

Undergraduate Research Symposium May 18, 2018 Mary Gates Hall

Online Proceedings

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BODIES WITH AND WITHOUT RIGHTS: ACTIVISM, ANALYSIS, ARCHIVES

Session Moderator: Priti Ramamurthy, Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies

MGH 254

12:30 PM to 2:15 PM

* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

Intergenerational Communication of Trauma and Cross-Generational Effects of Japanese Incarceration on Sansei

Alice Lau, Senior, Communication, Education, Communities and Organizations

UW Honors Program

Mentor: Ralina Joseph, Communication

Oral history projects documenting Japanese incarceration typically prioritize the stories of those that directly experienced the traumas of incarceration. Although trauma can be experienced by one generation, it can manifest and be passed down to subsequent generations through storytelling; trauma can also be experienced through silence, or the refusal to share stories surrounding a traumatic event, affecting individual and cultural identity. Very little scholarship has documented or closely examined the oral histories of those who did not experience Japanese incarceration themselves but have family members who did. The goal of this project is to examine the intergenerational communication of trauma and the cross-generational effects of Japanese incarceration on the Sansei generation (grandchildren of Japanese immigrants). Densho is an organization that documents and makes accessible through their online database the oral histories of Japanese incarceration experiences using digital video recordings and full written transcriptions of interviews conducted by them. I used digital video footage and interview transcriptions to qualitatively analyze for emerging themes or trends among the Sansei interviews surrounding how incarceration was communicated to them and its effects on them. I expect a common theme of emotional restraint and lack of communication of trauma among family members due to the impact of incarceration on identity and cultural practices. I also expect a trend among the Sansei interviews for seeking alternative means outside of family storytelling to learn about Japanese incarceration. Another result I expect is having their sense of cultural identity radicalized to seek justice for incarceration in varying ways. Placing significance on the gener-

ation of Japanese Americans who did not directly experience incarceration can further broaden the discourse of meaningful oral histories.

The Auto-Ethnographic Study of Ethnic Crisis and Displacement of Rohingya Women in Myanmar (Burma)

Thu Thu May Oo, Senior, Anthropology: Medical Anth & Global Hlth

UW Honors Program

Mentor: Rachel Chapman, Anthropology

Ethnic and religious violence on the border of western Myanmar's Rakhine State and Bangladesh displaced approximately 647,000 Rohingya (residents), a stateless Muslim minority in Myanmar since August 25, 2017. The fact that this crisis has not been fully addressed by the Burmese majority is very alarming especially under the administration of Aung San Suu Kyi, the prominent political figure of Myanmar. Hence, the initial purpose of my research was to examine the factors contributing to this humanitarian crisis by conducting interviews, oral histories, and online surveys among resettled Rohingya women in the Greater Seattle area. I employed a transformative feminist theoretical framework to understand the relationships between political subjectivity and gender violence and colonialism, military dictatorship, and patriarchy. However, while recruiting participants for my project, I encountered silence and reticence rather than enthusiasm from the Rohingya community. This wall of silence and the absence of Rohingya community even among the small Burmese populations in Greater Seattle Area has been a significant turning point in my research. Perhaps this silence itself indicates Rohingya fears that even the researcher-researched relationship could expose them to further racism and discrimination from Burmese here in Seattle on top of their sufferings from political trauma and sexual violence in Myanmar. Therefore, I am currently implementing an auto-ethnographic approach to excavate the role my own and other

majority Burmese immigrants' perceptions of and ways of representing the Rohingya, and how this has contributed to the current distrust, silence and fear between women in two communities who have both experienced sexualized military violence. By doing so, I hope my research will begin a process of facing Burmese internalized racism, sexism, and religious discrimination towards the Rohingya community and serve as the stepping stone towards inclusive community-building with cultural humility here and in Myanmar.

Oral Histories of Queer and Trans People of Color at the University of Washington

Ananya Gupta (Ananya) Garg, Senior, Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies, Comparative History of Ideas

UW Honors Program

Mentor: Priti Ramamurthy, Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies

This project seeks to highlight and archive the lives, stories, and experiences of queer and trans people of color at the University of Washington. Queer movements have historically rested on the labor of queer and trans people of color, however, these histories are often whitewashed. The experiences of queer and trans students of color are not ones that are often archived or given space to be told. Through this project I seek to give space to stories and lives that are pushed to the side and silenced. I also seek to find commonalities among different yet similar student experiences. This project is based in one-on-one, in-person interviews with individual students. As an interviewer, I ask the interviewees questions about experiences include upbringing, familial structure, cultural context, coming into queerness, finding queer of color spaces in and outside of the university context, looking to the future, and ways of healing from traumas. My methods include in-depth audio and visual recorded interviews, and full detailed transcripts of each interview. As a member and leader of the Queer People of Color Alliance at UW, I am a part of and have access to queer communities of color at UW. This project highlights the importance of individual narratives, as they inform larger understandings of queerness and community. In addition, this project builds an archive of queer and trans student of color experiences that, among other things, highlight the importance of institutional spaces within the university campus that supports queer and trans students.

Indigenizing the Space Program: How Can We Re-Appropriate the Space Program for First Nations Peoples?

Jesse Brisbois, Senior, Political Science

Mentor: Saadia Pekkanen, International Studies

The space program is a quickly expanding industry that promises trillions of dollars within the next 20 years. Countries are scrambling to cultivate space programs as the opportunities, both scientifically and economically, develop be-

fore our eyes. The United States leads the pack in the global space industry, and Washington State is a strong contender as front-runner in the US space program. With 26 federally recognized tribes, it is easy to see First Nations people being left behind in this lucrative business. How can we, as First Nations peoples, indigenize the space program by contributing our vast amounts of historical knowledge and re-appropriating the industry to reflect our unique views and histories? Do indigenous groups even want to be involved in the space program? And finally, how do tribal governments benefit from the financial benefits of the space program? By doing archival research of tribal views on space, the space program, conducting a field study based on the geography and economics of Spokane Tribe of Indians, and considering my own knowledge as a Native American identifying woman, I was able identify issues and formulate policy recommendations. Unfortunately, it is all too easy to see this important demographic becoming overlooked by this financially profitable opportunity. If First Nations groups will ever feel comfortable becoming part of the space program, their voices and sacred views need to be respected and valued. The US government also needs to make sure that indigenous people are able to have the opportunities that allow them to participate and share their views. Lastly, tribal governments need to find ways to indigenize the space program and make sure our communities see the economic profit that can be yielded from this extremely important industry.

The Making of DREAMs: An Exploration of Identity, Subjectivity, and Civil Disobedience of Undocumented Youth Living in the State of Exception

Monica Amira Romero, Senior, Anthropology, Spanish

UW Honors Program

Mentor: Devon Pena, Anthropology

The so-called DREAMers are the current generation of largely undocumented youth named after an unrealized piece of Congressional legislation known as the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors or "DREAM" Act. These youth, many of college-age, are the source of an unrelenting voice for the advancement of immigrant, civil, and human rights throughout the United States. Their movement mirrors earlier struggles that resulted in significant social, economic, and political change; taking the form of direct-action protests and involvement with state, national, and transborder organizing campaigns through social media networks. This ethnographic research project explores the DREAMers' Movement in terms of activists' enunciations of identity, subjectivity, and civil disobedience in the context of the State of Exception created by the Trump Administration's engagement in biopolitics. I address the principal research questions: Are new radicalized political subjectivities emerging from the widely shared daily-lived experiences of precarity among the self-identified members of this move-

ment? How does this subjectivity shape DREAMers' perceptions of and engagement with identity politics and civil disobedience in their rebellion against their status as bodies without rights? These questions were researched through ethnographic methods, such as one-on-one interviews and participant-observations. Ultimately noting new forms of engagement in activism and the creation of new identities and ideologies surrounding civil disobedience, this project will provide a scholarly space for reflections on the DREAMers' Movement and its prospects for transforming national and transborder narratives of self, citizenship, and belonging in this political era.