Spring 2002

The Race/Gender Resource Center’s newsletter provides information about scholarly activities that focus on race, class, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality and other issues of social inequality. Announcements of upcoming events sponsored or co-sponsored by the Center are listed. Please contact the Center at x71545 if you would like to post an announcement. We invite you to visit the Center at Room 3B Marts Hall, opposite the post office. The Center’s library includes over 30 journals, books, films in race, class, ethnicity, nationality, gender and sexuality studies, as well as newsletters and teaching resources.

For more information about the announcements listed below, feel free to contact the Center, or visit us on the web: http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/rgrc/

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## COMING EVENTS

**Monday, April 1**  
**Uphill LC, 4-6pm**  
"Start the Love" picnic. Sponsored by Sirens, V-day and Office of LGBT Awareness

**Monday, April 1**  
**Downhill LC, 8:00pm**  
Speakout and Take Back the Night March. A symbolic effort to pledge resistance to the abuse of women in commemoration of National Victim's Rights Awareness Month.

**Tuesday, April 2**  
**VL Auditorium, 7:30pm**  
*Spielman Lecture*  
Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Sexual Politics*. An exploration of sexuality and how sexual practices intersect with race, class, gender and similar systems of inequality in the U.S.

**Tuesday, April 2**  
**LC Cave, 12-1:00pm**  
Student Diversity Forum

**Wednesday, April 3**  
Diversity Forums:  
- Administrative, 8:30am in Walls Lounge  
- Faculty, 12-1:00pm in LC Cave  
- Support Staff, 1:30-2:30pm, Personnel Conference Room  
- 2:45-3:45pm, Personnel Conference Room

**Thursday, April 4**  
National Day of Silence in support of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights.

**Friday, April 5**  
**Terrace Room, 6pm**  
Annual Diversity Celebration.

**Thursday, April 11**  
**VL 101, 4:00pm**  
Lecture - Globalization Institutions and the Territorialization of Industry in the Caribbean: Exploring the Connection. Professor Mullings, Geography, Syracuse University

**Tuesday, April 16**  
Feminist Fiction Reading Group. Discussion of Sarah Water's *Tipping the Velvet*. Contact Elizabeth Crespo for time and location information (crespo@bucknell.edu).

**Thursday, September 26-through Saturday, September 28**  
**Race/Gender Center Conference on Race**  
*Color, Hair, and Bone -- The Persistence of Race into the 21st Century.*

**October**  

*Remember to check our Calendar of Events throughout the semester at http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/rgrc/
Race/Gender Center Conference on Race

September 26th to 28th, 2002 / Bucknell University
“Color, Hair and Bone: The Persistence of Race into the 21st Century”

Commentary by Glyne Griffith

On September 26th through 28th, the Race/Gender Center will host, at Bucknell, an interdisciplinary conference on race. The conference title is an adaptation of a statement by W.E.B. DuBois who characterized color, hair and bone as the visible markers of that egregious socio-political problematic, racism. When DuBois stated, almost a century ago, that "the problem of the 20th century [was] the problem of the color line," there was muted hope in his pronouncement that the close of the second millennium would also bring a close to the scourge of racism in the Americas. However, despite the legal and other gains of the 1960s and 70s (the civil rights movement, affirmative action, the Black Arts Movement etc.) we know that the problem of racism has not been entirely resolved.

During the past few decades, the police beating of Rodney King and ensuing L.A. riots, the dragging death of James Bird in Texas, the police shooting of unarmed Amadou Diallo in New York, racially motivated riots in Cincinnati, "racial profiling" of black drivers by New Jersey state troopers, disproportionately high Federal incarceration of Black and Latino men, and backlash against people of Arab descent in the aftermath of September 11th have proven the tenacity of racism as a continuing social and cultural ill. In light of these events, it seems sadly clear that the problem of the 21st century will also be the problem of the color line.

All of us might well agree that talking frankly and constructively about racism is a very challenging exercise. Honest discussions about racism are not typically the stuff of polite conversation, and it is often difficult to initiate and sustain forthright discussions even in fora established for the sake of such conversation. On our own campus, during the recent semi-public forum in response to the reported “blackface” incident, for example, I was struck by the way in which responses tended to quickly resort to emotional, “feel-bad or feel-good” interaction and then to the well-intentioned but somewhat flawed notion that what we really need are more educational programs about how we should treat one another.

Such approaches are obviously not without value, but we need to remain sanguine about the relative limitations of these approaches as our primary or preferred strategy in addressing the historical legacy, and systemic and institutional nature of racism. Oftentimes, discussions about racism move immediately to personal anecdote and individual emotional response. So we feel angry, or guilty, or compassionate, or frustrated, or any range of feelings across the emotional spectrum. The intense, emotional roller-coaster ride, having reached its peak, frequently leads to a kind of denouement of feeling, and we descend, feeling drained, spent. There is a sort of catharsis to be derived from such emotional experiences, but that does not mean that we have really addressed the vexing and continuing problem of systemic and institutionalized racism or discovered a solution.

At such fora, it is not unusual to hear admonitions for individuals from this or that racial group to make the effort to get to know individuals from another racial group, and so on. Such efforts are not unimportant, but we are likely to be disappointed if we believe that merely socializing across racial lines will seriously undermine the social structure of racism. We need only recall the legacy of slavery to recognize that racial lines were frequently crossed then too, even at the level of sexual intimacy, but the visible presence of the mulatto on the landscape of racial categorization did not radically alter this landscape. Indeed, the carefully assigned nomenclature, mulatto, sambo, quadroon, octaroon, mustee, musteefino, and so on, served to demonstrate the rigorous policing of the social boundaries between blackness, at one end of the racial continuum, and whiteness at the other. Racist discourse successfully intervened to reaffirm a social reality that was clearly denied by human intimacy and the biological reality of miscegenation. In our own context, we remember only too well the problematic of the “one drop rule.”

The point here is that racism is able to accommodate illicit crossings of its established racial boundaries and still remain intact because such boundary crossings establish exceptions to the rule without fundamentally altering the rule. Because racism operates at the level of stereotype, it provides us with knowledge of the group that is not our own group. We know ourselves because of our difference from the group which constitutes the “not us.”
Problematic and racist as this knowledge is, it nevertheless constitutes a form of knowledge. That is to say, if we think of knowledge as not only equated with truth, but also importantly equated with power, then the questionable truth value of some stereotype might nevertheless be held in abeyance by the important power value of that stereotype. In other words, the concepts of knowledge as truth, and knowledge as power can often be at odds. The truth claim of some event or situation may be questionable and yet that event or situation still manages to function as a practical form of knowledge in the socio-political world because it has consequences for the location and maintenance of power and privilege.

Although biology has long ago disproved notions of polygenesis, and has indicated, by means of objective analysis, that there are no significant biological differences among so-called racial groups, this finding has not eradicated racism. Even if we could insure that everyone was privy to this scientific knowledge, it is reasonable to assume that racism would still not be eradicated, because racist knowledge participates in power and privilege, and usually, if one has power or privilege, one does not easily relinquish or share it.

For this reason, sanctions, both legal and ethical, also have an important role to play in the socio-political struggle against racism. Such struggle is not simply concerned with the subversion of a certain sort of racist knowledge, but it is also deeply concerned with the social reality of racism as a naturalized justification for maintaining inequities of power and privilege in society. Consequently, the conference committee, chaired by Linden Lewis, and comprising Elizabeth Crespo, Renee Gosson, Pawan Dhingra, and Glyne Griffith, is as interested in academic analyses and deliberations grounded in legal perspectives as in those intellectual analyses which derive from perspectives indebted to the social sciences, and the arts and humanities. To this end, the two keynote speakers for the conference are professors Kendall Thomas of Columbia University School of Law, and Wahneema Lubiano of the Department of English, Duke University.

The submission deadline for paper and panel proposals is March 31st, and these should be submitted to conference chair, Linden Lewis in the Department of Sociology. For further details on the conference, please visit our web site at: http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/rgrc/cfp.htm. Please share the information about the conference with students and colleagues.

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Ambiguities and Anomalies of Gender in Poetry

Jennifer Perrine

On March 6-9, I attended the 2002 Associated Writing Programs (AWP) Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. At the conference, I participated in a panel entitled, "Lipstick/Leather: Poets Celebrating Ambiguities and Anomalies of Gender," with Stacey Waite, Maureen Seaton, Samuel Ace, and Denise Duhamel. Our panel focused on gender politics and poetry, with an emphasis on work that embodies "butch," "transgendered," and "femme" identities, as well as poetry that negotiates the areas between and outside of those realms.

In my portion of the presentation, I read selections from my poetry and addressed several areas of gender politics, including the relationship between race and gender, the limitations of the names we have for our genders, and the subversion of the butch/femme dichotomy. I also discussed how I became involved in gender politics, and the following is an excerpt of that discussion:

For me, thinking about the multiplicity of genders that can inhabit a single body grew out of thinking about how several races or ethnicities can play out in one individual. In other words, before I thought about transgender issues, I was thinking about transracial issues. Of course, at some point I realized that race and gender are intimate with one another, and that one cannot address issues of race without taking into account one's gender identity, or vice versa. I also came to understand that the boundaries of gender are different for people of different races. This came out of reading M. Butterfly, a play by David Henry
Hwang that in part deals with the idea that Asian people, no matter what gender identity they may assign themselves, are all "feminized" by "Western" culture. In other words, according to Western culture, there can be no such thing as a butch Asian. The following poem is part of my struggle to play with stereotypes of Asians as femme and to carve out a space where the intersection of Asian race and butch gender can exist.

War Bride

White men always want her
to be a war bride. They want
my father to have carried her home
from Nam like a photo
of a pin-up girl, creased and stained,
but still pretty in that voiceless way.
They want my mother
to speak broken English when she speaks at all,
to stumble over her letters and transpose
her idioms and look confused
when they laugh at her speech. They want her
to shuffle her walk and wear her hair
in one long, raven braid
the length of her spine, like a twisting rope
for my father to pull when she tries to run.

But the truth is, my mother
was born in northern California, met my father
in a textile plant in New Jersey.
Truth is, I am a second generation
Chinese-American, which makes me
a second generation war bride,
a native of atomic power
and evasive maneuvers.
It means I learned early how to scream
like a pinned-down girl,
how to break language
before it could break me,
how to transpose the words
that would keep me
laughing and confused.
It means I wear my hair shorn like a monk
or a warrior, so I cannot be caught,
and I twist my spine into one long stride
to walk farther
and farther from the wedding
of whiteness, from the men
who would make me their bride.

"War Bride" is reprinted from Gertrude: A Journal of Voice and Vision.
Bucknell hosted the Mid-Atlantic Women's Studies Association (MAWSA) annual conference on Saturday, February 16, 2002. MAWSA is a professional organization of women's studies scholars and teachers in the mid-Atlantic region. The theme of this year's conference was "Locating Women's Studies." Professor Glynis Carr (English) took the initiative to bring the conference and coordinated the planning committee, which consisted of herself and Professors Elizabeth Crespo, (sociology, race/gender) and Coralynn Davis (women's and gender studies). A cohort of Women's and Gender Studies majors and minors, members of Bucknell's women's issues organization for students, Sirens, and other Bucknell students volunteered to help out with the conference. Special thanks to Sarah Wilson, Courtney Spohn, Melissa Smicker, Rebecca Rupp, Courtenay Mastain, Valerie Lam, Shannon Gigliotti, Michael Collins, and Natalie Alvarez.

A number of other Bucknell students, faculty and staff attended parts of the day-long event, that brought 100 visitors from colleges and universities as varied in location and type as Clarion College, Illinois State University, Zayed University (United Arab Emirates), Princeton University, the University of Toronto and the Community College of Philadelphia.

Carolyn Sachs, Director of Women's Studies at The Pennsylvania State University delivered the keynote address on "Global Connections in Women's Studies: Why Place and Space Matter," The conference ended with a dramatic performance written by Pat Bond, performed by actor Marjorie Conn and entitled "Lorena Hickok and Eleanor Roosevelt: A Love Story."
The Scholarly Excellence in Women's Studies awards for the best previously unpublished essays on any aspect of women's studies were presented at the Conference. Michelle Yates, Penn State, won the undergraduate student award for her paper titled "Pleasing Pussy: Exploring Women-Centered Pornography". The graduate student award went to Mona Lee Krook from Columbia University for her paper titled "Re-thinking Norms and Institutions to Promote Women’s Political Presence: France and the United Kingdom in the 1980s and 1990s."

Eighteen panels covering a variety of topics related to this year's theme took place, including panels organized by Bucknell faculty. Coralynn Davis, (women's and gender studies), presented a paper titled "The Thief and Her Betrayer? Feminist Musings on the Dialogic Construction of Selves in Ethnicographic and Development Encounters". Jody Blake, (art and art history) delivered a paper titled "Nobody ever said that the old souls were living inside those glass jars": Family Photographs, Ancestral Memory, and Julie Dash's "Daughters of the Dust". Marilyn R. Mumford, (English), organized a panel titled "Working Where We Are: Rural, Collegial, Generational Challenges".

Karen Bojar, Professor of Women's Studies/Gender Studies at The Community College of Philadelphia, and Kathy Miller, President of Pennsylvania NOW presented panel on "Forging Connections Between Women's Studies and Feminist Activism". Their discussion addressed an important theme of the Conference and provided participants with a successful model for creating these connections. Karen Bojar will be coordinating the next MAWSA conference at the Community College of Philadelphia in Philadelphia, PA in the spring of 2003. The general theme of the conference will be "Through the Different Stages of Our Lives: Issues Across Generations."

A number of other activities generated by Bucknell's dynamic feminist community of students, scholars and staff offered visitors to our campus a sample of the creative projects that happen at Bucknell on an ongoing basis. The Women's Resource Center presented "A Room with a View", a multi-media exhibit on the struggle of women living in a culture critical of our bodies. "The Barbie Project", also launched by the Women's Resource Center was available for viewing. This was a life size eye-catching sculpture of the famous blue-eyed blonde that demonstrates the degree to which beauty ideals in our country are truly unrealistic and abnormal. A performance of "The Vagina Monologues" an all-student production of Eve Ensler's provocative play was performed on campus that evening as well.

The MAWSA conference was an important event for Bucknell because it gave us a forum to familiarize Bucknell students with areas related to women's studies teaching, research, and practice inside and outside the classroom. It gave faculty an opportunity to feature their scholarship, and network with other scholars, programs and centers.

**CONFERENCES AND CALLS FOR PAPERS**

**Keeping Our Faculties: Addressing the Recruitment and Retention of Faculty of Color in Higher Education.** April 21-23, 2002, University of Minnesota
http://www.oma.umn.edu/kof

**National Conference for College Women Student Leaders: Women in Charge, Washington, D.C., June 6-8, 2002**
The conference will be preceded by a Public Policy Institute on June 5-6 at American University in Washington, D.C. More information, including registration materials, is available on the American Association of University Women web site at [http://www.aauw.org/9000/nccwsl](http://www.aauw.org/9000/nccwsl)

**International Perspectives: Global Voices for Gender Equity, Wyndham Hotel, Washington, D.C., November 15-17, 2002**
The symposium will explore how women have used their education to address literacy improvement, peace education, conflict resolution, governance, and education for people with disabilities, with a focus on emerging nations. The symposium planners seek diverse participants, including people from traditionally
underrepresented groups, and particularly encourage submissions from academics, practitioners, field researchers, and community outreach personnel. All proposals must be received by May 1, 2002. Symposium information, including Proposal Submission Form and guidelines, can be found at www.aauw.org/7000/efi/, or e-mail intsymp@aauw.org

CALL FOR PAPERS - JOURNALS

Science and Society, Special Issue: Marxist-Feminist Thought Today
We seek to reappraise Marx's work, the Marxist heritage, and Marxist-feminist theory in an effort to understand the manifold ways in which capitalism affects the lives of women and men everywhere. We encourage prospective authors to explore both concrete issues, amenable to the use of empirical research findings, and theoretical questions having to do with poststructuralist, postmodern and postfeminist challenges to Marxism and to Marxist-feminism. We ask authors to explain how they view their framework to be Marxist as well as feminist. We especially welcome manuscripts and proposals from younger scholars. The coordinating editors for the issue are Editorial Board member Lise Vogel (Rider University, 2083 Lawrenceville Road, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648; lvogel@mindspring.com; 718-499-4952) and Guest Editor Martha E. Gimenez (Department of Sociology, Campus Box 327, University of Colorado at Boulder, Boulder, CO 80309; gimenez@csf.colorado.edu). Copies of proposals, abstracts, manuscripts, and other correspondence should go to both Vogel and Gimenez. The deadline for manuscripts is September 2002 and the issue is projected for publication in 2003.

Special Issue: Fictions of the (Trans)American Imaginary Modern Fiction Studies.
Guest Editors: Paula Moya and Ramón Saldívar. Deadline: September 1, 2002. As part of the ongoing project to re-imagine the central narrative tropes of American literary history, we plan to assemble a group of essays that discuss modern American fiction in relation to pivotal moments in the history of the U.S. as it belongs to the Americas. Our purpose is to make visible the centrality of Latinidad to the fictional discourses that continue to shape the American national imaginary. What can a U.S.-Latino Studies based project contribute methodologically to an understanding of modern American literary studies? Submit two copies of your essay plus an IBM-compatible disk (Microsoft Word preferred) to The Editors, Modern Fiction Studies, Department of English, Heavilon Hall, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907-1389.

Race/Gender Summer Grants
The Race/Gender Center is committed to supporting scholarship concerning gender, race, sexuality, class or other issues of diversity or social inequality. To advance this end, the Center offers summer grants to faculty for: (1) curriculum projects designed to integrate material on race, gender, class, sexuality or other issues of social inequality into new or existing courses; (2) projects designed to improve the academic climate for women and racial, ethnic or sexual minorities and (3) scholarly research projects pertinent to Race/Gender Center goals. A limited number of Reading Grants are also available. Deadline for submissions is April 21, 2002. For a complete description and guidelines please see our web page at: http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/rgrc/ or contact our administrative assistant, Martha Shaunessey at x71360.

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