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Fall 2001

Women' Studies University of Nebraska-Lincoln Fall 2001

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Women's Studies

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
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NEWSLETTER

FALL 2001

From the Director

This has been a busy and energizing semester, with several new Women's Studies majors and faculty adding to the vitality of our program. The faculty began the semester reaffirming and redefining our identities and goals. Twenty-seven Women's Studies faculty members attended a Saturday retreat at the Pioneer's Park Nature Center. Julia McQuillan and Barbara DiBernard led focus groups that launched us into a vigorous morning of discussion, problem-solving and planning. We left with several resolves: to build on our commonalities and our enormous expertise as teachers, scholars, editors, writers, translators, rhetoricians, and organizers; to nurture the social and professional relationships among us in order to create opportunities for interdisciplinary work; to mentor each other; to continue to be inclusive of all women on campus and to create coalitions with other groups and within departments and colleges to empower women faculty and students to resist and address institutional sexism, racism, and homophobia and to promote institutional change; to strengthen our connections with women in the community, in order to ensure connections between our academic work and activism. As one of the focus groups said: We have all it takes: vast expertise, poetry, soul, and strategies for working the margin and the center.

As always, the faculty are the vital core of Women's Studies. I'm especially pleased to introduce

new faculty who joined the program this fall. **Margaret (Peg) Bolick** really isn't new; she has been a Women's Studies Associate for several years. Last spring she and Mary Beck developed a new course, "Women and Gender in Science," which they taught for the first time in the first summer session. Peg is Professor of Museum Studies and Curator of Botany, University of Nebraska State Museum.



Kwakiutl Dreher, Assistant Professor, English and Ethnic Studies, has come to UNL from the University of California at Riverside. She has research and teaching interests in 20th century African American women writers, autobiography and autobiographical theory, popular media, film and visual culture.



Gwendolen Hines, Assistant Professor, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, has received grants for the past three years to fund the "All Girls/All Math" program, a week-long summer camp for girls interested in mathematics.

She is also the faculty advisor for Women's Undergraduate Math Network and regularly teaches a seminar on Women in Mathematics. Her research areas are differential and delay-differential equations, bifurcation theory and chaos. **Margaret Macintyre Latta**, from the University of Calgary, is Assistant Professor in the Center for Curriculum and Instruction specializing in social, cultural, and political teaching and learning, aesthetics and diversity. She is also



Co-Director of "Urban Education: Towards Addressing Diversity in Schooling," a Master of Education focus area to prepare educators for a wider understanding of learners and learning in urban and diverse settings. She will offer a

graduate course for teachers next spring on Gender and Education. **Loukia K. Sarroub** is an assistant professor in the Center for Curriculum and Instruction whose teaching and research interests include literacy studies, anthropology and education, ethnicity, gender and religion in schools, and ethnographic research methods. She joins us from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she was an assistant professor.



We have many important events planned for spring semester. We'll join our colleagues from UNO at UNK for the NO LIMITS Conference in March. Women's Studies will co-sponsor several outstanding visiting speakers including: Dr. Helen Longino, feminist philosopher of science from the University of Minnesota; Dr. Valerie Lee, Director of Women's Studies at Ohio State University and scholar of African American Culture and Literature; Dr. Chela Sandoval, Chicana/Lesbian theorist and author of *Methodology of the Oppressed*, Dr. Jane Donawerth, Professor of History and Women's Studies from the University of Maryland. Our own local scholars, Professors Maureen Honey and Venetria Patton will present a colloquium on their collaborative research on writers of the Harlem Renaissance.

Joy Ritchie is Director of Women's Studies and Professor of English.

EDUCATING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE; WOMEN'S STUDIES INTERNSHIP REPORT by Ben Hamburger

I suppose many would-be teachers start out very idealistically, and so far I've been no exception. When I was invited to co-facilitate a series of classroom presentations at Lincoln High School with Keri Wayne from the Lincoln/ Lancaster County Rape and Spouse Abuse Crisis Center, I jumped at the opportunity.

The curriculum, which was designed by the Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition is entitled "Reaching and Teaching Teens to Stop Violence," encompasses sexual harassment, rape and sexual assault,

dating and domestic violence, developing healthy relationships, and gender and violence in media. Students are asked to define many of the problems themselves, and then are introduced to common approaches to the problem, as well as examining some of the potential damage from sexual violence. The emphasis is on making individual efforts to stop sexual harassment and violence.

Keri and I make weekly trips to a "Relationships" class at Lincoln High, taught by Becky Sawyer, made up largely of older high school students. Keri had presented the curriculum to another class by herself, and the idea of co-presenting the program with a male came from the teacher and students, as a way of proving to the students the universality of the issues presented: men can have an interest in seeing gender-related violence end as well. That's where I came in. My presence and participation in leading discussion may lend some credence to the suggestion that issues like sexual harassment, rape, and gender roles aren't solely the responsibility of women.

But presenting information about sexual violence creates tension. The need for sensitivity in class, by both presenters and students, is magnified by the reality of the conditions in which many of the students live. Most of the students do not fit the model of the prototypical successful high school student. They are all very intelligent and thoughtful people, but many have difficult home situations. Many of the students do not have experience with mature methods of approaching discussions, so defining and responding to sexual violence is the goal as well as teaching respect for every student's right to speak their opinions. Another problem is that many of the students have already experienced sexual violence personally: before we began the unit about sexual assault, we surveyed the students with a random questionnaire about their experiences, and of the 22 students in the class (the class is overwhelmingly female, there are only 2 male students), nine reported that they had been sexually assaulted, and 15 reported knowing another person who had been sexually assaulted. This statistic reinforced our need to be sensitive in our presentation.

These examples are indicative of the day-to-day concerns that Keri and I worked to overcome. My initial approach to the class was clearly somewhat naïve because my own experience with Women's Studies was mostly in an academic setting and does not match students' experience. Almost immediately, it became clear that life



in an urban high school creates a different perspective from that in academic feminist theory. It's not hard in retrospect to realize why: many of the students had never been introduced to any other source of values than the media, or experienced time with parents discussing choices. Consequently students' attitudes ranging from the appropriateness of sexual activity to cultural and experiential influences on choices and decision-making conflicted with my more academic perspective. It's not simply a case of an academic looking down on the unenlightened, though — some of the commonsense approaches in that class can combine with a more critical approach to become much more understandable and useful. I've gained an important perspective on the challenge of creating cultural change, and an appreciation of the importance of common sense in approaching of abstract theory.

Ben Hamburger is a junior political science/history major and Women's Studies minor. He is also assistant debate coach at Fremont High School.

Hilda Raz On TRANS

by Kris Gandara

In the morning she makes coffee, as the last few drips sizzle out, she pours a cup, puts herself into a chair and moves to open her notebook. She begins turning the pages, revisiting journal entries, awaiting a connection to the re-written, bound memories, when she feels the energy transition from past to present, the physical movement from inside, out to the empty page in front of her, a connection which inspires her early morning revision exercises.

This is how Hilda Raz begins her day; by ritual, by moving sequences of language from one place to another. Hilda's latest book, TRANS, is about this movement. It's about transgression, transition and transformation. More specifically, the book is a reflection on Hilda's experience of becoming the mother of a transgender son.

When I met with Hilda to interview her for this article, I was genuinely greeted and invited in. Her warmth soothed my tension and her flamboyant intellect, as always, intrigued me. As she moved about

the office, I picked up the book in front of me: *The Nonsexist Word Finder; A Dictionary of Gender-Free Usage* (by Rosalie Maggio). She immediately sent the book with me. As I tucked it into my bag, we began talking about TRANS, and the life experiences which led to its development.

"I was living as rich as any person could hope. My individual life was gaining momentum as editor of *Prairie Schooner* and Professor of English and Women's Studies. My personal life took an unexpected turn. My sense of identity was pushed. I wrote about these opportunities, the discomfort with the happenings of my family and about my sense of community. I wrote about this movement from one change to another."

I asked Hilda whether her son, Aaron, had read the book; she told me that he put the manuscript in order, that she and her publisher made a few changes, but he influenced the narrative import. Hilda and Aaron are currently working on a book together, *What Becomes You*, a creative non-fiction look at gender and its relationship to the body.

Throughout our conversation my thoughts kept moving to Aaron. What a fortunate son to have a mother willing to bare her journey. In TRANS, Hilda releases and explores a continuum of experiences: sadness, rage, discomfort, acceptance, vulnerability, the reclaiming of family, of mother and son.

I asked Hilda if there is a separation between activism and a mother and writer sharing her experiences. She said that we experience it as all one thing. She insists that we must speak what hasn't been spoken; that to breathe is political. "I'm engaged in the subject of gender everyday of my life, also in transformation, and to be a poet, one must be alive to the world."

She suggests to writers: "Read the journals. Send out the work. Speak of what concerns you. We won't change the world unless we write fully about our concerns. Whatever shapes lives moves writers to write. We are not alone, we have texts. Where would we be without Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, or Judith Ortiz Cofer?"

Where would we be without Hilda Raz? We wouldn't know one of the most beautiful mothers in the world.

Kris Gandara is a Women's Studies and English major. She will be graduating with High Distinction in December.



Faculty Announcements

Radha Balasubramanian was the interim Chair for the Dept. of Modern Languages for Spring 2001.

Sidnie White Crawford was awarded a fellowship as a Research Associate and Visiting Lecturer in the Women's Studies in Religion Program, Harvard Divinity School, for the 2000-01 academic year.

Gwendolyn Foster became Editor in Chief of *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* and published two books, *Troping the Body: Gender, Etiquet and Performance* (Southern Illinois UP) and *Identity and Memory: The Films of Chantal Akerman* (Flicks Books, UK). She also was tenured.

Venita Kelley, Communications Studies, presented a paper at the conference, "A New Girl Order?: Young Women and the Future of Feminist Inquiry," in London, November 14-16, 2001. Her paper was entitled: "Hometalk: A Rhetoric of Redemption for African American Women."

Margaret Macintyre Latta published a book: *The Possibilities of Play In The Classroom—On The Power of Aesthetic Experience In Teaching, Learning, and Researching*. It was published by Peter Lang, 2001.

Jennifer Lehmann published, and wrote a preface for, an edited volume, entitled *Gay and Lesbian Marriages and*

Families, which came out this year.

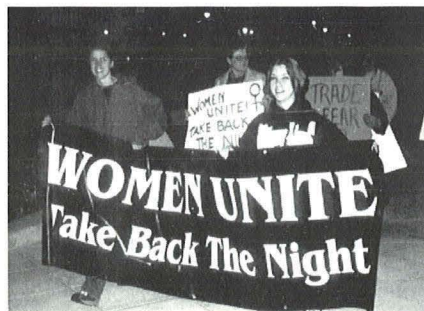
Carole Levin published *Extraordinary Women of the Medieval and Renaissance World* (Greenwood, 2000) and *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Palgrave 2001). She was also the president of the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women.

Adelaida Martinez was honored with a Certificate of Recognition by the National Society of Ecuadorean Writers for the book she co-edited with Gloria DaCunha-Giabbai of Moore College, *Narradoras ecuatorianas de hoy: una antologia critica*. The book became the "recommended reading of the week," and was widely reviewed by major newspapers and magazines. The Fall 2001 issue of *GraFemas* features a full length interview with Adelaida Martinez in which she discusses her sixteen years as General Editor of *Letras Femeninas*.

Venetria Patton published "Policing Our Daughters' Bodies: Mothering in Africana Literature," in *The Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* 2.2 (2000): 176-87 and "Seen But Not Heard. . . The Racial Gap Between Feminist Discourse and Practice: A Dialogue," with Kimberly Nettles in *Frontiers* 21.3 (2000): 64-81.

Joy Ritchie's book, (with Kate Ronald), *Available Means: An Anthology of Women's Rhetoric(s)*, was published by The University of Pittsburgh Press in August.

Note From The Women's Studies Association by Erin Teuber



our community, and across the globe. We are always looking for fresh ideas from members new and old. We

The Women's Studies Association is a proactive group of feminists who care about women and recognize the need to work together to bring about change on our campus, in

strive for an open, encouraging society both within our meetings and within our world. This semester we sponsored a demonstration for "Take Back the Night." The women who attended united to show our concern for the problem of violence against women. We meet every Thursday at 12:30 in 1206 Oldfather.

Next semester, we will be involved in and sponsor the "No Limits" conference and the "Vagina Monologues." We are always glad to see new faces among us, so if you are interested in WSA, please feel free to call me at 472-9392 or e-mail me at puravidaerin@netscape.net.



Ephemeral Forest *by Wendy Weiss*



The Ephemeral Forest is an ongoing creative collaboration between me and my husband and creative partner, Jay Kreimer. In our installation of iridescent three-dimensional weavings and evocative sound, we explore the relationship between visual and aural perception. The combination of the visual and audio alerts the viewing

participant to the complexity of human sensory experience. Hence, we weave sound as well as textiles. Our space is a place to wander through and absorb colors, forms, sounds and shapes. I create weavings on the loom as one continuous fabric that branch out into space to evoke trees and organic forms, while Jay Kreimer embeds a shifting sound score in the environment that the viewer triggers.

The Ephemeral Forest is scheduled to be exhibited at the Asian Center Gallery, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada next summer from July 24-Aug. 7, 2002. The exhibition is exciting for us because it will be in conjunction with Convergence 2002, an international conference of fiber arts organized by the Handweaver's Guild of America, Inc. Thousands of international visitors will come to Vancouver for this conference.

Pending funding, for this international venue, we plan to design interactive video/textile pieces that are animated with textiles triggered by the presence of viewer(s) with a musical soundscore that recombines based on motion of viewer. I will be on Faculty Development Leave for the calendar year 2002 and plan to continue my exploration of textile work with which the viewer interacts.

Wendy Weiss is Professor of Textiles, Clothing, and Design and Women's Studies.

WOMEN AND SCIENCE: THE FINAL FRONTIER BY KIM FRANZEN

This spring the Women's Studies Program will offer a new course, Women and Gender in Science, taught by Dr. Peg Bolick, Curator of Botany and professor of Museum Studies and Dr. Mary Beck, professor of Physiology, Animal Science. This course will examine, in depth, the historical roles of women as scientists and as subjects of science. It will also explore gender in science, with an emphasis on feminist critiques of scientific methodology and interpretation.

Historically, when we study the origins of science, time and time again we hear of "the founding fathers of science." Women have simply been forgotten, ignored, or misrepresented as scientists until quite recently. As a result, there has been, and often continues to be, a definite "masculine spin" on science. In her book, *Reflections on Gender and Science*, Evelyn Fox Keller discusses the role gender stereotypes have played in the workings of science. Not only have women historically been excluded from conducting science, they have also often been ignored as scientific subjects. For years, pharmaceuticals destined for prescription to women were not being tested on women, instead, they were tested on male subjects. If women were studied, it was primarily to justify why they were the "weaker" sex and therefore incapable of any number of activities and for limiting them to the more "nurturing" and typically "feminine" activities. To this day, science has defined certain areas of inquiry as women's and others as men's.

Science is often presented as absolute truth. Many scientists hold their profession up as being purely objective, believing that the methodology of science is immune to social influences. Unfortunately, this is not true – how can it be true when 50% of the population has been left out in any number of ways? In a culture that has been historically divided according to gender, class and race, can we really believe that a discipline such as science is immune to these divisions?

This course will provide a more accurate picture of the history of science and serve to provoke critical thought and discussion of issues pertaining to science and society.

The topic of women in science is important to me personally; when I returned to UNL and began to take science courses I noticed that I did not have one single female professor in all of my science courses. I also noticed



that women were rarely included in science textbooks. I was finally prompted into action when one day, sitting in one of these science classes the professor referred to Rosalind Franklin as “that woman”. Rosalind Franklin just happened to have been largely responsible for the discovery of the structure of DNA. Of course, her contribution is seldom mentioned and if it is, is often misrepresented. I plan to become a professor and I hope, in the science courses that I teach, to present a more accurate, more truthful picture of science.

Kim Franzen will receive her PhD. in Physiology, Animal Science in May 2002. She helped to design the new course for Women's Studies.

“Popular Piety and Women’s Confessional Practice” A Women’s Studies Colloquium by Alaina Bupp

Confession became a widespread practice among women in the Middle Ages enabling some women to claim spiritual power, but putting other women’s lives in jeopardy. In her keynote address for the Religion and Popular Culture Conference, Dr. Dyan Elliott of Indiana University-Bloomington discussed piety and women’s confessional practices in the Middle Ages with numerous stories of women’s ingenuity, fortitude, and humor. She described how certain women used confessional practices to benefit themselves, how the church viewed and used women’s confession, and the basic perceptions of women and their piety during this time.

According to Dr. Elliott, the act of confessing held extreme consequences for women. A woman could use her incredible piety to elevate her to a position of reverence in the community. An exceptionally pious nun might even be asked for spiritual advice by nobility or royalty. Conversely women took huge risks in confessing their sins. A woman’s sins were never safe from public scrutiny; if the priest wished to, he could announce the woman’s sins to the community and denounce her as a heretic. The priest could put the woman on trial or deliver her to the Inquisition. A woman of the Middle Ages could burn for the sins she confessed to her priest. The other major hazard posed by the confessional was the chance that a priest would try to seduce a woman confessing to him. In such cases, the clergy and public viewed the woman as being dangerous through her beauty. Clergy were often warned to be harsh and cold to all women confessors.

Dr. Elliott proposes a few reasons for the excessive confessional usage of women during the Middle Ages. One is the contracting social roles of women; this led them to search their souls and expand their lives spiritually. Women were also told that they, through Eve, were responsible for the evils of the world. The need to unburden themselves of this accusation led to excessive confessional practice despite the risks involved.

From this lecture, one can see how precarious an environment pious women lived in during the Middle Ages.

Alaina Bupp is a sophomore Women’s Studies & English Major.

Pictures from Women’s Studies COLLOQUIUMS



From left: Erin Teuber, Prof. Dyan Elliott, Alaina Bupp, and Margit Bergquist-Tracey.



Ginny Crisco, PhD. student, Prof. Gloria Gonzalez-Kruger & Prof. Marcela Raffaelli at the Colloquium on “Creating Community-University Partnerships”



No Limits Conference 2002

March 8 & 9, 2002

University of Nebraska-Kearney

* The conference is free and open to all interested

Keynote Speakers:

Adilah Barnes: "I Am That I Am: *Woman, Black*"

Barbara Lounsberry: "Nancy Drew: *Midwestern Heroine to the World*"

For More Information call 402 472-9392



Adilah Barnes

The Women's Studies Programs at UNK, UNO, and UNL are proud to announce Adilah Barnes as our No Limits 2002 keynote speaker. Barnes, an award-winning actor, has over 30 years of acting experience, and is best-known to television audiences for her role as *Anne Marie* on ABC's *Roseanne* for five seasons. Her recent film credits include a co-starring role in *Erin Brockovich*. Ms. Barnes has toured extensively coast-to-coast with her one-woman show, *I AM THAT I AM: WOMAN, BLACK*. Ms. Barnes earned her B.A. in Theatre Arts at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She also taught three years at the American Conservatory Theatre in several acting programs including the highly competitive *Advanced Training Program*. She is co-founder of the *Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival*.



Professor Joy Ritchie, with Women's Studies majors & minors Sarah Hochstein, Alaina Bupp, Eve Rumsley, Jaime Stock, & Melissa Raabe.

WS Program Newsletter

Gwen Bedient,

editor and designer

(gbedient@bigred.unl.edu)

*Congratulations to the following
Women's Studies Major and Minors
who will be graduating:*

Kris Gandara

Jaime Rierden & Dianne Daniels

Graduation Reception

Friday December 7, 2001

5:00-7:30 pm

3004 Stratford Avenue

(Joy Ritchie's Home)

Everyone Invited to Attend!

Women's Studies Faculty

Radha Balasubramanian	(Modern Languages)	Jennifer Lehmann	(Sociology)
Grace Bauer	(English)	Carole Levin	(History)
Sharon Baum Kuska	(Architecture)	Christin Mamiya	(Art History)
Mary Beck	(Animal Science)	Adelaida Martinez	(Modern Languages)
Susan Belasco	(English)	Ann Mari May	(Economics)
Rashmi Bhatnagar	(English)	Julia McQuillan	(Sociology)
Margaret Bolick	(Botany & Museum Studies)	Amelia Montes	(English)
Christina Brantner	(Modern Languages)	Helen Moore	(Sociology)
Shari Clarke	(Associate to the President of UNL)	Ruth Nisse	(English)
		Venetria Patton	(English/African-American/ African Studies)
Sidnie White Crawford	(Classics)	Malea Powell	(English)
Mary Jo Deegan	(Sociology)	Linda Pratt	(English)
Barbara DiBernard	(English)	Marcela Raffaelli	(Psychology/Ethnic Studies)
Patricia Draper	(Anthropology)	Hilda Raz	(English)
Kwakiutl Dreher	(English)	Joy Ritchie	(English)
Gwendolyn Foster	(English)	Susan Rosowski	(English)
Shelley Fuller	(Art)	Loukia Sarroub	(Curriculum & Instruction)
Amy Goodburn	(English)	Anna Shavers	(College of Law)
Gwendolen Hines	(Mathematics & Statistics)	Alison Stewart	(Art & Art History)
Maureen Honey	(English)	Luann Wandsnider	(Anthropology)
Lyn Kathlene	(Political Science)	Wendy Weiss	(Textiles, Clothing, Design)
Venita Kelley	(Communication Studies)		
Ann Kleimola	(History)		
Margaret MacIntyre Latta	(Curriculum & Instruction)		

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