DUKE WOMEN'S STUDIES

Spring 2008 Newsletter

Director's Column

By Ranjana Khanna, Margaret Taylor Smith Director of Women's Studies at Duke

Director Ranjana Khanna

January 9, 2008 saw the centenary of the birth of Simone de Beauvoir. There were celebrations of her work held in Europe, and particularly in the city that was so important in the creation of the vibrant intellectual and political scene of which she was a part: Paris. Beauvoir's autobiographical writings *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, *The Prime of Life*, *The Force of Circumstance*, and *All Said and Done* paint lively portraits of the characters and issues that made up twentieth century Paris. The representation of the inter-war years, World War II, and the period following it through decolonization reveal a very situated yet worldly consciousness—a sense of the necessity of situated yet non-parochial responses to some of the major events of the twentieth century, and the crisis around the concept of subjectivity that went along with those events. She was resolute in her commitment to both political engagement and philosophical reflection, and the former could not be conceptualized without the latter.

Some of the celebrations revolved around the politics of translation and the international dissemination, in particular of *The Second Sex*. As Women's Studies affiliate Toril Moi has pointed out, the English translation of the text is particularly poor and fails to communicate the philosophical concepts examined. There was a new Japanese translation and an official Arabic translation in the 1990's. There are, in a sense, different aspects of the work that have come to light in different countries—some translations have emphasized the Hegelian background, some have been more rooted in the particular changes Beauvoir made to the philosophical work of Heidegger and Sartre, some seem to suggest she existed in a philosophical vacuum eschewing all masculine influence—a position she would not see as a useful strategy for feminism. In the English translation, we see the bourgeois liberal feminist emerge because the more radical side of her philosophical and political commitments is effectively erased in translation.

For a long time, this faulty English translation made more of an impact than the original French. Many intellectuals in her immediate circle criticized and belittled the feminist theoretical tome, defensively suggesting that she was out to make French men look ridiculous. Others criticized her, sometimes unfairly, for her approach to motherhood, which is in actuality more varied and complex than some of these criticisms might lead one to believe. The context—or perhaps more accurately put, the historical situation—in which Beauvoir wrote is of course extremely important in this regard: the postwar period of governmental promotion of the maternal in France and the illegality of abortion meant that the social, indeed legislative constraints in which motherhood existed became necessary to analyze. 1949, when *The Second Sex* was published, was a mere five years after French women got the vote. Rather than

Directors Column continued on page 12

Table of Contents

IN THIS ISSUE:

Director's Column 1

Students 2-7

Faculty 8

Events 9-13

Campus Report 14-15

The Women's Studies Program would like to congratulate our 2008 Graduates.

From left to right: Chante Black, Renita Woolford, Catherine Guo, Kim Burke, Chong-Min Fu, and Katie Skeehan (Wanisha Smith not pictured).

Graduation Information

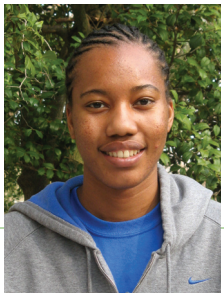
May 9	Women's Studies Commencement Celebration, Nelson Music Room, 7 pm
May 11	Duke University Commencement

SENIOR PERSPECTIVES:

Women's Studies Graduates Reflect on Their Time at Duke and Their Future

Chante Black

Women's Studies and Biological Anthropology & Anatomy, Biology Minor



For eleven years, I have been an athlete. For eight of those years, my understanding of what it meant to be a female athlete, in particular, was shaped by the media. Like many adolescent girls, I was unconsciously molding my image to appear picture perfect for the media's male constructed eyes. Although I loved and enjoyed playing sports, I was worried about getting too dirty or too sweaty, as it would affect my appearance. As I got older and my passion for basketball grew stronger, the impact of society's gaze began to bother me less, but it never went away entirely.

During my freshman year at Duke I pondered my future. I aspired to be so many things and, while many disciplines interested me, I had yet to uncover a true passion for any major. As I entered my second semester of my freshman campaign, I enrolled in a course taught by Donna Lisker called *Strong Men, Graceful Women: Participation and Representation in American Sports*. I learned that media coverage and career opportunities for female athletes are not equitable to their male counterparts. The class also raised the issue of how the media highlights the sexualized aspects of female athletes, not our talents. Donna Lisker inspired me to rethink what it meant to be both a woman and an athlete. During my sophomore year, I declared Women's Studies as one of my two majors.

I am an athlete and a woman, two entities that define different pieces of who I am. When Michael Jordan made a game changing play, the crowd cheered; his accomplishments were never qualified by remarking on his gender. As an athlete, I deserve to be awarded the same recognition and respect for my accomplishments. On the court, I will show emotions through my actions. If I want to scream, I shall do so, reminiscent of Rasheed Wallace. I will play basketball skillfully and passionately, and not worry whether my actions are lady-like. I will not adorn my ponytail with pink ribbons and curls to remind the world that I am a woman. I will not help the media divide women from men in athletics, because when I am on the court, all that matters is that I am a competitor.

While my focused interest remains on issues of gender and athletics, I am still consumed by the larger question of women's representation, or misrepresentation, in the media. As I enter my final semester at Duke, I live the lessons I have learned from the Women's Studies program. I am not a female athlete; I am a woman *and* an athlete. I will not qualify one part of myself by conjoining it with another. When someone speaks about me in comparison to my male counterparts, I want them to speak of my athletic prowess, not my gender. I know that females are not the weaker sex and it is time that women's achievements be claimed as their own, not dismissed through media comparisons of gender. A woman's accomplishments mean as much as any man's. I am glad and thankful that I am no longer bound to the media's ideology of femininity and its constant sexualization of women. I used to model myself on the images created through popular culture, but now I know I can be my own role model, and hopefully a model for others.

Kimberly Burke

Women's Studies, Study of Sexualities Certificate

As a high school student planning for my future, I knew of only a few academic tracts: pre-med, pre-law, and business. It never occurred to me that there were other options. Thus, I began my career at Duke in pre-med. While I completed science and math courses without enthusiasm or genuine effort, I looked forward to the elective classes about which I was more passionate. The first of these electives, a literature course in sexuality taught by Antonio Viego, offered a way to become more involved with Sexuality Studies and, by extension, Women's Studies. Where my goal of becoming a psychiatrist had seemed like a way to help women suffering from domestic abuse and sexual assault, pre-med was failing to address these concerns directly. By the end of my sophomore year, I faced the realization that medicine might not be the appropriate avenue to explore my most passionate academic interests. I officially became a Women's Studies major and Sexuality Studies Certificate candidate.

Women's Studies makes even the most basic assumptions debatable. All of my core classes emphasized a social constructionist view of gender and sexuality, the idea that a person's identity, or even their gender, does not have to be tied to their sex. Taking Anne Fausto-Sterling's argument that science plays as much a role in creating sexed bodies as biology, one can postulate that even the sex binary is a social construct. Social constructionism provides a language to critique the production of particular categories, but does not deny the very real effects the constructs have on people living within those categories, such as race, class, gender, and sexuality. This view proves an excellent political tool to challenge social hierarchies and claims of natural difference that are used to deny certain people rights and consign them to limited roles.

Upon becoming a major, I was welcomed into a community of students and professors who attacked issues that affected everyday social realities and the histories and theories behind those realities. Due to my minority position in this society, I know that these topics have a very relevant and tangible significance to the world we live in.

For example, I know that meritocracy is a myth: I attend Duke, while my sister struggles to raise her daughter, attend community college, and work full time night shifts. This is not because I am inherently smarter or that I have just worked harder. Rather, there are institutionalized inequities that permit some people to move up academically and financially and almost force others to fall through the cracks. Luck is what put me at Duke over my sister, not meritocracy. Thanks to Women's Studies, I now have the knowledge base and critical thinking skills to deal with that personally as well as make a difference politically.

Women's Studies has provided me with the historical knowledge and analytical tools to navigate the political and social world. I feel more apt to resist oppressive social structures because I know there is an alternate outlook. There is not an area of study outside of Women's Studies; even biological "fact" can serve a patriarchal agenda. I have developed a critical eye that will serve me in every aspect of my life. Women's Studies and Sexuality Studies have illuminated questions of race, gender, sexuality, and class and the intersectionality of all of those categories. Reality is not fixed and, through my major, I have acquired the ability to become a source of change.

Chong-Min Fu

Women's Studies, Biology and Sociology Minor

It is impossible for me to trace my academic interest in Women's Studies to a specific moment of origin. My current passion for Women's Studies arose from the confluence of countless factors and events throughout the course of my life and education. At the root of my desire to enter into the Women's Studies program was my ever growing dissatisfaction with and desire to change the socially-constructed, gender-specific roles prescribed to me and others. Dissatisfaction ultimately led to endless questions and questioning. In Duke's Women's Studies program, I found an academic home where I was always encouraged to ask such questions.

To major in Women's Studies was to commit myself to the interdisciplinary task of attempting to understand systems of power and knowledge production as they relate to gender and to other aspects of identity like race, class, and sexuality. The scope of Women's Studies, as I have experienced it, extends beyond simply the study of women. It also encompasses issues related to masculinity, intersectionality, and even species-ism. Regardless of the topic of study, the interdisciplinarity has taught me to engage critically with the world around me, to never be satisfied with things as they currently are, and to be open to new ways of thinking.

Women's Studies also provided me with a space in which I could strive to combine my personal interests in social inequality, public health, and gender. This was largely possible because of the uniqueness of the Women's Studies major and the discipline itself. The flexibility of the major allowed me to take many courses cross-listed in various departments like sociology, literature, and cultural anthropology. During my time at Duke, I have researched health disparities among lesbian women, the treatment of women's health issues in magazines, and the hidden histories and implications of the birth control movement, all from a broad range of inter-disciplinary course work.

As an entering first year student, I had every intention of applying to medical school and becoming a practicing physician. However, after much reflection, I am now convinced that my interests and passions would be better fulfilled elsewhere. Instead of practicing medicine, I hope to serve populations dealing with HIV/AIDS through social work, public health, or medical sociology. Not only does HIV/AIDS tend to affect already under-served populations, but the current epidemic also encapsulates several issues about which I am passionate: gender, sexuality, public health, and inequality. The work being done to help those living with HIV/AIDS exists at the intersection of my academic interests and would allow me to continue to merge these passions in meaningful and significant ways.

My time as a Women's Studies major has encouraged me to look for the ways in which people contest, resist, and rework dominant narratives and ways of thinking. How people first imagine and then create change was an important theme in many of my courses. All of these experiences through the Women's Studies program have led me to reevaluate the vehicle through which I hope to effect change. I am leaving the program with the sense that resistance is certainly not futile and that no system of power is completely impenetrable. I came to Duke hoping that change was possible and am walking away knowing that it is.

Catherine Guo

Women's Studies and Biology, Chemistry Minor

"If you can change your mind, you can change the world"
-- Joey Reimer.

As a Duke pre-frosh, I found myself browsing through ACES for hours on end, searching for courses that sounded intellectually and personally engaging. As if by chance, I made it to the end of the alphabet. Almost every class in Women's Studies sounded amazing, but my strict engineering curriculum did not allow room for many electives. In the fall of my sophomore year, I wrote a paper on how societal definitions of "femininity" can hinder women's progress for Kathy Rudy's *Gender and Everyday Life* class. As a result, she sent an email encouraging me to major in Women's Studies. I still retain some of the feelings I had when I read, "you are exactly the kind of student we want to bring into our program." The faculty's encouragement gave me the courage to double-major in Women's Studies and Biology, even though some people told me that "sitting around hating on men and refusing to shave won't get you a job."

Some people ask me how it is possible to reconcile my love of Biology with Women's Studies. Since I plan to become a physician

SENIOR PERSPECTIVES

in the future, I will be entering a field that is particularly tough on women, as the top tier of the medical field still remains largely male-dominated. However, this is precisely where my majors overlap, as I hope to raise gender awareness within the medical community through my work. Although most people would view science as gender-neutral, women and minority people are routinely left out of research studies and pharmaceuticals are usually designed for the male body. Women and minority populations need better representation in the medical research industry and I hope that my education will help me bring about that change.

In the realm of campus culture, it is not hard for me to find areas of discrimination and oppression at Duke. From "effortless perfection" to the hookup culture to the endless slander of "slut" and "whore" on juicycampus.com, Duke is no easy place for women. And yet, it is obvious that I have flourished here, in part because of the tools Women's Studies has given me. When I ask myself what kind of woman I want to be, the answer is an active one, one who fights against oppression. For this reason, I devote my time to being President of Healthy Devils, a peer education group that is responsible for Dating Violence Awareness week, Sexual Assault Prevention week, and the Breast Casting Workshop. My experience points to just how integral Women's Studies is to the university, and to the university's culture.

Now I am finishing up the best four years of my life at one of the nation's best universities. For a girl from small-town Kansas, Duke has certainly never been boring. It has given me the intellectual stimulation, both inside and outside of the classroom, that I desired. It excites me so much to see how far I have come. Now that Women's Studies has given me the tools to change not only myself, but also to broaden the minds of others, I feel confident that I can enact change in our world.

Katie Skeehan

Women's Studies and Public Policy Studies, Economics Minor

In the fourth grade, we had to list on a piece of paper two things in which we believed. Lots of kids wrote "love" or "family" or "God" or for some who really did not want to grow up, "Santa Claus." Right before graduating from junior high and going on to high school, we got that piece of paper back. I had listed "women's rights" and "animal rights."

Besides indicating that I was already a bleeding liberal at the worldly age of 9, that piece of paper demonstrates just how long I have been concerned with some of the issues I have dealt with for the past four years. By the end of eighth grade when I saw that list again, I had been beaten down by the social hell that is junior high. In an effort to be somewhat "cooler," I had allowed my convictions to wane. In high school and for the first year of college, I dated a guy who was somewhat chauvinistic and repeatedly caused me to question my intelligence. Suffice it to say that, when we finally broke up halfway through my freshman year, my confidence was at an all-time low. It was around this time that Women's Studies came into my life and re-awakened the long-silenced beliefs of my childhood.

Majoring in WST has meant an effort to reclaim the strong, healthy convictions I once held as a kid. Here was a major at a top ten school that legitimized everything in which I had once believed! I combined my WST major with another major in Public Policy Studies and a minor in Economics, three disciplines so wonderfully compliment one another; I cannot think of one without immediately drawing on my knowledge of the others. I have come to see my double major and minor as a way to ensure that a feminist perspective was represented in disciplines that hold great power to shape social relationships.

Of course, throughout my time here at Duke, I have been all too aware of the schism between the comfort and safety of the classroom and the social aspects of campus culture. How *does* one go about balancing everything one learns as a WST major with the unfortunate reality that the vast majority of this campus simply does not know enough to care? How do I deal with those people who believe that gender really is just an outward expression of biology, that Lara Croft is just an action figure, or that women are not really expected to work a second shift? At this point it is second nature to me that gender and even biology are social constructions, but short of launching into a lecture to a fraternity brother at a party after he makes some derogatory comment, how do I convey four years of study into something others can easily understand?

Shadee Malaklou said in her senior perspective in the Women's Studies Spring 2007 Newsletter: "To major in Women's Studies is to forfeit the popular belief that ignorance is bliss, because once invested in the field, it is hard to see anything as simple." Her statement resonated with me as an elegant expression of the exact turmoil with which I have often struggled. I have regained the conviction of my adolescence, building upon that childhood idealism with the real world tools and the knowledge provided by Women's Studies. I now face the struggle of taking those convictions back out into the world. I feel confident that I have at least given myself the best possible foundation by majoring in Women's Studies. And even if I fall, it is one hell of a safety net.

Wanisha Smith

Women's Studies

To be honest, when I came to Duke University as a freshman, I was completely sure that I was going to major in Sports Marketing. If I had done my research before hand, I would have known that Duke has never had such major. So I began taking a variety of courses to find a major that interested me. Luckily for me, there was a Women's Studies class titled *Gender Issues in Sports Media* taught by Tara Kachgal. It was extremely interesting because, although I play varsity basketball here at Duke, I never paid attention to how women were portrayed in the media or athletic coverage. This class helped me understand a great deal about my own experience as a woman in sports, given the contradiction between norms of femininity and the necessary aggression and physicality of excelling in a sport. *Gender Issues in Sports Media* was thus a turning point for me. After taking it, I decided that I wanted to major in Women's Studies. I was interested in learning more about the history of women, our struggles to be where we are today, and our future.

Another Women's Studies course that was particularly important to me was *Politics of African American Womanhood*, taught by Chanequa Walker-Barnes. This class delved into the experiences of African American women, their diversity, and my own ethnic background. When I entered the class for the first time, I was surprised to see a room full of African American students; I am used to being in the minority here at Duke. This class in particular helped me become more aware of where the stereotypes of the Jezebel, Mammy, and Sapphire had come from and how they continue to operate in American culture today.

The world is full of issues that deal with gender and I feel that the courses that I have taken have helped me gain insight into the conflicts and constructs faced by contemporary women. Women's Studies touches on subjects that women deal with on a daily basis such as inequality in the workforce, gender stereotypes, and women's rights. Although I have learned a great deal about women and their place in society, I know there is still more to learn and I am grateful that Women's Studies has given me the tools to continue exploring after I leave Duke. I hope I will be able to share and empower future female athletes with the knowledge that I have learned through Duke University's Women's Studies program.

Renita Woolford

Women's Studies, Psychology Minor

Entering Duke as an eager freshman, I did not know what to expect. As a pre-med student, my main priority was to take the classes necessary to become a physician and follow the "appropriate" path to get my goal. Thus, I immediately jumped into a science-based curriculum, leaving me little opportunity to experience classes in other disciplines. Yet, my freshmen seminar changed not only my academic curriculum, but also my view on life. I chose to take Jean O'Barr's seminar *Women Imagine Change*. I had never taken a Women's Studies course before, but women's health was a subject that had special interest to me. Not only was the course interesting, but it influenced the rest of my academic career. After this experience, I decided to major in Women's Studies.

Eager for knowledge, I took a course called *Gender and Everyday Life*. As the introduction to the major, this course set the tone for the rest of the Women's Studies curriculum. In this course, I saw how constructions of gender impacted our entire society and that one cannot talk about issues of gender, sexuality, or even race without looking at dominant ideology. Women's Studies also never required me to give up on my interest in medicine and policy studies, as the first elective I took was *Feminist Reproductive Ethics and Genetics* with Kathy Rudy. Specifically looking at the social and policy-related consequences of reproductive technologies, this course allowed me to learn about the social impact of health policies and the ways in which dominant racial and gender ideologies influence policy decisions.

Two of the most important aspects of this major are how it relates women's studies issues to both politics and campus culture. Women's Studies provides a language for us to foster discussion about the relation we have to our world and each other. In addition, one common theme I have taken away from the Women's Studies curriculum is *change*. Women's Studies fosters an atmosphere of possibility, in which individuals have the potential to influence their community through analysis of the world around them. By providing students with the skills to see critically, I feel empowered to call out injustice and become an agent of change. In analyzing many vital questions, the Women's Studies major creates an atmosphere in which we can question the status quo and challenge societal conventions. As I prepare for graduation, I still plan to pursue my career as a practicing physician, but I have decided to take time off to participate in the fight against racial and gender disparities. This major has allowed me to view the world with open eyes and I hope to inspire others to open their eyes to the possibility of change as well.

When the 'Black Horror' Met Germania

By Willeke Sandler, History.

My attendance and participation in the German Studies Association annual conference in San Diego, on October 4-7, 2007 was valuable both professionally and intellectually. This conference afforded me the opportunity to meet fellow graduate students and faculty from around the country and abroad who work on the question of German colonialism, as well as race, gender, and sexuality in German history, literature, and culture. These contacts, more difficult to establish otherwise, will allow me to keep abreast of new research done in my field. More immediately, the response and questions directed to my presentation ("When the 'Black Horror' Met Germania: Gender, Race and Colonialism in German Satirical Cartoons of the Rhineland Occupation, 1920-1923") and the discussion on visuality and German colonialism during the panel as a whole, stimulated my thinking about how to proceed with this research and how it may fit into a larger project on the public and visual culture of colonialism in Weimar and Nazi Germany.

My paper examined cartoons published between 1920 and 1923 in the German satirical journals *Simplicissimus* and *Kladderadatsch* with representations of the African colonial soldiers used in the French occupation of the Rhineland. These cartoons were part of a public discourse in Germany in which the French use of non-European occupation troops epitomized Germany's national humiliation of defeat and occupation, expressed in gendered terms through tales of rape. Coinciding with, and exaggerated by, the loss of the German colonies, these cartoons also decried the reversal of colonial dominance and sexual privilege, and the destabilization of national and racial hierarchies. My analysis of these cartoons involved, methodologically, both establishing their historical context and a close reading of the images. As the only panel in the German colonialism series that focused on visuality, our panel included German studies, literature, and art history scholars and so provided a variety of disciplinary perspectives on the visual culture of colonialism.

By, For and About: The "Real" Problem with the Feminist Film Movement

January 28, 2008 Graduate Scholars Colloquium

By Shilyh Warren, Literature.

Writing a dissertation is an arduous process for all of us. It means struggling to focus years of disparate course work and independent research into a viable dissertation project. It means conjuring a structure for a web of themes, topics, and theories that come together in unpredictable and untamed ways in your head. It can also mean setting yourself to make an "original" and "meaningful" intervention regarding a burning "theoretical problem" in a discipline or field of thought that has been developing over the past few centuries, quite remarkably despite your absence. And it means doing most of this in isolation, for hours a day, for years at a time. I have yet to meet someone for whom this is a dreamy way to live.

And yet, there are times when writing a dissertation seems like the best job around and a privileged means of existing. After all, the dissertation might bring together some of your best ideas, your honed skills, and your love for a particular topic, book, group of people, or set of theories. In the best case, when you have a dissertation idea or chapter to share with colleagues and advisors, you create a way to generate instances of intellectual community.

The Women's Studies Graduate Scholars Colloquium has always provided that opportunity for graduate students across the disciplines. I have been attending sessions since my first year on topics ranging from transnational feminism to forced sterilization. In recent years, as I cultivated the seed of my own dissertation, I relished the opportunity to attend colloquiums where fellow grad students presented chapters from their dissertations in progress. And finally, I was honored when I was asked to present the first chapter of my dissertation on feminist film theory and the neglect of women's documentaries from the seventies.

In the colloquium, I showed a brief and graphic birth scene from *Joyce at 34* (1971), one of the films that inspired my dissertation. Professor Jonna Eagle responded with acumen to my chapter, citing ways that my critique of feminist film theory could be pushed to make more precise demands and unsettle established ways of thinking in the field. And I'm grateful to all of my friends and colleagues who read the chapter carefully and provided profound responses about both the shortcomings of the work as well as its strengths. Following the colloquium session I was able conceive of concrete ways to tackle some of the theoretical problems that confounded me while I was writing in isolation. And even better, I did this with a renewed sense of purpose and confidence in my chapter's strengths. My appreciation goes out to all of you who participated and in particular to Fiona, Leah, Kathi, Jonna, and Erin without whom it wouldn't have happened.

The Future of Feminist Theory Conference at Rutgers University

Leah Allen, Literature, Women's Studies Certificate

In 2007 I had the privilege of attending two major feminist theory events. In the spring, I participated in the Feminist Theory Workshop here at Duke. Then, with the support of the Program in Women's Studies at Duke, in the fall I attended The Future of Feminist Theory conference at Rutgers University. While each event was productive and challenging in its own way, attending both gave me the striking opportunity to see the unfolding of changes in contemporary feminist theory. Seeing the actual practice of feminist theory in this framework of development proved to be invaluable when attending the Rutgers conference since it revolved around the problem of time and the very notion of development in feminist theory.

All the presenters at the Rutgers conference suggested not only new paradigms for feminist theory's future but also problematized the very idea of 'future' in feminism. Attending this conference therefore led me to rethink my understanding of progress in relation to feminist theory, a process made that much easier given that I was already thinking about development as a result of my earlier participation in the Duke Feminist Theory Workshop.

Fiona Barnett, Literature, Women's Studies Certificate

My connection with Women's Studies at Duke has paralleled an interesting moment in Women's Studies more broadly in the academic setting. Even though the Rutgers conference took place in late 2007, my response to it can be directly traced back to a conference I attended in 2004, Back to the Future: Generations of Feminism. Attending that conference was a major turning point in my thinking, especially in terms of redefining the metaphors and narratives we use to describe social movements and intellectual changes. Judith Halberstam's talk on the concept of 'strategically forgetting' has been particularly influential for me, as it provided a way out of the heteronormative assumptions of generational lineages that are founded on passing knowledge down from 'elders' to 'young' members of a community, family, or social movement. This concept of 'strategically forgetting' to abide by such institutional, structural, and cultural formations was useful because it managed to be productive without being reduced to being defined as merely 'counter'—and more importantly, it used affective humor as a effective strategy and as community response.

Some of the central questions raised at that conference on the generations of feminist theory were articulated by Elizabeth Grosz again at the Feminist Theory Workshop here at Duke in 2007 and the Future of Feminist Theory conference at Rutgers. Professor Grosz outlined that feminist theory can be understood as a project founded on an opening and humbling to possibility, rather than affirming an already-understood hypothesis or stance. Her proposals for the future of feminist theory claims the past as instrumental and influential, but not indicative of the future possibilities. By inviting feminist theory to address questions of the real, the natural and scientific world, sexual difference in the inhuman worlds, and a provocation to question the very categories of certainty, affirmation, and determinacy, Grosz wants to bracket current assumptions within academic formulations in feminist thought and practice. By promoting a project based on provocations to think otherwise, to expand and question rather than affirming or confirming, and by moving outward into undefined worlds and networks rather than solely inward, her project of the future of feminist theories has been at the core of many of the questions and strategies in my own research and dissertation project. Both Judith Halberstam and Elizabeth Grosz have underscored that this process of 'forgetting' and 'futuring' is productive: that very process of *imagining otherwise* is a feminist project, and one that has formed the backbone of my own dissertation research. Thank you to Women's Studies and its generous supporters for continuing to support graduate student work at Duke.

Joy Cranshaw, English (UNC-CH), Women's Studies Certificate

I had been fascinated by the way that community was played out in feminist and queer theory at Duke's Feminist Theory Workshop, where I noticed the collective and ostensibly (deceptively?) universal responses to the various keynote lectures. At Rutgers, this illusion of unity fell away, and there were many recurring debates and even some outright conflict. The point of highest tension came during the final plenary, when the keynote speakers had an opportunity to respond directly to one another. The differences between scholars, even those within the same department, became very clear.

On the other hand, these debates contributed to the greatest benefit I took from the experience: the time that I spent with Robyn Wiegman and with the other students in attendance, including several from Duke that I previously knew by name but little else. As a result of our conversations in response to conference events—including the closing plenary—I left with new ideas and questions, reading lists, Duke course and professor suggestions, and some new friends and colleagues. I look forward to continuing these relationships and conversations, thanks to the department's support of graduate students from beyond the Duke community.

Amalle Dublon, Literature, Women's Studies Certificate

The Feminist Theory Workshop held at Duke last spring and the Future of Feminist Theory conference at Rutgers were linked, both thematically and through talks at both events by Robyn Wiegman and Rutgers' Elizabeth Grosz. For those of us able to attend both conferences, these continuities provided reference points and the rare opportunity to develop our thought together over a longer period of time. Moreover, the intensity and intimate scale of the Rutgers conference meant that by the end of the weekend, conference-goers from a wide range of disciplines developed something of a shared map and vocabulary, one which marked points of dissent as well as commonality. Thus stirring and productive disagreements were able to emerge in the closing plenary. Among the many other highlights of the weekend were a fascinating paper on the concept of land by Rutgers graduate panelist Stephanie Clare and a rousing early-morning presentation on Nietzschean feminism by Ellen Mortensen of the University of Bergen, Norway.

Joy Cranshaw, Leah Allen, and Fiona Barnett at the Future of Feminist Theory Conference.

Faculty Notes:

Karla Holloway is a spring 2008 fellow at the Du Bois Institute at Harvard University. Her project for the fellowship semester is her book, *Private Bodies/Public Texts: Locating (a) Narrative Bioethics*. Her project illustrates how literature's creative engagements with difference and privacy mediate the subjects in bioethics (reproduction, clinical trials, death and dying, and genomics) that have led to significant debates in public forums and the law.

Mary McClintock Fulkerson was awarded a grant from Duke's Josiah Charles Trent Memorial Foundation to work on the interplay of religious faith and health care in responding to victims of sexual violence and abuse, along with co-investigator Liz Stern. They gave a conference entitled Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault: Providing Competent Medical & Spiritual Care on April 12, 2008.

Ranjana Khanna was delighted this term to be promoted to the rank of Full Professor. Her new book, *Algeria Cuts: Women and Representation 1830 to the Present*, was published by Stanford University Press. She greatly enjoyed her first year directing the program and wants to thank the staff and faculty profusely for all the help they have given her.

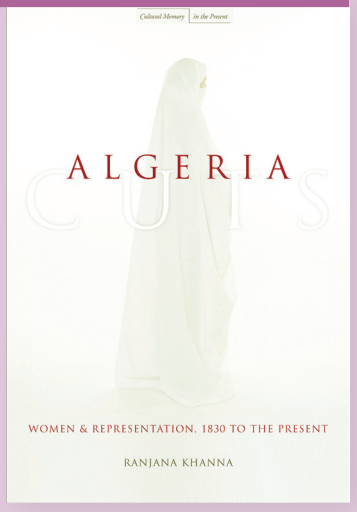
Martha Reeves conducted a workshop for Deloitte Consulting about the importance of networking and mentoring for women. Dr. Reeves also published an article entitled "Queen of the Hill: Creative Destruction and the Emergence of Women's Leadership" that will be forthcoming in *Leadership Quarterly*. Dr. Reeves, Dr. Leachman (economics), and Shana Starobin, a public policy graduate student, recently had a grant funded through DukeEngage to send ten students to Bangladesh to work with BRAC, an international micro-financing firm that supports women entrepreneurs.

Kathy Rudy continues to make great headway at drawing connections between animal advocacy and feminism. She is part of the successful and ongoing Eco-Feminist series sponsored by Women's Studies, and is nearing completion of her book on animal advocacy. Rudy participated in the Focus the Nation Day at Duke, a national endeavor to engage college students on issues related to global warming; it was a great success. This summer, inspired by the writings of renowned author Barbara Kingsolver (who will deliver the graduation address for the University in May), Kathy Rudy will teach a new course to in the Liberal Studies program entitled Culture and Agriculture. The course will address the global food industry along with various modes of resistance to the crises it is producing.

Rebecca Stein will be publishing a new book this spring, entitled *Itineraries in Conflict: Israelis, Palestinians, and the Political Lives of Tourism*, (Duke University Press). This book studies the Israeli/Palestinian conflict through the lens of everyday tourist practices and discourses. It focuses on Israeli tourist culture of the 1990s and considers how popular itineraries, consumptive practices, and tourist imaginations articulated with the concurrent Middle East Peace Process, the ongoing military occupation of Palestinian territories, and the history of Palestinian dispossession.

Robyn Wiegman has returned from fall leave, in Seattle, during which she completed "Outside American Studies: On the Unhappy Pursuits of Non-Complicity" for the Italian journal *Rivista di Studi Americani*. She is currently teaching the senior seminar, on the topic of gender and globalization, and the graduate core course, Foundations in Feminist Theory. Recent publications include essays in GLQ and Social Text. In February she keynoted at the Monash University conference The Progress of Gender.

Book Review:



Algeria Cuts: Women & Representation, 1830 to the Present, by Ranjana Khanna

—Review by Madhumita Lahiri, English, Women's Studies Certificate

In the 1960s and 1970s, after a prolonged and painful war of independence (1954-62), Algeria was becoming an avant-garde Third World nation, committed to valuing its men and women alike. In the 1980s, however, Algeria shifted towards a curtailment of women's rights and women's access to public space, and by the 1990s, the country was in a particularly 'virile war'--one that attacked women through violence and singled out women journalists and feminists for criticism.

How are we to grapple with the erasure of women from a postcolonial project that once looked so promising? Ranjana Khanna's latest book, *Algeria Cuts: Women & Representation, 1830 to the Present*, takes on this very question, putting deconstruction to work in the pursuit of feminist justice. Khanna's book tackles a variety of media to show how the figures of woman manifest as supplements to the narrative of a national discourse that has marginalized them, and how these supplements cut through the frame of this virile discourse, offering up reading possibilities for the pursuit of justice.

The Introduction to the book takes on the 2001 judgment of a French court awarding damages to Mohamed Garne, whose mother Kheira was systematically raped and beaten by thirty to forty French soldiers during the Algerian war of independence. The French court found that Garne had been directly harmed and awarded him reparations, and yet his mother, whose brutal abuse formed the cornerstone of the trial,

In Print: A Celebration of Recent Publications by Duke Professors on Gender-Related Topics

by Kinohi Nishikawa, Literature, Women's Studies Certificate

On January 18, 2008, the Women's Studies Program hosted the first annual "In Print: A Celebration of Recent Publications by Duke Professors on Gender-Related Topics." The event featured Women's Studies faculty members and affiliates reading brief selections from their work that had been published over the past year. The complete list of gender-related publications featured an impressive eighteen works by sixteen professors from the humanities, social sciences, and Divinity School, ranging from full length books to journal articles to edited collections.

Anne Allison read from *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination* (Univ. of California Press) and explained how her ethnography shed light on Japan's commodification of "play" as a national/natural resource. Mary McClintock Fulkerson shared her own ethnographic work from *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church* (Oxford University Press), a study of racial politics and disability in the United Methodist Church.

Two scholars' recent books focused on cultural politics in the Middle East. miriam cooke addressed the Syrian government's attempts to stifle intellectual freedom and dissent in the name of national security in *Dissident Syria: Making Oppositional Arts Official* (Duke Univ. Press). Negar Mottahedeh read from her book *Representing the Unpresentable: Historical Images of National Reform from the Qajars to the Islamic Republic of Iran* (Syracuse Univ. Press), a pioneering analysis of gender, nationalism, and visual culture from the nineteenth century through to contemporary Iranian cinema.

In *Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative* (Duke Univ. Press), Priscilla Wald wants to show how figures of contagion—such as Typhoid Mary, the "archetype of the superspreader"—have served as powerful indexes of social destruction and medicalized redemption in American culture. In *Dead Subjects: Toward a Politics of Loss in Latino Studies* (Duke Univ. Press), Antonio Viego explores the political and theoretical consequences of ethnic studies' failure to talk about ethnic-racialized subjectivity beyond the language of ego and social psychology.

The final speaker at the event was Ranjana Khanna, who read from her book *Algeria Cuts: Women and Representation, 1830 to the Present* (Stanford Univ. Press), whose title, she explained, refers to how figures of womanhood in the Franco-Maghrebi context signify "cutting, interruption, impurity, and irreconcilability" relative to the "violent reproduction of the masculinist state."

"In Print" concluded with a reception outside the Women's Studies Parlors, where attendees were able to pose follow-up questions to the speakers. The mood was festive as faculty members and students from different fields were able to catch up with each other and talk about their shared interest in scholarship on gender. For everyone involved, it was clear that the first annual "In Print" event was an interdisciplinary success for the Women's Studies Program.

Madhumita Lahiri and Ranjana Khanna at the In Print party.

was neither named nor restituted in the verdict. Khanna reads this as a "pathbreaking legal finding in which the father nation, France, belatedly acknowledges its bastard son—by skipping a generation of women silenced through amnesty or madness." To read for women like Kheira, women who engender the postcolonial nation and yet are erased from its legal and historical memory, is to open up the possibility of an alternative to the patrilineal drama of a masculinist nation, whether in postcolonial France or in postcolonial Algeria.

Part I, "Theorizing Justice," looks at a variety of ethical possibilities emerging from the Franco-Maghrebian encounter. Whether through the approach to the foreigner characterizing Derridean notions of hospitality, or in the recourse to the mock trial by feminist organizations in Algeria on International Women's Day in 1995, or in the collaborations between Simone de Beauvoir and other feminists in the pursuit of justice for Djamila Boupacha, Khanna elucidates the nature of a justice available only virtually. Part II, "Melancholic Remainders," engages with the questions of representation of Algerian women in the registers of cinema and visual art, moving from Gillo Pontecorvo to Assia Djebar, from Eugene Delacroix to Pablo Picasso, to demonstrate how fantasies of seeing, of mirrors and interiors, have informed the figure of woman from the colonial period on. Part III, "Algeria Beyond Itself," situates the difficulties around the figures of Algerian women in a larger Euro-Maghrebian intellectual frame, placing the Algerian painter Baya Mahieddine in conversation with the surrealist Andre Breton, and Assia Djebar's *A Sister to Scheherazade* with James Joyce's short story "Araby."

Khanna's incisive new book picks up in many ways where her previous one, *Dark Continents* (2003), left off. Whereas *Dark Continents* engaged with psychoanalysis and colonialism to move towards the ethical possibilities of the melancholic trace, *Algeria Cuts* performs a sustained deconstructive reading of that trace to demonstrate how the woman question cuts through the very frames that seek to erase, contain, or eradicate the questions of feminist justice. In its choice of region and history, in the variety of registers it engages, the book is a pressing intervention for the possibilities foreclosed and erased in our own time: the cuts in the historical record where women have been erased and how those cuts can be read towards a feminist internationalist justice.

Algeria Cuts: Women & Representation, 1830 to the Present was published by Stanford University Press in 2008.

The New Eco-Feminist

by Kinohi Nishikawa, Literature, Women's Studies Certificate

This year the Women's Studies Program inaugurated a series of events centered on "The New Eco-Feminism," a transnational feminist conversation on issues related to ecology, the environment, the production of food, the patenting of natural resources, and human use and management of animals. The series grew out of a Women's Studies reading group, Earth to Table (E2T), which met last year to talk about the ethics of global food production vis-à-vis Michael Pollan's widely influential book *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (2006). Expanding on the work of E2T, "The New Eco-Feminism" is a two-year commitment to investigating the ways in which transnational feminism can help humans imagine inhabiting the earth more responsibly.

The first event in the series, a roundtable on "Postcolonial Ecotourism, Gender, and the Question of Species," was held on November 26, 2007. The event featured an interdisciplinary panel of faculty members who offered divergent perspectives on the conservation of animal populations in developing countries. Associate Professor of Women's Studies Kathy Rudy framed the discussion by highlighting the need to overcome a nagging "speciesism" in the way humans perceive their relationship to animals. Georgina Montgomery, Visiting Assistant Professor of History and Philosophy, shed light on the challenges posed by activist interventions in communities which typically place matters of resource distribution and day-to-day survival over conservation efforts. Based on her own experiences working in Africa, Associate Professor of Biology Susan Alberts forcefully argued that even privatized zones of protected habitats, underwritten by corporate or NGO capital, should be supported to secure the minimum degree of conservation in developing countries. Presented with these quandaries of practical and theoretical concern, audience members at the roundtable witnessed the extent to which scholars' disciplinary locations affected how they approached the politics of conservation. The participants questioned the speakers on a number of issues, including, crucially, how we are to understand the gendered dynamics of the relationships among animals, between humans and animals, and how feminism may encounter the question of species.

The second event in the series, which took place on January 28, 2008, featured discussion of an article by Jody Emel titled, "Are You Man Enough, Big and Bad Enough? Ecofeminism and Wolf Eradication in the USA." In her article Emel argues that the idea of a rugged, emboldened masculinity has traditionally inhered in the destructive practice of wolf hunting. Noting this trend, one of the signal achievements of the ecology movement, she argues, has been to redefine American masculinity around conservation efforts and wolf habitat conservation specifically. Today it's "manly" not to kill wolves but to save them. Event participants were engaged by Emel's argument, but several also wondered why eco-feminist analysis should focus exclusively on stereotypical male personality traits (in this instance) and what, more generally, eco-feminism's articulation of gender and class politics might be in view of its privileging animal conservation over the (re)distribution of resources and capital among humans. There was considerable dissatisfaction with the articulation of feminism and social justice, and the conflation of the two.

The third event in March focused on a reading and discussion of "Pepperoni or Broccoli? On the Cutting Edge of Feminist Environmentalism," by Joni Seager. Feminist environmentalism has become a significant intellectual and social policy force across fields as diverse as public health, political economy, philosophy, science, and ecology. Feminist environmental theory and activism together are challenging and redefining foundational principles, from animal rights to the environmental economy of illness and well-being, from global political economy to the role of Big Science as the primary arbiter of the state of the environment. Animal rights is one of the most intellectually challenging and innovative areas of intellectual activity and social activism, and within feminist environmentalism is one of the most radical subfields. This paper provided an overview of activity in this subfield, starting from the observation that feminist environmental scholarship and grassroots activism on animal rights pivot around three concerns: elucidating the commonalities in structures of oppressions across gender, race, class, and species; developing feminist-informed theories of the basis for allocating "rights" to animals; and exposing the gendered assumptions and perceptions that underlie human relationships to nonhuman animals.

The group will continue to meet next year, with some invited speakers, readings, and films.

Alterity and Alternatives: A Conversation on Queer Theory with Judith Halberstam and Elizabeth Povinelli

By Alexis Pauline Gumbs, English, Women's Studies Certificate

"Do you watch the L-Word? I was just wondering." This was one undergraduate student's supplemental response to a an hour long conversation on December 4, 2007 between Ara Wilson, Director of Sexuality Studies, and visiting scholars Judith Halberstam and Elizabeth Povinelli. But the question was not as out of place as it might have momentarily seemed in a conversation about queer ontology, queer epistemologies, and the stakes of queer theory in the contemporary moment. Sponsored through a partnership between the Sexuality Studies Program and the Franklin Humanities Institute, the event itself blurred the line between a queer performance and a discussion on queer ontology. Each of the

The Tyranny of Choice, a Lecture by Renata Salecl

Erin Norris, Program Coordinator, Women's Studies

Have you ever stood in the aisle of a drug store, staring down the packed, full shelves of various shampoo, conditioner, and hair care products and thought that there were just a few too many choices? Have you ever wondered what brand of beer or cell phone plan you could choose that could help you express your true self? Have you ever considered how such personal preferences might be construed by society?

Professor Renata Salecl argues that in a world with too many choices, the concept of choice breeds anxiety and dissatisfaction. In her lecture, "The Tyranny of Choice," Salecl highlights these humorous episodes of choice as a series of examples on how choice becomes intertwined with questions of identity and anxiety. Salecl's lecture examined the concept of choice in late capitalist societies, emphasizing how we are encouraged to think that everything in our lives is a matter of choice. In the 1980s and 1990s, drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, much scholarship emphasized the social construction of the self. But now self-construction has become a requirement of commodified culture in which self-making is its own project.

According to Salecl, this emphasis on choice makes it seem as if we are free to create whatever we desire and that enjoyment in life is simply a matter of self-creation. As examples she cited how one London university tries to attract new students with the slogan, "Become what you want to be."; a new music record is advertised with the saying, "I am who I am."; and even a beer company uses the logo "Be yourself!" Rather than counteracting social prohibition with our desire, Salecl suggests that the imperative to make oneself happy actually feeds anxiety and guilt. Choice promotes an ideology of self-fulfillment by privatizing critique—indeed turning it inward as if one lived in a political vacuum in which real choices could be made without constraint. She claimed that "When people are encouraged to look at their life as a particular type of a corporation (Me, Inc.), they become perceived as individually responsible for their successes and failures. In this context, they also lose the possibility for the critique of the social and political organization of society. . . . In this highly individualized society, which allegedly gives priority to the individual's freedoms over submission to group causes, people face an important anxiety provoking dilemma: 'Who am I for myself?'" For Salecl, the ideology of a limitless world is itself a product of late capitalism and the relentless drive of consumer society with its emphasis on endless choice and possibility.

Renata Salecl questions the nature of the very idea of choice. Why is choice so emphasized? How do individuals internalize dominant ideologies, and once those ideologies are in place, what true choice remains? If there are truly endless choices, why do so many people limit themselves to one sense of self, and therefore, one series of choices? Dr. Salecl gave a fantastic lecture and left the audience with an awareness of how much the concept of choice pervades our life. More on this topic can be found in Renata Salecl's forthcoming book, *The Tyranny of Choice*.

participants self-consciously brought, or resisted bringing, their own experience of "being" queer to the discussion, foreshadowing the student's question about television consumption with an approach to dialogue that questioned whether queerness is or is not an ontology and/or a performance. If queerness is an anti-ontology and ongoing challenge to the production of heteronormative ways of being, as Judith Halberstam proposed early on, this panel asked, in both content and form: when and how is "queerness" discernable in the social field of the academy?

Though Elizabeth Povinelli and Halberstam could both be characterized as queer theorists (which slips between telling us if they *are* queer or if they *do* theory queerly) who focus on subcultural phenomena and rethink time, space, and relationality, they each have very different relationships to the practice of queer scholarship, each of which imply a distinct set of temporalities and values. Povinelli spoke about her work on a subcultural group mostly made up of white gay men called the Radical Faeries who are currently tracking legislation about the legalization of Peyote, one of the many cultural practices they borrow or appropriate from indigenous groups. Povinelli characterizes both her anthropological project and the project that the Radical Faeries are engaged in as "experiments," a term that carries with it a relationship to the scientific method, suggesting that it will yield results that will be useful in an imagined future and will produce methods that can be reproduced in other contexts.

Halberstam on the other hand never used the word "experiment," speaking instead of "performance" and performativity as primary categories of queer epistemology. Unlike experiments, performances exist in their own temporality, impacting a moment and an audience. Performances do not have to have measurable uses in specific futures and they do not have to be reproducible in order to create open spaces of possibility. In fact, the queer performances that form the focus of Halberstam's work seem to have been chosen because of their ephemerality, not their systematic coherence.

I suspect that it is these two rather different understandings of why attention to culture is useful drove the engaged attention and participation of the audience and the generative momentum of the conversation. And whether we were performing experiments or watching experimental performances, this event was able simultaneously to build and critique the shared projects of inquiry that gathered us.

The Body of War: Media, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Break-up of Yugoslavia, Seminar and Workshop with Dr. Dubravka Zarkov

By Genna Miller, Visiting Professor, Women's Studies

How does the naked, mutilated, and tortured male body pose challenges for feminist enquiry? What constitutes sexual violence? How are social constructions of "the body" used as tools to maintain power relations?

These are just a few of the thought-provoking questions and debates that came out of the February 15th seminar and workshop conducted by Dr. Dubravka Zarkov, an Associate Professor in Gender, Conflict, and Development Studies at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague. In the workshop, Zarkov discussed her recent book, *The Body of War: Media, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Break-up of Yugoslavia* (Duke Univ. Press), in which she analyzes the ways in which the Balkan war and the press coverage of the war have produced notions of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and nationality via their representations of female and male bodies. In particular, Zarkov began the seminar by pointing out that in the early 1990's, within the media coverage of the war by Serbian and Croatian newspapers, sexual violence and the rape of women was commonly reported in detailed accounts. Yet, while crimes involving the torture, mutilation, and humiliation of men's bodies were increasingly occurring, few news reports recorded such events.

"Why was sexual violence against men so absent from the press material framing the war?" Zarkov asks. To answer this question, she argues that we must consider the position of the male body within discourses of nationalism and war that reaffirm specific, shared, hegemonic images of (heterosexual) masculine ethnicities. That is, Zarkov argues, that the representations within the print media and the acts of violence within the war have depended on specific, shared notions of the body, femininity, masculinity, sexuality, and ethnicity.

In her presentation, Zarkov drew on similarities with narrative accounts of anti-colonial movements and violence within the 1800's colonial rule of India and the print and internet media surrounding the Abu Ghraib torture scandal, to explain the social significance of the scarce coverage of violence against men within the break-up of Yugoslavia. Specifically, she notes that the few early 1990's newspaper reports of violence against men occurred mainly within Croatian newspapers, with a focus not on the experiences of Croatians but on that of Serbian and Muslim men, often told from the view of a witness rather than the men themselves. For example, she explains that one Croatian news article indicated that a Muslim man witnessed another Muslim man being humiliated, assaulted, and mutilated by a Serbian soldier. Within the story, the absence of the Croatian reader of the newspaper is striking. Zarkov argues that this serves to validate and uphold a hegemonic, heterosexual, masculine, ethnic project in which Muslim and Serbian ethnic masculinities are viewed as "the Other" via the representations of these "bodies" within war violence and the press. This leaves the Croatian, heterosexual, masculine body and self safely untouched, united, whole.

Participants at the workshop built on this analysis to ask how women's and men's bodies have been constructed within the discursive practices of both war/violence and the media. Of particular interest to the participants was why women's bodies are often essentialized as being "sexual" while men's bodies often are not. Furthermore, what constitutes "sexual?" How then is "sexual violence/crime" understood in relation to other types of crimes? What is "sexual" about these crimes? What does the social construction of the meaning of "sexual violence" indicate about how notions of the body, gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity are produced? With these questions in mind, we thank Dr. Zarkov for an amazing exploration into the ways in which press coverage of war-related sexual violence against men can be understood within feminist enquiry.

Director's Column continued from pg1

falling into masculinist negative stereotypes, Beauvoir acknowledged the philosophical peculiarity of the pregnant and post-partum woman, the unfamiliarity indeed of the mother, at once split into more than one and yet historically inscribed as less than whole.

I bring up these questions of translation to help think about what it means to read Beauvoir today in multiple situations, languages, and feminist and philosophical traditions. What does Beauvoir represent locally and internationally in 2008? I was somewhat surprised by the gossipy celebration of her in *Le Nouvel Observateur* for the centenary which marveled at her sexual choices as if there had never been a sexual revolution! I was also surprised by the choice of prize winners for the 2008 "Prix Simone de Beauvoir" which has emphasized the pursuit of "freedom." The prizes were awarded by Julia Kristeva to Taslima Nasreen and Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Both women have suffered some persecution for their criticisms of Islam and both have justifiably sought refuge in countries other than their own unfortunately with varied degrees of success. However, they are very different sorts of thinkers. The former is primarily a popular writer and she has sought asylum in India, where some right-wing Hindu forces have been militating for her visa extension. She finds herself in the peculiar position of being supported by political figures with whom she does not seem to have any political affiliation, and abandoned by those with whom she does. Ayaan Hirsi Ali, on the other hand, has enjoyed the support of various right wing organizations. What becomes clear is that an anti-Islam fervor has generated interest in these figures who are represented as helpless victims. The problems of the work they have produced cannot be analyzed adequately in a situation in which they become symbols and the occasion for politically manipulative and regressive support. The problem of oppression and freedom gets exported somewhat patronizingly to foreign women in this gesture, which is itself politically manipulative. The more complex thinking

A Visit with History: Highlights from What is the Future of Feminist/Gender History Conference?

By Q Gaynor, Graduate Liberal Studies

Like any good conference, What is the Future of Feminist/Gender History? conference held at UNC on February 8th and 9th offered more provocations than answers. Here are some highlights from the conference's closing panel discussion.

One presenter displayed a graph depicting the percentage of history journal articles that dealt with gender history and personal relationships over the course of 20th century Britain. In 1955, there were very few of these articles. Now there are significantly more, and the increased curve is exponential. In ten years, 20% of all British history journal articles will deal with gender history and personal relationships. And by 2030, if you're not in the field of gender studies, according to the speaker, you might as well quit.

Next, a woman on the panel described how her senior male colleagues complained that feminists were destroying the unitary narrative of western history. That fragmentation threatens the likeability of the work being done in history departments. In other words, people prefer to read biographies of dead presidents. Well, I wasn't sure about this point. Some of those people might like to read biographies about dead feminists, too, if they were juicy and available.

Someone commented that gender itself is a question at best. Provincializing gender, for historians, pointed out the limits of a binary construction of gender. Once you remove gender from a binary, what is it? If gender is the question rather than the template, how far can one go?

"Theory needs practice," someone else said.

"Right," the speaker answered. "There's a world-building that goes on around how we know what gender we are."

I must admit, here, that I missed any of the world-building that may have followed because I got up to use the bathroom. I was glad to get a break from the overburdened conference room air, where two doors greeted me. A sign on one door displayed a figure wearing a triangular garment. On the other door was a figure without a triangle. I thought for a second and picked the first door. It's queer, this attraction to triangles.

I was surprised when I realized that the next respondent had actually prepared a sort of mini-talk instead of merely conversing with her cohorts. In fact, she had something very important she wanted to use this moment to draw our attention to: the need to confront transnational Muslim women's Islamophobia. As she talked, she drew our attention to a screen on which she displayed images of French and German memoirs whose sensational covers depict veiled and burkaed women. I think she may have waited until the closing panel to offer her comments so people could go home and chew on this.

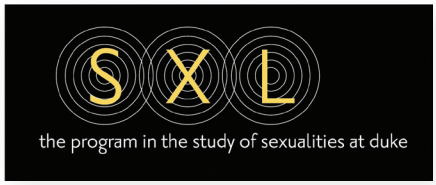
My final memory is of a speaker who claimed that teaching her students the constructed nature of reality is not very difficult. "They all grew up with computers," she said. Then she talked about how the real crisis is one of funding. "The boat is sinking, and we're standing on the deck asking 'What is gender?'" she said. "We need to start bailing." This was a frustrated and emotive speech and I agreed with the sentiments. Right then, I wanted to start bailing. Only at the end of the day, when one of the more renowned historians in the group said, "You don't live applied theory," was I able to relax.

of Simone de Beauvoir would demand more of an analysis of the complexity of this situation, the real problems of Islamism, the self-serving manipulative politics of right-wing governments, and the sometimes unintentional, sometimes intentional complicity of feminists with interests that aren't, in the long run, their own. This speaks to the complexity of translating one situation to another.

Much of the labor of Women's Studies is to sort through such complexities of situation, complicity, and a theoretical and defamiliarized understanding of one's own approach to the most intimate and the most distant aspects of gendered existence. But the emphasis on complicity often returns us to the present without an adequate examination of how one arrived at this situation. If Beauvoir taught us that woman is a historical and situated entity, she was able to do this at least partly because of her investment in a Hegelian Marxist notion of historical materialism and a notion of temporality that went with it. She acknowledged how sex was figured historically, or was a matter of representation, and to this extent she always worked on the gendered aspects of temporality as it played out on bodies caught between immanence and transcendence. There are times when Women's Studies today seems to be too caught up in the present, perhaps because of the neglect of a certain Marxism, perhaps out of a sense of the necessity of problem solving, and perhaps because of a failure of imagination, which made it difficult to think historically without reinscribing women as a stable object of knowledge.

I have greatly enjoyed my first year directing the Duke Women's Studies Program and want to thank the faculty and staff for all their encouragement, enthusiasm, and hard work, especially at a moment in which I was unexpectedly incapacitated. We once again had excellent attendance at the Feminist Theory Workshop, and much interest in many of our programs over the last year. We're looking forward to welcoming two postdoctoral fellows next Fall to help us think through next year's theme: Transnational Sexualities.

Sexuality Studies Becomes an Active Presence on Campus



The Program in the Study of Sexualities at Duke is excited to be graduating its first two certificate students in its new incarnation: Kimberly Burke and Ashlee Walker. Kimberly is pursuing a PhD in Women's Studies; and Ashlee is interested in a career in counseling. Currently the Program has six students signed up for the six-course Certificate.

Course offerings continue to grow in breadth and scope reflecting its interdisciplinary nature. Spring 2008 applicable to the Certificate include the *Introduction to the Study of Sexualities*; *Clinical Issues for LGBT Populations*; *Reading History, Sexuality, and the Harlem Renaissance*; and *Primate Sexuality*. Fall courses will include *Modern Sex*; *Aging, Sex and Popular Culture*; *Sex Work: Economies of Gender and Desire*; and *Gender and Sexual Politics in the Modern West*. The introductory course will be offered again in Spring 2009.

Sexuality Studies has been instrumental in supporting a variety of events on campus this year. In October, in association with UNC, the program brought in director Elle Flanders and screened her documentary, *Zero Degrees of Separation*, which looks at the Middle East conflict and the Palestinian Occupation through the eyes of mixed Palestinian and Israeli gay and lesbian couples. Later that month, Steven Angelides (Monash University) was on campus to discuss his essay, *Subjectivity and Power: Notes for a Post-Foucauldian Analytics of Sexuality*. In November, Jasbir Puar (Rutgers University) led a seminar to discuss chapters from her book *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* and Santa Cruz Professor Lisa Rofel talked about her book, *Desiring China*. In February, SXL sponsored a talk at the Franklin Center by Professor Jennifer Brody (Northwestern University/ Visiting Professor at Duke) on *Queering Punctuation: Art, Politics and Play* and in March was an event with queer theorist Michael Warner (Rutgers University). On April 3rd the director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, Jaime Grant, was on campus at the LGBT Center for a lunch discussion to explore ways for Duke undergraduates and graduates to engage in research relevant to policies concerning LGBTQ people and sexual rights. The SXL program also supported artistic performances this year, one by Sister Spit and a controversial Sex Worker cabaret. For more information on these and other events please check the Women's Studies calendar: **http://www.duke.edu/womstud/calendar/.**

For next year, the SXL Program will work with the Sexuality Studies minor at UNC-Chapel Hill on a Transnational Sexuality Series. This theme will be coordinated with the appointments of two post-doctoral fellows working on transnational sexuality studies to be brought in by Women's Studies next year.

Ashlee Walker, Erin Bell, Kimberly Burke, and Cody Lallier, Sexuality Studies Certificate Students

For those interested in keeping up with our many activities, SXL runs a listserv for interested graduate students which can be joined at **https://lists.duke.edu/sympa/info/sxl-grad.** Look for a new SXL website -- with a stylish new logo -- later this spring.

Fall 2008 Course Calendar

WST 49S	*Gender & Sports - Lisker (TTH 8:30 - 9:45 am)*
WST 90	*Gender & Everyday Life – Campt (MWF 10:20-11:10 am)*
WST 130	*Women & the Political Process - Grattan (WF 10:05 - 11:20 am)*
WST 150S.01	*Topics: Utopias – Rudy/Weeks (MW 4:25 - 5:40 pm)*
WST 150S.02	*Topics: Religion & the Moral Status of Animals - Rudy (MW 1:15-2:30 pm)*
WST 150S.03	*Topics: Sex Work: Economics of Gender & Desire – Nishikawa (TTH 2:50- 4:05 pm)*
WST 150S.04	*Topics: Aging, Sex & Popular Culture - Gentry-Lamb (TTH 1:15-2:30 pm)*
WST 150S.05	*Topics: Green Feminism - Rusert (TTh 10:05-11:20 pm)*
WST 150S.06	*Topics: Gender, Sexuality & Politics in the Modern West – Hicks (WF 11:40 am-12:55 pm)*
WST 160S	*Feminism in Historical Context - (Tu 2:50 -5:20 pm)*
WST 162S	*Gender and Popular Culture - Eagle (Th 2:50-5:20 pm)*
WST 163S	*Interpreting Bodies - Campt (MW 1:15-2:30 pm)*
WST 164S	*Race, Gender and Sexuality - Staff (WF 11:40 am - 12:55 pm)*
WST 271S	*Feminist Studies: American Melodrama - Eagle (W 2:50 - 5:20 pm)*
WST 300.01	*TOPICS: Politics & the Humanities - Wiegman/Hardt (W 1:30 - 4 pm)*
WST 360.01	*Interdisciplinary Debates: Transnational Sexuality - Wilson (Th 1:15-3:45 pm)*

Wilson to Teach Interdisciplinary Debates: Transnational Sexualities

In the fall of 2004, Women's Studies inaugurated a new plan to facilitate the interdisciplinary growth of faculty teaching in our program. Through the graduate course rubric, WST 360 Interdisciplinary Debates, we feature a special topics course designed for advanced graduate students and selected faculty. Over the past four years we have sponsored: *Gender & Bioethics* with Anne Lyerly (2003), *Gender and Ethnic Violence* with Claudia Koonz (2004), *The Genome Age* with Priscilla Wald (2005), *Legal Fictions* with Karla Holloway and Kevin Haynes (2006) and this past year *Asylum* with Ranjana Khanna and Charlie Piot. This year, WST 360 will be taught by Ara Wilson (Women's Studies, Cultural Anthropology, and Director of the Program in the Study of Sexualities) and will focus on the topic of *Transnational Sexualities*.

An added feature will be the inclusion of two Women's Studies residential postdoctoral fellows who are specifically engaged in the transnational study of sexuality. The intent of the postdoctoral program for 2008-2009 is to foster conversations among Women's Studies, the Program in Sexuality Studies, and allied fields at Duke. Fellows will each teach one course related to their scholarship. In association with this project, this seminar will also include lectures and guest speakers.

WST 360 Transnational Sexualities – Ara Wilson (TH 1:15 – 3:45 pm)

Queer Studies and Sexuality Studies have taken a turn to the transnational. This announced direction, which both builds on and critiques earlier work on an international or cross-cultural frame, is a response to critiques of national (particularly US) solipsism, to analyses connected with diasporas and post-colonial worlds, and to marked changes in political economy, social formation, and cultural currents worldwide. This graduate and faculty seminar takes this recent direction in Sexuality/Queer Studies as an invitation to investigate a wide variety of linkages between sexuality and supra-national phenomenon. Topics we explore include the following broad areas:

- The connections between sexual and gendered border transgression—that is, the crossing of norms with geopolitical border crossings. How does traversing national borders articulate with transgressing moral borders? How does the mobility of non-Western subjects challenge conceptions of the sexual subject predicated on experiences of Western national identity?
- Sexuality in the historical emergence of forms of governance. How was sexuality integrated into the creation of states, empires, and nation-states? How is sexuality associated with the definition of territory and scale?
- Sexuality and post-1970 period of "globalization" and intensified transnational flows. The use of transnational flags the limits of the nation-state as both a unit of analysis and as the main scale for political action. What is the place of sexuality in arenas superseding the national scale, e.g., in diasporic linkages, capital flows, reformulated political modalities like human rights, or the European Union?
- The relation between the focus on the transnational and domestic/national scholarship—in particular, the analysis of US or settler-society racialized sexuality. How are these put into relation or competition?
- The place of cross-cultural diversity in transnational analysis. Social construction theory has relied on the radical alterity of sexual practices in "other" places and times. How does this radical difference figure in analyses of linkages and cross-borders?
- Where might the universal, global, and transnational be connected or disaggregated in relation to sexuality? How can sexuality studies offer a basis for critical reflections on the international or global? How does the planetary scale figure in debates about sexuality?

For more information about this project, please contact Ara Wilson (ara.wilson@duke.edu).

Asylum Project Continues into the Spring

By Sarah Lincoln, English

The year-long project on *Asylum: Comparative Historical Perspectives*, co-convened by Ranji Khanna (WS) and Charlie Piot (Cultural Anthropology/AAAS/WST), continued its exploration of the various political, philosophical, legal, and literary aspects of asylum across historical and geographical contexts. After concluding a highly successful graduate seminar, WST360, and benefiting from visits to Duke by legal and academic experts on asylum last fall, the project is once again sponsored a range of stimulating events and conversations this spring.

On February 29, Harvard Law School's Matthew Perault spoke before a lunchtime audience in the Women's Studies Parlors about his work on repatriation. The faculty/graduate student seminar is meeting regularly this semester over dinner to discuss asylum from a diversity of disciplinary perspectives. In early April, we replaced Kathy Rudy's work on animal rights and asylum. At our last meeting of the semester, April 24, Duke professor and renowned playwright Ariel Dorfman shared a new story, entitled "Asylum," along with chapters from his memoir *Heading South, Looking North: A Bilingual Journey* that describe his own experience as a political asylum-seeker.

Become a Friend of Women's Studies!

Become a Friend of Women's Studies! Your gift of $50 or more makes it possible to publish this newsletter and report on Women's Studies scholarship. Contributions to Friends and other endowments also support on-campus and regional Women's Studies events and help to continue our outreach to alumnae/i.

* Gifts by check can be mailed with this form in the enclosed envelope.

* Or you may make your gift by credit card at Duke's secure credit card site http://www.duke.edu/womstud/aftergrad/contributing.html

Please mention code #NS08, Fund Code 399-2735. Or fill out the form below.

☐ YES! I am a Friend of Women's Studies and would like to continue receiving the newsletter twice a year, as well as invitations and notices about upcoming events.

Please find enclosed my check for $_____ ($50 or more)

Please charge my credit card account:

Card Type (Master Card, Visa, etc) _____

Amount $_____

Account number _____

Exp. Date _____ Signature _____

For Office Use Only: Technique code NS08, Fund Code 399-2735

Cut along dotted line.

WOMEN'S STUDIES

Duke University
210 East Duke Building
Durham, NC 27708-0760

**Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Durham, N.C.
Permit No. 60**