

Women's Worlds 2005

Volume 5

<http://www.ww05.org>

Thursday, June 23, 2005

Globalizing to Embrace the World

"Globalization is a synonym for embracing the world, the main theme for WW05," said Frances Raday (Israel), the moderator for yesterday's plenary session titled "Globalization, Economic Values and Poverty." Ideally, globalization should signal the world coming together with the ultimate purpose of creating a win-win situation for all. However, the world is still far from its ideal and globalization processes continue to marginalize certain groups, such as women.

Instead of trickling down development from the Western hemisphere to the East and building democratic institutions, globalization lingeringly produces sex tourism, the migration of women, and informal female labor. Thus, globalization seems to increase the heinous gap between the rich and the poor.

Gigi Francisco (Philippines) highly criticized the role of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in championing neo-liberalism and the "hyper-liberalization" of trade. WTO guidelines only allow a leeway for rich countries to implement "protectionism" by subsidizing their agricultural products and marginalizing developing countries. In addition, uncertain Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) puts women working in the service sector in jeopardy by making them jobless once foreign investors leave the country.

Nancy Folbre (U.S.) argued that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the System of National Account (SNA) can no longer act as proper measurements to a nation's well-being. Women's non-market work, which benefits women and the society, must be appreciated because women transfer a great amount of their time.

Wu Qing (China) emphasized how people, as constituents of global citizen networks, must promote pro-literacy projects, educating women for social change. Grassroot movements are also important for women to act as seeds in a circle to share resources that are limited across borders. Women must walk their talk by engaging themselves in various activities in changing the negative influence of globalization.

Joanna Kerr (Canada) ended the session by introducing a way to participate in the promotion of women's intrinsic rights – by participating in the Association for Women's Right in Development (AWID) International Forum on Women's Right and Development in October in Thailand.

by Rhie-young Lim



Photo by Ji-sun Kim

Jiyul Sunim (Korea) quilts a "green resonance" with participants.

Becoming One with Nature

In the invited speaker session, Jiyul Sunim (Korea) – a Buddhist nun – delivered her speech under the title, "Embracing Mt. Cheonsung: The 'Green Resonance' of a Human-Salamander." She is currently engaged in a campaign protesting against the construction of a tunnel through Mt. Cheonsung.

Jiyul Sunim said, "Although we cannot ignore the additional conveniences created from the construction, we should focus our hearts on this small salamander that is endangered. Our life energy will be amplified, creating an even greater positive effect on the world."

Emphasizing the role and harmony of yin and yang (female and male), she spoke of the earthy maternal instincts of yin. Then Jiyul Sunim stated that she views society in a different point of view from men. "I think that is the power of women and it is in this respect that the participation of women in politics and in society overall can find its meaning."

Jiyul Sunim concluded her speech by sharing an important lesson from a 100 day-hunger strike earlier this year. "The important thing I experi-

enced was not my miraculous recovery, but the invaluable experience of nature's infinite energy. And for now our choice is not between development and conservation; rather, it is time to gather wisdom to find the answers to the voices that warn us not to take another step further."

To a question as to whether Jiyul Sunim pursues life-centric or life-egalitarian beliefs, she answered that there is no exact standard for these beliefs. She believes these logical, reasonable, and realistic standards and concepts are rather making this world a darker place. "I detach myself from the secular concepts. I promote my emotion and visions to the movement. That is why I sometimes call it the free and rootless movement."

by Na-hyun Kim

Notice Board

Before the Farewell Festival, free dinner will be served to all participants at the cafeteria in the Human Ecology Building at 18:00.

More notices on page 2 ◀

Today's Schedule

08:30-10:20 Plenary Session
(Welch-Ryang Auditorium, Daegangdang)
13:00-18:00 Subsessions

Invited Speakers Sessions

10:30-12:00
"Gender and ICT Empowerment: Addressing Some Usage Questions" Chat Garcia Ramilo, Jung-hee Lim, Cabrera-Balleza Mavic, Nancy J. Hafkin (POSCO Building rm. B151)
"Valuing Care: A Feminist Critique of Global Capitalism" Nancy Folbre (POSCO Building rm. B152)

13:00-14:30

"New Initiatives of Women Towards Empowerment" Dorothy Fernandes (LG Convention Hall)
"The Development and Issues of Women's Studies in the Context of Argentina or South America" Beatriz Gloria Bonder (POSCO Building B151)

16:30-18:00

"Revisiting the Gender/Technology & Science Relation in Transnational Perspective" Charis Thompson (POSCO Building B152)

Artists' Series Session

14:45-16:15 "6 Senses of Dance" Ki-sook Cho (Humanities Building rm. H12)

Film Series Sessions

10:30-11:50 "No More Tears Sisters"
12:00-13:00 "Transnational Tradeswomen"
13:10-14:10 "Pine and Fires: Women's Lives in Socialism"
14:20-15:00 "Going Silent"
15:10-15:30 "Out-of-date Custom as a Factor of Discrimination of the Women"
15:40-16:30 "Password: Women"
16:40-16:55 "Songbird"
17:05-18:05 "Umma"
(POSCO Building rm. B153)

Social Program

18:00 Dinner at the cafeteria in the Human Ecology Building
19:00-20:00 Farewell Festival: "We are sisters" at the University Stadium (in case of rain, Welch-Ryang Auditorium)

Side Events

10:30-13:00 Publication Party: "Celebrating the Publication of 'Eight-Country Women's Studies Textbooks'"
June 19-24 Feminism Video Activist 2005 (Mary Hall, Sogang University)



Photo by Ji-sun Kim

Participants actively engage in the Plenary Sessions held every morning.

Changing the Paradigm

The 21st century demands new approaches towards health, the environment, and the role of the state. The plenary session, "Changing Paradigms for the State, Health and Environment" will outline problems of current paradigms and offer possible solutions where the state and citizens may work together on health and environmental issues.

Ito Peng (Canada), Professor of the Department of Sociology at the University of Toronto will present on "The State, health policies and Asian Women." She will focus on the political economy of Japan as well as social policies created in response to post-industrial pressures.

Irene Dankelman (Netherlands) will present her paper, "Women: Agents of Change for a Healthy Planet." Well-known for her concept "Sustainable Development," she will emphasize the need to integrate an ecologically sustainable approach in all global arenas. She will conclude by identifying a future-oriented perspective in which women and men can contribute towards a healthier planet.

Annie Njoki Wainaina (Kenya),

former coordinator for the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) will discuss on "The role of African men in AIDS prevention."

Gloria Bonder (Argentina), Director of the Area "Gender, Society and Policies" in FLACSO, will speak about "The impact of science and technology policies on social development." She will focus on the advances in gender, science and technology (S&T) research, education and policy-making in Latin America. She will provide examples of educational projects that articulate how S&T work with social and economic development based on gender equity.

Sandra Harding (U.S.), Professor of Life and Social Welfare at the University of the Air, Chiba Prefecture in Japan, will present her paper, "Science, multiple modernities and culture." She will assert that cultural diversity is a resource for the production of scientific knowledge. Harding is well-known for her book, "Is Science Multicultural: Post-colonialism, Feminism & Epistemologies."

by Eun-joo Lee

Notice Board

Information on Luggage Depository: Participants can leave their luggage in the WW05 Secretariat (POSCO Building rm. 152) from June 24 to 25. Number tickets will be given out to be attached to your luggages. Make sure not to lose your tickets. The service is available from 08:00 to 18:00.

Tour of the Folk-Village and Shamatic Ritual Performance: (in cooperation with the "Gender and Religion" section of the IICW) Experience Korean folk customs and the vibrant form of religious practice. June 24, 12:00-19:00. For more information contact snkim@sogang.ac.kr or visit <http://www.koreanfolk.co.kr>

Expanding Women Leadership Korean Culture in Globalization

June 23, 13:00-14:30 at the POSCO Building rm. 461
Speakers: Mary S. Hartman (U.S.), Pil-wha Chang (Korea), Hyo-song Cho (Korea), Carmen Ambar (U.S.)

Though barriers prohibiting women's leadership have been lowered, women leaders continue to be in short supply around the world. Women are not dominating high political offices or corporate board rooms. The session, "Theories and Challenges of Women's Leadership Development" with participants including heads of institutions from western and eastern societies will explore activities, share challenges, and compare ideas on how women in top positions may improve the work force's ability to improve performance.

Mary S. Hartman (Canada), Professor and Director of Institute for Women's Leadership will be presenting her paper, "Women in Power: a Theoretical Framework." Hartman will speak on a whole range of resistance behaviors and strategies that affect women's development in leadership roles. She will contend that women's networks across national boundaries will be a major factor contributing to the breakthrough in women's expanded leadership throughout the world. Hartman will also point to a new framework for interpreting women in leadership in order to take a fresh look at how historians and policymakers have understood, or misunderstood, the west in relation to the rest of the world.

Hyoung Cho (Korea) and Hartman will address and compare the challenges in Korea and the U.S., and will discuss the theoretical contributions that women's leadership can make to women's studies. Discussions will focus on women's leadership development, highlighting model programs, mapping out the contributions that women's leadership has played in the business arena, professional fields, non-profit organizations, and higher education.

by Na-hyun Kim

June 23, 13:00-18:00 at the POSCO Building rm. 252
Speakers: Young Choi (Korea), Hei-sook Kim (Korea), Mi-hyun Kim (Korea), Young-mi Kim (Korea), Hae-ran Cho (Korea), So-young Lee, Chengzi Li (China)

It is nothing new to state that Korea has developed at an extraordinary pace in the past two centuries. Western values, which have had a great influence on the Korean peninsula, have often ended up misrepresenting what the ultimate liberation for Korean women – who have been downcast throughout a patriarchal history – entails.

The conflicts these "Shin Yosung" (New Women) who stand in between tradition and counter-tradition in the 19th and 20th centuries have continued to challenge Korean women today. This panel will address specific problems the Korean women face in this era of globalization through feminist analyses on cultural areas.

The first presentation will discuss the dilemma women face between cultural decentralization and maintenance of cultural integrity, which denies women as subjects. This dilemma will be approached from various philosophical standpoints, followed by the presentation of a study which explores three stages of the modern history of women's literature in Korea.

The second presentation will delve into how opposing conceptions of women's buddhahood were taken in the Koryo and middle ages of the Korean society. It will also discuss how women of privileged classes were active and educated during the Chosun Dynasty.

The final presentation will take a look at Korean sexual discourses in Confucian society of the Chosun dynasty, portrayed in E-J-Yong's movie 'Scandal.' It will also discuss how ethnic Korean women in China are portrayed on Yanbian TV dramas, as they confront cultural clashes in the age of globalization.

by Eun-a Lee

Video ACTivists Free Females Artists from the Social Norm

June 19-24, 14:30-16:30
Place: Mary Hall, Sogang University

The Feminism Video ACTivist is held biannually. This year's fair is divided into three main sections: the Screening Program, the Feminism Art Performance & Concert, and the Feminism Online Relay to support the theme "Asia Lesbian Video ACTivist." There are minor fairs that show the trend and culture of feminism video art under the three categories to help the understanding of the viewers.

Around 20 national and international feminism video activists are invited and nearly 70 artworks are exhibited. The invited artists are Pipilotti Rist, a performing international feminism video artist; Desiree Lim, an artist successfully expressing lesbianism through artwork; Ellen Pau, a nationally influential godmother of Hong Kong feminism videos and a first generation artist expressing feminism through such videos; So-young Kim, an



Photo by Ji-sun Kim

Desiree Lim asserts that the current media often only portray the male's perspective.

artist presently more active as a movie critic; Julie Zando, an artist widely acting as part of the first generation of lesbianism video artists; and Iri, a newly rising Japanese lesbianism video artist.

Feminism Video Activist is another form of the feminism movement to reveal women's media codes in a male dominant media society. To protect human dignity against the sexual oppression and discrimina-

tion in society, various types of video works for women and sexual minorities will be screened in public. The trend of feminism video influenced by the social and the political context will be examined through artists and their activities in and out of the country.

The theme of the exhibition, "Asia Lesbian Video ACTivist" is meaningful because viewers can see the frontline of feminism video activism reflected on the works of various artists. Also, by displaying artworks of the past and the present, history from the year 1970 to 2005 can be easily seen. Korea, Japan, and Hong Kong's artworks allow the chance for Asia's feminism voices to be shared by concentrating on lesbianism.

The exhibited art works include music video, pop art, advertisement, and pornography. It is hoped that all the events and exhibitions help the communication between artists from different cultural sectors. Tickets can be bought online (<http://www.igong.org>).

by Tae-yeon Kim

New Paradigms through Transnational Feminism

The future of feminism after its departure from Eurocentric models requires new paradigms. The session "New Paradigms through Transnational Feminism" focused on seeking alternative models to guide the future of feminism.

In In-hui Lee's (U.S.) presentation "Dark Mother and Anarchism," she explained that the Dark Mother, a black lady, is the descendent of people from all nations and the goddess from olden days. In fighting multinational corporations and eurocentric social, economic, cultural, and political ideology, she asserted that "We need to think and connect with our own spirituality with our local and native indigenous culture instead of looking, connecting spirituality in other traditions. And also whenever we have that kind of consciousness, there is always the Anarchist movement. So I was trying to offer Anarchism and Dark mother as a new concept, a new paradigm for an alternative world."

As an Indian woman living in America, Elizabeth Philipose (U.S.) presented on, "The Politics of Pain and the End of Empire" and explored American politics and policies on pain critically. She stated that "central concern in my paper is with the need of global emotional literacy, one that challenges the use of violence for political ends." She referred extensively to the torture photos of the Abu Gharib prisons in Iraq. She asserted that the victims were not tortured to tell the truth or to tell the facts they knew, but rather that they were tortured for enjoyment and were sexually and mentally abused. She objected that racism still exists in American policy to which participants



Photo by Ji-sun Kim

Lee (U.S.) represents Shamanism culture through her attire.

responded that the issue is also problematic in terms of gender and class.

The last presentation by Saththaraj Venkateson (India) on "Glocal Feminism: Bridging Minority Feminism and Third World Feminism" was an analysis of cultural blindness of Eurocentric feminist models and "the intersection between the black feminist scholarship and post-colonial feminist scholarship."

by Tae-yeon Kim

For the Improvement of Health Services for Women

With regards for advancements in health services for women, Margarethe Hochleitner (E.U.) introduced the "Mosques project: A Prevention Project for Immigrant Turkish Women in Austria." Following Hochleitner, medical student Ingerd Helene Jossang (Norway) presented her thesis, "Education of Doctors – A Feminist's Perspective."

Focusing on Austria's health system, Hochleitner emphasized the importance of granting free access to medical care for immigrant Turkish women who are exposed to and are unaware of risk factors of cardiovascular diseases. Also, due to cultural discrimination and language barriers the problems are more severe. According to her research, Turks rank highest in Europe in regard to coronary mortality.

The presentation displayed the active movements of medical staff and students who put a project into practice and organized prevention programs for Turkish women at 28 local mosques. Her active approach and sense of progression could be sensed, as she stated, "What can we do to reach them? We have to go to people

because people do not come to us."

By handing out fliers in Turkish, holding student presentations, having discussions, and giving out self-evaluation questionnaires at mosques, the project was proved successful. However, Hochleitner urged, "But free access is not all that is needed. We must go further." She said she will continue to pursue the project.

The next speaker, Ingerd Helene Jossang, spoke of her graduation thesis which asks, "Do we need a gender perspective in the training of doctors?" She answered this by exemplifying three factors: first, diagnostic procedures for women with acute myocardial infarction (heart attack) is not enough in comparison to that offered to men; second, a study held in the U.S. on the delivery of premature babies among black women reveals that stress responses are high due to poverty, insecure living conditions, and racial discrimination; third, the effect of pharmaceuticals that test females without looking at the side effects.

Additionally, Jossang raised questions regarding the difference in working conditions and communication levels

between patients and doctors for males and females, not to mention the sexual harassment rates among them. To add, she stated that it is difficult for women to receive research funding and become academic scholars in medical studies.

As a solution, Jossang proposed that social and cultural environment, ethnicity, and cultural differences must be taken into consideration in biological study. More specifically, she suggested that medical schools deal with the term 'gender' in scientific courses offered to students in the first year so that students can learn to be critical. She discussed the need of medical case studies to deal with gender issues, and the need to have discussions with teachers and students on the difference between male and female patients. "We need to reflect on the danger of only viewing a sex without a gender perspective because we can slide into the patriarchal way of understanding the human body," she said. "Having a gender perspective is an important context which leads how we understand ourselves and how we view others."

by Soo-hyun Kim

Outlining Gender Issues in Science Education

The panel session "Gender Issue in Science Education" delved into issues of women in the field of science and their education in China, India, and Germany.

In her presentation, "Self Evaluation and Role Expectations of Female College Students in Science and Technology in China," Lili Zhang (China) pointed to the difficulties and barriers that female students face in universities. According to Zhang, women represent one-third of the total employees in the field of science and engineering, but compared to the male counterparts, they work in less prestigious positions. Her survey results also proved that more female students show better progress in their studies, but are neither interested nor satisfied with their fields of study. She argued that sex segregation and difficulties of job searching for women have a strong impact on the professional efficacy of female students.

Amrita Patel (India) presented her paper on "Gender Differences in Science Education: A Case Study of Orissa." It



Photo by Ji-sun Kim

From left: Zhang (China), Sotelo (Germany), and Patel (India)

outlined the gender constitution of science related majors in India, especially focusing on the highest seats of learning. She found out that certain majors, the so-called "soft-science" majors such as botany, zoology, and anthropology, were dominated by women; whereas the "hard-science" such as computer science and engineering field were dominated by men. She explained that this phenomenon is due to women's triple burden as a scientist, a housekeeper, plus the repro-

ductive role. She suggested that a more gender sensitive environment and encouragement between female students and teachers are necessary.

In the last presentation, "Changing the Culture of Higher Education by Introducing Women's Issue and Women's Science," Elisabeth de Sotelo (Germany) outlined ten points of basic renewal, which can be attributed to feminist involvement in research from a pedagogical perspective. Some of the ten points were autonomous determination and integration of women's issues, the subjectivity of women and the discovery of new contents, recognition of the gender-specific communication forms and women's cultural values as an education goal for men.

After the presentations, many participants raised questions on how each culture influences women in choosing their majors, and how the "soft" and "hard" sciences differ in each culture and time period.

by Bo-mi Kim

A New Look at Korea's Historical Women Figures

The session "Orientalism and Feminism" attempted to reconstruct historical women figures. Both presenters emphasized the importance of "context" in analyzing historical figures and how the stereotypical historical analysis had simplified and distorted them.

Young-min Kim (U.S.) argued that conventional ideas about Confucianism are too simplified and often misleading. According to dominant interpretations, Confucianism has deprived women of their basic rights and promoted a strict social structure that confined women's talents in public spheres. However, Kim argues that Confucianism contains much more diversity and variation in its contents, and that scholars should be more sensitive to the historical complexity of the relationship between Korean women and Confucianism.

To illustrate his point, he introduced the famous story of Chunhyang, a daughter of a courtesan, who falls in love with the town governor's son Mongryong. Chunhyang vows her love for Mongryong despite threats of death, and her chastity is rewarded with marriage and an elevation of class. While some see this as a typical Confucianist story, Kim said taking a glimpse at Chunhynag's underlying motive may reveal a subversive message of the story. He claims it was her desire to marry a yangban and uplift her social status that made her cling on to the values of Confucianism. Chunhyang has unique characteristics, Kim argued, and they are shown by how she refuses her identity as a courtesan and says, "A woman's virtue is the same for high and low ranks," outlining the notion that all human beings, regardless of class, are equal.

Sook-in Lee (Korea) attempted to interpret the lives of the women in the Joseon Dynasty from a perspective opposing the conventional

view that women were unconditionally victimized. Although women were bound by social restrictions, there were groups of women who tried to break free from the norms.

Lee presented two types of women, the Jongbu and the scholars. Jongbu, or the housewife of a Yangban clan, are like that of "modern-day CEOs," says Lee. "They are the ones responsible for managing the family rituals, governing the household finance, and controlling all the servants," explained Lee. The scholars, on the other hand, were women who tried to write and study. Because knowledge was only produced and delivered in the "male language," they had to conform themselves to masculine identities, in order to pursue the field of academics.

Lee said they are only two of the many different types of Joseon women. "We should not neglect these women and their efforts to overcome the social barrier of that time," said Lee, "and we should try to discover and analyze more historical women figures."



Photo by Ji-sun Kim

From left: Young-min Kim (U.S.) and Mi-sook Kim (Korea)

Gender Equality from the Cradle to the Grave

“Gender equality must be granted to all from the day she is born in her cradle to her final sleep in the grave,” are the very powerful words spoken by Njoki Wainaina (Kenya), one of the most prominent women activists in Africa. She has truly devoted herself to the empowerment of marginalized and deprived women in a society that harshly forbids females to engage themselves in such radical movements. Njoki Wainaina was the former chairperson for the African Women’s Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), which was set up in 1988.

Though Wainaina spent her childhood in a small traditional village in Kenya where male dominance was the norm, her parents were gender-sensitive and raised Wainaina’s siblings and herself to believe that both sexes are fundamentally equivalent. Wainaina’s father was highly opposed to female genital circumcision. Though it is a deeply ingrained tradition, Wainaina states that female genital circumcision originates from the idea of male supremacy. The rather “unique” upbringing by her parents in a rural African village was the motivational impetus that fuelled Wainaina to believe in gender equality.

Before working for FEMNET, Wainaina was a coordinator for the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), an organization that provides sexual and reproductive health services. It was actually her work in the IPPF that created the foundations for FEMNET



Photo by You-jin Cho
Njoki Wainaina

because IPPF gave Wainaina an opportunity to learn how to collaborate with numerous countries through an organization. Also, Wainaina was able to gain knowledge about the situations in other African nations and the problems that challenged them. Therefore, such experiences helped Wainaina coordinate the projects imposed by FEMNET that later gloriously triumphed at the Beijing Conference in 1995. “The Beijing Conference benchmarked a new era for African activists by showing the world that we can achieve something together and leap a step forward in safeguarding the basic rights of women,” said Wainaina proudly.

The conference in Beijing was momentous and made Wainaina realize that men are also actively taking part in struggles to promote women’s rights. Male activists stated that degrading the position of women not only brought injustice to women, but also an ailment to the entire society. Hence, Wainaina started to incorporate and emphasize males’ roles in elevating women’s status in her studies.

With regards to WW05 – also referred to as “Beijing Plus Ten,” – Wainaina comments, “The WW05 is vital at this point of time when society needs not only women activists but scholars in women’s studies who provide concrete statistics and theories to backup and propel women’s rights in a more swaying manner.”

by Rhie-young Lim

A Pioneer to Feminist Movements in Latin America

According to Merriam-Webster, a “pioneer” is a person who pursues and settles in a new region. Metaphorically speaking, all scholars and activists participating in WW05 are pioneers. Among them, Gloria Bonder (Argentina) receives the spotlight as being a pioneer in women’s studies in Latin America.

Bonder is an active advocate of women’s rights and one of the most prestigious scholars on women and gender issues. She founded the Centro de Estudios de la Mujer (CEM), a women’s institution in Latin America, and was also the creator and general coordinator of the National Equal Opportunity Program for Women in the Educational Area of the Culture and Education Ministry in Argentina.

Bonder contributes a great deal of time and effort as the Director of Area “Gender, Society and Politics” in the Latin American Post-graduate Institute in Social Sciences (FLASCO). Bonder said, “Basically, we research on how to improve women’s participation in educational programs in Latin America and on how to teach science from a gender perspective.” She added, “We try to find visions of gender analysis.” Through these



Photo by Yoo-mi Park
Gloria Bonder

programs, she has developed on gender and education, science and technology, communication and young women.

Her achievements and laudable activities do not end there. Bonder also coordinates the UNESCO Chair on Women, Science, and Technology in Latin America and the Virtual Master Program on Gender, Society, and Politics. In addition to organizing the UNESCO Chair, she has also overseen the creation of a Master Learning course offering training for graduate students on how to

mainstream gender and equality in policies and programs in 17 countries. “Both the UNESCO Chair and the Master Learning course try to explore potentials of International Communication Technologies (ICTs) for education, networking, and capacity building,” said Bonder.

Along with the efforts put in by Bonder to improve women’s status, Latin American countries have implemented laws and education programs to encourage women to go one step further. “In Argentina, there is a national law which stipulates that 30 percent of all elective positions in the parliament be given to women. Moreover, there is the Affirmative Action law, and progressive laws against violence,” she says. In terms of education in Latin America, especially in the South, there are no differences in enrollment, and there is equal access to education. “On the other hand, many black and indigenous women are not in the same situation.”

Bonder holds a graduate degree in gender and education from the University of Cambridge, U.K. Currently, she is a visiting professor at the University of Wisconsin.

by Eun-joon Lee

Shed the Flawed Myth of Women’s “Given” Work

“We can no longer subscribe to the ‘given’ that household work is the lowest valued of all labor, that ‘anyone’ can do it, and that it really should be done for free,” and “When we shed that myth, the female sphere can achieve equality,” are the words of Ueno Chizuko (Japan), a leading Japanese feminist known for her prominence and “notoriety” in women’s studies. Chizuko has authored sixteen books such as “The Challenge of Marxist feminism,” published in 1983. Chizuko has also written an award-winning book, “The Rise and Fall of Modern Family,” in 1994 which describes the factors influencing Japanese households.

Born and raised in Toyama, a medieval castle town, Chizuko received traditional schooling. After coming in contact with the ideas of Michael Foucault, a French philosopher who denies the notion of enlightenment and asserts that sexual behavior is something learned, everything changed for the traditional Japanese girl.

Chizuko bravely decided to subvert her traditional values and was motivated to delve deeper into the field of sociology at Kyoto University. Her professors advised her to take courses that they thought would be easier for females and where male competitors were few. Chizuko, however, discarded her

professor’s advice and studied theoretical sociology. She did no less than better than most of her male counterparts. Besides overcoming gender barriers, another great lesson was learned from taking theoretical sociology classes for Chizuko – the theory itself was gender biased and flawed.

From then on, Chizuko decided to participate in a more pragmatic and active method of promoting women’s rights in the Japanese society where the conservative political system often hinders such movements. Ever since the emergence of the Industrial society – a male-dominated society – with environmental problems, Japan has walked in the wrong direction of development, according to Chizuko. She argues that instead of trying to catch up with male standards, women must endeavor to create a new social structure where their work is no longer neglected and looked down upon.

One particular activity that Chizuko engaged herself in was the legalization of the Care Insurance Act enacted in 2000. As an important figure in the Senior Women’s League which specializes in care issues of Japan, Chizuko contributed in making women’s care labor a paid and recognized sector. Women’s care work, especially for the elderly, has always been regarded as



Photo by Yoo-mi Park
Ueno Chizuko

something that should be done by women for free. Nonetheless, a huge paradigm shift concerning the once-mistaken belief has been set by the new law. Chizuko states that the empowerment of women still has a long way to go.

Chizuko believes that events such as WW05 are momentous not only because people of diverse nations and cultures exchange their ideas, but because it offers opportunities for individuals of different generations to come together for the guarantee of rights of females of future generations.

by Rhie-young Lim

A Dreamer, a Writer, a Feminist: Nora Okja Keller

People say that the life of a writer is reflected in their writing, just as Nora Keller’s (U.S.) “Comfort Women” published in 1997 and “Fox Girl” reflect her life. At the heart of her two famous novels stated above is the relationship of a mother and a daughter, which was inspired from her close and intimate relationship with her mother and with her daughters. Her experiences of the occupation of Becca are also reflected in her novels.

With a slight smile on her face, Keller says, “Writing is a lot like parenting. In fact, my life as a parent informs much and inspirations come from all aspects of my life.” The three reasons that drove her to publish the book were 1. to apologize to her mother for not being respectful and being rebellious during her adolescent years; 2. to show her daughters; 3. to write for women. Keller emphasized, “I wanted to give women a voice.” To achieve her goal, instead of focusing on the facts, she focused on the emotions in the story.

Keller’s novels include stories of survival, war, self-sacrifice, the fierce love between mother and child, and the pain inflicted on women during war time. Her books alerted Americans and Europeans who were unaware of the term “comfort women,” and the term became generalized. It also sparked an increasing interest in the history of comfort women both on- and offline.

In her novels, she reevaluates her identity as a mixed-race. “Writing is one to explore myself as a Korean-American.” Her mother is Korean and her father is German-American. She was born in Korea and

was raised in Hawaii and mainland U.S. Therefore, many of her characters are also of mixed blood. The use of Korean language and folk tales, which make her writing style unique,

have made her work famous. She is one of the most remarkable Korean American writers in terms of the impact her novels have had on society, and on the identity of racially mixed people.

She believes that the power of the writer is being able to affect the society, as well as being able to affect oneself internally and physically. In conclusion, she stated, “Writing itself has power. The act of writing helps me figure out what I am thinking about. It gives a way to understand the world. And that is very powerful. It can transform the way you think and the way you see the world around you.”

by Tae-yeon Kim



Photo by You-jin Cho
Nora Okja Keller

Art Within a World of Women

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Photo by Yoo-mi Park, You-jin Cho, Na-hyun Kim

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1. "Media in 'f'" was exhibited on the 2nd floor in the Arts & Design Building. The exhibition "Ho Fatso" was interactively installed by Rania Ho (China).

2. The Alicia Political Performance "La Festa de Terroristas" was performed to "pray for all innocent victims of terrorism, especially women and children... around the Middle East, Russia, Latin America and here!!" In the photograph are artists Chisato Katata (Japan) and Ki Young (Korea).

3. The "Drawing Freely" road board, organized by the Blanket and Sponge Project in Asia (BASPIA), allowed participants to express their feelings through painting.

4. "Cul-de-sac," another exhibition at "Media in 'f,'" was created by Lyra Garcellano (Philippines).

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Ewha Voice Staff

Ewha Womans University, 11-1 Daehyeon-dong Seodaemun-gu, Seoul, Korea 120-750
Tel: (02) 3277-3169 Fax: (02) 313-5194 Email: evoice@ewha.ac.kr Homepage: <http://evoice.ewha.ac.kr>

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