

Rebelling

Women's Studies Department, UNLV

Spring 2009

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Women's Studies graduation party, April 30 2009!
L-R Anita Revilla, S. Charusheela, Jasmine Herbert, Destiny Farr, Amanda Rida, Gay Sessums, Lynn Comella, Katie Eubanks

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A Message from the Chair

By Dr. S. Charusheela

2008-2009 has been an eventful year. We moved to new offices in October! We will miss Houssels House, which served us as a warm and welcoming space, a gathering place for Women's Studies members and friends. But we have spent the year making our new space as hospitable as our old one — thanks to Gay Sessums, whose stellar organizational skills ensured a smooth move!

Despite the pressure of moving offices, we have maintained our tradition of providing a strong line up of activities and projects. We began a new collaborative project in the dorms, the Diversity Living and Learning Community (DLLC). We worked in conjunction with the Women's Research Institute of Nevada (WRIN) and the Jean Nidetch Women's Center (JNWC) to create a strong series of events, and of course had our annual production of the Vagina Monologues. Women's Studies students and faculty have remained active as well, earning honors and undertaking activities — more details of our activities and accomplishments inside!

We've had our difficult moments of course. Particularly, the budget situation remains difficult here at UNLV. Budget cuts have already forced us to begin moving toward large lecture formats for our introductory classes, and the budget only promises to get worse. In this climate, we want to ensure that we can continue our traditions of supporting students and engaging in strong levels of outreach and programming. **We are asking all our friends and alumni to contribute to Women's Studies.** You can contribute for programming through the **Women's Studies Program Fund**, or for student awards via the **Women's Studies Award Fund** (donation form included with this newsletter).

We will also be going through our **10-year external evaluation** this Fall. We will be contacting each of our alums to find out where you are and what you are doing, as part of this review. It is important for us to do well, especially in these times of fiscal stringency, so do make sure you respond—we need your help!

As I look back over the academic year, I remain amazed at the strong and vibrant community we have here at UNLV Women's Studies — it gives me hope that no matter how hard the fiscal situation gets, we will weather this with the support and commitment of our community.

Women's Studies has MOVED!

Come check out our new offices: CBC B-422

Faculty Updates

Dr. S. Charusheela: After a summer of research in India, I returned August 2008 to take over as Interim chair. In addition, I was co-organizer of the *South Asian Feminist Pre-Conference* at Madison in October, finalized a paper for the *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, worked with Crystal Jackson and Suzanne Becker on our paper (presented at the *International Association for Feminist Economics!*), and presented my work at the *International Studies Association*, the *Feminist Epistemologies, Methodologies, Metaphysics and Science Studies* conference,

the *Left Forum*, and at a special seminar and symposium at the Women's Studies dept. and the John Hope Franklin Institute for the Humanities at *Duke University*. I also was elected as the next Editor of *Rethinking Marxism* (five year term to commence August), and for a three-year term on the Executive Committee of the *Cultural Studies Association*.



Dr. Anita Tijerina Revilla's co-authored book, *Both Sides Now: The Story of School Desegregation's Graduates* is now available for purchase from the University of California Press! She has also been working on a co-edited volume, *Marching Students: Chicana/o Activism and Education 1968 & the Present* (University of Nevada Press) and has two articles under review ("Are All Raza

Womyn Queer? An Exploration of Sexual Identities in a Chicana/Latina Student Organization" with *NWSA Journal*, and "What Happens in Vegas, Does NOT Stay in Vegas: Student Activists in the Immigrant Rights Movement" with the *Harvard Educational Review*). Anita served as a caucus chair, conference proposal reviewer, and presenter at the National Associa-

tion for Chicana/o Studies (NACCS) and *Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social* (MALCS: Chicana/Latina Studies) conferences. She took three Women's Studies majors, Irina Barrera, Juanito Espinoza Cuellar, and Evelyn Flores, to present at the University of Utah this past summer and is preparing to take students again this summer to the conference in New Mexico. At NACCS, she presented on three different panels on the immigrant rights movement, activist scholarship, and body discrimination (Fat-phobia). She and her students also presented several panels at the NACCS Joto (LGBT) conference at California State University, Los Angeles in the fall.

Dr. Revilla was honored this year by receiving the William Morris Award for Excellence in Teaching from the College of Liberal Arts. This is the third teaching award for Dr. Revilla at UNLV, and she is extremely thankful for the support she has received from her colleagues and especially her students.

Dr. Lynn Comella was the guest editor of a special issue of *The Communication Review* commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Barnard Conference on female sexuality, which included her essay, "Looking Backward: Barnard and its Legacies" and an interview with sexologist and writer Carol Queen. She also published a review of the annual Adult Entertainment Expo in *Contexts Magazine*, a publication of the American Sociological Association, and completed a chapter on trends in the adult industry for inclusion in *Sex for Sale: Prostitution, Pornography, and the*

Sex Industry (2nd edition), forthcoming in Summer 2009. As Co-Chair of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Interest Group of the International Communication Association, Dr. Comella helped program the 2009 Annual Meetings, which will take place in Chicago in May. She is slated to present two papers at the 2009 ICA Conference.



The year 2008 was a busy and productive one for **Dr. Danielle Roth-Johnson**. In the spring, her co-authored article on the effects of education on fertility in Colombia and Peru was published in *Global Health Governance*, a publication that focuses on global health issues and their implications for public policy and security issues both globally and locally. Invited

to serve as co-editor for a special edition of the journal on non-communicable diseases, she also wrote the foreword for that issue. In the summer, her article on autism and special educa-

tion in Mexico came out in *Global Health Governance*. In late December, she also received news that her article on the administrative prevalence of autism disorders in Nevada school districts was to be published in the *Journal of the Nevada Public Health Association*. At present, her research and teaching interests are primarily centered upon analyses of the impact of public and environmental policies on women's health, the written narratives and activism of girls and women with disabilities, and the activism of women in environmental justice movements around the world. She is also currently working on her second novel, a work that focuses on the intersection of gender and environmental justice issues in Nevada.

Report from sabbatical by Dr. Lois Helmbold

What's not to like about a sabbatical? The opportunity to spend long stretches of time reading, thinking, and writing is one of the dreams of academic life that sabbaticals make possible. For the 2008 - 2009 academic year, I'm Scholar-in-Residence at the Beatrice Bain Research Group at University of California, Berkeley, with other lively feminist scholars from around the world: Austria, China, Germany, Iran, Italy, Japan.

My work comparing the survival strategies of Black and White working class women during the Great Depression is, unfortunately, only too pertinent today. Las Vegas and the Bay area are home to the highest foreclosure rates in the nation. My public talk at UC Berkeley, "Lessons from the Great Depression: Shifting Contours of Race, Racism, and White Privilege among Working Class Women" got a great audience. The California

Historical Society has a terrific show, *Hobos to Street People: Artists' Responses to Homelessness from the New Deal to the Present* (in downtown SF until August 15), including women artists such as Dorothea Lange, and curated by an old friend, Art Hazelwood, a printmaker whose art on current federal housing cutbacks and the resulting homelessness is emotionally wrenching.

Besides my academic and political pursuits, I've been practicing tai chi at a challenging school in my neighborhood, taking a few quilt classes (my quilts are always the most unusual), enjoying rain, ocean, old and new friends, great music, art, and politics. I promise I will return to UNLV and teach a new course, WMST 490/690, Women, Work, and Money.



We Are Out There!

It's been a busy year for the Women's Studies department!

We began a new collaborative project with Residential Life and Student Diversity Programs and Services, the **Diversity Living and Learning Community (DLLC)**. DLLC brings Women's Studies faculty to the dorms, where students living on the Multicultural/Diversity floor engage with faculty via a series of presentations on topics ranging from pornography to gay marriage. Thanks to **Carrie Sampson** of Campus Life and **Erika Bowles** of Residential Life for making this happen!

We brought a variety of speakers and events to campus! In Fall, (Oct. 28), we co-hosted a **Conversation with Ruby Duncan**, the award-winning Las Vegas feminist activist. In Spring, we co-sponsored the screening of **A Single Woman**, a movie adaptation of a play about Jeannette Rankin, Congresswoman and co-founder of the American Civil Liberties Union. The screening was followed by a discussion with director **Kamala Lopez** and other community leaders. We co-sponsored a visit by human rights activist and feminist scholar **Dr. Jael Silliman** of the Ford Foundation. Dr. Silliman met with students and community activists for a special discussion of minority women's perspectives on reproductive justice, and gave a public talk on transnational feminism. We also co-sponsored a University Forum lecture "Dreaming Blackness: Black Nationalism and African-American Public Opinion" by **Prof. Melanye Price** of Wesleyan University. And of course, we did our annual production of the **Vagina Monologues!**

Womyn's Herstory Month was also exciting. We partnered with the Jean Nidetch Women's Center, the Women's Research Institute of Nevada, the Office of the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, Student Diversity Programs & Services, Students Organizing Diversity Activities, the International Council, and Safe Nest to present an array of events, including an Open Mic/Slam Poetry night, discussions, Angela Shelton's Army of Angels Conference, and a benefit luncheon for breast cancer.

Women's Studies faculty remain active and involved via presentations to UNLV and to the broader community. **Dr. Lynn Comella** was part of a panel on the local "Metro [police] Prostitution Crack Down and Media Reporting" on Nevada Public Radio. **Dr. Anita Revilla** gave two public lectures, "We Are All the Same – Aren't We?: Colorblindness in Desegregated Schools" and "'What Happens in Las Vegas, Does Not Stay in

Vegas: How Las Vegas Youth are Transforming 'Sin City,'" and served on a panel at the William S. Boyd School of Law about the state of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer Civil Rights in Nevada. **Dr. Charusheela** participated in a panel on Multi-cultural curriculum transformation focused on incorporating Asian/Pacific Islander and Asian/Pacific Islander American perspectives in the curriculum. She also gave the introductory remarks for the Asian Pacific Islander American heritage month event, UPRoar, and gave the benediction for UNLV's first ever celebration of its API graduates. **Dr. Danielle Roth-Johnson** acted as Guest Co-Editor of a special issue on non-communicable diseases for *Global Health Governance: The Scholarly Journal for the New Health Security Paradigm*. These are just samples of how Women's Studies faculty have been active in the community – check out **Dr. Helmbold's** unpublished letter to the Editor below for another example of our engagement in the community!

Women's Studies students remain active and engaged as well! Graduate Certificate alumnae **Sandy Peterson** and **Amy Sandler** presented their graduate capstone research at the British Graduate Shakespeare Conference at Stratford-on-Avon and the National Women's Studies Association respectively. Graduate students **Crystal Jackson** and **Suzanne Becker** presented their research (with Dr. Charusheela) on sex-trafficking and the trafficking victims protection act to the Women's Research Institute of Nevada and at the International Association for Feminist Economics. Women's Studies Major **Xuanito (Juan Carlos Espinoza Cuellar)** had his poetry selected for publication in a variety of venues including *Mari-posas; An Anthology of Queer Latino Poetry* (Floricanto Press), *ArteLnativa* (Casa de la Cultura Hispanoamericana CAXCULTHI) and *Vagus Nerve*. Women's Studies students **Irina Barrera**, **Joanna Nunez**, **Xuanito Espinoza Cuellar**, and research assistant **Jose Manuel Santillana**, (members of the United Coalition for Immigrant Rights [UCIR], a student and community organization), successfully organized an Immigration "Know Your Rights" Forum, a Queer Immigration Forum, and a city-wide march for immigrant rights in Las Vegas on May 1st this spring. Plus, two new groups have got off the ground this year: **The Vagina Warriors** and **Students United for Reproductive Justice (SURJ)** – stop by our offices if you want to find out more about them!

Unpublished letter to the editor of the San Francisco Chronicle

By Dr. Lois Helmbold

With the inauguration of President Obama, journalists rushed to make comparisons with the New Deal. Neither they nor the experts (including my former colleagues and professors) recalled the gendered, raced, and classed aspects of the New Deal, in their praise for public works projects which created jobs for the unemployed.

We need analyses which are explicitly race, gender, and class conscious. New Deal programs were neither race-neutral nor gender-neutral, and they maintained institutionalized racism and sexism.

FDR, a politician, was unwilling to alienate southern white

Democrats. All labor legislation, from minimum wages and maximum hours to the Social Security Act, excluded two occupational groups which accounted for the majority of Black, Mexican, and Asian workers: agriculture and domestic work. Virtually all relief programs targeted the "head" of the household, based on erroneous assumptions of only male breadwinners and of family sharing. Jobs programs were segregated by race and gender. Programs for women overwhelmingly involved stereotyped domestic and sewing jobs. Housing programs created redlining to exclude neighborhoods of color and mixed neighborhoods. Discrimination was blatant prior to 1960s civil rights activism and legislation.

Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins' conclusion, that the New Deal "took the edge off human misery" is accurate, but it helped white, male-headed families much more than people of color, women, and people living outside families.

Congratulations Are in Order!

Congratulations to **Dr. Anita Revilla** for winning the **College of Liberal Arts William Morris Award for Excellence in Teaching** — M.E.Ch.A.'s 1st Annual Banquet was given in her honor as well! Kudos to **Dr. Lynn Comella** for getting a much coveted **College of Liberal Arts 2008 Summer Research Stipend**, and to **Dr. S. Charusheela**, who just won elections to serve on the **Executive Board of the Cultural Studies Association** and as the next **Editor of Rethinking Marxism!**

Women's Studies Graduate Certificate student **Crystal Jackson** won the coveted **Regents' Scholar Award** (award for best graduate student in the entire NSHE system!) and a **GREAT (Graduate Research Training) Assistantship** from the Graduate School — congratulations Crystal! Women's Studies Graduate Certificate Alumna **Sandy Peterson** has had her paper accepted for publication in an anthology to be published by Cambridge Scholars Press and been admitted to the Ph.D. program in Theater at University of Wisconsin Madison. Women's Studies Major **Xuanito (Juan Carlos Espinoza Cuellar)** had his po-

etry selected for publication in a variety of venues including *Mari-posas; An Anthology of Queer Latino Poetry* (Florincanto Press), *ArteLnativa* (Casa de la Cultura Hispanoamericana CAX-CULTHI) and *Vagus Nerve*. **Marisa Christensen, Melinda Guillen, and Jasmine Herbert** have all been accepted to graduate school (at UCLA, Univ. of Southern California, and University of Tennessee, Knoxville respectively — congrats Sandy, Xuanito, Marisa, Melinda, and Jasmine! Congratulations as well to our **2009 Audre Lorde Award** winners, **Katie Eubanks** and **Destiny Farr**. Destiny Farr was also nominated for the University-wide **Outstanding Student Leader** and **Outstanding Scholar Leader** Rebel Awards!

Women's Studies 2008- 2009 graduates include majors **Regina Esquivel, Marisa Christensen, Cam-Tu Dang, and Melinda Guillen**, as well as minor **Jasmine Herbert**. We would also like to congratulate **Amy Sandler** and **Zahra Buttari**, who completed the Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies. The Annual Women's Studies Graduation celebration was held on April 30, 2009.

The UNLV 2009 Vagina Monologues Production



The Vagina Warriors

By *Karoline Khamis*

The UNLV V-Day benefit production of The Vagina Monologues raised money for the Family and Child Treatment of Southern Nevada and the Jean Nidetch Women's Center. 450 people attended the evening performance where local agencies Planned Parenthood, Safe House, The Rape Crisis Center, as well as UNLV Spectrum and The UNLV Vagina Warriors, set up in the lobby of Artemus Ham Hall for an information fair.

UNLV has celebrated V-Day and produced The Vagina Mono-

logues since 2002, and it serves as a catalyst for discussion about gender violence, especially against women and girls. Nevada is fourth in the nation for sexual assault, and FIRST for domestic violence related homicides, so initiating this discussion and decreasing violence has been a mission for the women on campus for quite some time. If you would like to learn more about The Vagina Monologues or The Vagina Warriors, go to www.vday.org or <http://getinvolved.unlv.edu/>.

Prostitution Law Enforcement: Protection or Expensive Misogyny?

Guest Comment by *Susan Embury-Lopez*

The Sunday, February 15th issue of the Las Vegas Review Journal featured the photographs of 22 women on its front page with the headline, "Working Girls- Las Vegas' 50 Most Prolific Prostitutes." Just 9 days later, 67 adults had been arrested in Las Vegas in a nation-wide sweep by local authorities and the FBI in 29 cities called "Operation Cross Country III," meant to target child prostitution.

In a sting for OCC III in Boston, a woman reported to the Boston Globe that she and her mother saw 17 FBI agents and police "struggling to arrest two kicking and screaming young women." The woman added that "one of the women screamed at the top of her lungs, then rolled on the floor hyperventilating." That particular operation resulted in the arrest of 5 women, and no children or pimps.

Consenting adult women earning a living with sex work are hardly a danger to anyone, while law enforcement's obsession with arresting them is a danger to society. According to a 1987 study, the average prostitution arrest nationwide cost about \$2000. Adjusted for inflation, today that equals about \$3605 per arrest. The total number of arrests in all three Operations Cross Country was 1439, which means that local law enforce-

ment collectively spent about \$5,187,595.00 arresting prostitutes, not including federal and FBI costs. According to the Review Journal, there were over 5000 strip arrests last year alone. So Las Vegas tax payers spent \$18,025,000.00 arresting consenting adult sex workers, in one small section of Las Vegas. Meanwhile, in 2007, there were 13,641 reported violent crimes in Las Vegas, yet only 5595 arrests were made statewide. There were 58,897 property crimes reported in Las Vegas, and only 15,606 arrests statewide.

Juxtapose the intensity with which the police pursue prostitutes with the criminally ambivalent pace at which they pursue prostitutes' murderers, and the misogyny begins to show. Since 2004, several women missing from Albuquerque, New Mexico were presumed to be the victims of a serial killer. Now they are uncovering the remains of 13 of those women, and no killer has been found. According to the comments on one article, the Albuquerque police department had only *one* detective assigned to this case. How many detectives have been assigned to the stings for Operations Cross Country I, II, and III?

Prostitution laws are expensive and misogynistic laws, punishing (mostly) women for engaging in an activity for profit which would be completely legal if they didn't charge. The laws against prostitution benefit nobody, but their elimination would save hundreds of lives and millions of dollars. Perhaps it is time to explore the New Zealand decriminalization model.

Feminist Praxis—Spring 2009

Praxis Students

By Dr. Lynn Comella

Students enrolled in the Women's Studies Capstone course, Feminist Praxis, presented their research findings at a public forum on April 28th to an audience comprised of women's studies faculty, students, family, and friends. These presentations were the culmination of long hours spent conducting interviews, poring over historical documents, and generating surveys. Students gained experience analyzing primary data and learned how to turn rough drafts into polished final papers with an analytically sound argument. As the abstracts below suggest, these projects reflect a wide range of interests, theoretical frameworks, and methodological approaches. What they share, however, is a commitment to feminist research and inquiry.

More Than a Makeover: The Cultivation of the Gendered Consumer Citizen on Reality Lifestyle Television

Katie Eubanks

This research project investigates the technologies of instruction used in the cultivation of the gendered consumer citizen through the popular television shows *What Not to Wear* and *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. These shows exist in the context of ever-popular reality television programming and the genre of lifestyle television, where consumption practices are presented as a form of self-improvement. This research utilizes textual and discourse analysis in order to examine the following question: As technologies of instruction in modern capitalist society, how do these television shows construct ideas about race, class and gender through the cultivation of a particular kind of citizen consumer? An intersectional feminist analysis of these two shows explores how discourses of race, class and gender are used to mold individuals into productive consumer citizens. I analyzed ten episodes of each show in order to uncover patterns, similarities, and differences in the technologies of instruction used by each show. I use neoliberalism as a theoretical framework to understand how consumption is presented to viewers as a form of individual responsibility and a prerequisite for productive citizenship. I argue that these shows create ideals and standards for citizenship that are highly racialized, classed and gendered.

JotActivista! When Margins Intersect:

Resisting Multiple Oppressions through Intersectional Analysis

Xuan Carlos Espinoza Cuellar

SaLGA began in 2002 as a Gay-Straight alliance founded by a group of ESL Latina/o queer and non queer immigrant students as a response to the hostility they faced on a daily basis. In 2003 and 2004 the organization began growing in membership and consciousness. SaLGA membership began advocating not only for queer issues but also for immigrant and minority rights. My research maps, documents and analyzes the Queer/Xueer Latin@/Chican@ Im/migrant organizing and legacy of SaLGA, the first organization of its kind in the state of Nevada. Because of the nature of this group, it is crucial to explore the intersectionalities amongst the activisms, identities and oppressions of former SaLGA members in order to better understand queer immigrant mobilization and its legacy. My research aims to provide broader perspectives when it comes to organizing for social change, understanding the hybridity of the Queer Latina/o experience, and documenting the importance of sociopolitical coa-

lition building while resisting multiple forms of oppression. These explorations shed light on the diverse pedagogical methods used by members in consciousness raising and the constant negotiation of identity politics. From a historical perspective, SaLGA shows how issues of immigrant rights and queerness can intertwine.

"If You're Light, You're Alright": The Politics of Race and Colorism Among African American Women

Jasmine Herbert

This research project documents the experiences of African American women on the topics of skin color and race. *Colorism* – the discriminatory treatment of individuals within the same racial group based on skin tone – is the primary theoretical framework I use to analyze the experiences of the women in my study. I explore whether race and skin color affects interpersonal relationships among African American women, and whether there are generational differences in how African American women talk about these experiences. I conducted oral histories with six African American women and organized a roundtable discussion with six additional women in order to better understand how race and colorism impacts women's lives and their relationships with other African American women. My research shows that colorism remains a prevalent issue within the African American community and plays a huge part in the lives of women, especially in regard to questions of "ethnic authenticity."

Las Vegas Womyn: Redefining Female Sexuality

Amanda Rida

My research examines the ways in which young womyn negotiate their sexuality in Las Vegas, with a specific focus on masturbation. I conducted interviews and developed a survey in order to examine how women, both self-identified feminists and non-feminists, talked about their sexual experiences. All of the womyn I spoke with reside in Las Vegas and range from ages 21-25. This research is important because female sexuality is often generalized and lumped together. Because of this essentialized view of female sexuality, I feel that interviews are the best way to get at and value womyn's voices and sexual histories. In addition, examining female sexuality in the context of Las Vegas is significant due to the hyper-sexualized environment of the city, which greatly influences how womyn understand and negotiate their sexuality.

An Academic Revolution: The Herstory of the UNLV Women's Studies Department

Destiny Farr

My research examines the history of UNLV's Women's Studies Department and compares it to the evolution of Women's Studies across the country. I examine how the program was developed, who developed it, and what obstacles were overcome in order to form what is now the department. While a few small projects have been done on the history of the UNLV Women's Studies Department, no substantial research has been conducted on the formation of the department and how its history relates to the broader history of Women's Studies in the US. I use oral histories, interviews, historical documents, and secondary research to explore this topic. My research findings suggest that much like other Women's Studies Departments, the UNLV Women's Studies Department has faced resistance from within the University and that the formation of the department was a long and often challenging one.

Graduate Student Conference Presentations

Gender and Nation in Shakespeare's Coriolanus

By Sandy Peterson

My paper began as an exploration of gender issues in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, the first draft of which I wrote for Dr. Evelyn Gajowski's *Gender and Interpretation* class in the English Department at UNLV. Over the next year I honed this paper into my Capstone Project for the Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies under the mentorship of Dr. S. Charusheela. The final draft, titled "Gender and Nation in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*" examines the relationship between gender and nation in the play.

The play explores issues of consolidating government, greater rights for the common people, and the decline of authoritarian institutions. All these contribute to the imagined community of *Coriolanus*. I outline the constructions of femininity and masculinity in the play, paying close attention to the construction of Rome as well. Then, by focusing primarily on the gendered interior space of the nation, transformations from fatality into continuity, and the figuring of the nation through the icon of the family, I unpack the relationship between the successful general Coriolanus, his mother Volumnia, and Rome. I draw parallels between Volumnia and Rome as mother figures, and explore the grand desideratum of immortal masculinity that is present in the play.

Having researched and written drafts from both Shakespeare Studies and Women's Studies, the work is truly interdisciplinary. I submitted an abstract of the capstone paper to the 2008 British Graduate Shakespeare Conference and to the Women and Theatre Program at the Associate of Theatre for Higher Education Conference. My paper was accepted for presentation at both conferences, in the summer of 2008.

In June I traveled to Stratford-Upon-Avon in the U.K. for the BritGrad Conference. It was a thrilling experience to meet scholars from all over the world. The version I presented at both conferences was book ended by examples of the relationship between



Sandy Peterson in England

gender and nation in the U.S. 2008 presidential election, which created quite an interest from participants from other countries. Using the current election as a framework from which to explain how nationalisms affect gender identity was something my European colleagues found fascinating for two reasons: they could use the theories presented in the paper and apply them to their own national leaders, and at the time there was great attention in the international press about the primary race between Senators Obama and Clinton. The paper was such a success that it will be published with eleven others from the conference, in an anthology by Cambridge Scholars Press.

Earning my Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies was an amazing experience and has better prepared me to continue in the world of academia.

Implications of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act

By Suzanne Becker and Crystal Jackson

Women's Studies Graduate Certificate students Crystal Jackson and Suzanne Becker, along with Dr. Charusheela, attended the International Association for Feminist Economics (IAFFE) sessions at the Allied Social Sciences (ASSA) conference, January 3-5, 2009 in San Francisco, California. IAFFE is an important international organization within the field of economics, and participates in the prestigious annual meetings of the Allied Social Sciences Association (ASSA). These meetings bring together scholars from around the world who work in areas related to economics. Suzanne and Crystal report on their research below:

The paper presented at IAFFE, titled "Bargaining and State Policy: The Implications of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) for Women Sex Workers," stems from a project first developed in Dr. Charusheela's *Gender, Development, and Globalization* class in the spring of 2008. Our subsequent research applies a feminist economic bargaining framework to explore women's social, political, and economic bargaining power under the TVPA. While feminist economists are accustomed to exploring bargaining in relation to global labor standards or legal frameworks on property rights and inheritance, the application of the bargaining framework to the study of sexuality is fairly new. Our research adds to this burgeoning literature by applying the bargaining framework to a contested

area of sexuality: sex in the market. Specifically, our research examines the relationship between prostitution, labor conditions and state policies under the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

Broadly, the TVPA describes the problem of increasing proliferation of trafficking. Founded on the principles of "prevention," "protection," and "prosecution," the initial bill attempts to define the terms of trafficking, recommends ways to assist victims, specifies penalties for traffickers, and lays out measures which impact anti-trafficking policy abroad. As an international tourist destination built on sin, vice, and sexuality, (and a federally identified trafficking hotspot) Las Vegas, Nevada provides a useful site to study the intended and unintended effects of anti-trafficking policy. When we examined the actual number of traffickers arrested, trafficking victims receiving local, state or federal assistance, and the number of T-visas issued to victims granting temporary stay in the country, we discovered that the goals of the TVPA are not being met. Non-citizen women and children in the sex industry are receiving very little aid, and very few are identified as trafficked compared to the numbers expected by the federal government.

By examining state laws and practices in Nevada, including the series of anti-trafficking bills passed by Congress, we can provide valuable economic, social and legal dimensions to broader discussions of trafficking policy in the U.S. We are honored to have the opportunity to collaborate with Dr. Charusheela in this area of research, and for the opportunity to discuss that research with a group of prominent, international scholars.

Contributions by Women's Studies Majors

Brown people know of walls

By *Xuan Carlos Espinoza-Cuellar*
"Xuanito"

Tall, wide, steep,
We know of walls
Because they separate us
From our loved ones
Our culture
Our legacy
And overall, our potential
We know about walls

And our children know of walls
That suffocate us
Since the breeze of opportunity can't reach
our faces
The wall of immigrophobia
The wall of sexism
The wall of institutionalized racism
The wall of homophobia
The wall of segregation
The wall of ignorance
The walls raised over our borders and our
educational institutions

A week before I started attending UNLV
I had a dream of high walls surrounding
the university
In my dream I could fly, sit on top of the
wall and contemplate

Thinking about Those who couldn't make
it over
Because not everybody was born with
wings
Since our mother's and father's flights
were brought to abrupt halts
After they lost their dreams, they could not
see beyond those walls

Remember?
1971,72, Latino student protests to in-
crease the number of Chicano faculty and
implement a chicano studies program
2004 Chicano studies minor established
2006, community activists and UNLV stu-
dents stage the largest demonstration in
the history of Nevada, they planned it
here, in this very building
2007, students protest the lack of spaces

for people of color not just in the new stu-
dent union but in the institution itself

And in 2009, the opening of our multicul-
tural center .
Let the walls barring access crumble

The glass ceilings fall
And the obstacles of doubt implode
Let us be free of the structures that mur-
der our spirits

We will be free
Like the rio grande used to be

Like the desert of Sonora
Free, as the voice of our ancestors
Free and beautiful
Libre como los vientos

Let this place be
A small rupture through the wall
Through which we can smuggle our
dreams

My Experience

By *Cam-Tu Dang*

My decision to major in Women's Studies was based completely on convenience. I felt as if I had taken too long to obtain my Bachelor's degree, and decided to pick the major I could complete the quickest. This decision turned out to be the best decision I could ever have made.

Upon entering into Women's Studies, I considered myself a feminist. I believed in equal rights, but that was about the depth of it. I was what one would call a "liberal feminist" – one who believes change needs to happen in order to create equality, but does not challenge the status quo of patriarchal society. Within the first few classes, this view would change and deepen drastically.

Women's Studies turned out to encompass some of the most challenging classes I have ever undertaken – this from someone who has been through Calculus II. First and foremost, I learned the most important and ever-changing lesson, which was the answer to the question: what is a feminist, and why am I a feminist? Furthermore, I learned the numerous theories of feminism along with how to identify them, both in theory and in practice.

However, Women's Studies would have been immensely lacking if I did not mention the most academically challenging class – Feminist Praxis. I have never stressed or struggled so much to complete a research project. Before this class, research projects had seemed to be nothing more but regurgitation of numerous sources. Thru this course I was able to learn how to research through different medias, how to incorporate different methods and theories, and how to critically analyze the information I find through a feminist perspective. While my research project is amateur compared to the scholarly work I was referencing, I have never been more proud of my work because it was one I was required to create, follow through on, and present to a group.

Perhaps the most personal and crucial lessons came during my last semester. Going back to the beginning, I picked the so-called quickest degree because I wanted to go on to law school faster. It was during my last semester that I studied what I will now hope to pursue later in my law career, which is Critical Race Feminism. Not only did this class help me identify a niche in social justice that I want to pursue, but it has also unearthed the intersectionality of gender, race, class, and sexuality and the subtle ways it can manifest and create legal issues within society that I had never even considered.

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Awards for Students: Women's Studies has set up a new fund: The Department of Women's Studies Award Fund -- all the monies donated to this fund are tax deductible charitable contributions, and the donations to this fund are reserved for funding student awards.

Contributions toward Speakers and Events: You can also make tax deductible charitable contributions to other aspects of WMST. Donations to our general fund help us bring in speakers and host events -- in the past, the money from this fund has helped us bring scholars like Cherrie Moraga to campus!

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