

Voices

NOVEMBER 2003
VOLUME 6 NUMBER 1

A PUBLICATION OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR FEMINIST ANTHROPOLOGY

The Doubly Bound World of Kurdish Women

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The original caption of the picture below¹, which appeared in the 2000 Amnesty International wall calendar, tells us that it is of "Kurdish refugees" as they "collect wood for heating, village of Doganli, Turkish Kurdistan 1997." While other women trudge through the snow by behind her, a woman has taken a moment out of her task of burden-carrying to pose for the camera. Most likely at the behest of the photographer, she affects a needy, helpless person reaching out for assistance.

By the most commonly-accepted definition, a refugee is a person who has been granted protection from violence after crossing a state border. Such people rarely live in villages; they are usually housed in cities or in camps. The women in the picture are residents of a village built by the Turkish army after it destroyed their homes in its conflict with Kurdish separatists. The image shows them gathering wood, most likely for use as fuel. This suggests the agrarian lifestyle that Kurds, and other people in the region's villages, have lived for centuries. While not materially rich, this life is nevertheless one in which people meet their own needs through cash-cropping, subsistence agriculture, and gathering, as the women are doing in the picture.

If a careful reading of this photograph and its caption thus suggests self-sufficiency to a greater degree than it suggests flight and dependency and that the women are not "refugees" in the conventional sense of the term, no doubt there is a reason Amnesty International chose this image for its wall calendar, which is distributed annually all over the world: a list of the world's most famously battered ethnic groups would surely include the Kurds somewhere near the top. A disproportionate number of Kurds have become refugees and asylum seekers or displaced within their own countries. Around 25 million Kurds (perhaps more, perhaps fewer, since reliable census data does not exist) live mainly in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. As many as one million may now live in the West, mainly in Western Europe. Most went to the West in search of refuge.

This essay is about situatedness: the situatedness of the Kurds in global and regional context, of Kurdish girls and women within the larger body politic of Kurdish communities. Kurdish girls and women live in a double bind. As Kurds, they suffer the effects of political instability and repression. The sources of these are multiple, and implicate everyone from consumers of oil to Western governments. Until very recently, one source, Saddam Hussein and his government, loomed largest over the Kurds I know. Fear, displacement, and violence have been a way of life for many Kurdish girls and women. Hundreds of thousands were victimized on Saddam's orders. Secondly, Kurdish girls and women suffer the effects of being females in a heavily male-dominated society in which their movements

and achievements are restricted, sometimes violently such as in the case of honor killings.

I have chosen to tell their story through the lens of my own situatedness as a female Western anthropologist studying the Kurds and living in the Arab world. As I show, the lines between the Kurds' experience and that of my own have become blurred, and this has recently made for some rich moral dilemmas. As I have spent time with the Kurds I too have experienced the binds of working under political repression and a restrictive gender system.

My entrée into the world of the Kurds began in the mid-1990s in California when I was searching for a research topic in cultural anthropology. I was interested in social change in traditional societies when the local population of Kurds caught my attention. The Kurds I met in California were mainly from Iraq, and it seemed all of them reported having suffered and fled, in most cases from the Iraqi government. When I learned that their traditional homeland had enjoyed relative political stability and openness to the outside world since the 1991 Gulf War, I decided to try to carry out my research there.

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"Kurds in Doganli, Turkish Kurdistan, 1997."
Photograph courtesy of © Sebastião SALGADO (AMAZONAS Images/CONTACT Press Images). All Rights Reserved.



Editor's Note

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It is a great honor to have been asked to edit this issue of VOICES, the newsletter of the Association for Feminist Anthropology. We have not had a "regular" issue of VOICES in a couple of years; in 2002, Sandi Morgen edited a special issue of VOICES on the critical topic of "Women and Impoverishment." [This special issue is still available for purchase. Single copies can be ordered for \$13.00 each (but there is a discount for multiple-copy orders) through the American Anthropological Association, 2200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 600, Arlington, VA 22201 (ISSN 1538-2680)] Prior to 2002, the previous editor of VOICES, Suzanne Baker, edited several issues of VOICES and it was a challenge for me to live up to the high standards she set.

In thinking about the intersection of my own academic career with feminism and feminist anthropology, I realize that I was extremely lucky to have launched my graduate studies at UMass in 1989 in tandem with the publication of the landmark collection *Gender and Anthropology: Critical Reviews for Research and Teaching*. Edited by Sandi Morgen, a past president of AFA and then a faculty member at UMass in the Women Studies Program, *Gender and Anthropology* brought together a now classic collection of review articles on feminist anthropology from all four sub-disciplines, demonstrating the fluorescence of exciting new research on gender that had emerged out of the ferment of second wave feminism, and providing tools for constructing undergraduate courses that allowed us to teach against the andocentric tropes (like "man the hunter") that had often bedeviled introductory courses in particular.

In celebration of the 16th birthday of the Association of Feminist Anthropology, I thought it would be appropriate to pay tribute to the historic importance of that original publication by having four anthropologists contribute short review articles on the current state of feminist anthropology in each of the four sub-disciplines. Pam Stone (Biological Anthropology), Lynn Meskell (Archaeology), Dana-Ain Davis (Feminist Methodologies in Cultural Anthropology) and Noelle Molé (Linguistic Anthropology) have each done a masterful job of bringing us up-to-date on some of the ways that feminism continues to produce new and exciting insights in all of anthropology's domains.

As this publication goes to press, the news from the Middle East continues to be grim. As all of us as feminist scholars know, in times of war and conflict, women and children overwhelmingly comprise the largest number of casualties. In recognition of the grave geopolitical context of this particular moment, I am grateful to Diane King for providing us with our "cover story" on "The Doubly Bound World of Kurdish Women." This article will also appear simultaneously in a journal entitled *Al-Raida*, published by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World located at the Lebanese American University in Beirut. I thank the editors of *Al-Raida* for their collegiality and generosity in making this reprint possible; in my correspondence with *Al-Raida* it was a lovely moment for me to be able to feel a human connection to scholars the Middle East in the midst of the divisive anti-Muslim and anti-Arab policies promoted by the current US administration. I also thank the two artists, photographer Sebastião Salgado and painter Azhar Shemdin, for allowing us to reprint their work with this article.

In keeping with our spirit of democratic egalitarianism, we also wanted to use VOICES to provide space for new voices in feminist anthropology.

Margaret Wehrer's article "Racial Diversity and Antiracist Practices in Women's Organizations: Any Links?" is taken from her recently completed dissertation and deals with the critical issue of how race, class, sexuality and disability serve to both connect and to divide women in the context of their attempts to organize across these boundaries.

Past issues of VOICES included other features such as book reviews and resources for teaching. Over the past year, we have been extremely fortunate in having Laura Ahearn, who was also this year's Program Chair, undertake a complete overhaul of our website where this kind of material will now be posted making it more timely than what we can accomplish in a yearly publication. If you have not visited us on the web recently, we encourage you to do so to admire the work Laura has put into making the site both attractive and useful.

URL: <http://sscl.berkeley.edu/~afawebl>

More thanks again are due to Laura Ahearn in her capacity as 2003 Program Chair, and to Program co-Chair Dorothy Hodgson, who together have organized a full roster of panels at the 2003 meetings of the AAA, including two Presidential/Executive sessions: (1) "The Other Side of Peace: Women and Globalization," organized by Lynn Bolles (U Maryland) and Nandini Gunewardena (UCLA); and (2) "Author Meets Colleagues: Peggy Sanday and Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy," organized by Susan Sered (Harvard).

Over the next year, we look forward to more events and activities to mark the celebration of our 16th year as a section of the AAA. Don't forget to keep a look-out for information about the Society for the Anthropology of North America (SANA) conference to be held in North Carolina in April, an event for which AFA, along with several other sections, will be a co-sponsor. Information about the conference will be posted to our website as it becomes available.

Lastly, this issue also includes brief remarks from our out-going president, Lynn Bolles, and our in-coming president, Mary Anglin. Both have been long-time activists and feminists, dedicated to the cause of building AFA into the kind of organization that is capable of providing a social, a political and an intellectual home for all of us within the larger body of the AAA. If you are a new member, or not yet a member of AFA, we urge you to join us and to become involved all of the activities — organizing panels and sessions, serving on the board, working on our many projects such as the newsletter and the website — that will continue to ensure feminist voices will always have a strong lead role amidst the sometimes cacophonous chorus of vocalists that together make up our ever-growing and vibrant discipline.

Voices is a publication of the
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A Message from Our Out-Going Chair

THINGS THAT ARE INTERESTING

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On December, 1930, Zora Neale Hurston, scouting out potential fieldwork sites in Honduras, wrote back home to one of her professors, Ruth Benedict. Writing from the offices of the United Fruit Company, Zora says "There are several things which I think that you would be interested in. I hope so anyway." (Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters p. 197). Following that train of thought of Zora's, there are several things of interest here that I would like to share concerning past and upcoming events of the AFA.

First and foremost on this list is a hearty welcome to all. The AFA is a very dynamic section of the community of anthropologists both within the AAA and outside of the academy. 2003 was a particularly active year for the AFA, as the section played a major role in developing the theme of "Peace" for the annual conference of the AAA. The AFA was also one of the sponsors of the SANA/CASCA meetings held this past May in Halifax, Nova Scotia. A number of AFA members participated in that conference as well. Faye Harrison organized great sessions for the IUAES in Italy in July, and conversations begun in Italy are continuing on that group's listserv. I am sure that each one of us can add to this list of events where an AFA was present and visible!

Needless to say, so much of our work as feminists is shrouded by the on-going wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Liberia, Palestine, Israel and other troubled areas of the world. Each day, AFA members as individuals and as members of other groups seek equitable conflict resolutions to end the violence. They lobby for the end of the debt crisis and demand equal rights and justice for all. The 2003 AFA sessions planned for November during the AAA are testaments to AFA members' commitment to understanding the root of conflict; how it is gendered in acts unmentionable, and how it becomes embedded in numerous cultural and social locations.

There are other "things of interest" that look to the future. To begin with, Mary Anglin (Kentucky) will become the next AFA chair right after the annual meetings. (See her remarks elsewhere in this newsletter) There are new members of the Board too, including Cheryl Mwaria (Hofstra) as secretary, and treasurer, Pamela Kendall Stone (Western Michigan University). Last, but not least

Florence Babb (Iowa) becomes our new chair-elect! As board members change, please remember that the AFA is a very democratic organization. It thrives on its diversity across all the ways that feminist anthropologists see themselves. Feel free to become involved in whatever capacity suits you that will keep the AFA moving forward.

As Zora remarked in another letter to Ruth, "I hope that all the things are going well with you" (September, 16, 1941, Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters p. 462)

Carla Kaplan, editor, Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters.
New York: Doubleday, 2002.

A Message from our In-Coming Chair

FEMINISM IN PRACTICE

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Earlier this month (September, 2003), I attended a "Breast Cancer Town Hall Meeting" in northern California. A committee consisting of public health workers, community activists, and residents in the urban neighborhood where the meeting took place had organized this event. Through the work of volunteers, the upper floor of a neighborhood church was transformed overnight into a women's health clinic with spaces for acupuncture, massage, clinical breast exams, diabetes and blood pressure screening, mammography, and consultations with a physician and the main floor rearranged to accommodate registration, lunch for 150 participants, and the afternoon meetings. The morning clinic was free to attendees, seventy women in all, most of whom had no regular source of health care. Accordingly, clinic providers and organizers made sure that no one left the clinic space without referrals and specific plans for continued care.

Lunch was catered, with salads, hot entrees, desserts, and there were white tablecloths and flowers on all the tables. The afternoon presentations included a question and answer session with a breast cancer specialist and a panel of women of color who offered their own accounts of diagnosis and treatment for breast cancer and strategies for contending with problematic care. Finally, there was a table staffed by women from community groups, as well as larger organizations that addressed cancer and women's health more

generally. In that limited space were to be found information on mainstream approaches to cancer prevention/treatment, support groups for women of color, organizations providing complementary and alternative medicine to women with limited (or no) income, and activist organizations addressing the politics of breast cancer.

All in all, it was an amazing event. It seemed to me an example of a community event that addressed the dignity of women's lives as well as the problematic realities of health care for poor women. The word, "feminist" was never explicitly used; nonetheless, this event was clearly conceived of and executed in the best spirit of feminism.

I left California wondering, not for the first time, about how feminism is defined, who currently uses this term, how feminist anthropologists bridge the gulf—or not—between academic theor(ies) and practices related to gender equity/social justice. So I am proposing that over the next two years, we, as members of the AFA, address this cluster of issues through the theme of "Feminism in Practice." I am not sure if there should be a question mark after the title, but I offer the following questions as a starting point for further discussion:

Is feminism within the academy enough?

Can we or do we, as anthropologists, make feminist knowledge useful beyond the academy?

What other kinds of contributions—beyond the production of theory and anthropological texts might feminist anthropologists make in the context of non-academic practice?

What have anthropologists learned from studying activism and/or feminism in practice?

What forms of knowledge are produced and called upon outside the academy, and what are their implications for feminist anthropology?

This is a call for the membership of the AFA to consider these questions, and add still others, as we develop workshops, panels, and other kinds of discussions about "feminism in practice." I invite you to email (manglin@uky.edu) or call (859-257-1051) me, as well as to present your ideas at our annual business meeting and other fora sponsored by the AFA.

Last and most important, I want to thank A. Lynn Bolles for her excellent leadership of the AFA over these past two years and her gentle mentorship of this Chair-elect. Hers is an act all but impossible to follow. Thankfully, there will be many more opportunities yet for all of us to continue to benefit from her conversation and wise counsel.

Linguistic Anthropology and Feminist Theory: Language and Gender Studies

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Dialogues between linguistic anthropology and feminist theory have been instrumental in bursting open tightly bounded notions of gender, and moving towards a relational, multiple, and conflicting conceptualization of gender that is practiced, performed, and/or constituted through language.

Gender and language research parallels in many ways the study of language and culture, shifting from reified dichotomies to more synthetic, fluid theorizations. Robin Lakoff's (1975) book *Language and Women's Place* described a speech style that she dubbed "women's language." This view of gender as indicative of a specific (heterosexual) way of speaking was common in the late 1970s and 1980s, with insightful contributions on the topic provided by scholars like Daniel Maltz, Ruth Borker, Pamela Fishman, and Jennifer Coates. Deborah Tannen (1990), a linguist, famously analyzed miscommunication between heterosexual couples as a platform for exploring language and gender in her popular book, *You Just Don't Understand*. Since the early 1990s, with the rise of anti-essentialist third wave feminism, previously held assumptions regarding gender and speech were revised. Moreover, as linguistic anthropologists including Elinor Ochs, Bambi Schieffelin, Majorie H. Goodwin, and Bonnie McElhinny studied diverse cultural landscapes, the enterprise of a natural pre-determined "women's language" or "men's language" was found insufficient to describe a range of cultural contexts.

Language and gender studies have productively utilized the insights of Pierre Bourdieu's practice theory. Practice theory has been an essential tool to grapple with such challenging issues as structure, agency, domination and resistance; Sherry Ortner has been instrumental in disseminating this theory within anthropology. Additionally, Laura Ahearn's work has been critical in applying practice theory to agency and social transformation in the field of linguistic anthropology (see Ahearn 2001a, 2001b). Also in favor of a practice-based approach, Bonnie McElhinny (2002) has emphasized the strengths of its critical engagement with feminism, antiracism and postcolonialism. Finally, Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnel-Ginet's (1992) notion of a "community of practice" has generated theoretical innovations on such topics as speech communities, identity, and queer speech.

Revolutionizing feminist scholarship, Judith Butler's notion of performative language uniquely combined the work of theorists like J. L. Austin, Mikhail Bakhtin, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault to reconceptualize language, power and subjectivity. In *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler rejects sex as the conceptual 'once upon a time' to gender's 'ever after.' In turn, linguistic anthropologists investigated what words did in constituting gender, framing language as essential in the production of gendered bodies. In pieces like Joanna Chanell's (1997) analysis of a phone conversation between lovers, she argues that a series of utterances reiterating love and sex are not just "talk," but words that actually enact sex itself. Similarly, Wendy Langford's (1997) investigation of British couples' use of private names and behaviors nullifies the distinction between speaking and doing. When compared to earlier linguistic anthropological studies, these approaches enable us to explore the ways in which treating language as a social action frames everyday interactions in a different theoretical light.

Deborah Cameron's work is another excellent example of work that challenges received notions of women's speech, namely as gossip or cooperative speech, and

men's speech as typically competitive or dominating speech, ideas that were popularized by early research on gender and language. She takes up performativity theory most directly in her discussion of a conversation between five American male undergraduate students (Cameron 1997). Cameron attends to the unsaid where the unarticulated threat of homosexuality haunting homosocial conversation among the group is submerged by labeling gender deviants as "gay." As Cameron demonstrates, what is not said in talk may be just as important as what is said. She makes a significant intervention in our understanding of homosexuality, showing how it is indexed in terms of gender (as opposed to sexual) deviancy, including behaviors such as desiring unattractive women, dressing poorly, or having poor social skills. In Don Kulick's (2003) "No," he argues that acts of saying 'yes' and 'no' to sex enact culturally-specific sexual subjectivities, concluding that transgressions of a normatively gendered 'yes' or 'no' may be linguistically and socially marked (Kulick 2003). Informed by performativity theory, Kulick raises interesting questions about pleasure, language and sexuality, considering language as a set of power-charged sayings and doings. Kira Hall (2001) has suggested that linguistic anthropologists might combine performativity with practice-based approaches like Eckert's in order to combine Butler's insights with the richness of ethnographic research.

Linguistic anthropologists interested in queer theory have used insights from feminist theory in treating language, gender and sexuality as three intersecting axes, not as easily discernible units (Kulick 1998, 2000, 2002; Campbell-Kibler et al 2002). Concerned with how research attempting to nuance gender dichotomies ultimately reproduces them, Janet Bing and V. Bergvall (1996) urged researchers to problematize the division of speech into gendered binaries—suggesting that the inclusion of sexuality may achieve this goal. A fixed notion of 'gay' language has moved towards an inquiry into queer ways of speaking, an argument largely attributed to Anna Livia and Kira Hall's (1997) volume *Queerly Phrased*. Don Kulick (1999, 2000, 2003) has challenged linguistic anthropologists to create new theoretical tools to analyze not sexual orientation and language, but desire and language, ultimately questioning the project of "queer" linguistics itself (see also Leap 2002).

Recent work on language and gender have found fruitful ways to talk about subjectivity, culture, power and desire, in ways that complicate how gendered or sexual identities are made in language (see *Language and Communication Special Issue: Language and Desire* 2003). Cameron and Kulick (2003) point to desire as "inquiry into the semiotic process through which desire, of all kinds (not only homosexual, and indeed not only sexual) is constituted and communicated" (94). Examining desire as opposed to gender or sexuality sidesteps a number of troubling binaries: heterosexual versus homosexual, and, more importantly, man versus woman. That an exploration of desire is polyvalent (commodity desires, sexual desires, and desires for recognition) makes desire a productive tool for ethnographic and linguistic research.

Linguistic anthropologists influenced by postcolonial and feminist theory have sought to use language as a tool to understanding systematic inequalities. Viewing gender as part of a larger constellation of constituting difference—racial, ethnic, national, class—in language, proponents of this perspective, including Catherine Lutz, Susan Gal, Mary Bucholtz, and Lila Abu-Lughod, have carefully shown that 'gender' cannot be isolated from other axes of power. Furthermore, gender and language differences are undergirded by broader political and economic inequalities. With hints from Bourdieu (1981), Foucault (1978), and Silverstein (1979), linguistic anthropologists interested in the processes of state power, domination and social inequalities have formulated innovative questions and methodologies to connect a notion of difference in the study of language ideologies (see Schieffelin et al 1998, Philips 1998, Kroskrity 2000). In the context of Zambia, Debra Spitulnik (1998) studied how language ideologies in radio broadcasting constituted sameness and difference. More generally, Paul Kroskrity (2000) has

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ANTHROPOLOGY ACROSS THE FOUR FIELDS

Feminist Archaeologies of Identity and Difference

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A resolute commitment to identity and difference, to the place of politics at all levels of engagement and the recognition of embodied experience are all hallmarks of feminist theory and practice. So too is a strong sense of historicity, in terms of both the experiences of individuals and the concomitant understandings we craft to explain and theorize their situatedness. These would seem inescapable acknowledgements in our current global milieu, but they are perhaps not immediately obvious as concerns for those whose subjects of enquiry are peoples and cultures located in the distant past. Denying the power of these ideas, however, is no longer tenable for archaeologists given the theoretical and social developments in our discipline over the past two decades. The place of individuals and communities, their culturally grounded experiences of self, identity, embodiment and social relations are now center-stage and have come to replace the limited understandings of societies directed by top-down forces, determined by their physical environments, bereft of agency or innovation, that somehow move en masse without recourse to reflexivity.

How does a feminist perspective inform such disciplinary developments in archaeology? I would argue that the salient aspects of feminist theory, in all its diversity, are applicable and indeed beneficial to our scholarly enquiry. Indeed they have a significant role to play at all stages of archaeological research, from design to implementation and public presentation. We have been asked here to recount how our individual research has been shaped by the interventions of feminism, and for this I return to Australia and my own education in the early 1990s. As an undergraduate, the centrality of gender as a primary structuring axis of experience was made apparent to me on two distinct fronts: in both the theory and the practice of archaeology. First, Stephanie Moser, then a young PhD candidate at the University of Sydney, taught a seminar in which, for the first time, we considered seriously the role of gender in the discipline. It was an exciting breakthrough that radically changed the ways in which I approached my own undergraduate thesis and later graduate research. Feminist theory was a key component in Moser's work (1995), one that made it imperative for her to seek out feminist archaeologists in the US and Britain during her research. This need to travel beyond Australia was captivating and perhaps gave me the courage to leave in 1994 for a similar reason. At this time in Australia scholars who explicitly claimed a commitment to feminism did not hold academic positions; this situation has gradually changed.

Second, my experience of both the university and of the discipline made me aware that gender played a crucial role in the expectations held by professors for their students, including their opportunities for fieldwork, for postgraduate work and thus for their career trajectories. One male professor advised me to change my appearance, cut my hair off, dress differently, and yet another suggested I consider an alternative career despite my academic achievements. Some might say that Australian archaeology is, or was, very different from other fields in terms of its academic culture; I believe, however, that experiences such as mine are still common today in many institutional settings. While anecdotal and obviously personal, these two experiences contoured the ways in which I approached engendering the archaeological past, most notably in terms of my analysis of ancient Egyptian social dynamics, an analysis contextualized by my embrace of an explicitly third-wave feminist agenda around identity issues. And pragmatically, such

experiences made me more determined to undertake my postgraduate work abroad in England: a scholarship at Kings College, Cambridge led me further along the feminist path and towards other theories of difference. Kings College was the first college to admit women in Cambridge and somewhere I felt intensely proud to be. Three years later I would hold a research fellowship at New College, Oxford: interestingly, it was the first college to admit women in Oxford and the sister-college of Kings. There I was also Tutor for Women and started the Queer Theory Forum, two things that put my feminist politics into practice.

As an archaeologist working on a richly documented New Kingdom Egyptian community 3500 years ago, my work was inevitably tied to questions of identity, both in the realm of lived experience, as well as that of the next world because of the elaborate preparations that were invested upon specific individuals in death. My graduate research, conducted in the archaeology department at Cambridge University in the mid 1990s, began first as an engendered examination of difference; specifically, I began to consider the ways in which women resisted the domination of their male counterparts. Very soon this second wave approach yielded to the acknowledged complexities of a third-wave perspective, influenced by feminists such as Butler (1990, 1993), Gatens (1996), Grosz (1994, 1995), Hekman (1990) and others. The data themselves presented challenges and offered up all the complications of identity, not simply framed by gender difference, but also as they are embodied in hierarchies of inequality contoured by class, status, ethnicity, age and so on. Third-wave feminism provided a powerful match for the messiness of the ancient data since it considered the formation of identity as fluid and complex, and was not simply reliant on a singular construction of womanhood. As Sylvia Walby (2000: 195) makes clear, such a politics of difference falsely assumes that it is possible to separately identify holistic communities, each with their own distinctive values. It is axiomatic that divisions run through most communities, fracturing them on gendered, generational, religious or ethnic lines, for example.

The adoption of a third-wave position further allowed analyses of masculinity as a cultural formulation that might also be interrogated alongside its counterpart, femininity. So it, too, provided a compelling framework to utilize in exploring such issues that historically had been given less prominence in archaeology, including understandings of sexuality, notions of the body, and even age as salient structuring devices that tend to overlap and complicate each other, rather than standing as discrete features of any given society.

Egyptian evidence of this time period is particularly rich: it includes the archaeology of houses, tombs, and individual bodies, iconography representing a spectrum of Egyptian society and a vast corpus of textual documents from literary texts to personal letters. It was this evidence that was marshaled and analyzed through the lens of third-wave feminism that formed my book, *Archaeologies of Social Life: Age, Class, Sex Etc. in Ancient Egypt* (Meskell 1999). Rather than continuing to focus disproportionate attention on the lives of elite pharaohs and queens, it was the study of women's lives that ultimately proved invaluable for unlocking our understanding of Egyptian social life. While several books had taken women as their main subject matter, what was needed was an engendered analysis that considered identity more broadly and from the standpoint of social relations. Ancient Egyptian women's experience was obviously diverse, depending on whether they held elite or servile status, were married or divorced, unmarried or widowed, local or foreign, young or old, and so on. Accounts of abuse, adultery, and neglect all added to a complex, often disturbing picture. Yet certain instances of social freedom, economic independence, ritual expertise and personal agency were constant reminders that these were real individuals, not simply historical fictions or cultural dupes. In *Private Life in New Kingdom Egypt* (Meskell 2002) I took this approach even further, with a focus on daily life, struc-

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Pracademics: Doing Feminist Anthropology with Girls and Young Women

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The power of feminist anthropology and research lies in the way that we view participants as complex active agents, who are capable of interpreting the meaning of their own lives. Given that research participants are not viewed as passive objects, feminist anthropology can seek to collaborate with participants in designing projects. Just as important is creating the space to allow participants to take part in the research process. As such, the project of feminist anthropology may be seen as one aspect of "pracademics," that is bridging theory and practice. Bridging theory and practice is instrumental in being productively engaged in social justice work from a feminist perspective and research can be a catalyst for social change. This article briefly offers one example to illustrate how pracademics, as I understand it, can be actualized in the service of feminist anthropology.

Transforming Ideals of Equity and Democracy into Shared Research

According to Mullings (2000:20) there are research tools that facilitate the process of feminist anthropology including ethnography and participatory action research. These research practices raise the volume of the voices of those who lie outside the centers of power.

Participatory research, one hallmark of feminist methodology, is grounded in principles of inclusion, equal rights and equal access. It is limited not only to knowledge acquisition, but is also concerned with the process of gaining that knowledge. Including the research subjects in both the decision-making process and subsequent data analysis encourages the broadest possible distribution of power between researcher and researched.

The challenge is in transforming the ideal of equity into a lived experience of shared power. Participatory research provides people with the analytic and practical tools they need to document their lives and offers a language for articulating the unique strengths of a group. Using this model we can ensure that the voices and expertise of our constituents are not lost in the effort to achieve scientific validity (Fullwood, Debold and Davis 2000).

Partnering with study subjects requires that they be actively involved in all or various stages of the research design. At its most successful, participatory research extends beyond the idea that researchers are studying subjects, and invites them to produce more nuanced and profound analyses of the problems or issues with which they are faced and to improve the conditions of their lives (Park 1993). Here, I recount one example of my own collaborative work with girls and young women to illustrate the power of working with "subjects" as co-researchers.

Collaborating with Young Girls and Women

In 1998, I was asked to serve as Co-Director of Research for the Ms. Foundation for Women on the Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women (the Collaborative). This project was designed to "redefine and strengthen the field of girls' and young women's programming and was a collaborative effort between researchers, funders, girls, young women and the programs of which they were a part. We wanted to capture low-income girls' leadership activities and to nurture their activism. Of course, this focus meant that dominant ideologies about young

women had to be revised given that low-income girls and young women are often depicted as potential problems. They are labeled in negative terms and are often represented stereotypically as being "at risk." Instead, the project sought to underscore the ways in which girls and young women are forces for change in their own lives as well as in their communities (Fullwood et al. 2000)

Work was done with 12 girl-centered programs across the country in both rural and urban environments. We worked with low-income White, African-American, Latina, Laotian, Cambodian, Vietnamese and Native American girls from a range of places including: rural Appalachia, Philadelphia, Chicago, Atlanta, New York City, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Long Beach, and Richmond, California; Denver, Colorado; Lame Deer, Montana and Portland, Oregon. Employing a Teach/Learn model, we set out to substantiate how girl-driven programs build girls' leadership skills. To ensure that we were seen as collaborators, we, the researchers called ourselves the Learning Team. The Learning Team co-authored with the young women and their program directors a participatory research project that was in fact driven by the young women participants.

Preparation for the research phase involved building the research skills of program staff and girls as well as the capacity of their programs to collect and utilize data. Each program received a site visit from members of the Learning Team to assess individual programs' capacity to engage in research. To ensure that girls were involved as equal partners and had as much voice as the professionals, tremendous investments were made to develop their capacity to participate. A research curriculum was developed and a series of regional cluster meetings were held to help program participants understand the research process. The goal was to demystify evaluation research and emphasize the relevance of evaluation research to community work with girls.

A Learning and Inquiry Workgroup meeting was held to design the research component. Ultimately, the program staff and girls framed the hypotheses, developed research questions and devised data collection methods. The young women named themselves the Young Women's Action Team (YWAT). Their research question was "How does being in a girl-centered program impact girls' lives?" After exploring and critiquing several methods, they decided upon two methodologies that would be used to investigate the question: structured interviews and photojournaling. In planning the research, YWAT determined that young women and girls would be interviewed twice over a six-month period. Through photojournaling they captured young girls' and women's participation in program activities. My role was to train program participants in the data collection process, provide them with the equipment and resources necessary to complete the project, manage the data collection spread across a wide geographic area, provide support to the YWAT members, train them on data analysis and coordinate the write-up of their findings.

Young women reported how empowering the project was. As one participant from Brooklyn, Karen, said:

I was given a chance to research how young women are affected when they participate in a girl-only program. It has been an invaluable opportunity to show society how we as young women can and are capable of making positive change. If given the time, respect, space and skills we can do incredible things (Fullwood, et al. 2000: 8).

They devised mechanisms to ensure the continuity of data collection, by training other young women in their programs. They called each other for support and relied on the Learning Team members for technical assistance. Over six months, YWAT took over 250 photographs, conducted nearly 60 interviews with young women ranging in age from 11 to 20 years old.

The public was able to view the photographic data, which were transformed
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ANTHROPOLOGY ACROSS THE FOUR FIELDS

Feminism In Biological Anthropology

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Feminism in the sciences is a story that is still being written. In anthropology it is an uneven tale of subfields, where archaeology and cultural studies have embraced and fueled explosive dialogues surrounding feminist scholarship, but biological anthropology remains an endnote to that story. This unbalanced narrative is deeply rooted in biological anthropology's close ties to the medical sciences in which assumptions of "objectivity" define the work and are questioned when the scholarship is described as "feminist" (Schiebinger 2003). Feminism in the sciences is often dismissed as part of an "anything goes" relativists' camp (Conkey 2003). In addition, feminist scholars have long been suspicious and critical of science as a bastion of male privilege, infused with male values and interests. Several decades of close analysis and critique reveal that the most relevant sciences to women's lives often produce the most inequality (particularly in such areas as biomedicine and reproductive technology). It is for this reason that it matters a great deal that feminist models and critiques are used to understand with accuracy and explanatory precision the nature and extent of the inequities that exist in scientific research and in the methodologies that researchers utilize in conducting studies.

Fausto-Sterling (1985), Keller and Longino (1996) and other feminist scholars identify 5 different types of feminist critiques of science. These include: (1) equity studies that document obstacles women face in education, employment and funding; (2) studies that examine the sexist uses and abuses of science and technology; (3) research that questions the possibility of scientific objectivity and shows that all scientific work is value laden and conducted within historical and political contexts; (4) work that utilizes literary criticism and historical interpretation to find hidden symbolic and structural meanings in scientific claims and practices; and (5) the creation of feminist epistemologies that provide a foundation for an alternative understanding of how knowledge and beliefs are grounded in social experience. In the application of these kinds of critiques, most notably in primatology, evolutionary studies, and health, the goal is not to cease doing science, but to shift and reframe the context within which scientific activity takes place.

When studies emanate out of feminist approaches in bioanthropology they tend to be reflexive, acknowledge the contextual values that influence the research and the biases and the role that history and sociopolitical factors play in the scientific enterprise, and, they acknowledge the ways in which gender influences how knowledge is shaped. Just as Ruth Behar and Deborah Gordon (1995) produced the volume *Women Writing Culture* in response to *Writing Culture*, edited by James Clifford and George Marcus (1986), in bioanthropology we have Adrienne Zilberman and her colleagues (1981) who produced the collection *Woman the Gatherer* in response to Lee and DeVore's (1968) *Man the Hunter*. *Women in Human Evolution*, edited by Lori Hager (1997) which is perhaps one of the more recent important volumes, synthesizes a great deal of feminist scholarship in bioanthropology. These works attest to the strength of women scientists who take on huge territories previously dominated by male scholars, and promote analyses influenced by feminist theories.

While biological anthropology is still an area that is largely dominated by males and prevailing masculine paradigms, the very participation of women as researchers in the field brings new perspectives into the discipline. This participation in fieldwork and in laboratory analyses serves to broaden the view of female biology in cross-

cultural perspectives. This is especially important as the female life-history is marked by her passage into, through, and by the completion of her reproductive cycle, all distinctly biological, but shaped by cultural contexts. Recently within the anthropological discourse, there has been a very strong feminist critique of the medicalized female body (see Davis-Floyd and Sargent 1997; Devries et al. 2001; Ehrenreich and English 1972; Graham and Oakley 1981; Martin 1992; Rapp 2000; Stuart-Macadam and Detwyler 1995). The reproductive female has also been used as a centerpiece for examining sexual politics globally through feminist and activists' perspectives (Ginsburg and Rapp 1995). But, for the most part, this dialogue has been dominated by cultural anthropologists rather than by biological anthropologists.

Why have biological anthropologists shied away from feminist discussions and continued to work within, instead of against, the value laden (androcentric) models rooted in historical and political contexts? In my own research questions such as these are very important as androcentric notions of biology (particularly reproductive biology) concretize assumptions about the roles and identities of women. These assumptions served to immobilize women; because of their bodily functions— they menstruate, give birth, lactate, and raise children—they were represented as passive. In addition, in the past, women were assumed to have died young as a result of pregnancy-related complications, thereby dismissing the opportunity to investigate other possibilities. This resulted in a failure to examine the larger contexts and more interesting questions about women, health and inequality. Contemporary studies have now revealed that worldwide, women in marginal and agricultural settings are vulnerable to higher rates of morbidity and early mortality due to preventable pregnancy-related health problems (Population Reports 1988), but these "at-risk" women are also documented as working long hours at subsistence activities as well as at child rearing (Harris and Ross 1987). This evidence strongly suggests that these women shoulder both the burdens of pregnancy and its risks along with strenuous workloads. Clearly relationships exist connecting women's multiple roles and lower status with poorer health in many societies, and there is reason to believe that the trajectory of gender asymmetries and increased health risks for women extend into the pre-colonial past, as well (Bentley et al. 1993; Goodman et al. 1995). But biological anthropological studies seem to miss this larger dynamic of health and inequality for women and continue to tout the line that women who die young do so only as a result of pregnancy related complications. Empirical data used to examine and support these "obstetrical dilemma" hypotheses focus on measuring the size and shape of the pelvis to prove that there is little variability, from pelvis to pelvis and subsequently from women to women. But where are the voices of women who have given birth? Where are the reflexive biological analyses that infuse the variability of biology and cultural buffers used to support and manage birth from many perspectives, not just from that of the pelvis?

To answer these questions, we need to briefly examine the foundations of biological anthropology and scientific (medical) inquiries which were initially aimed at understanding variation of the human body, differences in "racial types", and in promoting intense scrutiny of sexual differences ("sexual science"). These foci were tied closely to politics, religious belief system, and social contexts of the times, not necessarily to "true" biological measures. Furthermore, it is the "sexual sciences" that lay the foundational models for the future (or lack of) of the feminist scientific dialogue, and created the chasm between the cultural and biological discussion of the female body. As early "sexual sciences" were rooted in biological determinism, and were used primarily to "resolve debates about woman's proper role in society and the professions" (Schiebinger 1999:108), they often missed the importance of biological variability, while also perpetuating justifications for unequal treatment of women in many arenas. But surely, biological anthropology today has moved beyond these biologically deterministic models - or has it?

Primatology and evolutionary biology continue support early "sexual science" research, rarifying the concepts of "male the aggressor" and "female the passive"

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At the time, the Kurdish part of northern Iraq was not under the control of the Baghdad government; a Kurdish administration governed behind an internal border enforced in the air by the U.S., Britain, France and Turkey. People who were not of Iraqi origin, such as myself, were only allowed out of Turkey and into the region in conjunction with the relief and development efforts there. After lobbying several NGOs by fax, phone, and email, I eventually found one that would allow me to visit northern Iraq under its auspices. In return for pledging to generate data that would benefit the local population served by the NGO, I received border-crossing authorization.

On my first trip in 1995, I stayed for five weeks during which I secured permission from the Kurdish authorities to conduct research, and learned as much as I could about the social environment so as to design a research project that I would start the following year. I remember very well the day I first crossed from Turkey to Iraq at the Habur border-crossing. I hired a driver to take me from Diyarbakir, the main city in Turkey's Kurdish area, to the border a few hours away. At the border my luggage was copiously searched by gruff border guards as we waited in the scorching heat. Finally I crossed the bridge, where I was met by a representative from the NGO, an American man who worked as a veterinarian.

My first discussions with the American NGO personnel involved where I would stay, and this was determined by the local gender conventions. I had made it clear in correspondence that I wanted to be as immersed as possible in the local social environment, and I therefore insisted on living with Kurds. As a young unmarried female, however, there were few households that qualified. If I lived in a household that included one or more men, I would be the object of sexual gossip by the watching community. This would cause social problems not only for me, but for the host family. Households without men were few and far between.

One such household existed of which the NGO personnel were aware, and they had arranged for me to live there during my stay. A woman around the age of fifty who had been widowed several years earlier lived with five of her twelve children, daughters who ranged in age from early teens to early twenties. I was not the first outsider to live with them; they hosted another American, a woman who worked as a nurse for an NGO. Over the following five weeks the seven of them gave me a crash course in local mores. I hired one of the daughters as a translator and assistant. She and I made numerous visits to homes, NGOs, and the offices of local officials as I worked out the details of my research topic and settled on a plan that I would implement beginning the following summer. I returned to the US with plans to begin the following year with six months of language study followed by a year of residence in a village examining how villagers interacted with and understood the presence of international NGOs.

From the start, my introduction to Kurds and Kurdishness centered around the world of Kurdish girls and women. For me, the most striking feature of life for the girls and women I lived among was its restrictedness. During the initial weeks I struggled to learn the rules. I learned that it was considered uncouth to be seen eating in public, to walk alone anywhere, to chew gum in the presence of a man, or to drive a car. My research assistant and I took taxis and rode the bus around town, but she was very careful about where we went, and we reported all of our movements to her mother when we returned. Whenever possible, we stopped by her brother's shop near the main souq. A chat of a few minutes sufficed, and showed him and the watching community that we were not engaging in any unsanctioned behavior. As I got to know more people, I began to see this family as relatively liberal in its ways. In other households, the female members were even more restricted, and it is likely that in many families, the older members, both male and female, would have prevented the any female members of the household from working with me.

In 1996 I attempted to return to Iraq to begin my language study and fieldwork as planned, but arrived just as the Habur border was closed due to an incursion by the Iraqi army into the Kurdish area. I waited in Turkey for the political situa-

tion to stabilize and for the border to reopen, but neither happened as I waited for two months. Carrying out my research in Turkey was impossible due to the political repression of Kurds there, which was much in evidence. As an outsider associated with Kurds, I was also considered suspect. I was followed regularly by the secret police, interrogated in a threatening manner, and heard many testimonies from local Kurds of Turkey's violent repression. Faced with all of this, I made an unplanned trip back to the US. Determined to continue my trajectory of learning the Kurdish language and culture even if I was displaced, I visited a refugee English course for women and asked for their help. One woman told me that her husband was away working in another city, that she was living alone with her six children, and that I was welcome to come and live with her. I thus took up residence in my second Kurdish household, this time in California. Again, gender conventions dictated where I lived and among whom I associated. My host made it clear that I was able to stay only because her husband was away for an extended period. She guarded her movements and those of her teenage daughter in a manner similar to what I had observed in Iraq.

A few months later I was hired by a refugee resettlement agency as a counselor for Kurds evacuated from Iraq as a result of the same events that had prevented me from crossing the border from Turkey. The group I counseled had been employees of the NGO that had initially invited me to northern Iraq. We marveled at the unanticipated turn of events that led to our being together again, this time on the other side of the world.

In 1997 I tried again to return to Iraq. After waiting for two more months for border-crossing permission through Syria, I was finally successful. The moment I actually crossed the border is etched in my memory as a kind of homecoming. My involuntary displacement from the Kurdish region the year before, and attempts to reconstruct a Kurdish experience elsewhere, had rendered this "authentic" Kurdish locale highly desirable to me. I understood the longings for homeland that I had heard from diaspora Kurds with a new potency, one rooted in similar experiences.

I stayed for about a year, dividing my time between Dohuk, Zakho, and a village, again working under the double bind of gender and political repression. I didn't go anywhere alone for the first six months, and after that rarely and only by day. I dressed conservatively. I didn't look male strangers in the eye. When working with a research assistant, we went only to places pre-approved by her older family members. I practiced an awareness of my surroundings during every waking moment. In 1996 Saddam Hussein had announced a price on the head of all Westerners in Iraq. While the Kurdish administration assured me that I would be safe, they agreed that it was best to be vigilant.

Kurdish Women's Lives

I began this essay with mainly logistical details in order to situate myself and the Kurdish girls and women I have come to know. Although living under a double bind, the Kurdish women I know have been anything but helpless like the woman in the picture purportedly is. Rather, from the start I was the one who needed them. It was Kurdish women who offered me refuge from a social milieu in which people would brand me as dangerous and unwelcome without the covering of "adoption" by a local family. Kurdish girls and women befriended me and shared their lives with me. They shepherded me through the awkward toddler phase of language-learning. They taught me subversive jokes. They listened to my endless questions about out-migration and other research topics. They opined endlessly about politics. While I paid rent and compensated my interviewees and employees, my academic funding sources only allowed me to pay at rates lower than those paid by other foreign entities, especially UN agencies. Kurdish girls and women shared their secrets with me, which in most cases involved the conflictedness of lives lived under multiple tyrannies from the gendered to the geopolitical. In my case, then, the image of the helpless Kurdish refugee has been inverted. Except for my stint as a resettlement counselor, it is I who have been dependent on the Kurds, not the other way around.

Navigating the 2003 War

In 2000, I moved to another part of the Arab world and began teaching at the American University of Beirut (AUB). I am now ensconced in a different cultural/political milieu than that of the Kurds. As I write this, Iraq has just been through another war: It is the third brutal war experienced by Iraqis in a generation, and the second in which Saddam Hussein's government has been pitted against a coalition dominated by the United States. Saddam's regime is now obliterated. What political order is next for Iraqis is, at the moment, ambiguous.

In the weeks leading up to the war, I sought out the perspectives of my Kurdish friends in order to compare them to the other voices I was hearing. Almost everyone in the (mainly Western) academic world of which I am a part by virtue of my profession, and the Lebanese/Arab world in which I now live, was in agreement on the war: they opposed it on the grounds that the United States had no right to invade another sovereign state on the other side of the world. They saw it as neocolonialism and hegemonic domination. It was to be opposed, purely, simply, and passionately.

My Iraqi Kurdish friends saw things quite differently. For many, the United States was not just doing them a favor by removing Saddam, it was making their dreams come true. The United States might have impure motives, sure, but that was of secondary concern after the first concern, that Saddam's regime should go. Here are some sample lines from emails and phone calls with Iraqi Kurdish women during April 2003:

[From Iraqi Kurdistan:] "We have been slaves for so many decades. I am praying for (the United States) to win this war. If they don't win, we are going nowhere."

"Here [in a US university town], most people are so anti-Bush that they are pro-Saddam... I find myself arguing bitterly with some of my long time friends..."

[From Iraqi Kurdistan:] "The future is uncertain, but one important thing is certain: that Saddam and his regime is out... nothing worse than that could happen to us in the future... Even though Iraqi Kurdistan has been free from Saddam for the past 12 years, we were not free from the fear of him."

[From a large US city:] "It makes all of us cry to see Iraq free and the devil out of the country. Here we are alive to see Saddam out of the country... and breathe fresh, healthy air again after three generations. Thanks to USA.... If it's for oil... today I think it is worth it!"

Quite a few Kurdish friends expressed apprehensiveness about the future of Iraq, but that was as far as they went. Their support for the attack on Iraq by the US and Britain contrasted sharply with the voices coming from my other two main circles, academia and the Arab world, the combination of which are embodied in Edward Said.

An Edward Saidian Dilemma

During the war, Edward Said came to visit Beirut and AUB. In his main public lecture at AUB on March 26, the hall was packed well beyond its intended capacity; the atmosphere seemed more akin to that of a rock concert than a lecture presented by a professor of English. He peppered his talk with anti-war assertions, to which the crowd responded with thunderous applause and cheers. He championed "humanism" and declared US President George W. Bush to be "the enemy of the humanist." His opposition to the war and those who waged it could not have been clearer.

In 1978 Edward Said took the literary world by storm with his book *Orientalism*, in which he charged that Westerners writing about the Orient and its peoples have written insensitively and toward manipulative, colonizing ends. "Knowledge is power," Said has famously said for decades. Said insists that researchers must give voice to the people they are portraying in their work.

When I read his book years ago as a Western student preparing to study this same geographic region, it jarred me into a determination to work hard at an authentic representation of the people about whom I would be writing.

In a more intimate gathering with AUB faculty a few days after his electrifying public lecture, Said further articulated the values that have made him famous: he advocated for empathetic, sensitive interaction on the part of writers toward their subjects, and encouraged us as teachers to teach in a way that accommodates diverse perspectives.²

I felt caught in a dilemma: My Kurdish friends had not drawn the same conclusion about current events as Said had. Would he advocate for my giving them voice, if they were saying things that did not jibe with his apparently straightforward moral interpretations of the Iraq war?

After the talk, Said fielded questions. Eager to present him with my conundrum, I explained that I was listening to the people around whom my research centered, and that what I was hearing conflicted with what he was championing. The people among whom I conducted research wanted the war, and if I understood him right, it was my job to listen to them. What did he advise?

Said smiled, as did my colleagues, some of them audibly. Then he said, "I am happy that I am not in your place." He paused, before going on: "It is a difficult situation." He paused again. "But you must write and explain yourself, and situate yourself along with the people you are portraying. Get the word out, and don't worry about what people think of what you have to say. Getting the word out will not be a problem today, with so many ways, such as the internet, to tell your story."

So here I am, telling my story. My Kurdish friends' stance on the war has been clear. What is more ambiguous is what they would have advocated for had they not been situated under the tyranny of Saddam's government. Would they then have focused on other tyrannies, like my Western and Arab friends in Beirut? I believe the only authentic approach is to interpret what they have said in light of the binds from under which they speak.

Shortly after Baghdad fell to American forces, I had heard so many Kurdish friends express their jubilation that, when talking on the phone to another Kurdish friend in Iraq, I asked a loaded question: "Are you happy? You are free! Saddam is gone!" My friend responded wryly, "Do you think merely removing Saddam will make me free? If you really want me to be free, if you really want it, you will have to kill my whole tribe. Oh - and after that you will have to kill all of the townspeople too, because if my tribe is gone the townspeople will start to busy themselves with watching me. No, I am not free now that Saddam is gone. It will take a much greater effort to make me truly free." She let her comments linger a bit as I struggled to find a response. Then she added in a more serious tone, "But yes, I am happy! Now that Saddam is gone people are dancing in the streets. Everyone is jubilant here."

My friend's comments speak to the complexities of Kurdish women's lives. One oppressor is gone, but others remain to be dealt with - in the case of this friend, with humor. Accounting for the pro-war stances of Iraqi Kurds - and I did not hear a single dissenting voice among them - could be as simple as listening to their experience. My own foray into their lives lent me a sense of the urgency they felt at the need to free their homeland of the fear of Saddam, even at any cost. And as my friend noted above, only halfway in jest, other binds remain, especially the one that keeps girls and women from reaching their potential.

I hope for a world in which there is no longer a need for portrayals of "Kurdish refugees," whether authentic or not, on Amnesty International calendars. I hope for more inversions of the kind I experienced as a person dependent on the kindness of Kurdish people rather than as a Westerner to whom the Kurds would stretch out their hands for help. I want Kurds to tell their own stories. I want more Kurdish social

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scientists. (Currently I know of no female Kurdish colleagues in my field of anthropology.) I want more Kurdish artists like my friend Azhar Shemdin, who recently wrote to me, "I, as a person and artist, cherish my free spirit and individualism and detach my judgment on things from the influence of relatives and groups whatever they are. I paint what I see and experience, or read about. I try to look at the positive things that come out of misery, and try to heal life's wounds by taking refuge in nature." Azhar paints Kurdish subjects, yes, but more importantly she paints human subjects. She paints life and death. She paints tolerance. She paints pain. She paints beauty. You can see her art on the web.³ There are so many ways to tell the story.

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"Interior,"
by Azhar Shemdin.
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permission of the artist.

¹This photo is from the book *Migrations- Humanity in Transition* by Sebastião Salgado (Aperture, 2000) page 96.

²Editor's note: Edward Said passed away on September 24, 2003 after a long struggle with leukemia.

³This painting, entitled "Interior," won the Alice Peck Award at a juried exhibition held at the Burlington Art Centre for the Burlington Fine Arts Association, in Ontario, Canada, 2002. You can view more of Azhar Shemdin's work on the internet at: <http://www.absolutearts.com/portfolios/s/shemdin> She can be reached at: azhar_shemdin@yahoo.com

New Voices in Feminist Anthropology

Racial Diversity and Antiracist Practices in Women's Organizations: Any Link?

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Racial diversity is a highly prized commodity among middle-class, white, progressive activists like myself. The organizations we tend to support, like, for example, the National Women's Studies Association, often reaffirm their commitment to "increase the number of women of color students and faculty within the field of women's studies" (NWSA 2002:9), and the progressive Catholic organization, "Call To Action," expresses regret that its membership and leadership "...fall short on ethnic diversity" (Call to Action 2002:2).

These organizations define the problem as a lack of members of color; and the solution as the "add people of color and stir" approach -- that is, recruiting people of color as members. This formulation assumes a causal link between increasing the proportion of non-white members in an organization and promoting its antiracist organizational practices. (For the purposes of this article, I borrow Barndt's (1991:160) definition of "racist" practices as those which directly or indirectly buttress white members' and leaders' power and privilege, and "antiracist" practices as practices which empower people of color to participate fully in an organization's power and decision-making.)

As a white progressive activist, I have seen white-dominated groups, dedicated to antiracist politics, recruit women of color only to see them depart. By contrast, I have observed women of color remain loyal to groups with apparently racist pol-

itics and social practices. I therefore question whether there is a causal link between racial diversity and antiracist organizational practices. As the following examples from my dissertation research with Central New York women's groups illustrate, connecting racial diversity and antiracist politics requires studying the intersection of race with other identities such as class, sexual orientation, and disability. Furthermore, it also requires an explicit commitment to a political agenda, a goal which may not fit easily with other organizational priorities.

Hampton Community Choir: Race versus Other Identities.

The Hampton Community Choir is a politically progressive Central New York community choir whose racially diverse membership is primarily linked not only to its racial politics but also to its stance on homosexuality and disability.

The choir's mission is to challenge racism, classism, and other forms of oppression. Like its founder, Kathy, most of the choir's 40 members are progressive, middle-class, middle-aged white women who live in the surrounding university neighborhood or in wealthy suburbs. Many are teachers, university professors, or social workers. Like Kathy, approximately one-fourth of choir members are openly gay or lesbian. Kathy intentionally recruited to the choir low-income women, people with disabilities and people of color. In fact, six of the choir's eight members of color are low-income and have known disabilities; the seventh has an openly lesbian daughter who introduced her to the choir. In other words, the choir's nonwhite members differ from the white majority not only with respect to race but in terms of class and disability status.

During my research year, choir practices were held weekly from 7-9 pm in the university neighborhood's community center. Midway through each rehearsal, Kathy called a fifteen-minute break, during which members stretched, went to the bathroom, and filled their water bottles at the drinking fountain. After a few rehearsals, I noticed a pattern: white women immediately moved toward each other during the break and stood, laughing and talking, in the back of the room. Surrounded by the din of laughter and animated conversation, African-American choir members, most of them disabled, sat in their chairs alone, not speaking, staring straight ahead or looking at their music. One or two white women who weren't familiar with the other white women also sat alone.

I asked choir director Kathy if she had noticed this seeming self-segregation, especially in light of the choir's mission statement which challenges members to build community across divisions of race, class, disability and sexuality. Kathy admitted that the situation bothered her, but claimed she felt powerless to intervene. She recounted how a white, middle-class choir member had once stood up and berated other whites for not making a greater effort to welcome others; for a few weeks, whites were more welcoming, but then the old pattern returned.

How did African-American and disabled members view this apparent self-segregation? In private interviews, none mentioned feeling socially excluded. To the contrary, each spoke of feeling welcomed and at home in the choir. I was puzzled. Did these marginalized choir members not notice their exclusion, or did other aspects of the choir outweigh the exclusion from white-dominated social networks?

Disability, poverty and homosexuality can marginalize individuals. Disability, for instance, often leaves individuals starved for social connections with mainstream society (Bogdan 2001). Perhaps for people of color who felt marginalized in these ways, Kathy's personal welcome was more important than the informal exclusion they experienced from the choir's middle-class white majority. In any case, the choir's recruitment of nonwhite members appears more related to its policies toward gays and lesbians and people with disabilities than to its racial politics.

Border Crossers: Class Divisions and Condescension

In *Border Crossers*, racial divisions were very explicitly connected to class divisions. Ann Marie, the group's wealthy white Central New York founder, had hoped

that by organizing trips to other cultures members would develop cross-class, cross-racial friendships. To date, members have successfully planned trips to the Lakota territory in Pine Ridge, SD, as well as to West Africa, Puerto Rico, and Costa Rica. The group has succeeded in building some alliances across racial lines but, as I describe below, they have had less success crossing class divisions.

Most of the group's twenty active members are women; half are white, and others include Native Americans, African-Americans and Latinos. For the first three years, all traveled together to a single destination. However, just before I began doing fieldwork, the group divided into a West Africa subgroup and a Pine Ridge subgroup. A Pine Ridge member told me that the split occurred because some members wanted to travel to West Africa, while she and others wanted to return to Pine Ridge. However, Ann Marie told me that the group had split along race and class lines: the West Africa group was composed of middle-class whites and African-Americans, while the Pine Ridge group included only low-income Native Americans and whites. Ann Marie expressed regret at the split, but did not intervene.

When I asked West Africa group members why the split occurred, they spoke not of class differences but of the Pine Ridge members' condescension toward people of color. Caroline, a white college professor who switched from the Pine Ridge group to the West Africa group, described this attitude:

"There was that old stereotypical notion that somehow we were going to go there and 'help' the Native people by volunteering to work in their fields or do this or that. I really objected to that; that never did feel authentic to me. ... I really don't like that perspective that one culture is going in to rescue another culture."

Veronica, an African-American who also switched from the Pine Ridge group to the West Africa group, discovered that the Pine Ridge members were capable of having condescending attitudes during the so-called "shower incident". While in Pine Ridge, Veronica and two white group members stayed with a Native American host family who asked them not to shower more than once a week. Veronica, angry, wanted to confront the family. "As another minority community, I know what hospitality is supposed to be... Hospitality is very important in all minority communities, so them not providing a shower every two days is bullshit." The two white members blocked her from confronting the family, saying that this would be ungracious. Veronica perceived the white women's action as patronizing to the Native American family by not calling them to their responsibilities. Veronica quit Border Crossers in protest, but later joined the West Africa subgroup.

Both Caroline and Veronica accused the Pine Ridge group of framing people of color as powerless, guilt-free victims to be pitied and helped. They and other West Africa group members insisted that people of color be framed as responsible, accountable agents. The fact that Caroline and Veronica joined forces to reject the low-income white, Native American and Latino Pine Ridge members suggests that class-based interests were stronger than race-based interests. I also observed that West Africa group members shared a high degree of cultural capital as a result of their middle-class status. All shared a high school and college education in a white-dominated institution; all shared an interest in fine arts and volunteerism. All shared an interest in particular clothing designers, shopping malls, and restaurants. My evidence suggests that the West Africa group bonded not around antiracist politics but around shared class interests.

Welfare Warriors: Antiracist Talk, Undercurrents of Racism

In Welfare Warriors, shared class interests served to bond low-income women, but did not overcome whites' racist attitudes. When I attended my first Welfare Warriors meeting, I was struck by members' use of racial language in such phrases as, "This white woman told me..." or "As a black woman, I..." In a culture where race is a topic to be avoided, members seemed comfortable in self-identifying racially and discussing racial aspects of their lives. The group, composed of two white women, two African-American women and one Latina, had extremely close inter-

racial social networks. They called each other every day, and invited each other to birthday parties, backyard barbecues, and family funerals.

Not only were the group's social networks racially integrated, but in public presentations members spoke out actively and publicly against racist stereotypes of welfare recipients. Before overwhelmingly white college classes, civic groups and church groups, Welfare Warriors challenged the equation of welfare with people of color and the framing of welfare recipients as passive, dysfunctional, and irresponsible.

Given their open use of racial language, their close interracial networks, and their antiracist presentations, Welfare Warriors appeared to be a model of cross-racial women's organizing. All group members were currently receiving public assistance or had done so in the past, as was stipulated in the group's membership requirements. The women's shared economic status and experiences in the welfare system forged a bond that obscured issues of racism and white privilege. However, when I conducted private interviews I discovered that the group's two African-American group members felt inhibited talking about racism with Josie, a white group member. Josie, in her interview, recounted her suspicion of African-American women outside the group. Thus, despite their close social networks, uninhibited racial language and antiracist presentations, white members were unable to admit their racist attitudes and African-American members were unwilling to confront them. In this case, the shared class bond did not overcome deep-seated racial prejudice.

Paths and Barriers to Cross-Racial Collaboration

Overall, my key findings are four: First, like all identity-based groups, racial communities are marked by heterogeneity and exclusion along the lines of gender, class, disability, and sexual orientation. Therefore, the Pine Ridge group's framing of people of color as "victims" is not only unwelcome but unwarranted. "Today less than ever does minority status correlate with victim status... (this linkage) is somewhat moribund, doubtful, suspect" (Omi and Winant 1994:158).

Second, heterogeneity and conflict within a racial community create possibilities for cross-racial collaboration. Those on the "margins" (Collins 1986:15) of their racial communities forged effective alliances along the lines of class, sexual orientation, and disability. For example, Welfare Warriors members' shared identity as low-income welfare recipients provided a strong cross-racial bond, just as Border Crossers West African members' shared middle-class identity provided a strong cross-racial link even as it distanced them from their Pine Ridge co-members. Within the Hampton Community Choir, disability and homosexual identity appeared to serve as strong cross-racial organizing identities.

Third, cross-racial collaboration can also be fragile and unstable, as Goode (2001:365) warns. Within Border Crossers, collaboration between middle-class whites and African-Americans was based on a rejection of low-income white and Native American group members. In Welfare Warriors, strong cross-racial social networks did not erase long-standing racial fears or prevent self-censure by African-Americans. Choir director Kathy succeeded at recruit African-Americans who were poor, disabled, and/or lesbian, but failed to recruit those who were middle-class, able-bodied, and/or heterosexual.

Lastly, I also discovered that, while each group leader demonstrated some degree of awareness of their white privilege, most white group members did not. This comes as no surprise to researchers of antiracist activism like Thompson (1997:358), who found that white progressive women tend to reject challenges of racism and white privilege. Proud of their previous work in challenging oppression, such women resent the notion that they are on the side of the "oppressor". In addition, many don't feel "privileged" because US society may marginalize them not just as women but also as progressives, as lesbians, and/or as non-Christians. White women often see their relationship with communities of color as that of one oppressed group helping another. Third, as McIntosh (1988) so vividly illus-

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trates, white women have been socialized not to see their backpack of race privilege, and therefore view themselves as relatively powerless in society. White women often subconsciously "distance ourselves from being white and the unearned privileges we have been granted along the way" (Thompson 1997:359). African-Americans, keenly aware of white privilege, are sometimes astounded at whites' naiveté about their privilege, and find it hard to accept white progressive women's gestures toward communities of color (Collins 2000:462).

While this article highlights fragmentation within multiracial groups, I also caught in each group occasional glimpses of Martin Luther King's "beloved community" - moments where the group successfully challenged white supremacy and other oppressive social forces. At concerts, Hampton Community Choir singers joined hands across lines of race, class and disability and sang boldly about ending racism, saving the environment, and embracing gays and lesbian identity. During their Ghana trip, Border Crossers West Africa members ended a visit to two slave forts by singing and praying together; blacks and whites, on a cliff overlooking the sea-coast where slave ships had once docked. At the Welfare Warriors annual summer barbeque, black and white women served each other fried chicken and potato salad, entertained each other's children, and laughed raucously at stories of male partners, "female" exams, and children's antics. Such moments renewed my conviction that a unified multiracial women's movement worth struggling for.

My findings support Goode's (2001:391) contention that racial diversity alone, in the absence of a strong political commitment to destabilizing hierarchies of privilege, will not transform an organization's political identity. Destabilizing hierarchies of privilege appears to involve at least two steps. The first is to inventory white privilege at all levels of an organization and to begin incorporating people of color into all aspects of power-sharing and decision-making; Welfare Warriors has already begun this process by using a consensus decision-making process and requiring that the group's leadership rotate between whites and nonwhites. The second step is to closely analyze members' intersecting axes of power and powerlessness, in order to nurture fragile cross-racial alliances as they emerge and to short-circuit racially essentialist projects that might threaten those alliances. Leaders of each group would be well-advised to map out members' intersecting identities and to find ways to strengthen actual and potential cross-racial alliances. The choir has already begun this process by occasionally splitting the choir into affinity groups by class and disability, fostering cross-racial alliances among, for example, people with disabilities.

Antiracist work is urgent, and multiracial antiracist organizations with an antiracist political agenda may be the best groups for the job (Frankenberg 1993:181). Rather than discouraging white-dominated organizations from seeking racial diversity, I hope that my findings will encourage them to analyze and uproot institutionalized white privilege. This approach will demand more than the "add people of color and stir" approach, but, in the end, it holds far greater promise for bringing about the structural changes that challenge and may ultimately destabilize hierarchies of privilege based on race.

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Linguistic Anthropology (continued from pg. 4)

drawn our attention to the plurality of language ideologies as they help to map multiple social divisions.

In order to elucidate some of the ways in which insights from feminist and linguistic anthropology have influenced a new generation of scholarship, I will give an example from my own research in Padua, Italy where I have been studying graduation rituals. In the Italian educational system, university students graduate, one by one, on the day they complete their research project defense, at any point of the academic year. In preparation for this event, friends and family of the graduate create a 'papiro,' literally a large paper 'scroll' (3' x 5') on which friends and family compose a rhymed narrative about the graduate's life, particularly highlighting sexual encounters. A 'papiro' includes a hypersexualized visual representation of the graduate, often including snake-headed penises that wrap around men's bodies, gigantic breasts, sexual acts in cartoon form, and even flying genitals, drawn cherub-like with wings. On the day of graduation, graduates are brought to the piazza, stripped, redressed in costumes (American flags, bunny costumes, garbage bags) to read their life narrative in front of friends and family. Contributions to feminist and linguistic anthropology have influenced my inquiry, as I ask: 1) In what ways does the ritualized reading of life narratives enact gendered and sexual subjectivities? 2) How do scroll texts and their performance reflect how gender deviance, a marked social category, is simultaneously marked linguistically? 3) How does code-switching between Italian and Veneto dialect index desire? 4) Reading such carnivalesque language as performative, how do certain words and images remap more traditional gender dichotomies, despite the use of socially taboo words and images?

Ways of conceptualizing a gendered, and, above all, a speaking subject in linguistic anthropology have moved between a number of analytical frameworks, with multiple interventions and dialogues with feminist scholarship. Such interdisciplinary richness has shifted the study of language and gender from the insistent, yet revolutionizing essentialisms of a speaking like a "woman" or a "man," to 'doing' gender in language; and, finally, to identifying an intersecting triad of gender, sexuality, and desire in language.

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Feminist Archaeologies (continued from pg. 5)

tured through the analytical prism of the lifecycle. With the latter as my template, the work attempted to chart the experience of men, women and children from birth to death and beyond to beliefs about the afterworld. With such rich materials one can examine social, legal, economic, sexual, religious, domestic spheres with the caveat that, for the Egyptians, these domains were often permeable and existed in configurations different from contemporary culture.

Feminist theorizing on the body extended another significant contribution to the understanding of ancient identity and social life. A raft of influential publications in the 1990s by major theorists foregrounded the body as individually performed and lived, not simply the passive site of cultural inscription. This had major implications for archaeology, especially engendered studies that had previously simply examined the representational sphere and now was thrust into debates about experience, personhood and notions of the self, drawing deeper into the insights of feminist anthropology, philosophy and phenomenology. Again, feminist theory provided the catalyst for exciting changes in the discipline and influenced further work on ancient Egyptian embodiment. The culmination of this research found expression in a joint, comparative work with Rosemary Joyce, an expert on the Maya who specializes in feminist theories of embodiment, sexuality and

gender relations. *Embodied Lives* (Meskell and Joyce 2003) is infused with feminist notions of performativity and situated practice, but also with insights gained specifically from psychoanalytic feminism, feminist ethnography, philosophy and literary theory. We are not alone in making these connections, for over the past decade or so, feminist archaeologists have made vital links between many forms of feminist social theory and the specificities of the archaeological record and past human experience. Extending beyond the exclusive study of women by women, archaeology is moving more convincingly into the sphere of identity - a domain that positions individuals not only in their respective cultural milieu, but in a mesh of social factors such as nation, generation, religion, class, sexuality, life stage and so on.

With this shift squarely in mind, it seems timely now to bring archaeological theory into the present. Feminist archaeology has always maintained a firm commitment to critiquing contemporary disciplinary structures and field practices in regard to issues of equality and inequality, androcentric bias, and the ramifications of political action broadly construed. An attention to such concerns and an ever-widening concern with identity politics has led many feminists to also be outspoken around issues of heritage, violence, nationalism, ethics, indigenous rights and so on: Bender, Wylie, Joyce, Smith, Arnold, and Scham, are a few who come immediately to mind. While many feminists would implicitly like to retain the gender-specific nature of feminism as its core, others hope to extend the limits of feminist theory to encompass other subject positions and research agendas across a wider political terrain. Here I would argue that rather than focusing specifically on marginality as conferring epistemic privilege, we should recognize that our own embodied, embedded identities are connected to other constitutive communities, and engage with those other perspectives. Thus a feminist consideration of difference and identity politics has been instrumental in developing a postcolonial archaeology and a politics of the past. My own work has delved into the historically situated effects of archaeology and its deployment in the spheres of globalism, nationalism, cultural heritage, tourism, terrorism and violence. Specifically this ongoing research addresses these negotiations in contexts such as Egypt, Afghanistan, South Africa, Australia and the United States. Feminism and postcolonialism share a series of linkages that have been profitably explored by scholars such as Spivak, Abu-Lughod, Brah, Narayan and so on. Currently I am fortunate enough to teach at Columbia University, with several of these role models, and where my colleagues foster such exchanges. My students are also encouraged to extend the limits of our discipline, in theory and practice, and I consider myself fortunate to have both sets of interlocutors. It is both timely and necessary that we embark on these exchanges across the sub-disciplines. While many major figures have failed to speculate on the more current nature of both feminism and gender studies, and their real world political implications, younger scholars and our students are doing exactly that in practice: they are writing about notions of identity, more broadly construed.

Feminist archaeologists, from a variety of traditions and contexts, have focused on representational inequalities in the field and the academy, others with data analysis, and some with ethical concerns and theoretical innovation: all are interrelated and necessary. To conclude, I would like to propose a more central role for archaeologists within feminist studies and this follows Walby's (2000) observation that we are at present dominated by those drawn from philosophical and literary disciplines, at the expense of those from data rich disciplines such as economics, geography, and so on. Within the literary disciplines the nature of the typical object of analysis, the written text, is often different from those examined in social science disciplines. Archaeology needs to broaden its intellectual base and insert itself into current debates and feminist theorizing, moving outside its current modes and sites of publication. In addition, feminist theory could be more wide-ranging, including archaeology, and this addition might provide a fuller understanding of identity and difference across space and time.

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into photo-novellas and exhibits. In 2000 the YWAT produced a yearbook, documenting how the experience of working collaboratively as subjects of their own research had affected them. And their findings served to generate support for the programs of which they were a part. They found out that their programs offered them opportunities to reach their goals by exposing them to more choices. In discovering the benefit of being in a girl-only program, the young women realized that they felt more capable of realizing their potential. Finally, their research brought out how important it is for young women to feel safe in the world and how being part of a girl-only program can facilitate their sense of safety.

As wonderful as this project was, in its aftermath some of the young women faced resistance to living out the promise of their newly empowered selves. That is, after acquiring the skills and knowledge they needed to discuss and interpret their lives and to make the case for girl-only programs, they also deployed their new knowledge in their everyday lives. In exhibiting their skills in educational, familial and social settings, they found themselves ridiculed, and sometimes punished by adults who perceived them as defiant for speaking up.

Nonetheless, this collaborative endeavor situated young girls and women as experts. They were viewed as assets and proved to be effective data collectors, as well as engaged data analysts. Still, the "professionals" sometimes lost sight of the principles of equality to which we felt so deeply committed. And, the young women reminded us when we had shifted the balance of power away from their favor. They took the issue of equality seriously enough to challenge us when we forgot that this was a participatory project.

It should be remembered that participatory research comes with problems. These include having findings challenged based on a supposed "lack of scientific validity," and dissonance between funders, researchers and subjects' interests. But a commitment to feminist anthropology and research is built on being accountable to a number of constituents among them ourselves, our informants, the general public and those who work to influence policy (Mwaria 2001:208). The relationship we must have to our work is three-fold as Hymes (1972) pointed out over 30 years ago:

...we are critics and scholars in the academic world; we work for (and I would add with) communities, movements, operational institutions, and we are linked to direct action as members of a community or social movement. There is need for all three roles (Hymes 1972:56).

Being feminist anthropologists means that we can make all of these connections explicit in the work we do. There are greater goals than just getting research done because people's lives are often at stake.

Notes:

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank Susan Hyatt for asking me to write this article.

This article is excerpted from "What Did You Do Today?: Notes from a Politically Engaged Anthropologist," which appeared in Urban Anthropology, Special Issue on Anthropology and Political Engagement, vol. 32(2), Summer 2003. Reprinted with the permission of the journal.

For a full description of this project see Ms. Foundation for Women: The New Girls Movement: New Assessment Tools for Youth Programs. Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls, Healthy Women. New York: Ms. Foundation 2000.

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(social) nurturer", constraining women by their reproductive roles. This modeling was first challenged in the 1970's with Zihlman and colleagues' women-the-gather thesis marking new ways to examine the role of females in evolution, making them "visible" and activating them as participants in subsistence strategies, tool construction, and in the larger social order. But this model maintained earlier division of labor and, to some, it did not as far as it could (Schiebinger 1999). I would argue, however, that this model unlocked new ways of thinking and asked new and important questions about the position, or lack of position, of women in the past in relationship to men, as well as in their own active spheres within social and subsistence strategies. This lead has been followed, examined, and discussed by archaeologists and cultural anthropologists but there still remains a general silence in a biological dialogue that would animate females beyond the boundaries of their reproductive roles.

This lack of continued momentum for engendering interpretations of females from a biological standpoint is most evident in the perpetuation of static interpretations of female reproduction, particularly in regards to analyses of pregnancy and birth. Much of the biological research has centered on morphological quantification of pelvic shape and size in relation to the birth process and then on static interpretations of the birth mechanism. Studies in this area have linked pelvic size and shape to the problems associated with reproductive success for the human female, categorized early on as an evolutionary "dilemma", as the shift to bipedalism results in a reduction of the pelvic canal, creating a very close fit between the fetal head and the physical birth canal. Females start off marred by their poor evolutionary (biological) development. This typological approach has been little challenged (see Walrath 2003), but instead has been widely accepted as truth and continues to be used to support the notions that women are truly compromised by their reproductive roles. This assumption has extended directly into medical and obstetric practices in which the concepts of "obstetrical dilemma" have resulted in pathologizing of the female body, rendering it sick, problematic and passive particularly with regards to birth process (and notably in relation to male health). The female body is objectified and analyzed through its reproductive "problems", and removed from all larger social contexts.

These early typological approaches have remained unchallenged biological facts, which permeate the anthropological and medical dialogues, and have resulted in a loss of understanding of the dynamic nature of the birth process and the range of variability within the reproductive process (fueled by both biology and culture). Feminist scholarship offers insight into ways in which this variability can be recognized, as female researchers, many of whom are also mothers and scientists, utilize both emic and etic approaches to under-

stand reproductive, variability and create new dialogues around the birth process. In turn, this new understanding might result in better birthing experiences for women cross-culturally and might help to deconstruct current models and assumptions that marginalize or devalue the experience and lives of women. In the arena of birth in particular, feminist bioanthropologists are well positioned to use science to understand the profound importance of human variability with a focus on the most human of all experiences - childbirth. A feminist critique of childbirth from a biological perspective requires a reflexive analysis of the "standards" and assumptions of "norms" used, and of the historical and cultural influences, as well as offering new way to think about birth, the birth process, and the variability of female biology and experience in reproduction. Recently, new research, conducted by feminist biological anthropologists, has begun to challenge the singular narrative of the birth process and brings to the forefront the need for physical anthropology (and medicine) to reexamine female biology and embrace its variability from woman to woman (see Walrath 2003).

The story of feminist biological anthropological studies is being crafted to include inclusive and reflexive dialogues that both invigorate women as active agents and place them in larger spheres of knowledge. Clearly this comes at a time when the need for detailed and reliable knowledge of the conditions that support inequality should be at the center of feminist scholarship in biological anthropology. Scientific modes of inquiry are among the most powerful tools we have for undertaking this task, as more often than not, the supposition is that science equals fact; such "facts" then become embedded in more general understandings. As feminist biological anthropologists we need a commitment to ground action in a sound empirical understanding of the human, social, biological and natural conditions that impinge on our lives. Science and scientific methods are a crucial source of information on how to proceed effectively in the pursuit of creating a gender-equitable world. And so, feminist scientists walk a fine line: How to be part of the solution while participating in what seems to be part of the problem?

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SYLVIA FORMAN PAPER PRIZE, 2004

Ninth Annual Competition
Association for Feminist Anthropology

Every year the AFA invites graduate and undergraduate students to submit a paper in FEMINIST ANTHROPOLOGY in competition for the Sylvia H. Forman Prize. Winning papers receive a certificate and a cash award and will have their paper summaries published in the Anthropology Newsletter. The prize is named for the late Sylvia Helen Forman, one of the founders of AFA, whose dedication to both her students and to feminist principles contributed to the growth of feminist anthropology.

We encourage papers in all subfields of anthropology. Papers may be based on research within a wide variety of topics including (but not limited to) women's work, reproduction, religion, language and expressive culture, family and kin relations, economic development, long-term changes in gender relations, gender and material culture, biological approaches to gender issues, women and development, or race and class.

Papers will be judged on:

- Originality
- Use of feminist anthropological theory to analyze a particular issue
- Organization, quality and clarity of writing
- Effective use of both theory and data
- Connections to other feminist research
- Timeliness and relevance of the topic
- Ability to make an argument

Please check the AFA website for guidelines for the 2004 competition.

The winners of the 2003 competition will be announced at the annual business meeting of the AFA in Chicago.

AFA Theme for 2003-2005:

Women and Globalization

Nandini Gunewardena, AFA Secretary

Globalization refers to the fluidity of capital, the mobility of production, and the deregulation of trade barriers between states, and the ensuing cultural transformations and exchanges. Globalization, both in its cultural and economic manifestations can well be considered the most compelling force of the 21st century. The ways in which women and gender concerns intersect with globalization is complex and often contradictory. Compelled by the driving force of neoliberal economic policies and practices, and propelled forward by global production designed to meet the ever-increasing demands for popular consumption, we know that globalization constructs, represents, and incorporates women in diverse ways -- in the realms of culture and morality, politics and discipline, labor and economy.

The globalization of production has meant a feminization of the global labor force. Perhaps it is no coincidence that of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty worldwide, 70 percent are women, and women constitute the bulk of the labor force in global production, with their economic activity rates rising over the past thirty years.

Over the next two years, in our conference activities and publications, AFA will be encouraging members to present work that engenders processes of globalization, illustrating its multifarious effects on women worldwide, including the emergence of local-level and cross-border activism undertaken in response to increasingly oppressive circumstances.

For more information, please see the AFA website at:
<http://sscl.berkeley.edu/~afaweb/>

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The Board and Members of AFA thank:

A. Lynn Bolles, Chair 2001-03, Nandini Gunewardena, Secretary 2001-03, Barbara West, Treasurer, 2001-03 and Laura Ahearn, Program Chair 2003, for their dedicated service to AFA.



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