2006, Tomar Heymann), an award-winning documentary on Filipino/as working as caregivers as a drag queen ensemble in Israel and *When Strangers Reunite* (Marie Boti and Florchita Bautista) on how Filipino families separated by the international labour market and by the Canadian Live-In Caregiver program struggle to rebuild their lives together. Discussants were Conely de Leon, MA student in Sociology

and Equity Studies/OISE, member of the Collaborative Program in Women and Gender Studies, and member of Ugnayan ng Kabataang Pilipino sa Canada/Filipino-Canadian Youth Alliance and Ian Nillis, member of Ugnayan ng Kabataang Pilipino sa Canada.

The second evening focused on gender and U.S. colonialism and militarization, by screening *Sin City Diary* (1992, Rachel Rivera) a film about the lives of women working as prostitutes around the US Navy base at Subic Bay in the Philippines and *The Real Glory*, a 1939 film depicting the U.S. military training Christian Filipino soldiers to wage war against Muslim Filipinos (with Gary Cooper starring as the physician interested in using new psychological techniques to train the Filipinos). Discussants were Jerrylyn Guevarra and Daniella Bisnar, both of the Philippine Women's Centre of Ontario.

The third evening focused on poverty and land reform in the Philippines, with a screening of *Holding Our Ground* (1989), a film about Filipino women in Cebu who have organized to pressure the government and wealthy Filipinos for land reform, shelters for street children, and to develop their own money-lending system. The film was discussed by Kelly Botengan (a member of SIKLAB Ontario, a Filipino migrant workers' organization),



Teodosia Villarino (Ph.D. student in anthropology), and Ethel Tungohan (Ph. D. student in Political Science and in the Graduate Collaborative Program in Women and Gender Studies).

The final evening focused on Filipino Women's Organizing in Canada and the Philippines, and featured *Gabriela* (1988, Trix Betlem) on the history of women in the Philippines, on Gabriela, a mass organization of diverse women's groups in the Philippines, and on strategies for global feminism, as well as *Kababaihan: Filipina Portraits* (1989, Marie Boti and Malcom Guy), which profiled numerous women's activists in the Philippines, from grassroots community organizers to the heads of the national women's association, Gabriela. Discussants were Celia Diocson, one of the founders of the National Association of Philippine Women's Centres and Camille Cendana (member of the Philippine Women's Centre and Ugnayan ng Kabataang Pilipino sa Canada/Filipino-Canadian Youth Alliance).

The discussion most evenings went well past the two hour time-slot allocated. On at least two evenings spirited and thoughtful discussions lasted from 7 to 10:30 at night! The film series served to suggest resources for courses on feminist studies, Asia-Pacific studies, anthropological studies and/or equity studies, and to provide a continuing forum at the University of Toronto for a community of people interested in learning about and discussing Filipino issues, issues which remain remarkably under-represented in the Canadian economy, despite the growing numbers of Filipinos in Canada: the Philippines has become the third largest source country for immigrants to Canada since the 1990s, after China and India, and Filipinos are the 4th largest "visible" minority group in Canada. Media Commons at Robarts has acquired all films used in the series, and they are therefore available to prompt future discussions in classrooms and other settings.

- **Bonnie McElhinny**

On Previous Page:

Top Photo: Movie Poster for Paper Dolls

Middle Photo: Screen shot from Sin City Diary

Bottom Photo: Logo for Gabriela, Filipino Women's Group



This page: Tara Goldstein, former Graduate Coordinator of IWSGS (now WGS) and Bonnie McElhinny, Graduate Coordinator of the WGS 2007-8

Research Profile - Judith Taylor

Judith Taylor is a social movements scholar whose research extends our understanding of activist organizations, tactics, ideologies and intellectual work. Judith and colleague Josee Johnston recently completed a study of corporate cooptation of feminist movement ideology based on their analysis of the DOVE “Real Beauty” campaign. In their article “Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign,” they argue that rather than de-centre beauty as an obligatory goal for women, this advertising campaign, like most in the beauty product industry, argues that its products can help women achieve it. The authors indicate DOVE’s similarity to other corporate entities such as The Body Shop that promotes a colonial discourse of feminine responsibility to clean themselves and the world through consumer-based philanthropy. Judith and Johnston are now conducting research on groups of feminist friends to learn how they collectively make sense of corporate campaigns that utilize feminist ideas.

Judith currently holds a SSHRC to investigate the extent to which feminists in Canada believe the Canadian nation state should be a central target of feminist activism, and whether they hope Canada’s longest standing national feminist organization, the National Action Committee (NAC) will succeed in its efforts to revitalize. She also asks interviewees to articulate their ideal organization, mapping how it should be funded and constituted, and delineating the issues it should prioritize. Such a project engages with both movement practices and imagination, disappointments and hope in this period of local fatigue, national conservatism and transnational possibility. In addition, Judith critically engages with complex questions of leadership, representation, and coalition that have propelled and stymied movement actors.

In addition to studying mobilization, Judith also analyses feminist movement memoir, combining approaches in the humanities and social sciences to make sense of persistent yet under-theorized themes in North American feminist writing. In this project, Judith contends that while the North American women’s movement is most known for its efforts to transform social relations between women and men, its adherents have also focused on remaking relations among women.

This movement’s concern, she argues, can be found not on protest signs in the streets or on the web pages of feminist organizations, but rather in memoir produced for the eyes and ears of other women. Analyzing such

memoir produced over the last 40 years, Judith focuses on narratives that explore the disjuncture between feminists’ desires for supportive and meaningful social interaction among women, and the conflicts, jealousies and disappointments they found and experienced. With this project, Judith hopes to extend commonplace understandings of feminist ideas and goals, and sheds light on the “emotional habitus” of the women’s movement. More generally, the project highlights the significant work memoir can do in the life of social movements.

Finally, Judith is embarking on a project that critically engages our expectations of experiential learning in university. For the past several years, she has coordinated the Women’s Studies Practicum course, in which 4th year Women and Gender Studies majors and minors take placements in feminist organizations across Toronto. As a Faculty Associate at the Centre for the Study of Students in Postsecondary Education at OISE for 2008-9, Taylor will compare the trajectories and experiences of graduates who did and did not take the practicum course to discern its potential impact. While skill acquisition and preparation for employment are the most touted benefits of experiential learning, this project looks at other aspects of the experience, such as students’ understandings of organizational life and sustenance, bureaucracy, mentorship, political generations, difference and diversity, burn-out, efficacy and social change. Next year as undergraduate program coordinator at the WGSI, Taylor aims to further develop, through both her research and the Practicum course, a network of Women’s Studies graduates in Toronto who will continue to dialogue about these issues together beyond graduation.





Research Profile - Rachel Gorman

work of documenting and analyzing these cultural shifts.

Rachel Gorman researches ways that artist/activists involved in political movements engage in cultural production, and asks questions about the relationship between aesthetics and ideology. In order to better understand the connections between social and artistic movements, Rachel considers the organizing work of art production, and the ways artists consciously engage with aesthetic practices. Her thinking is influenced by Marxist theorists who argue that cultures are organized through, and articulate ideologies of, dominant classes and nations; and by feminist, anti-racist, and disability studies theorists who argue that cultures are sites of multiple struggles over representation.

Rachel started focusing on cultural production during her master's research on disability and work, through a participatory study of a Toronto-based group of disabled artists/activists she belonged to at the time. Because of their disability focus and because they were artists, the group was both an example of a work site for people who are underrepresented in formal employment, and of a mode of work that is marginalized. The study revealed ways that disabled people and artists are seen as non-workers, and shed light on their consciousness of representation as a central political concern.

As Rachel began her doctoral work on disability rights politics and class consciousness, she noted that a significant shift was taking place in the disability rights movement. Her group's organization around cultural production and the arts was part of a larger shift in the movement. Across Canada, issues of access and representation were rapidly being reframed as a disability culture movement. From 2001 to 2004, they traveled across the country performing at disability culture conferences and festivals. Rachel began the

During this time, Rachel's central political and aesthetic concern was the lack of connection between the disability culture movement, and emerging transnational anti-capitalist and anti-war movements. As an artist producing work on war, anti-imperialist struggle, and racial surveillance, she became increasingly aware of the organizing relations of a white-identified and gentrified cultural scene. In 2005, Rachel began her postdoctoral work on transnational political organizing and cultural production. In 2007, she completed a preliminary comparative study of recent developments in queer and Mad cultural production, which reveals a shift away from transnational solidarity.

Rachel contends that emerging artists in urban Native, and anti-war artist/activist communities have much to teach disability artists about the centrality of racism and imperialism, which—expressed on a global scale through war, scarcity, and environmental destruction—cause thousands of people to become disabled on a daily basis. In her current research she asks how transnational narratives of disability can reveal and contextualize universal political and economic processes through a focus on the complex and specific. By following threads of her own family narrative to Luso-African anti-colonial activism in Lisbon from 1968 to 1973, and the Cuban intervention in Angola from 1975-1991, she is developing an experimental theatre project on intergenerational dislocation, Madness and trauma, and mixed-race identity.

Faculty Books, Journals and Future Projects

Kay Armatage

Forthcoming 2008

Fashions in Feminist Programming - Un-Making the Cut, University of Southern Illinois Press

Forthcoming 2008

"Films by Moonlight" *Film International* special issue

Forthcoming 2008

"Joyce Wieland's Political Cinema" *Canadian Women Directors*, University of Alberta Press

June Larkin

published December 2007:

Welpel, I., Reschka, B. & Larkin, J. (Eds.) *Gender and Engineering: Strategies and Possibilities*. Berlin: Peter Lang

Bonnie McElhinny

published in 2007:

Words, Worlds, Material Girls: Language and Gender in a Global Economy, ed. Bonnie McElhinny. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Bonnie McElhinny has co-founded a new journal, *Gender and Language*, with the two issues appearing in 2007. She founded this journal with Sara Mills (English, Sheffield Hallam University, UK), author of such books as *Gender and Colonialism* (2005), *Discourses of Difference: Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism*, *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: An Anthology*, *Language and Gender: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. The special first issue of the journal, which had as its theme "Unanswered Questions and Unquestioned Assumptions in the Study of Language and Gender" included articles on biological perspectives on female verbal superiority, postmodernism and feminist sociolinguistics, language, gender and neoliberalism in Japan, discourse and domestic violence in neoliberal China, desire in women's discourse, the embodiment of transgender identity through use of Brazilian grammatical gender, and global and local perspectives on language and gender in Tonga.

Ashwini Tambe

forthcoming August 2008:

The Limits of Colonial Control in South Asia: Spaces of Disorder in the Indian Ocean Region. London: Routledge

Judith Taylor will be a Faculty Associate at the Centre for the Study of Students in Postsecondary Education, OISE for 2008-9 which will support her research on Pedagogy and Experiential Learning in Women's Studies



Top: Judith Taylor and Ashwini Tambe



Bottom: June Larkin and Rick Halpern, Principal of New College

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