

Intersections

March 19, 2007

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We're looking forward to continuing conversations about how to build relations between WGSS and the natural sciences.

Another successful, engaging WGSS retreat

By Joan Ostrove

The WGSS Department had its annual retreat at the Alumni House on Saturday, February 10, 2007. Almost 20 people attended, including faculty from a wide range of departments and students (from first years to seniors). We had good conversation, good socializing, and good food! Sonita told us about her upcoming adventures in Oxford – be sure to read her report in this newsletter.

Our agenda included a review of the revised Mission Statement (soon to be posted on the WGSS website!), and an extensive discussion of the requirements for the major. Among other things, we talked about an increased focus on historical perspectives in the major, a possible change in how students distribute their courses with the core faculty in the department, and the possibility of developing a link to the website that describes various ways to think about and fulfill the WGSS major. If you're interested in working on that last idea, contact Scott Morgensen (morgensen@macalester.edu). The requirements subcommittee has a few more details to work out, but you can expect to see a slightly revised description of the major in the 2008-2009 catalogue.

We spent the early afternoon talking about interdisciplinarity, how to build more permanent cross-listing relationships with other departments, and some exciting possibilities and questions posed by discussions between Scott Morgensen and Biology professor Devavani Chatterjea about ways to interlink their teaching. Devavani will be a guest speaker in Scott's Global AIDS course being offered next year, and we're looking forward to continuing conversations about how to build relations between WGSS and the natural sciences.

The spring has a huge number of exciting WGSS-related events, including a jam-packed and stimulating calendar of programs for Women's History Month. Many will have been successfully completed by the time you're reading this newsletter, but keep an eye out for upcoming events!



Race, Sexuality, and Globalization in the US: Reflections on Martin Manalansan

By Scott Morgensen

Manalansan's interdisciplinarity also models new ways to teach and do research in queer studies.

WGSS was proud to host as our February speaker Martin F. Manalansan IV, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Criticism and Interpretive Theory at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Manalansan's work has made crucial contributions to the emerging fields described by Prof. Roderick Ferguson (University of Minnesota) as "queer of color critique" and by Prof. Gayatri Gopinath (University of California, Davis) as "queer diasporic critique." In our introductory and intermediate courses in LGBT and queer studies, WGSS students read Manalansan's monograph *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora* (2003), as well as his articles "In the Shadows of Stonewall: Examining Gay Transnational Politics and the Diasporic Dilemma" (1997) and "Race, Violence, and Neoliberal Spatial Politics in the Global City" (2005). Each text has made a significant contribution to centering sexuality in studies of diaspora, globalization, and transnationalism; and to insisting that queer studies address how sexuality forms within racial, economic, national, and global power relations. Manalansan's interdisciplinarity also models new ways to teach and do research in queer studies. An anthropologist by training, Manalansan argues that queer studies needs ethnography in order to localize queer theory's heady reflections in the theories-in-practice of everyday life. Yet he also transforms social science theory and method by doing research in dialogue with critical theory, including by moving from the study of "social groups" towards how subjects form, cross, and disrupt identities by critically theorizing the relation of culture to power. Prior to taking his PhD, Manalansan worked for many years in Asian American and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS organizing. His ethnographic scholarship retains many direct connections to the everyday social and political struggles of queer people of color in the US and transnationally. As reflected in the 2005 special issue of *Social Text*, "What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?" (ed. D. Eng, J Halberstam, J. Muñoz), his work offers an index of the current reformulation of queer studies around the scholarly and activist interventions of queers of color.



Martin F. Manalansan IV

I invited students in WGSS 110, "Sexuality, Race, and Nation: Introduction to LGBT and Queer Studies" to reflect on what they learned from Manalansan's visit, drawing from his talk, his writing, and our conversations with him in class. On the following page is a small sample of their thoughts.

• • • Student reflections on Martin Manalansan

In Manalansan's article "Race, Violence, and Neoliberal Spatial Politics in the Global City," he talks about how the expansion of private, exclusive businesses and authority efforts in promoting a "quality lifestyle" with "lesser crime" remap the lives of queers of color in contemporary New York. He talks about consumerism and domestic privacy's roles in changing the queer of color scenes in New York, and how they are produced by heteronormativity. He also mentions the connection between consumption and identity, and how freedom and capitalism act together to create a new gay identity, which excludes many queers of color who don't fit into this gay, white, middle class category. After reading this essay, I realize how I have been influenced by the generic white, middle class gay image and taken this stereotypical gay portrait "for granted." This realization allows me to explore the constructed nature of the generic gay image and the violent effects such image has inflicted on those who are excluded from it.

Pei-Hsuan Wang

During his visit, Professor Martin Manalansan drew very interesting connections between neoliberalism, American culture, and how non-heterosexuals are perceived and treated in the present day United States. The neoliberal agenda has erected further barriers around people, based upon their ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion, and class. With the fear and prejudices from 9/11, individuals who do not conform to normatively white, middle class, Protestant, heterosexual identities are not merely marginalized, but increasingly criminalized. Any individual who does not fit neatly into the system with its rigidly defined boxes by not eagerly conforming to a role in consumer culture is assumed to be a threat to the mainstream American culture.

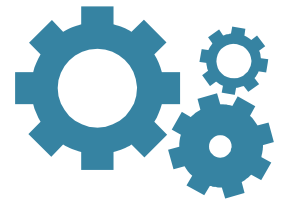
Maggie Hughes

Professor Manalansan's visit gave me a chance to explore a question that had been on my mind since reading his essay "Race, Violence, and Neoliberal Spatial Politics in the Global City." In his work, Manalansan referenced the majority opinion in *Lawrence v. Texas*, the U.S. Supreme Court case that overturned sodomy laws on privacy grounds. He pointed to *Lawrence* as a critical example of the sparse, privacy-oriented gay/lesbian politics that focuses solely on oppression based on sexuality and ignores intersections with racism and classism. I asked Professor Manalansan about the (somewhat little-known) fact that the petitioners in *Lawrence*, the gay couple who sued to have the sodomy laws overturned, were, in fact, interracial. He said he agreed that race had been buried, and that this was particularly ironic, since the original call that brought police to the scene was, in fact, racist and race-based.

David Seitz

It is incredibly thrilling to meet and interact in person with an esteemed scholar you have read in class. I found Martin Manalansan to be a down-to-earth fellow who does not mind talking at length about the link between neoliberalism and homonormativity. What I found most intriguing about his presentation though was the discussion of race and borders as they relate to queer sexualities. And lastly, it gives me hope to know that there are queers of color out there who both theorize and put into practice intersectionality, and bring queer theory closer to its full realization.

Linda Nguyen



Ms. Sarker Goes to A Certain University

By Sonita Sarker

Oxford University has invited me to be a Visiting Research Fellow at their International Gender Studies Centre. The IGS is a focal point for all the Oxford colleges and hosts interdisciplinary research, conversations, and other activities among their visitors and natives. IGS was previously titled The Cross Cultural Centre for Research on Women (CCCRW). Given our recent experience with issues surrounding changes in department titles—and perhaps change in general—the re-naming might be of some relevance locally, globally. Also, naming the institution often tends to add a gloss (you know, in the nature of oooh, Oxford!) that smoothens artificially a certain productive turbulence.

That's for another time...but perhaps not. As I describe what I'm doing there, perhaps these statements emerge in different ways. I'm writing a book on the responses of women intellectuals to ideologies such as fascism, capitalism, and socialism. The authors included in my project are Victoria Ocampo (Argentina), Cornelia Sorabji (India), Virginia Woolf (England), and Grazia Deledda (Italy). My work attempts generally to create encounters between literary analyses, cultural studies, and political theories. I am self-conscious when I list names and approaches because I am aware of at least two elements. One is that names of individuals are associated with countries; the other is that the list of approaches indicates discrete fields. Both these itemizings function as conduits as well as constraints—people easily understand and can visualize names of individuals, countries, disciplines, etc. and therefore I use them; at the same time, I am in search of a language to convey the awareness that names give the illusion of borders as real. One of my goals in the book is to deal with how Virginia Woolf, to take one name, has always been for readers an amalgamation of how she appears to exist and what is conveyed through her writings. So, my attempt to assert how Woolf responded to the -isms of her time has to acknowledge this amalgam and juxtapose it against other writers' opinions. Similarly, I have to remain aware of the political function of nation-states and of disciplinary boundaries. In other words, the appearance of any entity inevitably invokes the arbitrary boundaries drawn around it that are, at the same time, convenient and materially effective. I am interested in the entity as it appears as well as how boundaries are believed to exist.

Well, the visit is already colored by my curiosity about how all this will be received by sociologists and political scientists, economic development theorists and historians, to list some of my cohorts' identities. My own entity and project, named as they are, will emerge only in that juxtaposition. Keep waving and smiling in my general direction!



Oxford University

Upcoming Events

WGSS Career Night

7:00-8:00 pm – March 21st

Harmon Room, Library

Conversation and information on the fields you can explore with a degree in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Alumni will share what they are doing in their careers, and how their WGSS degree influenced their choices.

WGSS Feminisms Today

11:50 am – March 27th

Old Main, 4th Floor Lounge

In honor of Women's History Month come hear Macalester Faculty talk about their work related to the Women's History Month theme: Women Create! Art, Identity, and Social Change.

Student Workshop in Queer and LGBT Studies

9:30 am – April 7th

Old Main, 4th Floor Lounge

In honor of a banner LGBT year at Macalester--our college ranking in the Advocate Guide for LGBT Students; the first Scots Pride LGBT Alumni Reunion--WGSS is proud to host its first "Student Workshop in Queer and LGBT Studies" which will highlight the excellent scholarship Macalester students are creating in these fields. The workshop will be held the morning of Saturday, April 7, beginning at 9:30 am.

WGSS Honors/Research Presentations

6:00 pm – April 17th

Carnegie 206

Students will present their Honors and Research Projects

In Honor of Women's History Month

For details on each event, please visit our website at:
www.macalester.edu/whats happening/womenshistory/

Edén Torres Reading	March 20
Community Art Project	March 21
"Women's Rights are Human Rights"	March 21
Celebration of International Women's Day	March 21
Sisters in Spirit Lunch	March 22
Cherrie Moraga Performance	March 22
"Safe People, Safe Spaces"	March 26
Volunteer Opportunity	March 26
WGSS Feminisms Today	March 27
EnviroThursday	March 29

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Alumni Shot-Spots



Megan Stevenson – '04
Individual Gifts Associate
The Minnesota Opera

Megan handles fund raising gifts under \$2500, plus the \$100,000 Telefunding campaign for the Development Department. In addition to coordinating the Rehearsal Reception and speaking before every new production opens; she organizes the Donor Appreciation Concert and Donor Dress Rehearsal.

WGSS Career Night
Wednesday, March 21st
7 pm – Harmon Room, Library

Danielle Nelson – '05
Associate Director of Annual
Fund at Macalester College



My WGSS major taught me the tools to enact a values-driven career and helped me to see that the words, "queer" and "feminist" don't have to be erased from my life after college. My internship opportunities through my WGSS major also gave me the hands-on skills that allowed me to get a head start and steer my career path to where it is today. My former work at the Development Director at the Minnesota Women's Political Caucus and now my work as the Associate Director of the Annual Fund here at Macalester College have currently narrowed my focus into non-profit fundraising, but my background in WGSS gives me the confidence to do almost anything. While I am still young and relatively new to the workforce, I know that because of my strong convictions, backed by strong theory and lived experience and an ability to think critically--thanks to Sonita's Senior Capstone, I will be prepared to move forward with achieving my goals, such as holding public office, running a small business, helping build a culture of philanthropy amongst people in my life and basically taking over the world!

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