

WRC TODAY

• SPECIAL ISSUE •

Bringing the Margins to the Center

by Tara Anderson

In *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, bell hooks (2000) explains that “much feminist theory emerges from privileged women who live at the center, whose perspectives on reality rarely include knowledge and awareness of the lives of women and men who live on the margin. As a consequence, feminist theory lacks wholeness, lacks the broad analysis that could encompass a variety of human experiences” (p. xvii). This year’s theme for Women’s History Month as well as this piece explores the meaning of margin to center.

Patriarchy exists to deny access to power, choice, voice and equitable opportunities to women and those occupying marginalized gender positions. Systemic oppression occurs through sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, and ableism (to name a few). Equity will not be achieved until we recognize that groups with privilege have access to education, political power, economic power, fiscal resources, healthcare, etc. while the same access is denied to disadvantaged groups. Although, white, heterosexual, upper-middle class women continue to experience sexism, they are granted the platform and resources to advocate and centralize the issues they deem relevant. For example, Betty Friedan (1963) identifies the ‘problem with no name’ in *The Feminine Mystique*. The problem, Friedan argued, was that women want to be more than just housewives maintaining the home, husband, and children, and should not be excluded from the professional sector. Because access to employment became a central issue, women of color and working class women (for example), who were already working are excluded from the conversation.

Intersectionality, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, recognizes that all identities intersect with gender and the layered experiences of individual. Crenshaw (1993) discusses how women of color are marginalized in antiracism and feminism movements, specifically when considering how patterns of sexism and racism reinforce violence against women. For example, when navigating the aftermath of violence, white women are granted access to resources and support services to which women of color are often denied. While the experience of violence is situated within a system of patriarchal and sexist oppression, systems of racism create additional barriers for resource access for women of color.

When reflecting on the different agendas of leaders through the waves of feminism beginning in Seneca Falls, through the second wave, and to where we are today, it is clear that the issues of priority focus are centered on individuals within privileged groups. This is not to say that these women in our history, and their efforts for gender equity, should be reduced. However, it is important to give attention to the dominance of these issues within the movement. There is no one size fits all solution, so as we go about activism we should be aware of the various experiences and intersections that the individuals in a movement bring and raise awareness to issues that may not get to be heard. Taking an intersectional approach to addressing and discussing gender and women’s issues can help bring the margins to the center. As stated by Kimberlé Crenshaw, “ignoring the differences within groups contributes to tension among groups” (1993).

References

- Crenshaw, K. (1993). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, Volume 43 (6). Retrieved from http://0-www.jstor.org.source.unco.edu/stable/1229039?pq-origsite=summon&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
- Friedan, B. (1997). *The Feminine Mystique*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.
- hooks, b. (2000). *Feminist theory: From margin to center* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

CATCALLING AWARENESS DAY

Assault Survivors Advocacy Program (ASAP) presents Catcalling Awareness Day. This day is an opportunity to demonstrate where catcalling occurs on campus and allow expression how individuals felt when catcalled.

March 23rd
McKee Breezeway
9:30am - 2:30pm

March 24th
University Center
11:00am - 2:00pm

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

March 21st-25th

WHM Poster Series

Women's Resource Center (Scott-Willcoxon Hall)

8:00am - 5:00pm

In recognition of this year's Women's History Month, From Margin to Center, the WRC presents the 2016 Poster Series featuring women across race, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, class, and religion in history who have created change while existing on the margins. Through this poster series, we encourage our campus community to engage the stories of these extraordinary women and work to explore and centralize additional narratives from women in history whose voices have been marginalized.

March 31th

Women's Resource Center Social Media Launch Party

Women's Resource Center (Scott-Willcoxon Hall)

4:00pm - 6:00pm

The Women's Resource Center is now on Instagram!

Join us for free food, fun and giveaways!

All March

Poster Campaign

Be on the look out for our Women's History Month Poster Campaign around campus! Five different posters will be circulating with facts about women's history.

Tweet us your thoughts or reactions to @UNCO_WRC #UNCOWRC



For more information go to: www.unco.edu/wrc/whm

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING LUNCHEONS

Come and join the Women's Resource Center all semester long for our Consciousness Raising Luncheons! There will be free food provided, but this is only while food lasts so be sure to come early!

I need
**Feminism
Because...**

UNC Women's Resource Center

Luncheons from 12 PM-1:30 PM:

March 30 April 26

STAFF REFLECTIONS

The staff reflections section gives the staff a chance to voice their opinions and reflect on certain topics throughout the year.

What does “from margin to center” mean to you?

{ I think that from margin to center means allowing the voices that are seldom heard to have an opportunity to be heard for a change. In a movement for the betterment of women, all women need to be heard.
- *Kiana Green, Student Assistant* }

{ To me, from margin to center means recognizing intersectionality and that we must bring attention to issues faced by women who hold marginalized identities other than their gender.
- *Lindsay Robertson, SI Graduate Assistant* }

{ “From Margin to Center” recognized that the marginalized groups and their issues should be at the center of movements, working as a collective instead of further oppression within a movement.
- *Tara Anderson, Student Assistant* }

{ To me, “from margin to center” means honoring often forgotten voices in the history of women’s and gender issues. It’s deconstructing the fact that they weren’t absent, but unseen by the dominant narratives of our movements. “From margin to center” is also calling for attention to intersections, aiming for different populations of folks to co-exist at center, and leave no one in the margins.
- *Tyrell Allen, WRC Graduate Assistant* }

{ The greatest failure of the Women’s Rights Movement has been (and continues to be) the further marginalization of oppressed identities by white, cisgender, heterosexual, middle/upper class, christian, able-bodied women. Those occupying these (and other) privileged spaces continue to decide issues of priority in feminism and these identities continue to gain focused attention in activist work. Intersectionality in feminism is critical in centralizing the voices and experiences of all identities. Let us not repeat these ongoing failures by creating a new collective; one that recognizes beauty in difference, honors multiple identities and experiences and eradicates the margins.
- *Emily Hedstrom-Lieser, WRC & SI Assistant Director* }

INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S AWARENESS WEEK

March 7th & 8th

Helping Hands, not Hurting Hands: Stop and Make a Difference, 10a -1p at the UC

This event is still in the process of finalizing details; however, we plan on creating bags for 300 women that include feminine products and toiletries. We will also be doing a coat/clothing drive.

March 9th

**Documentary: "A Thousand Voices", Ross 1040- doors open at 6PM, movie starts at 630 PM
Rose B. Simpson will also be at this event and we will have a Q & A session after the documentary.**

From the proverb, "It takes a thousand voices to tell a single story," this is a documentary that builds from thousands of voices to present one universal story of New Mexico's Native American women. Native American women have been purveyors of culture since creation. In spite of Western invasions, Native American women remain strong and grounded in traditional values by enduring courage and wisdom. The voices and advisers are from the Navajo Nation, Mescalero Apache Tribe, Jicarilla Apache Tribe, Kiowa Tribe, Pueblo de Cochiti, Ohkay Owingeh, and Pueblos of Acoma, Laguna, Jemez, Santo Domingo, Pojoaque, Santa Clara, Taos, Nambe and San Ildefonso. This is the inspiring story of the power of Native American women from the beginning of time, through invasions from Spain, Mexico and the United States, to the present day. The power remains...and the story continues.



Rose B. Simpson (b. 1983), daughter of clay sculptor Roxanne Swentzell and Patrick Simpson, a wood and metal contemporary artist, Rose has experienced art throughout her life in Santa Fe and on the Santa Clara Pueblo Reservation. Being from both Indigenous and European descent, with art and philosophy primary in both families, she applies her abilities in ceramic and mixed media sculpture, installation, drawing, aerosol painting, writing, music, and performance to further her exploration and dedication to finding the relationship between aesthetic expression and life.

March 10th

Tanaya Winder- Slam poet, 11a - 1p outside the UC (closest to West Campus)

Tanaya Winder is a writer, educator, motivational speaker, and spoken word poet from the Southern Ute, Duckwater Shoshone, and Pyramid Lake Paiute Nations. She grew up on the Southern Ute Indian reservation and attended college at Stanford University where she earned a BA in English. After college, she pursued her passion of poetry and received her graduate degree a MFA in creative writing from the University of New Mexico. Since then she has co-founded As/Us: A Space for Women of the World. Tanaya guest lectures, teaches creative writing workshops, and speaks at high schools, universities, and communities internationally.

View her TED talk here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BF1z5XHEMaM>

You can follow her on Twitter at @tanayawinder



STUDENT VOICES

This semester, the Women's Resource Center is proud to launch the *Student Voices* section of the newsletter. We will use this space to feature the written work of various students in the UNC community.

Are you interested in writing a piece and submitting it to be in our newsletter? Please contact the Women's Resource Center at 970-351-1492 for more information or contact Emily Hedstrom-Lieser at emily.hedstromlieser@unco.edu

On Doctors and not Taking Women's Pain Seriously

By: Drew Heiderscheidt

An article in *The Atlantic* revealed that when women go to the hospital, or the emergency room, or the clinic, doctors are less likely to take their pain seriously. I have met women who have gone through the same pain described in the article; and interestingly I have also met doctors who took the pain of women less seriously. My freshman year of high school, my aunt became sick. She would call our home at two in the morning asking for my mother take her to the hospital— the pain was so unbearable that she couldn't do anything. The doctors took very little action, even when the pain was so excruciating that she was unable to talk. The doctors would give her pain medication and send her back home. They probably thought that it was an insignificant ailment or that she was exaggerating.

"It's probably nothing," I can imagine them saying. No matter how often she would go to the hospital feeling this terrible pain, the doctors reacted the same every time: prescribing pain medication, and sending her home. Occasionally they would keep her overnight, but that was both rare and pointless because she was never tested and if they had, they would have noticed she had cancer.

Colorectal cancer is commonly referred to as colon cancer. Often it results in people losing weight, feeling tired all the time, and blood in a person's stool. My aunt was finally diagnosed with Colon cancer and she was not the first in the family to have it either. The doctors at the hospital failed in their jobs to diagnose it, and if they had she might still have been alive today. At the end of her life, my aunt only weighed around seventy pounds and couldn't eat.

Why do I need feminism, or do I need it at all?

It's a difficult question, but I think it deserves an answer. Yes, I do need feminism, because without feminism people like my aunt will eternally suffer, due to bias that pervade everyday life concerning those of every gender. I can guarantee that, if my aunt had instead been my uncle, the doctors would have taken her pain more seriously.



About Drew Heiderscheidt: He is from Aurora, Colorado. His major is History Secondary Education, and he is also a writer for the University of Northern Colorado's school newspaper, *The Mirror*.

Consulting Editor: Dr. Ather Zia, Lecturer in Gender Studies and Anthropology.



Call For Nominations

Inspiring Women's Awards

To be inspired is to feel moved, motivated and influenced in a way that speaks to one's own unique spirit, truths, goals and commitments. The Inspiring Women's Awards is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate women students, staff and faculty who have inspired others around them. To be inspirational cannot be defined in one simple way. There are endless ways in which we are inspired and inspire others within our campus community. This award allows us to honor women at UNC who make a difference every day in the lives of others by being who they are and doing what they do.



Outstanding Mentor Award

A mentor is someone who provides guidance, support, encouragement, opportunity and offers space for growth and self-discovery. The Outstanding Mentor Award is an opportunity to recognize individuals at UNC who go above and beyond to mentor women students at UNC. These individuals not only contribute to the success of students with whom they work, they foster an environment in which women have an opportunity to use their voices and see their potential at UNC and beyond.

Nomination forms can be found on our website at: www.unco.edu/wrc/IWA

Nominations are due March 25th at 5:00 pm

Contact Us!

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You can also find our newsletter on our website!