



E-News!

Gender Studies at Memorial

Winter Semester 2017 | Volume 16, Number 2

Notes from the Head

Welcome to the Winter/Spring 2017 issue of *E-News: Gender Studies at Memorial*. In this issue, we celebrate all things research: the conference papers, research projects, and publications our faculty members have been involved with, the grant successes and awards that faculty have enjoyed, the creative works and community engagement activities, the research activities of our undergraduate and graduate students, and the publications of those who have recently completed their degrees.

We don't often get a chance to see our work arrayed like this, and it's been a great opportunity to step back in wonder at the range of scholarship and creative work happening here in Gender Studies at Memorial. From photography to autoethnography, to Indigenous self-determination, colonial histories, reproductive justice, craftivism, decolonizing practices, anti-trafficking, trans life writing, tattoo stories, creative non-fiction, feminist book reviews, and more, ours is a vibrant world of critically informed, socially engaged, and politically relevant research.

Sonja Boon

Head, Department of Gender Studies

Dean's Award for Teaching Excellence



We are delighted to announce that **Dr. Julie Temple-Newhook**, a regular per-course instructor in Gender Studies, has just been awarded the Dean's Award for Teaching Excellence (non-tenure track)!

Julie has been teaching as a per-course instructor in the Department of Gender Studies since 2015. She has taught 8 iterations of GNDR1000, our introductory course (both on campus and by distance), and has also guest lectured for the M.Phil. (Humanities) program. Beyond the Department of Gender Studies, Julie has shared her expertise in the areas of gender diversity, gender creative youth, and trans needs widely, appearing as a guest lecturer throughout MUN's St John's campus – in Sociology, Nursing, Gender Studies, Education, Behavioural Medicine, and Pharmacy – and also, in numerous workshops for local businesses, schools, and community groups in St. John's and beyond.

Julie is also a noted community educator and engaged citizen. In addition to providing training in gender diversity to local businesses, schools, and community groups, she is the Founder and Facilitator of Parents of Gender Creative Kids–NL, Canadian Parents of Gender

Creative Kids, Co-chair of MUN's Trans Needs Committee, and member of the Trans Health Committee (Eastern Health). She has facilitated numerous initiatives for and with gender diverse and trans youth, building and sustaining supportive communities and knowledge resources for marginalized youth across the country. In this way, Dr. Temple Newhook contributes actively, not only to a better university, but a better world. In the words of an anonymous student: "Please keep doing what you're doing, because I honestly think the university needs more professors like you."

We are so very fortunate to have as committed, experienced, and passionate an instructor as Julie Temple Newhook among our ranks; at all levels – as a teacher, colleague, and advocate – her contributions far exceed the expected boundaries of a per-course appointment. Dr. Jennifer Dyer, one of several who wrote letters in support of Julie's nomination, puts it best: as a "a passionate teacher and advocate for gender diverse youth ... [Julie] not only makes her classroom a safer, more inclusive, and more politically perceptive class, she makes the university as a whole a better and more learned place."

Autoethnography and Creative Non-Fiction

Sonja Boon

I've been immersed in my current SSHRC-funded research project, Saltwater Stories: Migration, Memory, and Identity at the Water's Edge, since 2015. My research has taken me to archival collections in The Netherlands, the UK, Suriname, and even to my own backyard: the Maritime History Archive at MUN. Because it's an autoethnographic project, it's also taken me deep inside myself and into my own histories.

I've been working with two graduate research assistants (Master of Gender Studies students Lesley Butler and Daze Jefferies) on a collaborative blog (saltwaterstories.net). Together we are also producing a number of community-based events. One, "Poking the

(Academic) Bear: Experiments with Autoethnography," a co-production with *The Blue Castle*, took place in early March and featured short autoethnographic presentations and performances by faculty and students from across Memorial.

The Blue Castle: Conversations on Women, Culture and the Spaces of the Imagination and the Saltwater Stories Research Project present

Poking the (Academic) Bear: Experiments with Autoethnography

In this evening of short presentations and performances, MUN faculty members and students explore the role of autobiography as an approach to research.

Friday, March 10 at 7 pm
MMAp Gallery, 2nd Floor, Arts and Culture Centre

Canada Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada



On May 12, we present the St. John's premiere of ECMA-nominated multi-disciplinary artist, Rozalind MacPhail's *From the River to the Ocean*. This project, which features the collaboration of 6 filmmakers, is, in Rozalind's words, an "audio-visual experience where cinema and live music weave a tapestry of memory, place and identity." *From the River to the Ocean* takes place in the Suncor Energy Hall, School of Music, and is free.



My essay, "Dusting for Fingerprints: Bodily Traces, Embodied Memories, and the Forensic Self" (2017) appears in *Life Writing* (<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14484528.2016.1241207>). Published or forthcoming are: a co-authored article on teaching (<http://journals.msvu.ca/index.php/atlantia/article/v>

[iew/54-67%20PDF/54-67](#)), a book chapter embodied research and dancing the minuet (2016), a co-authored book chapter on knitted feminisms (2017), and an autoethnographic article about reproductive rights (2017). I've also been exploring creative non-fiction in the past few years: "Thirteen Litres" appears in *Geist* #101 (2016), and "French Kiss," shortlisted for the *Don't Talk to Me About Love International Writing Competition*, can be found here:

<http://www.donttalktomeaboutlove.com/nonfiction-finalist-sonja-boon/>.

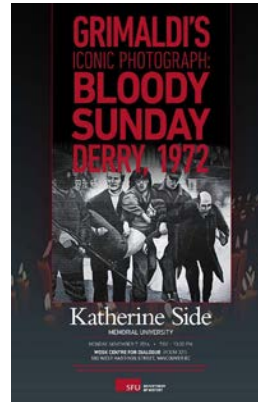
Photography and Research: Northern Ireland, Ireland, and Newfoundland

Katherine Side

In 2016, I received 2 grants, the Public Engagement Accelerator Fund and WW100 Living Memorial Fund, for ongoing research into volunteers' photographic collections at the Grenfell Mission, 1909-1926. Both projects include graduate student researchers (Emma Lang and Laura Kennedy) and forthcoming public, travelling exhibitions across Newfoundland. I'm Co-Editor, with Dr. Jennifer Connor, Faculty of Medicine, of a forthcoming book (2017) about the Grenfell Mission. I also co-authored a chapter, with Emma Lang, examining the Mission's practice of clothing exchange. My book, *Patching Peace: Women's Civil Society Organizing in Northern Ireland* (2015) was reviewed in *Irish Studies Review* (2017).

In 2016, I published articles in *Gender, Place and Culture* (on mobility, migration, and abortion access from Ireland), the *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* (on Northern Ireland documentary filmmaker, Cahal McLaughlin's corpus of work), and a review in the *Journal of Gender Studies* (on changing attitudes towards gender in Ireland). An article examining the *Stormont House Agreement's* Oral History Project is forthcoming in *Irish Studies Review*; and, a book chapter that examines official

accounts of conflict-related displacement in Northern Ireland is in press.



In November 2016, the Department of History, Simon Fraser University invited me to speak about Grimaldi's iconic image of Bloody Sunday, 1972, which I'll also present in Derry, Northern Ireland. My research on "Photographing Bobby Sands" will be presented at

Memorial University, and in Missouri, US in March 2017. Having recently been awarded a place at an international writing retreat, I'll be picking blueberries in Haukijärvi, Finland this summer.

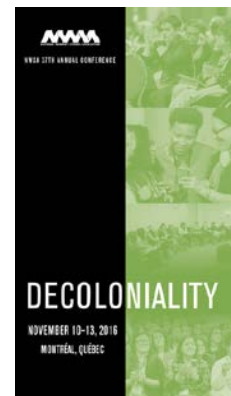
Decoloniality in Montreal: Report from the National Women's Studies Association

Vicki Hallett

In November 2016, Dr. Sonja Boon, Dr. Carol Lynne D'Arcangelis, and Dr. Vicki Hallett presented a panel of three papers at the National Women's Studies Association Annual Conference 2016,

in Montreal, QC. The conference theme was Decoloniality, and the panel fit with this theme very well. Entitled "Messy Be/Longings: On Borders, Transgressions, and the Reframing of Colonial Geographies", the panel showcased our current research projects. Doing the panel was a rare chance to talk about our work together, and to highlight connections and overlaps that are often overlooked.

The conference was huge, with over 2000 delegates, and so it was impossible to take in everything. But, there were a number of high points. One of these was the keynote address



by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, which beautifully invoked the power of story, the importance of tradition, and the ever-present connection to land that are required for decolonization. Another striking presentation was the plenary session on Decolonizing Institutions with Audra Simpson, Chinyere Oparah, and Kim Tall Bear. These three activist/academics talked about their varied feminist, decolonizing praxis of resistance with passion and brilliance.

There were also many incredible panels and presentations by our Women's and Gender Studies colleagues from around North America. While the United States' election results cast a pall over the proceedings, people were already talking about how to resist the new regime's encroachments on human rights, women's reproductive health, and more. Being with, talking with, laughing with a large and diverse group of feminists was a balm at that moment. Seeing old friends and colleagues, and meeting new ones, is always one of the best things about such events. Not to mention the incredible book fair, the art exhibits, and all the delicious things that exist in Montreal! *Vive le féminisme!!*

Talking Bodies and the State of the Arts

Jennifer Dyer

My major research project is about parental advocacy of gender diverse youth in Canada. In the context of an SSHRC Insight grant application developed with colleagues here and across the country, we are working to better understand, specify challenges and needs, and develop ways to support Canadian parental advocacy efforts. We will undertake a national study of parent advocates of transgender children and youth to:



- 1) Explain, from a robust theoretical perspective, advocacy successes and the ongoing challenges that differently situated parent advocates face; and
- 2) Create new networks, organizational linkages, and templates for practice within the rural and urban communities in which parents are undertaking their work.

Our research aims to combine participatory action research with parent advocates in four different regions, qualitative interviews with parent advocates and key allies, and a critical media analysis of representations of transgender youth and families to better understand parental advocacy.

I am also finishing a research project about the role of the female nude in contemporary digital/video art, arguing that this art offers a model of representation that develops both an ontology of difference (based on new materialisms) that supports an aesthetic of collaborative, interactive and responsible practices of looking.

Finally, I am conducting research on Patterns of Arts Support in this province, answering a need (stated in the 2006 provincial Blueprint for the Development and Investment in Culture) for data about who supports the arts, what support do the arts need, and how to connect arts activity with corporate social responsibility in Newfoundland and Labrador.

This spring, I will be presenting papers on parental advocacy at the Talking Bodies Conference, University of Chester, and on the aesthetics of collaborative viewing practices in landscape art at the International Conference on the Image, Paris.

Violence No More at Ground Zero: It Starts With Us

Carol Lynne D'Arcangelis

Auspiciously, the sun beamed as activists, academics and community members gathered at the St. John's Native Friendship Centre (SJNFC) to discuss our respective work on the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous

women, girls and Two Spirits (MMIWG2S). The workshop and public event that followed was the latest of a series of “Violence No More” forums usually held in Toronto. Thanks to collaboration between the SJNFC, Memorial’s Department of Gender Studies and the Toronto-based group No More Silence, “Violence No More” made its way to “ground zero” of the colonial encounter in North America. That morning, over twenty people gathered from near and far to discuss the issue of MMIWG2S in light of the national public inquiry just underway at the time.



We met to develop strategies for holding the Government accountable during the Inquiry and, even more importantly, for strengthening community-based responses to the murders and disappearances.

At the public event later that evening, four compelling speakers shared their perspectives, some critical, about the possibilities and limits of inquiries. Two of the speakers were from Newfoundland and Labrador: Charlotte Wolfrey, an anti-violence advocate from Rigolet, Nunatsiavut; and Barbara Barker, a lawyer in St. John's and member of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation. They were joined by Dr. Alex Wilson, a member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation and Associate Professor at the University of Saskatchewan; and Dr. Kim Stanton, Legal Director of the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) based in Toronto.

Our working group’s discussions continued post-forum and culminated in a public statement to highlight our collective position on the inquiry. Both the statement and video of the public event can be found here: <http://nomoresilence-nomoresilence.blogspot.ca/2017/02/violence-no-more-at-ground-zero-it.html>.

The forum was possible thanks to funding from the Memorial Conference Fund; the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Conference Fund; the Gender Studies Department Scholarship in the Arts Fund; and a SSHRC Connections Grant.

Anti-Trafficking Legislation and Anti-Immigration Sentiment

Christina Doonan

In November 2016, my article entitled “A House Divided: Humanitarianism and Anti-immigration Within US Anti-trafficking Legislation” was published in *Feminist Legal Studies* (vol.24, issue 3: pp. 273-293). This article considers the plight of irregular migrants to the United States (I prefer the term “irregular” to the dehumanizing term “illegal”). It contrasts the compassionate language adopted in U.S. anti-trafficking legislation with the grim realities encountered by even the most defenseless migrants: unaccompanied children. Beginning in 2014, thousands of unaccompanied children began crossing into the U.S. via Mexico, fleeing dangerous conditions in the so-called “Northern Triangle States” of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Several Republican lawmakers reacted to these children as ill-intentioned criminals, and immediately began to seek means of removing protections afforded to migrant children under the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008. These protections preserve a child’s right to an immigration hearing, shield her/him from precipitous deportation, and allow her/him remain in the custody of a family or friend while awaiting an immigration hearing, rather than in institutional accommodations. I argue that the hostile Republican response to child migrants reveals that the U.S.’s attempt at global leadership on the issue of combatting human trafficking is seriously compromised by anti-immigration sentiment. Since the article was published, the election of Donald Trump has only intensified the predicaments facing irregular migrants to the U.S., and the tension between the U.S.’s identity as a proponent of “anti-trafficking” and its anti-immigrant bias will likely only become more acute.

Indigenous Self-Determination in Labrador

Andrea Procter

I'm a cultural anthropologist, and I focus mainly on indigenous self-determination and settler colonialism. Ever since I moved to St. John's 15 years ago from Montreal, I've worked with indigenous communities in Labrador on a variety of community-driven projects.

Most recently, I've been collaborating with people from Nunatsiavut to highlight and celebrate Inuit women's leadership through the "Daughters of Mikak" initiative, and it's probably been the most fun thing I've ever done. We've been getting people in Nunatsiavut to create digital stories about an inspirational Inuit woman in their lives for our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/DaughtersofMikak/>), and the outpouring of love and appreciation for each other has been beautiful.

I've also been working with colleagues in Labrador to explore how community re-storying of women's history in NunatuKavut can build new understandings of indigenous self-determination and the intersections of race and gender in the region. More recently, I've started working with NunatuKavut Community Council as their Research Advisor, and we're beginning an Indigenous community governance and sustainability initiative with three communities in NunatuKavut.



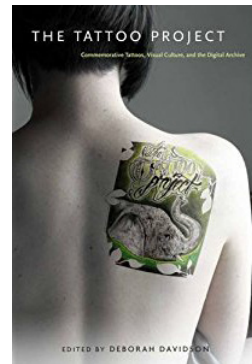
I headed up to Nain and Hopedale for a few weeks at the end of February to start another Tradition & Transition Research Partnership project, working with people there on creating a book of stories based on a collection of beautiful black and white photos that were taken in northern Labrador in the 1960s and 1980s by Candace Cochrane.

Department of Gender Studies E-News (Winter 2017)

Student Research and Publications

Congratulations to recent Master of Gender Studies graduates, **Zaren Healey White** and **Gina Snooks**, who both published scholarly works this past year!

Zaren's essay, "I Am Not My Bodies:" Transgender Identity and Embodiment in Nina Arsenault's *The Silicone Diaries*," appears open-access in *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture, & Social Justice* (<http://journals.msvu.ca/index.php/atlantis/article/view/173-183%20PDF/173-183>). Zaren is currently working at the Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development at Memorial University.



Gina's essay, "Enshrined in Flesh: Tattoos and Contemporary Women's Spirituality," also based on her Master of Gender Studies research, appears in the edited collection, *The Tattoo Project: Commemorative Tattoos, Visual Culture, and the Digital Archive*, edited by

Deborah Davidson. Gina is currently a doctoral student in Women's Studies and Feminist Research, University of Western Ontario.

Research in the Classroom: Reviewing Feminist Books

Students in GNDR4000: Contemporary Feminist Issues, taught by Dr. Katherine Side, wrote collaborative book reviews of contemporary feminist texts. Below, **Manon Garandeau**, **Laura Griffin**, and **Bianca Pitre** review three recently published books.

Not That Kind of Girl: A young woman tells you what she's "learned"

LENA DUNHAM, 2014

Random House, New York, NY

288pp., 978-0-385-68067-7, Joana Avillez (Illustrator), \$32 (hardcover)

Sexpowerment: le sexe libère la femme (et l'homme)

CAMILLE EMMANUELLE, 2016

Editions Anne Carrière, Paris

240pp., 978-2-843-37768-6, €18 (paperback)

Sex Object

JESSICA VALENTI, 2016

Dey Street Books, New York, NY

224pp., 978-0-062-43508-8, \$31.99 (hardcover)

“One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” Simone de Beauvoir claimed, in 1949, in *The Second Sex* (267). Seventy years later, enjoying the benefits from the social and sexual revolution of the 1970s, such as financial independence, tolerance towards LGBTQ communities, contraception and abortion, women seem to control their own sexual lives. However, 21st century Western young women, such as Lena Dunham (USA), Camille Emmanuelle (France), and Jessica Valenti (USA), question this apparent sexual freedom “in a world that hate[s] women” (Valenti 2). Based on their reflections and personal experiences, these three sex-positive feminists reveal the way that their sexuality shapes their paths to womanhood – from sexist slurs and slut shaming, to the discovery of clitoral pleasure: they advocate that the liberating power of sex may balance relationships between men and women.

As Emmanuelle notes, sex-positive feminism was born in the USA in 1980 and aims at proving that “sexuality is not only, for women, a hazardous field, but also a lever of emancipation and self-governance” (21). How can sex-positive feminism thrive in a 21st century patriarchal society that promotes the hypersexualization of female bodies and blames women who freely pursue their sexual lives? Based on dark satirical memories of her youth in New-York, Valenti illustrates how the oppression she experienced for being a woman – from penis flashing in the subway to guilt-provoking emails about her sexuality – had a negative impact on the construction of her identity. She wonders, “who would I be if I didn’t live in a world that hated women?”

(Valenti 2). Dunham agrees with Valenti and condemns the embedment of gendered expectations that leads to the stigmatization of women. For example, there is criticism of women when it comes to their right to have multiple sexual partners, and when they refuse to fit the mould of a perfect housewife. Confirming the perpetuation of such patterns across the Atlantic, Emmanuelle rather deplors the rising of reactionary political movements (Le Front National, Les Précurseurs, La Manif Pour Tous) in a French society which seeks refuge in “‘socially secured values’ : the heterosexual couple and the family” (177). These movements dangerously encourage homophobia and maintain a retrogressive image of woman with serious consequences for the appropriation and the assertion of gender and sexuality, for women, and men who want to assume, proudly, their feminine side.

In a woman-hating world, women are to be pure, virgin, and untouched; when they violate this norm, they are considered sluts. Slut shaming is used as a source of sexual oppression. It is difficult for a woman to want to have sex for the pleasure; yet, Dunham, Emmanuelle, and Valenti all express this desire. Emmanuelle acknowledges that a woman encounters more difficulties to living freely with her sexuality. “Sometime, honestly, I have sex because I feel alone; or because I need to prove myself that I am attractive” (Emmanuelle 121). Dunham agrees with Emmanuelle and admits that she sometimes enjoys having sex because it makes her feel desired (Dunham 10). There are many reasons why women want to have sex, but should that be a reason for slut shaming? Emmanuelle talks about out the notion of the “walk of shame” - after a girl has spent a night with a guy and comes back home, there is a stigma put on her, and not on the guy (Emmanuelle 122). The French feminist also puts forwards the “slut stigmata” (Emmanuelle 124) which translates to the reception by the society of her nonconformist will to live and have sex like a man; to freely fuck who she wants without consequences. Unfortunately, women usually pay the highest price for freely

enjoying sex, especially when it comes to their reputation. Valenti discovered that women did not just experience face-to-face sexual harassment – as when Kyle, a man she had sex with, hollered, “you’re a piece of fucking garbage... I don’t associate with whores!” (Valenti 104). This also happens anonymously, and online. For instance, in April, 2012, Valenti received an email telling her “[she] just need[s] to be gagged, and that women just need a good fuck and chuck because they’re cunts” (Valenti 199).

It is about time we polished up the despised image of women, and sex-positive feminism. Dunham, Emmanuelle, and Valenti actually testify to a will to deconstruct patriarchal stereotypes by promoting “sex as a source of emancipation” (15). For Emmanuelle and Dunham, freedom lies in the body and sexual autonomy. As Emmanuelle points out, among the multitude of porn that exists, feminist and queer porn notably succeeds in showing empowering representations of women who master their own bodies (56). Therefore, sex is a place where women can set apart social and gender expectations, and even upset traditional relationships of power (Emmanuelle 134). That explains why freedom in sexuality appears as “politically incorrect” (Esther Perel qtd. in Emmanuelle 134). Dunham shares the same view about the liberation of women by means of the control over their bodies. After casting herself in sex scenes for her hit show, *Girls* (HBO 2012-2017), the American actor was excited to change the representation of sex. “Between porn and studio romances, we get the message that we have been doing it all wrong” (Dunham, 103). In fact, by exposing her chubby body in sex scenes, she allowed a more realistic depiction of her sexuality, but also proved that she is able to master her body: “I do it because my boss tells me to. And my boss is me. When you're naked, it's nice to be in control” (Dunham, 103). Valenti agrees with Dunham and Emmanuelle about the impact of mastering your body. Known as Valentitty (53), the American feminist used her breasts as a symbol of sexual empowerment

that also masked her bodily insecurities. Valenti used to be constantly harassed for being a women, thus by proudly showcasing her feminine attributes, she challenged the twisted patriarchal view of femininity.



L to R: Bianca Pitre, Laura Griffin, and Manon Garandea

In spite of the improvements in the perception about gender equality, these authors realize that there is still a long way to go for them to enjoy the same rights and privileges as men. Especially when it comes to the question of female sexuality, current patriarchal institutions take a malicious pleasure to make women pay the highest price for expressing freely their sexual lives - from having one night stands to choosing not to bear children. Slut-shaming is one of the numerous sexist stigmas that women experience and it has a serious impact on the constructions of their identity and their self-esteem. However, sex-positive feminists claim that sexuality is be an empowering tool. By mastering their bodies, and consequently their sexual lives, women, and men, may confront the stereotypical view of sexuality. They may play with gender roles to appropriate “a post-gender, both feminine and masculine” (Emmanuelle 14). Simone de Beauvoir noted: “Do not forget that a political, economic, or religious crisis is enough to question women’s rights. These rights are never taken for granted. You must stay watchful all your life long” (qtd. in Monteil 242). The fight that these three sex-positive feminists, Dunham, Emmanuelle, and Valenti have fought is evidence that past feminist achievements still have some resonance today and that one day, women will enjoy the same liberty as men.

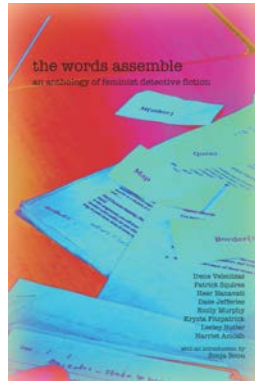
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Manon Garandeau, Laura Griffin,
and Bianca Pitre

Research in the Classroom: *all the beginnings: an anthology of feminist detective fiction*

As part of the Fall 2016 iteration of GNDR6000, our required graduate seminar in feminist theory, students wrote feminist detective stories. These stories were gathered into a self-published anthology, launched in a micro print run of 25 copies in



January 2017. Congratulations to the 8 student authors whose work appears in the anthology: **Harriet Amoah, Lesley Butler, Krysta Fitzpatrick, Daze Jefferies, Emily Murphy, Heer Nanavati, Patrick Squires, and Irene Velentzas!**

Organized around the theme of “finding theory in unexpected places,” the Fall 2016 graduate seminar in feminist theory interrogated the idea of place in a variety of ways. Place could be the site of theory-making: we considered weather, plants, things. Place could also be the way that we choose to tell our theories: in addition to traditional texts, we considered memoirs and mysteries, and in written assignments, wrote reflexive blog posts, and – as this collection demonstrates –

detective stories. But as we discovered, place can also be ambiguous; it can be in the spaces between, in the juxtaposition, overlap, and entanglement of ideas, the abject, *mestizaje*, the *entre-deux* where meaning collapses and is reborn....

Where is feminist theory located? And how do we make it? Can we find feminist theory in things? How about in neuroscience? What role might place play in feminist theory? And what about language, when our tongues tangle and twist, words shaping and reshaping themselves inside our mouths? What might a hyphen mean, and what stories does it carry? How do we account for the natural world – for weather, for animals, for water, for fish, for air? Can we make theory with the body of a dead rat, a power grid, an assemblage of garbage? What happens in the breath between bodies? And what happens inside the body itself? Can we make theory with our viscera? Can we find theory in blood, amniotic fluid, semen, breast milk, urine, vomit, tears, sweat?

What about how we write theory? Can theory emerge in memoirs; that is, can we find it in places where people write from and through the self? Can we find theory in fiction? These are just some of the questions that shaped our thinking as we worked through feminist theory together.

The impetus for a Feminist Detective Story project came from the work of Andrea Petö, who developed a similar assignment for a feminist history course. In her book chapter, “Feminist Crime Fiction as a Model for Writing History Differently” (2014), she observes that “crime fiction is a meeting point between politics and entertainment” (83). Feminist theory, while often highly conceptual, is also always political. What might it mean to respond critically to feminist theory in the form of a detective story? How would thinking change? What might be possible that otherwise would not be possible at all? What might be the limitations?

Writing is an intrinsic component of knowledge production. Like feminist theory itself, writing is never neutral; as we learned

from our attempts to read the work of M. NourbeSe Philip out loud, language is, itself, a political instrument, deeply embedded in colonial logics, and profoundly important in our experience of our embodied selves.



L to R: Sonja Boon, Barb Flint, Emily Murphy, Lesley Butler, Harriet Amoah, Irene Velentzas, Patrick Squires, Daze Jefferies, Heer Nanavati. In front: Krysta Fitzpatrick.

How could feminist theory students take up the tools of the detective novelist and what might happen if they did? This assignment asked students to consider what constituted a crime and to think about who could be a detective. They also had to think carefully about the nature of an investigation and how they might effectively conduct one. And weaving through all of this was the story itself, a narrative constructed from a close attention to feminist theory, on the one hand, and the tools of the creative writer – character, dialogue, setting, and plot – on the other.

The title of this anthology, *The Words Assemble*, is drawn from *All the beginnings: A queer autobiography of the body* by Quinn Eades, the last book that we read together, and the book that had the most impact on everyone's thinking. In Eades' work theory can be found in every pore of the body, in every body process, every bodily experience. To paraphrase Judith Butler, we, as readers, were undone by Eades. Our borders and boundaries breached, we had to find new ways of thinking, new ways of reading, new ways of being....

Sonja Boon

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