



# matters

Undergraduate & Graduate Programs in Women and Gender Studies, Faculty of Arts & Science

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## Acting Director's Message



Professor Mojab is currently enjoying a well-deserved research and study leave (January – June, 2007) and we wish her all the best with her research. In July, she will return to the Women and Gender Studies Institute for her final year as Director, and so it is my privilege to review here our achievements over the past academic year. WGSi has consolidated the gains made in recent years, having become a fully autonomous unit with all the rights and responsibilities of a department, and we continue to work towards the full implementation of our ambitious academic plan. We learned last August that the Ontario Council for Graduate Studies (OCGS) had approved our stand-alone MA Program in Women and Gender Studies and much of the focus of this year's administrative work has been on the development of policies, procedures, and administrative structures for the program, under the leadership of the new Graduate Coordinator, Professor Bonnie McElhinny. I am delighted to report that we will welcome our first cohort of twelve graduate students to the Institute next September.

This year has seen the Institute building on our research strengths with a number of exciting initiatives. In September, we held a highly successful conference on "Contested Genealogies," devoted to assessing the impact of women's studies in Canada and charting our intellectual goals for the future. Organized by members of the Institute's Academic Planning Committee under the leadership of Professor Jacqui Alexander, the conference celebrated feminist achievements in Canadian academe and focused attention on continuing struggles. Later in the fall, several WGSi faculty and collaborative graduate students, including Professors Jacqui Alexander and Alissa Trotz,

co-organized and participated in another international conference, the multi-site "Diasporic Hegemonies." Both conferences grew out of the Institute's commitment to transnational feminist research and our innovative series "Theorizing Gender and Transnationality". This series continued in April, when WGSi hosted Professor Yen Le Espiritu in a workshop. As part of our continuing focus on transnational feminism, this year the Institute co-sponsored a series of talks and workshops on the transnational theme of "Biopolitics and Technoscience" under the leadership of Professor Michelle Murphy. The Institute also organized several events in the "Year of Languages" series sponsored by the Faculty of Arts and Science at the University of Toronto, including a workshop on "Language and Neoliberalism" in February and two public lectures in March and April respectively, all of which featured international speakers. Further international contacts are envisioned as a result of the University of Toronto's new membership in the Worldwide Universities Network (WUN), which has a strong Gender Studies Group with research interests in HIV/AIDS and other issues of central interest to WGSi faculty. Professor Ashwini Tambe, who joined the faculty this year, will represent the Institute at the inaugural meeting of the WUN Gender Studies Consor-

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tium in Leeds, UK, June 21-22, which will explore the possibility of teaching and research collaborations and exchanges in women and gender studies among WUN member institutions.

The Institute's engagement with feminist scholarship across the University of Toronto and in the wider feminist community in the city continues to grow. The Tri-Campus Women and Gender Studies Network has met twice this year and members have had productive discussions concerning the coordination of programs and academic fairs to enhance our students' experience across all three campuses. On the St. George campus two Community Knowledge Alliance events attracted students and members of the broader feminist community into the Institute. In the fall, Professors June Larkin and Judith Taylor organized an event on the theme of "Post AIDS 2006: What We Learned, Where We Go From Here," while in the spring Professor Taylor invited Allyson Mitchell to speak at the Institute on the stimulating topic of "Fat Feral Females Run Amok: on Interdisciplinary Research and Activism."

This year the Institute continued to work to enhance our students' learning experience in a variety of ways. We work closely with the New College Writing Centre on all our courses and are now starting to explore ways to internationalize our curriculum, the transnational focus of which well suits such a global perspective, by pursuing opportunities to mount courses in conjunction with the University of the West Indies in Jamaica, perhaps through collaboration with the program in Caribbean Studies at New College. Our curricular initiatives in intensive writing and internationalization have been facilitated by the cross-appointment of a number of core faculty to related units at New College: June Larkin to Equity Studies at New College, Linzi Manicom to the New College Writing Centre, and Alissa Trotz to Caribbean Studies at New College. New College Principal Rick Halpern has maintained David

Clandfield's tradition of close collaboration with the Institute and we are grateful to him, and to the college, for continuing support and institutional cooperation. In addition, we are grateful to the Provost's Office, which awarded the Institute money from the "Student Experience Fund" in both the fall and winter competitions, (1) to upgrade the undergraduate students' office and computing facilities (fall) and (2) to host two WGSI alumnae for one term each over the next two years, to give student presentations and hold office hours to discuss the innovative and productive work that WGSI graduates have gone on to do (winter). The faculty's commitment to teaching and student engagement has been recognized this year in the award to Professor Trotz of two teaching prizes: the SAC-APUS teaching award for her teaching at the Institute in New College, as well as an Award for Distinguished Contributions to Teaching from OISE. Our students' commitment to the discipline and outstanding contributions to academic life have also been recognized this year in the award of the inaugural Faculty of Arts & Science Student Leadership Award to Nidhi Punyarthi, President of the Women's Studies Students' Union.

Next year promises to keep us as busy as we have been this past year. We have received permission from the Dean's office to proceed with searches in feminist African Studies (a split appointment with New College) and in cultural theory/cultural production (100% WGSI).

In closing, I would like to congratulate my colleagues at the Institute on their achievements, both personal and collective, this past year and thank everyone at WGSI—faculty, staff, and students—for their help and support over the six months I have been acting for Professor Mojab. It has been both a privilege and a pleasure to participate in the intellectual life of the Institute and I have enjoyed my time in WGSI enormously.

*June Larkin (Undergraduate Coordinator), Shahrzad Mojab (Director of WGSI, currently on sabbatical) and Margrit Eichler (former Director of the WGSI)*



## Faculty Awards and Grants, 2006-2007

Kay Armatage

SSHRC Standard Research Grant for “International Film Festivals”, 2007

Alison Keith

Robert F. and Margaret H. Gohan Fellowship, National Humanities Centre, 2007

June Larkin

International Working Group, Sport for Development and Peace, 2007

Literature Reviews on Sport for Development and Peace, 2007

Canadian Council of Learning for “The 5 E’s for Health: Understanding eLiteracies for eLearning in Electronic Educational Environment”, 2006

Shahzad Mojab

SSHRC Standard Research Grant for “Children of War: Citizenship Education and the Practice of Democratic Principles”, 2007

Michelle Murphy

Michelle Clayman Gender Research Institute Fellowship, Stanford, 2007

Beatrice Bain Research Fellowship, Berkeley, 2007

Judith Taylor

Munk Centre Halbert Faculty Network Grant, 2007

SSHRC Standard Research Grant, 2007

CIES granted Fulbright Ireland, declined

Alissa Trotz

SAC/APUS Undergraduate Teaching Award for teaching excellence, 2007

OISE Award for Distinguished Contributions to Teaching, 2007



*Jacqui Alexander addresses the new graduate students at the Graduate Orientation in September, 2006*

# Undergraduate Program Report

2007-2008 was a year of curriculum expansion and new initiatives designed to enhance the undergraduate student experience. Professor Ashwine Tambe, our new faculty appointment, taught a special topics course, WGS334S: Nationalism, Religion and Gender in South Asia, which examined how nationalist and religious movements prescribe specific kinds of masculinity, femininity and sexuality. At the 400 level, Professor Alissa Trotz introduced a new course, Gender, Transnationality and the Black Diaspora which extends the transnational focus of our curriculum renewal process.

Our successful proposal to the Student Experience Fund provided funds from the Dean's Office to refurbish the undergraduate student union office. The new computer and office furnishings made the office an attractive gathering place for students. The Women and Gender Studies Student Union, headed up by Nidhi Punyarthi and Thijiba Sinnathamby, turned the office into a hub of activity. The many initiatives taken up by the student union helped to earn one of the student leaders, Nidhi Punyarthi, the inaugural Dean's Student Leadership Award. The award also recognized Nidhi's work with the Gendering Adolescent AIDS Prevention (GAAP) project and other cross-campus and community activities. The International Women's Day Event was a screening of *Mohawk Girls*, a film about the lives of three Mohawk teenage girls growing up on the Kahnawake reserve. The event, which was scheduled as part of the introductory course in women and gender studies, featured the director Tracey Deer and character Lauren Jiles who provided some commentary on the film and took questions from the audience.

Many undergraduate students participated in our two annual professional development seminars: The Going to Graduate Workshop (Fall, 2006) and the Careers Workshop (Spring, 2007). These seminars are offered to provide students with information that will be helpful in planning their future in academia and/or in the workplace. In the graduate school workshop, Katie Larson, a student in the WGS Collaborative Graduate Program,

shared her experience of the graduate application process. At the Careers' Workshop, WGS alumnae Ceta Ramkhalawansingh, Manager of Diversity Management and Community Engagement, City of Toronto, and Janet Mahwinney, from The Center for Addiction and Mental Health, provided a synopsis of their career paths and offered advice based on their own triumphs, challenges, resources and networks.

The annual Undergraduate Student Research Colloquium was held on March 23. Students from the Advanced Research Seminar course made presentations on their independent study projects to an audience of friends, family, faculty and co-students. (Please see feature on this page.)

Over the year a number of WGS students participated in HIV/AIDS education activities through the Gendering Adolescent AIDS Prevention (GAAP) Project. A group of students presented their work at the Ontario HIV Treatment Conference. A new GAAP initiative is the international internship program on HIV/AIDS. This summer, two undergraduate WGS students will be traveling to Africa to work on various HIV/AIDS projects. Amy Willis and Tejpreet Saini will be working on gender and micro-finance projects with the Small Business Development Centre at the northern campus of the University of Namibia.

Congratulations goes out to WGS graduates Sarah Switzer and Nwadiogo Ejiogu who both won an Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) and a Canada Graduate Scholarship (CGS). They will begin their MA programs at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education September, 2007.



*June Larkin introduces filmmaker Tracey Deer and cast member Lauren Jiles at the International Women's Day screening of Mohawk Girls*

## Undergraduate Colloquium March 23, 2007

**Caitlin Burgess:** “Buy a T-Shirt, Save the World”: Gendered representations of “Africa” in Global Aid Campaigns

**Michelle Herbert:** “Movin’ on Up”: Experiences of Caribbean migrant workers in Canada

**Nidhi Punyarthi:** “The new “English-French bilinguals”:  
Women in Canada’s South Asian diaspora

*Undergraduate Colloquium participants  
Nidhi Punyarthi, Michelle Herbert and Caitlin  
Burgess*



## Report from the Women and Gender Studies Student Union

This year’s WGSSU was off to a busy start. In October, we held our first WGSSU Pub Night event at the Green Room, where old and new members met, hung out and had fun. Some of our members participated in the Jiu-Jitsu Workshop the following day where women at the University of Toronto came together for a 2-hour long self-defence workshop.

In November, attention was brought to Gurjeet Ghuman, Manjit Panghali, Thayalini Subramaniam, Navreet Waraich, Malini Thayakumar, Neruuya Thayakumar who were among the women in Canada murdered during the months of October and November. Their deaths struck a cord in all of us. We were disturbed by the media’s portrayal of these women’s lives and that soon afterwards their deaths merely became statistics. On December 6, the WGSSU held a Speak Out/ Demonstration in opposition to violence against women everywhere. After the event, we were urged to continue to speak out and call attention to the many forms of violence in women’s lives. The Union started peer support groups, where women would be able to speak about experiences and issues of violence and women’s rights in a safe space. We started a “Stop the Silence/ End the Violence” Postcard Project, where individuals could write in or artistically draw their thoughts and feelings on violence – whatever form it may come in. These were some of the events we held during the course of the year, which we hope to continue in the new school year! The WGSSU thanks all those who supported and got involved in our initiatives.

## Graduate Women's Studies Students Association- Year in Review

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The Graduate Women's Studies Students Association hosted a number of successful events and workshops throughout the 2006-2007 academic year. In September we participated in the Graduate Orientation session to welcome new students to the Collaborative Program and inform new and returning students about our plans for the year.

We ran three informative workshops including: Strategies for Feminist Pedagogy, Workshop in Feminist Methods, and Strategies for Feminist Publishing. During our first workshop, Strategies for Feminist Pedagogy, Alissa Trotz and Suzanne Lenon (doctoral student in WGSI and SESE, OISE) provided teaching assistants with a number of strategies to further engage WGSI students and deal with difficulties that arise in the classroom. Deborah Steinberg (Visiting Scholar at WGSI and Reader in Sociology, University of Warwick) spoke about narrative research methods and Ronit Dinovitzer (Sociology) gave a compelling presentation on quantitative research in November's workshop, Feminist Research Methods. Our third and final workshop, Strategies for Feminist Publishing, was well attended despite March's snow and slush. This workshop featured Philanda Masters (editor of

Resources for Feminist Action), Katie Larson (doctoral student in WGSI), Bonnie McElhinny, and Reggie Modlich (Women and Environments International Magazine) who provided a number of helpful tips on how to get published.

Another highlight from 2006-2007 was the annual Graduate Collaborative Program in Women's Studies Symposium. This year's symposium, "Violence, Memory, Power" coincided with Dec. 6 and featured a variety of interdisciplinary panels that explicated the gendered nature of violence including "Institutional Violence," "State Violence" and "Theorizing Violence." The Symposium also included a plenary lecture by Bonnie Burstow (OISE) entitled "Electroshock: State Sponsored Violence Against Women."

We thank everyone who participated but we are extremely grateful to Alison Keith, Bonnie McElhinny, and Marian Reed for all of their kind assistance organizing the above events.

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## Graduate Student Awards, 2006-2007

Graduate Women's Studies Entrance Prize

Caroline Hossein, PhD student, Department of Political Science

Janka Seydegart Scholarship in Feminist Studies

Lichun Liu, PhD student, Department of Sociology & Equity Studies in Education, OISE/UT

City of Toronto Women's Studies Graduate Scholarship

Jennifer Ajandi, MSW student, Department of Social Work

WGSI Teaching Assistant Award

Suzanne Lenon, PhD student, Department of Sociology & Equity Studies in Education, OISE/UT

## Graduate Programs Report

*The New M.A. in Women and Gender Studies* Women and Gender Studies scholarship has developed so rapidly over the last 30 years that free standing MAs and PhDs are increasing yearly in the US and Europe. We are thrilled to announce that in the fall, UT will join the ranks of other strong Canadian universities in fielding a new master's degree in women and gender studies (at present, the MA is also offered, to our knowledge, at York, UBC, Simon Fraser, Dalhousie and Memorial University). This new master's program was approved by the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies last summer.

In September 2007, the Women and Gender Studies Institute will be welcoming its first cohort of twelve students into this new graduate program. The master's program is designed for students who have

completed an undergraduate B.A. or its equivalent in Women and Gender Studies, or a related area.

The master's students will be supported by the University of Toronto guaranteed funding package (a minimum funding package of \$13,500 plus tuition). These students will take core courses in Feminist Theory, Feminist Methods and Colonialism, Postcolonialism and Transnationality.

Although in the first year of the program, these graduate courses will only be open to MA students, we will be exploring ways of restructuring course requirements in the collaborative program in order to make these courses more widely available. We believe the launching of the new master's program will also create additional opportunities for enhancing the intellectual experience of the students in the collaborative program.

Because of our enthusiastic support for collaborative programs, WGSI has also become a participating program in six collaborative programs (Aging, Palliative and Supportive Care Across the Life Course; Asia-Pacific Studies; Environment and Health; Environmental Studies; International Relations; and South Asian Studies), so that our master's students can also have the benefit of participating in interdisciplinary discussions in other parts of the university. We hope to become a

participating unit in several other collaborative programs over the next year.



*Margrit Eichler presents the Margrit Eichler Award to Katie Larson and Sandra Tam*

*Collaborative Program in Women's Studies* The Graduate Collaborative Program in women's studies remains one of the largest and most popular collaborative programs at the University of Toronto. A unique, multi-faculty program, the GCWS currently includes 28 programs across 7 faculties (Arts and Science, Law, Library and Information Sciences, Medical Sciences, Nursing, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and Social Work) with over 100 cross-appointed faculty members. There are currently 47 Master's students in the collaborative program (the same number as last year) and 63 doctoral students (an increase of 7 students over last year's enrollment). We would like to welcome the departments of Classics and German as participating units. We have submitted a request for a name change in the collaborative program, to "collaborative program in women and gender studies".



*Marian Reed (Undergraduate and Graduate Program Administrator) greets students at the Graduate Orientation, Sept. 2006*

This name change has been approved at all relevant levels at UT, and is currently being reviewed by the Ontario Council for Graduate Studies. This summer, we will also submit a brief to the Ontario Council for Graduate Studies for renewal of the collaborative program, which is entering its 13th year this fall.

*Events for and by Graduate Students in Women and Gender Studies* The WGSJ regularly sponsors a series of events for graduate students in the collaborative program in women's studies. At the orientation event each fall, students in the graduate collaborative program have the opportunity to meet WGSJ faculty, as well as other students in the program. This year, Jacqui Alexander and Ashwini Tambe gave talks about their research. We also recognized students who had received graduate student awards in the past year. This year, the GCWS also sponsored workshops on (1) feminist pedagogy at which Suzanne Lenon, recipient of the first WGSJ TA Teaching Award, received her plaque; (2) feminist methods; and (3) feminist publishing.

In addition, students in JPW 3000 organized the annual research symposium on December 6th, in conjunction with the graduate coordinator Alison Keith. The theme of this year's symposium was "Violence, Memory and Power." It included a plenary panel on "Institutionalising Interdisciplinarity", with talks by Mariana Valverde (Sexual Diversity Studies and Criminology), Tanya Titchkosky (Disability Studies in Sociology and Equity Studies in Education), and incoming graduate coordinator, Bonnie McElhinny, as well as a plenary presentation by Bonnie Burstow. Twenty-three students presented papers during the symposium, in panels on topics as various as Sex, Struggle and the State; Knowledge Production & Religious Traditions; Gender, Race & Violence; Theorizing Violence; Nostalgia and Memory; Institutional Violence; and State Violence. Congratulations and thanks go, in particular, to Cheryl Auger, Allison Burgess, Gulzar Charania, Shaindl Diamond, Sarah Evans, Shari Goldberg, Cassandra Lord, Jessica Taylor and Sarah Turnbull for their work in organizing this event.

Thanks to all others involved in events throughout the year, including Cassandra Lord and Cheryl Auger, our out-going GWSSA representatives, and Marian Reed, for her cheerful and energetic support of all the graduate programs. Thanks also to Alison Keith, for all her work on many of the initiatives listed here!



Bonnie McElhinny, Graduate Coordinator, speaks at the Biopolitics and Technoscience series in Fall, 2006

## Women and Gender Studies Institute Sponsors Year of Language Events with Anthropology

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences designated 2006-7 as the Year of Languages in order to recognize the importance of languages in education, research, and cross-cultural engagement. Anthropology and WGSI sponsored a series of events which spoke to the units' shared concerns. Anthropology's long-standing strength has been a focus on culture, politics, society and economics in non-Western countries. Increasingly, however, anthropologists also engage in projects "at home", including studies of culturally diverse populations in Canada and elsewhere in ways that engage themes of globalization, structural adjustment and transnationalism. One of the traditional four sub-fields of anthropology is linguistic anthropology, which has been a particularly important site for the consideration of these questions.

An important emphasis at the Women and Gender Studies Institute in recent years has been redesigning the curriculum to have a more transnational focus, and sponsoring a lecture series on Gender, Transnationality and Citizenship to encourage scholarly attention to these questions. WGSI and Anthropology sponsored 3 key events which addressed the theme of "Provocative and Provoking Questions about Language and Gender in Global Transition." The first was a two-day workshop on language and neoliberalism which included keynote talks by Charles Briggs (Alan Dundes Distinguished Professor in Folklore and Anthropology at University of California Berkeley) on "Making Neoliberal Subjects: Communicable Imaginaries in News Coverage of Biomedicine" and Miyako Inoue (Anthropology and East Asian Studies, Stanford) on "What Do Women Want? Gender Equity and the Ethics and Aesthetics of Self in Neoliberal Japan". Briggs tracked the changing form

that the communication of biomedical information takes, and changing ideologies about how biomedical information will circulate. Inoue pointed out that "the study of neoliberal governmentality alerts us to the unstable political valence of all techniques and practices of gender empowerment. She warned that none of the fundamental critical strategies in feminist theory—identity, agency, difference, resistance—or in liberal democracy more generally—diversity, individual sovereignty, self-autonomy, freedom, citizenship—come with guarantees that they are essentially critical, liberating, or progressive in determinate contexts, as she tracked the way some of these concepts were invoked in Japanese workplaces engaged in new practices of affirmative action. Other papers presented at the conference were by Kori Allan, Lindsay Bell, Marnie Bjornson, Christian Chun, Susanne Cohen, Jonathan Larson, Bonnie McElhinny, Shaylih Muehlmann, Abigail Sone, Zoe Wool and Jie Yang.

The other two events were keynote talks by Penelope Eckert (Linguistics and Anthropology, Stanford; Director of Feminist Studies) who offered a general survey on work on language, gender and sociolinguistic variation and Niko Besnier (Professor of Cultural Anthropology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam, and Deputy Director of the Amsterdam School for Social Research) who challenged recent arguments that humiliation is the necessary result of people's encounters with modernity by analyzing stories told by women on Nukulaelae Atoll, in the Central Pacific.

# Research Profile - Bonnie McElhinny



Bonnie McElhinny is the graduate coordinator at Women and Gender Studies and a faculty member in Anthropology and Women and Gender studies. Her commitment to interdisciplinary studies, like those fostered by the WGSI, has been evident throughout her studies and her career. As an undergraduate at the University of Pittsburgh, she had a triple major in English literature, philosophy, and linguistics, and was one of the first two recipients of a new honors degree, the B.Phil, from the Honors College at that institution. As a master's student she obtained a M.A. in linguistics from Stanford University, and an M.A. in English literature (with a master's thesis on Mary Wollstonecraft) from Johns Hopkins University. She completed a Ph.D. in linguistics at Stanford University. Her thesis examined the impact of a quota-hiring affirmative action hiring program on the Pittsburgh police department, and included detailed studies of officers' interactions with citizens.

After graduation, she held a Fulbright at the Kristiina-Instituutii (Christina Institute for Women's Studies) at the University of Helsinki, and a Mellon Postdoctoral position in Social Thought and Analysis at Washington University in St. Louis, before accepting a position in Anthropology at the University of Toronto. She notes, wryly, that as a graduate student in linguistics, she sometimes felt that her work outside the discipline (as a TA for feminist studies, as someone regularly taking courses in anthropology and modern thought and literature, as a fellow at the Humanities Center) was regarded as dilettante-ish, but she found that it was precisely her ability to work across disciplines that provided her with postdoctoral and job possibilities. Her advice to students who are grappling with some of the barriers that ideas about disciplinary boundaries or normalcy place on what constitutes an appropriate intellectual project is to suggest that students think, first and foremost, about what and who will make their project as strong as possible, rather than asking how it fits into a particular discipline.

Bonnie has published in the areas of feminist theory and linguistics, gender and globalization, feminist anthropology, gender and imperialism (especially U.S. imperialism in the Philippines) and she currently holds a SSRHC grant for the study of Infants, Imperialism and the International Regulation of Motherhood: North American Interventions into Filipino Child-rearing Practices, 1908-2008. Her career honours include: Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research Richard Carley Hunt Post-doctoral Fellowship, National Science Foundation Graduate Fellow, Fellow of the Stanford Humanities Center, and Mellon Fellow in the Humanities.

She traces her academic interests in women and gender studies and in political economy to growing up with 5 younger sisters on a family farm in the rolling foothills of the Appalachian mountains, in Western Pennsylvania. Bonnie has, she notes, worked for pay since she was in grade six. She has two children (a daughter, 8, and a son, 6), and two step-children (a step-son, 22, and a step-daughter, 21). She firmly believes in asking the university, which can consume all of one's waking hours, to respect evening and weekend time as time for family. Bonnie is an avid cyclist, and regularly commutes by bike from her home in eastern Toronto (45 minutes, each way) to the St. George campus. She's even been spotted in drizzly weather, or at temperatures of  $-7^{\circ}\text{C}$  (her lower limit, she emphasizes!). She does yoga once a week and 20-30 minutes of strength training about 3 times a week, and engages in what some now call "metabolic strength training" but she calls "playing tag on the playground with my kids."

# Research Profile - Ashwini Tambe

Professor Ashwini Tambe's solid training in the fields of international studies, global political economy and critical cultural studies serves her well in navigating the richly interdisciplinary terrain of feminist studies. She finds that this background gives her a perspicacious vantage point from which to explore how concepts travel, and are reformulated, across disciplines. Her region of specialization, colonial South Asia, also affords her a context outside North America from which to explore the history of feminist issues and movements. The courses she teaches for WGSI and the History department typically offer these multiple vantage points.



Ashwini's committed and extensive research agenda has been animated by the problematic of protection: how the shadow of potential coercion accompanies any relationship of protection. Her Ph.D. dissertation, now revised into a book manuscript (*Codes of Misconduct*, forthcoming University of Minnesota Press, 2008), critically examines the colonial state's measures to protect populations from venereal disease and prevent 'sex trafficking' in Bombay. The book demonstrates that regardless of whether laws accepted prostitution or sought to abolish it, the threat of police coercion was always a problem for those who worked in the sex trade. It shows that regulation and criminalization of prostitution were not contrasting state approaches to prostitution, but rather different modalities of state coercion. In examining this specific dimension of colonial governmentality, the book evaluates the uses and limits of Foucault's approach to law and sexuality in colonial settings.

Ashwini's next book project looks at another complicated relationship of protection, that between states, parents and girls in India. She traces changes in legal standards for the age of consent for sexual relations, through which the state exerts a protective, as well as disciplinary, relation to female children. She asks how social standards defining childhood and appropriate sexual activity have shifted through the twentieth century, and compares parental anxieties about girls' sexual practices in two contexts, the 1920s and the 1990s. She frames this study from a transnational angle, critiquing how nationalist state policies are created in relationship with, and against, imperial/ international standards and conventions defining childhood.

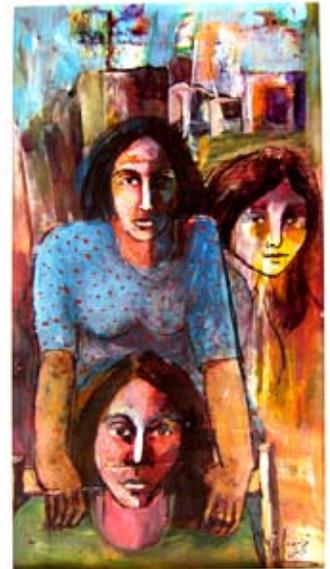
Ashwini is also co-editing a volume on transnational approaches to subaltern mobility in the Indian Ocean, with historian Harald Fischer-Tine of the International University of Bremen. Thinking about colonialism in dynamic terms, this volume covers the social milieus of European, Australian and East African underclasses within South Asia. The social groups featured in this volume threatened the racial, class and moral order instituted by British colonial states. Because of their perceived 'in-between' and unruly character, these groups created problems for both privileged European and non-European elites, and also entered into conflicts with other underclasses.

Ashwini's interdisciplinarity shows in the range of journals where her work has been published, such as *Feminist Studies*, *Gender and Society*, and the *International Feminist Journal of Politics*. She is our newest appointment, and promises to emerge as a major player in the growing body of exemplary feminist faculty that make WGSI such a rich center of international feminist scholarship. We count on her to help foster a committed and rigorous interdisciplinarity at WGSI, as we unfold our MA programme.

# Memories, Memoirs and the Arts

Women Political Prisoners of Iran

Please visit [www.utoronto.ca/prisonmemoirs](http://www.utoronto.ca/prisonmemoirs) to view the website for Shahrzad Mojab's research project, "Memories, Memoirs and the Arts - Women Political Prisoners of Iran" which features a compilation of books, art, music, film and more on the subject of political prisoners in the Middle East with a focus on women in Iran.



## 'Peace', 'Post-war Reconstruction' and Women's NGOs

Shahrzad Mojab and Nadeen El-Kassem, a doctoral candidate in Adult Education and Community Development and the Collaborative Program at the Centre for International Development, spent about a month in Nepal from December 2006 to January 2007. Hosted by the All Nepal Women's Association-Revolutionary, the largest and most influential women's organization in Nepal, they studied and documented the role of women's NGOs in the on-going peace negotiations in the wake of a decade of war (1996-2006).

This research opportunity extended Mojab's current SSHRC-funded project on the role of women's NGOs in Iraq (a country experiencing war) to Nepal (a country in the process of peace negotiations). Iraqi and Nepalese women have been resisting multiple forces of oppression for decades under conditions of patriarchal-nationalist regimes, feudal-religious gender traditions, social formations such as caste, class, and urban/rural cleavages. This myriad of indigenous patriarchal hierarchies is further complicated by the ways in which it intertwines with the two nations' experience of colonialism, occupation, and globalizing capitalist relations.



Despite vast historical and cultural differences, women of both nations share similar challenges in resisting cultural, national, and global forces of subordination. Our study shows that external global forces such as the US, India and China, in the case of Nepal, and the US and the UK in Iraq, as well as internal forces such as tribes, castes, monarchy (in Nepal), nationalists, and theocrats (in Iraq), converge on the control of women's movements.

Editor: Alison Keith

Design: Luci Mok