

Editorial

As this issue is going to press, we have just returned from attending Women's Worlds 2002 in Kampala, Uganda (July 21-26, 2002). This international, interdisciplinary Women's Studies Congress has met every three years since 1981 in different cities around the world; this was the eighth congress and the first in an African country. There were 2,500 delegates from 94 countries. Our Ugandan hosts made everyone very welcome and impressed us all with their outstanding organization. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the faculty and students of Women's Studies and Gender Studies, Makerere University, the city of Kampala and the people of Uganda for their hospitality.

The Congress brought together academics, activists and cultural practitioners who had the opportunity to present their work, debate a range of topics with their colleagues and explore the extent to which women's specific situations are unique or part of larger global patterns. Several themes stood out in particular. There were animated debates about the most effective ways to organize for improvements for women. How important is it for women to be part of the formal political process as members of governments? or part of business as directors and managers of large and small organizations both for profit and not-for-profit? Are women's efforts better spent in grassroots mobilizing? Many women talked about how hard it is for them to get information about their issues to people in other parts of the world. Women soldiers from the Sudan were frustrated that so few understand what the issues are in their struggles. HIV/AIDS activists deplored the lack of understanding they face in their work. Another recurring discussion focussed on the role of development and aid agencies in communities that need solidarity and support but fear their vulnerability to the agendas of the donor agencies. Grassroots groups talked about the ways in which they were under pressure to shape their projects in response to the interests of funders instead of to the needs of local communities. Women from most parts of the world agreed that economic security and freedom from violence were among women's greatest needs and most despaired of finding easy solutions. All agreed that the increased militarization and mobilization for war following the events of September 11, 2001 had made life more precarious for most women around the world. Women's efforts to ensure peace in their own homes, local communities, countries and globally are essential and many Congress delegates pledged to increase their efforts both to find ways to strengthen ties between

women across existing conflicts and to challenge men's domination both of war and of peace-making initiatives.

The sense of pleasure in each other's company, the chance to learn about women's issues in other countries, the strong commitment delegates took away with them to strengthen the global women's movement all made this congress worthwhile. The next congress will be in June 2005 in Seoul, Korea. Readers who are interested in more information can check the Women's Worlds Congress organizers, The Korean Association of Women's Studies, at the following websites: www.ewha.ac.kr or www.yonsei.ac.kr or www.sogang.ac.kr.

The "KnowHow" Conference was held congruently with the Congress. This conference, organised by the International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement in the Netherlands and Isis-Wicce, Uganda, focussed on the issues of the collection and dissemination of feminist knowledge - including print forms, but also providing discussion and hands on experience of radio, web publishing, drama and other dissemination tools. As editors of *Atlantis*, we returned home with a renewed sense of the importance of feminist publishing, both as a way to make accessible information and ideas not readily available in the mainstream media, and as a way of fostering space for debates about a wide array of issues.

This issue marks a significant moment in *Atlantis'* history. As many readers may remember, in 1995 two new editors, Christine St. Peter and Marilyn Porter, took over as editors with a commitment to ensure that *Atlantis* continued to "participate in the dynamic growth of feminist knowledge in Canada" (Editorial 22.2, p.1). They agreed to serve as editors for a longer term than usual to ensure that *Atlantis* establish a secure process of editorial succession. Christine St. Peter ended her term with Volume 23.1; this issue marks Marilyn Porter's last as coeditor. We are pleased to announce that June Corman (Brock University) will rejoin *Atlantis* as an editor with the next issue, Meg Luxton (York University) will continue for two more years and Rhoda Zuk (Mount Saint Vincent University) and Linda Kealey (University of New Brunswick) have agreed to become editors in the next year. We also want to strengthen our presentation of creative writing and poetry. We are delighted to welcome Maureen Hynes (George Brown College) to a new position of Creative Arts Editor. In collaboration with Cecily Barrie, the experienced and resourceful Managing editor, and with the active support of the editorial panel,

this editorial team will steer *Atlantis'* course for the next six years.

We mark this change in editorial leadership by sharing with our readers our plans for the upcoming issues. We will continue to publish both general and special issues, and we invite suggestions for future topics and submissions for either format. The next seven issues are:

- 27.2 Health Panic and Healthism
- 28.1 General Issue
- 28.2 The Politics of Unpaid Work
- 29.1 General Issue
- 29.2 First Nations Women
- 30.1 General Issue
- 30.2 Art and Politics

Both the experience in Kampala and the change in editors provoked us to think again about how to produce a feminist journal in a feminist way in a real world composed (largely) of constraints and limitations. Here we reprint from Volume 22.2 Spring 1998 what Christine St. Peter and Marilyn Porter described as the key values of *Atlantis*:

1. First, we believe that we should reflect in our structures (that is, the composition of the editorial panel and the selection of reviewers), and in the content of the journal itself the full range of feminist scholars active in Canada today. This means recognizing and then attempting to incorporate into each issue the diversity of region, age, religion, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation and abilities that contribute to the richness of feminism today.

2. In our view this does not mean abandoning the journal's roots in the Atlantic region, but rather using that rootedness to anchor our respect for and desire to share in other identities. In the same spirit we have welcomed contributions from other parts of the world, especially from women sharing their knowledge of the economic south.

3. This recognition of diversity has led to a growing insistence on reflecting as much as possible the diverse ways of producing and reflecting feminist knowledge in Canada today. Indeed, we have begun to use the phrase "feminist knowledge" rather than "feminist scholarship" as a more precise way of designating the diversity of our understandings and the forms in which they are expressed. This is why we have been proud to welcome contributions from creative artists; to publish interviews with notable feminists in different areas of activity; and to encourage community "voices" in various forms.

4. We are, however, also aware of the rapid and dynamic growth of Women's Studies as a discipline and

the place of teaching and research in the colleges and universities. We want *Atlantis* to continue to publish the very best in the more traditional forms of scholarly writing, and to that end we have developed a rigorous process of peer reviewing and editing. But we also wish to reflect the innovative pedagogy and research that is going on within Women's Studies, and we are proud of our new "Women's Studies in Focus" feature that reflects those activities.

5. Our final "value" is harder to pin down. We have been fortunate that we have so enjoyed working with each other, and with Cecily Barrie and the editorial panel, and with the various editors of the Special Issues. Feminists so often crush themselves and each other under a weight of stress and strain, obligations and guilt. Our lives leave little time for reflection and even less for fun. When we have ensured time for both in our editorial lives and work, we have gained the energy and vision we needed to go forward.

This issue reflects many of the concerns raised at Women's World 2002. The issue begins by taking up one of the most important issues feminists confronted over the past year: the events of September 11, 2001. When hijacked planes flew into the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, killing hundreds of people, the newly-elected Bush government in the United States declared "war on terrorism" and insisted that anyone who dissented was an enemy. Stunned by the horror of the attacks, many feminists, peace, social justice and anti-globalization activists found it difficult to denounce both the attacks and those who support such tactics, and the US government-led response.

Sunera Thobani, a professor of Women's Studies at the University of British Columbia, a former president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and a well-known anti-racist feminist gave a speech to the "Women's Resistance Conference" organized by the Elizabeth Fry Society of Canada and the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC) in Ottawa on October 2, 2001. The gist of what she said was that US foreign policy following September 11 was part of a long tradition of fighting to ensure that the West maintains control over the world's resources. This policy, Thobani said, has resulted in thousands of deaths around the world, from Chile to El Salvador, from Nicaragua to Iraq. She called on the audience to denounce the racist, imperialist policies advocated by the US government and readily supported by the Canadian government. Instead, she called for an end to the bombing of Iraq and for the lifting of the sanctions against Iraq, for resolving the Palestinian question, for removing American military bases from the Middle East and for ending the racist colonization of Aboriginal

peoples in Canada. Her conclusion urged the audience to make common cause with women across the world who are fighting to make such changes. (The entire speech is available online at several different websites including the Canadian Women's Studies Association: www.yorku.ca/cwsacef/cwsacef, and the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres website: www.casac.ca/conference01/conf01_thobani.)

Thobani's speech provoked an extraordinary outburst. We publish here Sunera Thobani's article "War Frenzy" in which she comments on reactions to her speech, compares them to what she actually said, and analyses what they indicate about the current political climate, especially for immigrant women, women of colour and anti-racist feminists. To illustrate the role of the mass media in whipping up hysterical attacks on Thobani and her speech, we include a column by Michele Landsberg "Unmasking the Bigotry Behind the Hysteria" that appeared in the *Toronto Star* newspaper on October 14, 2001. Landsberg shows how the media misrepresented Thobani's speech, dramatically demonstrating how hard it is for us to get accurate information about issues even in our own country. More importantly, Landsberg's column offers an example of responsible journalism that makes information about feminist issues available to a larger public.

Mary-Jo Nadeau in "Who Is Canadian Now? Feminism and the Politics of Nation After September 11" develops this analysis further. She argues that hostile reactions to Thobani's speech must be understood as part of a process by which national identity is formed by constructing a white Euro-American collectivity which is differentiated from those identified as "Other" - such as non-anglophone immigrants and people of colour. She notes the repeated claim that Thobani's speech was "anti-American" and shows how discussions about "national security" were used to position Thobani as an enemy of, and an outsider to, both "Western democracy" and "Canadian values." Nadeau argues that such efforts to deny Thobani status as a Canadian and to challenge her right to speak as a Canadian reveal important aspects of the way Canadian national identity is formed. Nadeau calls on feminists to engage more rigorously with racism and imperialism as part of building a stronger, more politically-engaged and effective movement.

While the issues relating to September 11 and various reactions to it reveal the importance of anti-racist feminism on a global scale, Kiran Mirchandani's "A Special Kind of Exclusion: Race, Gender and Self-Employment" shows how important such struggles are at the local level as well. Her article discusses the ways in which race, class and gender impact on women's decisions to engage in self-employment. The focus of the article is on the experiences of women of colour in

Halifax as they try to establish viable economic strategies to support themselves and their families. The next two articles explore some of the constraints women face in trying to live safe and healthy lives and provide support for other women to live similarly. Alexandre Dumas and Genevieve Rail's "Les contraintes sociales aux pratiques d'activite physique de femmes cheffes de familles monoparentales" interviews women heads of single parent families and studies what factors hinder their participation in regular physical activity. Carmen Gill and Luc Thériault's "Family Violence Services Delivered by Women's Shelters in Saskatchewan: How Does the Province Recognize Them?" presents a detailed case study of the relationship between women's shelters in Saskatchewan and the provincial department of social services. This enables the authors to explore the contradictions in which shelters often find themselves - on the one hand dependent on the state for funding and on the other wanting to make profound critiques of both the system and the inadequacy of the available resources.

The focus then shifts to an earlier period in Canada's history as June Corman, in "Returning to the Classroom: Married Women Fill the Void for Teachers in Saskatchewan," explores how the exigencies of the labour force overcame deeply-held values that married women should not participate in the paid labour force. She shows the pressures on local school boards in Saskatchewan that prompted them to ask married women to return to the classroom even though board policies maintained that teachers should be single women. She also explores how married women with children understood such requests and managed the competing demands of family responsibilities and teaching.

Vijaya Ramaswamy, in "The Taming of Alli," offers us feminist scholarship operating in the different cultural context of South Asia, as she gives us a sustained discussion of the way in which a particular Tamil myth, "the taming of Alli" has been used and adapted. Ramaswamy argues that the figure of Alli (who married Arjuna in the Mahabharata legend) was transformed from a relatively independent figure in the original Tamil account into a more patriarchally-stereotyped female figure in the later Bramanic versions. This use of the textual analysis of myth and oral traditions reminds us of the diversity of feminist approaches to knowledge.

This issue offers two different perspectives on Women's Studies in Focus. Ann Shteir reports on a conference held last year at Emory University in the USA on the PhD in Women's Studies. As Canada now has three free-standing Women's Studies PhD programmes (at the University of British Columbia, and York and Simon Fraser Universities) and one collaborative programme (at the University of Toronto), and other universities are considering expanding their graduate

programmes, important issues need wider discussion: what should such PhD programmes offer, how should they differentiate themselves from each other, how are their offerings different from other disciplinary programmes and what employment prospects are available for their graduates. The Emory conference brought faculty, graduates and graduate students from the USA and Canada together to engage in such debates. The other perspective comes from reflections of four Women's Studies graduate students at Memorial University of Newfoundland who formed a "thesis support group." Their writing shows that such groups not only support members in practical ways, but also help them to develop a much more sophisticated understanding of what feminist intellectual work should and can comprise. As Women's Studies scholarship in Canada develops more advanced programmes, it is important for us to reflect on how feminist approaches to teaching, learning and research differ from the more standard academic disciplines.

We include in this issue four poems by poets Jacquie Buncel, Shoshana Magnet, and Sonja Greckol and in the final pages of the issue we include an interview by Kathleen O'Grady with novelist Zadie Smith about writing *White Teeth*, the phenomenally successful first novel by a young British writer with roots in several ethnic communities. Her writing shows the complex intersections of race, class and gender as different generations of immigrants struggle to find a place and/or transform British society. Vanessa Farr complements this interview with a review of the novel. And finally, on the cover you will find "Mi'kmaq Girl," 1978, by Susan McEachern, a silkscreen from the Mount Saint Vincent University Collection.

Marilyn Porter and Meg Luxton