

# WGS NEWS

Women's and Gender Studies Department at UMass Dartmouth

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Center for Women, Gender and Sexuality: 50 Years of Feminism

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# Events

## Trans Day of Remembrance

The UMass Dartmouth community marked Trans Day of Remembrance on November 20 in the Commuter Café. The event was a collaboration between the Center of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, Gender Punks, Chestnut Hall residents, and Luran Moran (Artist-in-Residence). A collaborative painting and paper flowers were created to come together and memorialize those were killed in 2018 due to anti-trans violence and honor trans resilience. Dr. Upadhyay's WGS/PHL 104 (Identities: Gender, Race, Sexuality) students participated in these collaborations. At the memorial, several people shared flowers and messages for those killed due to hatred as well as their hopes for a future free of violence against trans peoples, specially trans women of color.

## Possibilities of Ethnic Studies in the Trump Era

In Fall 2018, Dr. Nishant Upadhyay, Dr. Heather Turcotte (CJS), and Dr. Katie Krafft (CJS) organized two events as part of the “Possibilities of Ethnic Studies in the Trump Era” Seminar Series. Drs.

Upadhyay and Turcotte received funding to organize this series as part of the Provost Office’s Interdepartmental and Interprogram Seminar Series, 2018-19. The series was launched with a screening of the documentary **On Strike: Ethnic Studies 1969-1999** at the Frederick Douglass Unity House on October 22, 2018. The documentary contextualizes the struggles for Ethnic Studies in the late sixties and late nineties

in California. The screening was well-attended and post-screening Dr. Turcotte facilitated a discussion on the need for Ethnic Studies at UMass Dartmouth.

The second event was a panel discussion on **“Why Indigenous Peoples’ Day?”** on November 19 at the Unity House. The panel featured Margarita Huayhua (Sociology), Tuti

Mary Barker (Brown University) and Hartman Deetz (Wampanoag educator and activist). The panelists provided critical insights into colonial



holidays like Columbus Day and Thanksgiving. They also spoke about the different struggles for self-determination and sovereignty that their Indigenous communities are engaged in North America, South America, and the Pacific. The event was attended by over 30 people.

In Spring 2019, Drs. Upadhyay, Turcotte and Krafft will organize more events as part of the seminar series. Keep a look out!

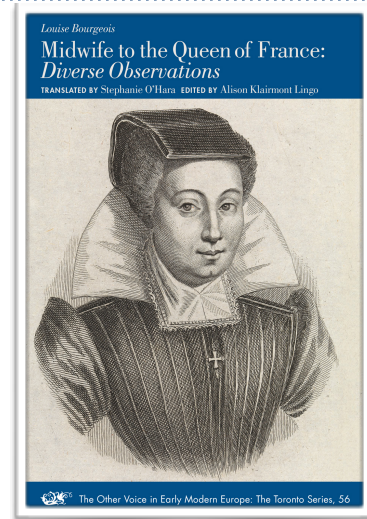
## CWGS and WGS Meet and Greet

The Center for Women, Gender & Sexuality hosted WGS faculty and students for a mixer in October. The organizers wanted to bring students together to learn about the WGS major and to learn about feminist activism on campus. Look out for details about this semester’s event to learn more about the WGS major and how you can get involved with the feminist community at UMass Dartmouth.

# Faculty News

## Associate Professor Stephanie O'Hara

Dr. Stephanie O'Hara (Women's and Gender Studies, and Foreign Literature and Languages) and co-author Dr. Alison Klairmont Lingo, of UC Berkeley, won the Josephine Roberts Award for a Scholarly Edition in recognition of their book *Louise Bourgeois, Midwife to the Queen of France: Diverse Observations*. The award is from the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women, in recognition of the best scholarly edition published in 2017 in the field of early modern women and gender.



## Assistant Professor Nishant Upadhyay

Dr. Nishant Upadhyay won the 2018 National Women's Studies Association/University of Illinois Press First Book Prize for their manuscript *Indians on Indian Lands: Intersections of Race, Caste, and Indigeneity*. The manuscript is based on their Ph.D. dissertation that they finished at York University, Toronto in 2016. The prize is awarded for cutting-edge intersectional feminist scholarship that is interdisciplinary and offers new perspectives on issues central to women's, gender and feminist studies. As a co-winner, Dr. Upadhyay will receive an advance book contract with the University of Illinois Press and a cash prize. The review committee commended their project as "a remarkable instance of how feminist scholarship advances nondisciplinary thought and practice by holding anti-settler colonialism, anti-Blackness and anti-caste analytics together, whilst making a contribution to post/colonial studies, transnational feminism, and South Asian diaspora studies."



# Students

## Laurel Alice Berryman, "Where are the Black women?"

I was casually picking things up around the house one afternoon, and there happened to be a Van Jones special playing in the background featuring Ben Jealous, the former National President of the NAACP, who was at the time campaigning for the governor's seat in Maryland. Honestly, I wasn't really paying attention to the program until I heard Jealous make a statement that left me staggered. He was going through a list of people who he believed to be impacted by President Donald Trump's "politics of divide and conquer," and I specifically heard him mention "Black folks and women." I felt dumbfounded by those words. The first question that popped up in my mind was, "I am Black, and I am a woman. I exist in both of those categories, and because I do, why is there division within that statement that excludes me?" Black women are both "Black folks" and "women," but somehow, and most often when people are listing groups of oppressed people, they make this distinction which leaves Black women out of the equation. Interestingly, upon doing some self-reflection, I realized that even I, myself am guilty of doing this, and so I set out on a quest to identify the roots of this distinction made between "Black folks" and "women."

I journeyed back to the nineteenth century, since that is in my opinion, the most defining time for Black women in the United States. We toiled as slaves, were emancipated, and were then thrust into a society that sought to control us in many untold ways including our hair<sup>1</sup>. For example, Tignon Laws that were put in place in Louisiana

in 1786 which made a Black woman wearing her hair out a hardened criminal. Keep in mind that The Revolutionary War

which stood for change and independence had just been won three years earlier in 1783. Change and independence for some, but obviously not all. Historically, Black women have been left behind and forgotten; our struggles, our livelihood, our place in history.

It is specifically what we now know as White feminism that I hold most accountable for this neglect. White feminism is feminism centered on the ideals and struggles of white, heterosexual women and alienates or ignores Black women, non-heterosexual women, trans women, and women in religions such as Islam. It is because the two central figures of feminism, Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) and Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) voiced their strong disapproval of universal suffrage, which included voting rights for Black men, that the

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separation of feminism by race began. In fact, on the issue of Black male voting rights, Anthony once said that she "would sooner cut off her right arm before she would ever work for or demand the ballot for the Black man and not the woman"<sup>2</sup> It

was insulting to Anthony to be asked to compromise on the issue of rights for a race and sex other than her own.

In 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton delivered a speech at Seneca Falls called the Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions 3. Stanton's speech included a list of resolutions including a woman's right to education, and defined the new cause for political freedom for "women". The list of resolutions included:

\* "The equality of human rights results necessarily from the fact of the identity of the race in capabilities and responsibilities."

\* "It is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise."

Stanton is clearly referring to White women. White women were the only group of women in 1848 who had privilege. For example, because they were considered citizens of their whiteness, White women could benefit from the First Amendment which gave them the right to protest the "corrupt customs" Stanton speaks of. Yet, at the same time Stanton was speaking, Black women were the property of white men. Therefore, I am brought to the obvious conclusion that it was not Black women Stanton spoke of in her speech.

In comparison, the rhetoric of Lucy Stone (1818-1893), another popular figure in early feminism who played a role in its racial division. At first, Stone doesn't seem as problematic as her peers. She attended Oberlin college in Ohio and was hired by the renowned abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison as a writer for his Anti-Slavery Society. In contrast to Anthony and Stanton, Stone held fast to her belief that Black men deserved the right to vote. In fact, in 1866 Stone helped found the American Equal Rights Association (AERA)

which stood for the "right of suffrage, irrespective of race, color, or sex"<sup>4</sup>.

Apparently, the associations "abolitionist allies" viewed "women's suffrage" as a "hinderance to the immediate goal of winning suffrage for African American men"<sup>5</sup> which would end in the dissolution of the AERA, and the women's suffrage movement itself. If abolitionists were fighting for Black men, and suffragists or feminists were fighting for White women, what does that say about Lucy Stone who was both an abolitionist and a feminist? Moreover, in 1855, 14 years prior to the end of the AERA in 1869 in an speech entitled "Disappointment is the Lot of Women," Stone explains that she chose to attend Oberlin College because it was a place "where

*This marks the emergence of Black feminism, contrary to popular belief which places the beginnings of Black Feminism in the 1970's...*

women and negroes could enjoy opportunities with white men"<sup>6</sup>. Translation: it was a place where White women and Black men could enjoy equal opportunities with White men. Based on my findings about Stone, "negro" equates to African American men and "women" equates to white women.

At this point I have to pause and ask myself, where are the Black women? The feminist movement broke into different groups based upon internal conflicts involving Stanton, Anthony, and Stone centered around the debate regarding the inclusion of Black men into the suffrage movement, but Black women were not involved at all. Black women had no choice but to take a stand for themselves if they wanted to be acknowledged. This marks the emergence of Black feminism, contrary to popular belief which places the beginnings of Black Feminism in the 1970's; Black women such as Sojourner Truth (1797-1883), Anna Julia Cooper

(1858-1964), and Ida B. Wells (1862-1931) dedicated their lives to improving the livelihood of women who looked like them, and touched upon issues such as intersectionality that placed them far ahead of their time.

For example, Sojourner Truth, who will be our first hidden figure who I uncovered on my journey. Formerly Isabella Baumfree, Sojourner was born a slave in Dutch speaking New York, and during her time in bondage she often suffered severe beatings and sexual abuse. Although she was unable to read and write, Truth prided herself on her unimpeachable power of speech. In her most renowned speech, Ain't I a Woman?, Truth challenged everyone in the room, White men and women alike, to ask themselves what sets her apart from them. What made her a Black woman who had been through more in her early life as a slave than probably anyone in the

building, any different or less deserving than them? With Ain't I a Woman?, Sojourner Truth was touching upon what we are now taught as the concept of

intersectionality. Truth saw very clearly that being a Black woman was a problem. When you are a Black woman, you are first and foremost, if not only, seen as being black.

Truth was not paid for her speaking and preaching, and as she traveled throughout the country, Inn keepers and hotel managers would not allow her to stay or to eat all because she was Black and then she was a woman. Sojourner Truth undoubtedly understood this concept as she was affected by it until the day she died.

*As an educated Black woman and as an activist, Cooper was well aware of the exclusion from society that Black women faced, and she actually believed that the Black race could not lift themselves out their physical and mental constraints until Black women were acknowledged and included.*

Born the daughter of an enslaved woman and her master in the antebellum South, Anna Julia Cooper spent her early life in bondage. Although Cooper wanted equality of Black men and women, she had a sincere conviction for the struggle of Black women. In 1892, after having gained experience as an educator, Cooper published her first book made up of essays entitled, *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South*. In it she targeting young Black women stating that “there is material in them well worth your while, the hope in germ of a staunch, helpful, regenerating womanhood on which, primarily, rests the foundation stones of our future as a race.” As an educated Black woman and as an activist, Cooper was well aware of the exclusion from society that Black women faced, and she actually believed that the Black race could not lift themselves out their physical and mental constraints until Black

women were acknowledged and included. Having lived 105 years dedicated to the cause for Black women, Anna Julia Cooper finally earned the title of “The Mother of Black Feminism” in the 21st century.

Our last hidden figure, and one that I admire most dearly, is Ida B. Wells. Wells was a famed investigative journalist and activist in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Wells wrote in 1892 in the introduction of *Southern Horrors and Other Writings*, one of her pioneering works about lynching, “Somebody must show that the Afro-American race is more sinned against than sinning, and it seems to have fallen upon me to do so”<sup>8</sup>. She was relentless in bringing the world’s attention to the raping and lynching inflicted upon Black women by White men as a form of control. Most White people, clouded by

their White ignorance, were only aware that Black men were targets of racial violence, but no one seemed to be aware of or care for the fact that it was happening to Black women also. Wells knew the importance of the inclusion of Black, female lynching victims, including Eliza Woods and viewed it as a critical step in the struggle to acknowledge the The United States' violent history of racial and gender inequality.

Those three Black women were astonishing. Each of their groundbreaking life's work represents dedication to the cause and the hope that I may be able to live in a better world than they did. Yet, I do not live in a different world

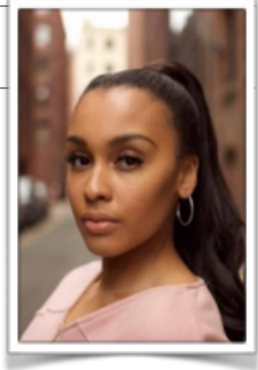
than they did. As great as the study of history is, as it serves us in many positive ways, it is also a very unfair and negative institution, and those people who write the books allow their personal bias to deem significant people and events unimportant. These people, being predominately White men and women, have written us out of the history books, and America has continued to leave us unacknowledged. It is this one simple fact that brought me to the sudden end of my journey. I've concluded that the reason why "Black people" and "women" is still a common phrase even in an era where being conscious is key, is because Black women are still in the shadows.

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## About Laurel Alice Berryman

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Laurel Alice Berryman is a third-year student in the Woman and Gender Studies Major at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. She became an activist at the age of 17, working with a group of her peers to expose the systematic racism rooted in their local high school. Upon an interview with a casting director regarding Bi-Racial Identity in 2017, Laurel Alice Berryman has become an avid supporter of the Womanist Movement and encourages Black women with mixed ancestry to embrace their individuality rather than to allow society to define them.



### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Nasheed, Jameelah. "When Black Women Were Required By Law to Cover Their Hair." Broadly, VICE, 10 Apr. 2018, broadly.vice.com/en\_us/article/j5abvx/black-womens-hair-illegal-tignon-laws-new-orleans-louisiana.

<sup>2</sup> Brzustowicz, Victoria. "Interpreting Susan B. Anthony for Our Times." Susan B. Anthony House :: Her Story, 2018, susanbanthonyhouse.org/blog/interpreting-susan-b-anthony-for-our-times/.

<sup>3</sup> Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, 1815-1902. Address Of Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Delivered at Seneca Falls & Rochester, N.Y., July 19th & August 2d, 1848. New York :R.J. Johnston, 1870. Print.

<sup>4</sup> Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopedia. "American Equal Rights Association." Encyclopedia Britannica, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 27 Feb. 2018, www.britannica.com/topic/American-Equal-Rights-Association.

<sup>5</sup> "The Women's Suffrage Campaign Begins, Then Divides." Your Vote Your Voice, www.yourvoteyourvoicemn.org/past/communities/women-past/womens-suffrage-campaign-begins-then-divides.

<sup>6</sup> Stone, Lucy. "Disappointment is the Lot of Women." October 17, 1855, Women's Rights Convention, Cincinnati, OH.

<sup>7</sup> Wilson, William J. "Power, Racism, and Privilege ." Power, Racism, and Privilege , The Free Press, 1976, p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> Wells, Ida B. Southern Horrors and Other Writings The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900. 1st ed.

# Alumni

## Alumni Update, Yvonne Hitchens, WMS Major, Class of 2009

After graduating from UMass Dartmouth Women's Studies program I was immediately accepted into the Boston University Graduate Program in Clinical Social Work. I graduated with my Masters Degree in Social Work in 2012.

My education in Women's Studies assists me greatly in my current work as a social worker in a Community Health Center in New Bedford and Wareham. Classes such as Understanding Intimate Personal Violence and the Psychology of Gender were extremely useful in working with clients and understanding the dynamics at play in individual's lives.

Since graduating I have had the opportunity to go to several trainings through Harvard Medical School on Advancing Healthcare for Transgender Populations. My current work includes being a case manager for individuals with an HIV diagnosis and I also assist with counseling in a medically assisted treatment, suboxone program, for individuals with an opioid use disorder who are seeking care.



# Community

## Event: 50 Years of Feminism, by Amanda Marcelino



Originally founded in 1970 as the Women's Referral Center, the Center for Women, Gender & Sexuality is the second oldest collegiate Women's Center in the country.

I attended the event 50 years of Feminism which took place in the Grand reading room at the Library. We were joined by guest speakers Mary Niesluchowska, founding Women's Center Director, Dr. Janet Freedman, a former UMass Dartmouth Dean of Library Services, Director of Women's Studies, and current Brandeis University Resident Scholar for Women's Studies Research Center, and Gail Fortes, The Executive Director of the YWCA of

Southeastern Massachusetts. During this event, students wrote down questions such as Who can be a feminist? And what does feminism mean to you? And how do you define intersectionality? Which could be answered by the board or other participants. Closer to the end of the event, people asked more personal questions, like "How can I make my mom or dad understand that women have a right to say what's on their mind?", or even "How should we change an organization's name to make it all-inclusive?"