

SPRING 2014

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY



# WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES NEWSLETTER

## A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

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**DR. BETH CATLETT**

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**Greetings!**

It's mid-May and still feels like February, but that's springtime in Chicago. I know I say this every year, but it's true again this year: I cannot believe the academic year is already coming to an end—time moves so fast! It has been such a full year!

I would like to share some bittersweet news. At the end of this quarter, we'll be saying goodbye to one of the founding members of Women's and Gender Studies at DePaul—Dr. Midge Wilson. Midge is retiring from the university after 33 years, and as she says, a few gray hairs.

Midge came to DePaul in 1980 to join the Psychology Department. Immediately upon arriving at DePaul, her interest and expertise in women's issues and constructions of gender was apparent. She developed several new courses including the undergraduate course Psychology of Women, the graduate course Advanced Psychology of Women, a graduate seminar called Divided Sisters: Cross-Race Relations, and a course on Human Sexuality. WGS students have been benefiting from these courses for years! Midge was one of the founding mothers of the then called Women's Studies Program at DePaul, and served as the Director of the Program from 1995-1997. In 2006, Midge was appointed as an Associate Dean and continues to serve in that capacity.

*(continued p. 2)*

## NOTE FROM THE CHAIR (CONTINUED)

It is also important to note that in 2011-2012, after LAS had been split into two colleges and her home department of Psychology went to the new College of Science and Health, Midge decided to stay with the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, and joined her friends in WGS as one of our core department faculty members—it was like coming home again for Midge. Now that Midge is retiring from full-time DePaul life, she is getting ready to embark on a new life adventure. We know that she won't be a stranger, and you'll likely even see her teaching a couple courses for us as time goes on. Please join me in thanking Midge for her outstanding service to WGS—we are so much richer as a result of her involvement with our faculty and students. Also, stay tuned for more information, coming soon, about end of year parties to celebrate Midge!

Although the academic year is coming to a close soon, we still have several more WGS events that promise to be very exciting. Please visit our website and our offices for information about upcoming programs over these next several weeks.

Of particular note, I really hope you'll mark your calendars now so that you can join us at two of our most special end-of-year events during the last week of classes. On Wednesday, June 4 (from noon-2 pm) we'll have our annual WGS spring luncheon during which we celebrate the accomplishments of our graduates as well as our faculty. This luncheon is always so gratifying and inspiring—please join us!

Also, on Friday, June 6 our graduate students will make presentations based on their final M.A. projects—thesis projects, practical projects, creative projects, and portfolio projects. This promises to be an exciting event at which you'll have the opportunity to hear about the cutting edge activist scholarship that our graduate students have produced. Please keep your eyes open for invitations to both of these events soon.

Moving into next year, we already have many plans in place. For instance, we are delighted that the Center for Intercultural Programs has already confirmed that Patricia Hill Collins will be speaking at DePaul in fall. This is such an exciting opportunity for our community!

And on a more personal note - as some of you already know—I will be taking research leave next year. We will have an interim/acting chair in place for the year, and then I'll return as chair in the 2015-2016 academic year. Please join me in thanking Dr. Paula Kagan, Associate Professor in the School of Nursing, for agreeing to serve as interim chair next year. Dr. Kagan's areas expertise include women's health, health policy, critical social and feminist theory and practice, emancipatory nursing, health disparities, and documentary filmmaking. Dr. Kagan has been very involved with WGS over many years. She has taught cross-listed classes, served on our WGS Advisory Committee, served on a variety of standing WGS committees. I have full confidence that Dr. Kagan will provide valuable leadership and support to ensure a productive 2014-2015 in WGS!

I so appreciate the support of the administration, and our faculty and students in helping to make this research leave possible. I have to say that I'm going to miss the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of SAC. I have great gratitude to be surrounded by people every day who inspire and challenge me—so thank you! I'm wishing everyone a fun-filled and relaxing summer. Take some time to re-energize!

**DR. BETH CATLETT**



*This issue, take the "Where's CECE?" challenge!*

*Somewhere hidden in the pages of the Newsletter is a photo of our favorite WGS toddler.*

*Be one of the first 5 people to post the correct spot on our facebook page and win a special prize!*



# THE TRIOTA MANIFESTO

Current Presidents: **Mary DeMarchi & Brittany Boulton**

Future Presidents: **Ellen Goese & Danijela Desnica**

We've all had that conversation where our feelings and anger were dismissed as emotional, an overreaction, or PMS. We got catcalled at or a professor said something that made us uncomfortable. We went to our usual confidante and we felt dismissed, like, to them, these feelings weren't a big deal. There is a certain type of community we need to be able to go to who can validate our thoughts and feelings. Triota can offer this safe space.

Triota is a community of people who have also experienced oppression and marginalization. We will tell you "You're right. You should not have been treated that way and we should do something about it." We are a compassionate collective who understands the oppression you face as a woman, a person of color, a member or ally of the LGBTQIA community, a disabled person, a working class person. We take those feelings as a marginalized group and put it towards constructive action with volunteer projects, educational and professional events, and social outings. We strive to make an impact inside and outside the DePaul community and make the world a better place for all oppressed individuals. We also offer networking opportunities with wonderful professors and other people involved in the feminist community. We can help prepare you to combat prejudice in whichever career field you choose.

If you wish to take advantage of these opportunities or have a commitment to feminist scholarship, don't hesitate to apply to join Triota, the national, academic honors society for Women's and Gender studies.

## What is Triota?

Triota is an honor society which encourages academic achievement in the fields of Women's and Gender Studies. You can join Triota if you are a major, minor, graduate student, or interested in WGS. We offer opportunities in student and community involvement, academics, volunteering, professional development, networking, social events, and much more.

Requirements for Membership:

- ◆ At least *8 credit hours* (2 classes) in WGS
- ◆ Overall GPA & Cumulative GPA for WGS classes:  
3.0 for undergraduates and 3.5 for graduates

Consider applying for Fall Quarter. The deadline is October 1st.  
Faculty advisor: Dr. Robin Mitchell.

For questions or more information, visit us at the graduate assistants' office in the WGS Department or our table during Dandelions in the Concrete or contact us here:

[TriotaDePaulWGS@gmail.com](mailto:TriotaDePaulWGS@gmail.com)

Facebook Group: DePaul Triota

## WE LOVE STUDENT WORK

- ◆ articles
- ◆ poetry
- ◆ essays
- ◆ artwork
- ◆ academic writing
- ◆ short stories
- ◆ opinion pieces
- ◆ event reflections
- ◆ photography
- ◆ Comics

E-mail us your work,  
suggestions, feedback,  
or questions:

[wgs.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:wgs.newsletter@gmail.com)

# WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE YES TO DIVEST

BY: HANNA ALSHAIKH

On March 31<sup>st</sup> a Students for Justice in Palestine initiative launched on our campus that challenges our complicity in Israeli human rights violations. DePaul Divest, a growing coalition of 17 student organizations including Amnesty International, Black Student Union, MEChA, Trans\*(formation), Triota, and Building Communities, Ending Violence is responding to the 2005 Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) call put forth by Palestinian civil society. The goals of this call are simple: the right of return for all Palestinian refugees, equal rights for Palestinians, and an end to the occupation of Palestine, which includes the dismantling of the apartheid wall.

Why is this relevant to DePaul students? We are currently invested in at least 13 companies that profit off of Israeli human rights abuses against Palestinians. This is not a general boycott of Israeli companies, and certainly is not a boycott of Israeli individuals. In fact, only one of these companies is Israeli. We are simply asking our university to uphold its commitment to social justice and Vincentian values and pull its funds from companies that are complicit in human rights abuses.

Starting May 19<sup>th</sup> students will have the opportunity to vote on this issue in the upcoming SGA elections, which end on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. DePaul Divest urges the student body to vote yes to divest, and here are some reasons why:

**As WGS students, you know how gender-based violence is used as a political tool. We can end our complicity in this form of violence against Palestinians.**

Gender-based violence has historically been used against Palestinians to ethnically cleanse villages since the *Nakba* (Catastrophe) in 1948. During this time, entire villages were massacred and many women were raped. Gender-based violence is also an ongoing practice in Israeli prisons. In 2013, Israel had over 200 Palestinian child prisoners in detention. Not only were these children *beaten* and *tortured*, they were threatened with [rape](#), according to the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem.

Palestinian women are often forced into labor at checkpoints, while being denied access to hospitals by the Israeli military. One in ten Palestinian women [undergo labor](#) while being held at Israeli checkpoints. From 2000-2007, five of these women were killed and thirty-five infants died as a result, according to a study published in *The Lancet*, a British medical journal.

DePaul is currently invested in HP, which makes the surveillance technology used in Israeli prisons. HP also makes the technology used at military checkpoints, where Palestinians are routinely humiliated, threatened and denied freedom of movement. DePaul Divest includes HP as one of the 13 companies that profit off of Israeli human rights abuses, and this is a company we don't want our tuition dollars invested in.

**You will show support for a growing international movement in solidarity with the Palestinian people, similar to that of the South African anti-Apartheid Movement.**

DePaul Divest is following the BDS call put forth by Palestinian civil society, and is a grassroots movement part of a larger international movement that advocates for the human rights of Palestinians. We draw our inspiration from the legacy of the South African movement, seeing many parallels between Israeli apartheid and South African apartheid. Just like our campaign is dismissed as "polarizing" or "divisive," so too was the South African anti-Apartheid movement for years before the apartheid regime came crumbling down. Aren't all popular human rights movements "uncomfortable" for oppressors? We remember Nelson Mandela's words, "We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians."



## VOTE YES TO DIVEST (CONTINUED)

We can keep the momentum of student activism alive on our campus.

Over the last few weeks, DePaul students have proven wrong those who argue that our generation is apathetic and disinterested in the political issues that impact our lives. Student activism is thriving at DePaul. First, DePaul Divest launched on our campus. Next, a coalition of student organizations (many of whom are part of DePaul Divest) staged a walkout on Allen West, a war criminal and former congressman infamous for his hatred of Islam and undocumented immigrants, sending a message that



human rights abusers are not welcome on our campus. A positive rally was held afterwards where all organizations involved spoke about their work, showing that movements are combining. Then, a group of students called DePaul Exposed held a banner drop in Arts and Letters, challenging DePaul's questionable record in dealing with sexual assault cases on campus, showing that rape culture has pervaded DePaul's institutions. This banner drop was clearly effective—it was covered in *The Huffington Post* and, more importantly, a discussion of how to end rape culture and how DePaul must end its complicity in these matters was sparked on campus.

While these issues may seem unrelated, they are not. *All human rights struggles are intertwined*. Like Angela Davis said, “justice is always indivisible-it should be clear that a mass movement in solidarity with Palestinian freedom is long overdue”. Please join DePaul Divest in showing solidarity with the Palestinian people, who are resisting oppression everyday. Help us call on DePaul to stop investing our tuition dollars in violence and oppression. [We urge you to vote YES to divest in the SGA elections, May 19th through May 23rd.](#)

Vote YES to Divest here: <https://wa.is.depaul.edu/sgavoting/>

For more information, please visit [www.dpudivests.org](http://www.dpudivests.org) or email [sjpdepaul@gmail.com](mailto:sjpdepaul@gmail.com)

## Student Work Spotlight

### Manifestos from Dr. Robin Mitchell's Class

In Dr. Mitchell's course *Feminist Frameworks: Feminist Theory via the Manifesto, Declaration & Statement*, students get the chance to merge feminist theory with activist interventions.

For their final project, students write their own manifesto: a declaration of their personal and political beliefs.

On the following two pages, you will find manifestos from students in Dr. Mitchell's winter quarter *Manifestos* class. Enjoy!

# THE MANIFESTO OF A FORMER FAT GIRL

By Maggie Brawner

Dear Babygirl, I must take this time to tell you how I feel. I must get this guilt off my chest, like the pounds I shed to distance myself from you. I thought that by leaving your body, I would forget. I thought I would forget all of the things you deserve to be told, but I realize now these feelings will never go away. For this reason, I must apologize...

I am so sorry that society hates you and fears they will be you. I am so sorry that you had to constantly fear being whispered about, pitied, or have others validate themselves by your appearance.

I am so sorry that your name was taken from you and you were given names like "big girl" and "fat bitch"

I am so sorry that you met judgmental stares when you picked out a candy bar in the convenience store checkout line.

I am so sorry that songs like "Fat Bottom Girls" exist and are supposed to make you feel better about yourself.

I am so sorry that you had to worry about people being sexually attracted to you, that you had to wonder if every single time a male approached you whether or not it was a joke, they needed money, or they were some freak with a hard-on for chubby girls.

I am so sorry that your appearance gave others the right to make assumptions about your work ethic, your personal hygiene, and your family.

I am so sorry that you were seen by the contours of your stomach fat and not by the content of your character.

I am so sorry that your physical education instructors made you feel like a piece of shit throughout your entire educational career.

I am so sorry that you could not achieve the acting roles you vied for in school because, regardless of the fact that you had all the credentials for the role, you literally did not "fit the part." You were the man. The haggard old woman. The creature.

I am so sorry that the man at the petting zoo wouldn't let you ride the pony when you were six because the little darling "just couldn't handle it."

I am so sorry that others told you that "one day you could be beautiful, if..."

I am so sorry that you had to don gray, baggy, lifeless garments from the women's department at age thirteen, because none of the fun and flirty juniors' clothing catered to your size.

I am so sorry that your body is made into a Halloween costume for others' amusement. I am so sorry that the tiny fucking chairs they made you sit in wouldn't allow your ass to squeeze through.

I am so sorry that summers were hell for you because I feared flaunting your skin. I am so sorry that I allowed others to photo shop you so you wouldn't "ruin the picture"

I am so sorry that I deleted all of the pictures of you.

I am so sorry that I believed enough of what they said to make sure you disappeared forever.

I am so sorry that I starved your strong body in order to make it small and weak to please others.

I am so sorry that I when I run for my races, I do not run toward the finish line, but run away from you.

I am so sorry that I made you quiet so that your voice may not take up as much space as your ass.

I am so sorry that I never let you feel pretty at a school dance.

Baby girl, I am so sorry for what the world has done to you. I am not ashamed of you, and I do not fear becoming you again. I promise you that I will make it up. I swear, I will never allow for another little girl to feel the hatred that you felt ever again.

# THE MUTILATION OF CHOICE MANIFESTO

By Shelby Green

As a child called male, I was given knives for cutting man shaped holes in the world. You are forbidden to cut any shapes not assigned to you. For decades the razor edged Shapes of silent normalcy mutilated any part of me that didn't fit until I was shaved down into a man's outline made of shiny scars. I fit the outline less and less until I was cut too deep and bled gender all over. It was a pretty bright pink color before all that dark blood swirled into it.

I stated that I'm a girl.

I quickly learned the punishments for being seen as a woman of any kind. Hideous violence and a hate so pervasive that to recognize it, is to breathe it. Beauty culture, always hiding in my mind, became a nightmarish pressure of hate and isolation as real and deadly as a man's expectations after a few strong drinks. I fought until a tired narrative limped out to grudgingly proclaim me transgender and give me all new rules to play by. But the new pink razors weren't for cutting woman shaped outlines in the world, they were for slicing off any parts that didn't fit into the male approved female shape.

Why did I accept these rules when I had refused the ones men were given? I was scared and excited. I knew what I had to do, and knew it was the only way. I was wrong as to my choices, but not my decision. I took those new blades made of privilege and expectations, and I used them. Eagerly. I found a doctor, and it worked out as well as he had hoped it would.

I have had over a dozen bones broken in my forehead, brow, and jawline. Cartilage in my nose and throat has been shaved off. I have had fat moved, silicone implanted and screws driven into my bones. I have been laid open with blood spilled across myself and I remember pain like a root canal in my entire skull for well over a month but I will never know the experience of childbirth despite wanting it so badly I ache. Yet this is a staggering privilege I know.

I do not regret what I did.

I am not angry about this. Given these choices, among many, I would chose to do it all again.  
But I wasn't given many choices.

I am angry about being fooled, about believing the media narrative that there was "only" one way to be a woman. How dare this be something defined by men. I am angry that any doubt is called a lack of dedication. I am angry that we are silenced when curious instead of encouraged to explore what woman means. My body was offered up as a penance of blood and coin to the ONLY way I was told I could be a woman. Beauty culture in concentrated form.

The Normal mutilates us by lying about or removing our ability to see other options.  
What are these supposed choices women are given?

A childless woman is told she lacks maternal instinct.

Child or not, she is a woman.

A lesbian woman will be told she hasn't met the right man yet or be shamed.

Partner or not, she is a woman.

A heavy woman must be thin or she will be shamed.

Size or shape aside, she is a woman.

An intersex woman must have a vagina or she is deformed.

There is no lacking, she is a woman.

A trans woman must be shaped by surgery or will be told she isn't really trying.

Her privilege or decision on this means nothing, she is a woman.

Any woman who speaks of sexual pleasure will be called a slut.

Her pleasure is hers, she is a woman.

Any woman who refuses sexual pleasure will be called a prude.

Her decisions change nothing, she is a woman.

A woman is only a woman when a man calls her one.

Wrong. She is a woman by her voice alone.

Choices are not free floating ideas without history or intention. I made the only choice I was shown was possible by a biased world and later understood that choice to be coercive. I would make the same choice now. Eagerly again. This does not forgive the crime of omission by the patriarchy.

That crime, of tainting a choice I would have made freely, is one I cannot ever forgive the patriarchy of. My right to chose, even in agreement, was erased. I now realize that if something is the ONLY choice it is no choice at all. I listened because I didn't know better. I was told not to question. No doubt was allowed. I was robbed of the decision to choose the body I have even though I would choose the same path again. That is a moment that was stolen.

I will speak to different choices and ways to be a woman, especially if those ways are not mine.

Exploring what makes us women is an act of revolution that is mutilated every time we believe it when told that we don't have any choices.

# 2014 GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS



**Hannah Arwe:** Resistance through Healing: Responding to Secondary Trauma in Anti-Violence Work

**Carolyne Luna:** Feminist Comedians: Fey, Kaling, and Peohler Maneuver the Double-Edged Sword

**Brittany Boulton:** Anti-Racist, Inter-Generational, Sustainable Feminist Coalitions: The Necessarily Wordy Answer to How Advocates Can Create and Sustain Progressive Public Policy

**Molly Pim:** Literature for Girls and the Preadolescent Novel: A Historical Analysis and Recommendations for Challenging the Status Quo

**Katherine Markiewicz:** No Answers, Just Better Questions: An Interdisciplinary Journey of Knowledge Transitions

**West Duncan:** Fathoms Beneath Us: Changing the Tide of Female Empowerment through Sailing

**Karla J. Muldowney:** Moving from "I" to "We": Threading Together the Pieces of a Latina Identity

## Presentations

*Friday June 6, 2014*

Student Center, 314 A&B  
5:00pm-7:00pm | Reception to Follow



**Alexandra De Leon:** Gendered Policy and Resistance: Journeying from a US to a Transnational Perspective

**Celia DeBoer:** Working Women and the Lilly Ledbetter Act: A Case Study on Misleading Rhetoric of Equal Pay

**Lee Westrick:** (Re)Born This Way

**Katie Hallam:** Reproductive Justice, Activist Art, and Zines: An Artistic Examination of the Reproductive Justice Movement

**Buki Ogundipe:** The Afrogaze: Graphic Narratives, Storytelling and Afrofuturist Possibilities

**Sarah Hughes:** Linear Realizations: From Second-Wave Feminism to Globalized Militarization and Sexual Violence

**Pidgeon Pagonis:** The Son I Never Had: Reflections on Growing up Intersex

# WHITE PRIVILEGE CONFERENCE

## A Reflection

By: Aiden Michael Bettine

Over spring break, I joined a group of DePaul students attending the White Privilege Conference (WPC) in Madison, WI. I was given this opportunity through the Dialogues Project, a collaborative effort through the Women's and Gender Studies Program and the Center for Intercultural Programs. WPC was a three day experience jam packed with keynote speakers, workshops, and caucuses. The goal of WPC is to address white privilege and to learn strategies to confront privilege and oppression.

As a historian, it was great to learn new, accessible tools for understanding how historical oppression affects our present society. I learned so much, and was truly inspired by a lot of the important work happening at WPC.

Despite many powerful workshops, I was surprised at the overwhelming heteronormativity of the conference. There was no discussion of queerness or place to discuss the intersection at which queer people of color live and herteronormative institutions. We cannot dismantle racist institutions without dismantling sexist, heterosexist, ableist, and transphobic institutions. The systems of power in our society are intersectionally oppressive, so we have to do intersectional activist work in return. I was surprised that this understanding was absent at WPC, except among a minority of the participants.

I was also surprised to witness a lot of unrecognized white privilege, classism, and ageism from fellow attendees and presenters. People of color were often cut off when participating in workshops; some white people completely dominated discussions, not allowing room for others to speak or for listening. This was not what I expected. I did expect racism to be present at the conference, but not to such an extreme degree. Unfortunately most of the time I sat, frozen with frustration, as a silent bystander and did nothing to intervene in the oppression happening right in front of me.

The biggest lesson I learned at the conference was that self-work around my own white privilege, white supremacy, and racism will never be done. A majority of the conference participants were white people, some of whom have been doing antiracist work for longer than I have been alive, and they still managed to take up space in a very racist, privileged way. This made me realize that even though I can call myself an antiracist activist, it does not mean that my self-work is done. I am still learning, and I always will be.

Through attending WPC I have also learned to appreciate our DePaul community in new ways. Many of my peers on the trip were also frustrated by the conference. Our group had endless conversations about the racism around us, as well as our own ideas and approaches to antiracist work. I would not have survived WPC without the support without this community.

I also was able to realize how much I have learned about privilege, oppression, and antiracist work through my time at DePaul. Although our campus is far from perfect, there are so many amazing professors, staff, and peers committed to social justice work. Without them, I would not have even been aware of the ways that racism was manifested at WPC.

I do not regret going to WPC. Though far from my expectations, it was a valuable learning experience. I want to attend WPC next year and challenge myself to break out of my passive bystander role and confront the oppression happening all around us.

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*Aiden is a third year student double majoring in History and African and Black Diaspora Studies with a newly declared minor in Women's and Gender Studies. He is also a Leadership Development Coordinator in the Student Leadership Institute.*



*From all of us here in the WGS Department:*  
**Congratulations to everyone graduating this year!**  
You did it! Best wishes and lots of love to each of you!



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Cherríe Moraga & Andrea Smith

*The Roots of Resistance:  
Women's Spiritualities & Social Activism*

Thursday, May 22 | 7:00pm  
Cortelyou Commons

## HIV Testing

*Free*

Wednesday, May 28 | 11:00am - 3:30pm  
Loop Campus | DePaul Center 11001

Thursday, May 29 | 11:00am - 3:00pm  
LP Campus | Student Center 315 & 316

## Lavender Graduation & Stonewall Awards

Wednesday, May 28 | 5:30pm  
Cortelyou Commons

## Dandelions in the Concrete

Friday, May 30 | 5:00pm - 8:00pm  
SAC Pit

## Queer Prom

*Suggested Donation 10\$ | Formal Event*

Friday, May 30 | 8:00pm - 10:00pm  
DePaul Art Museum

## WGS Annual Spring Luncheon

*Celebrate the achievements of our graduates and faculty*

Wednesday, June 4 | 12:00pm - 2:00pm  
DePaul Art Museum | 2nd Floor  
935 W. Fullerton Ave

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY  
WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES  
NEWSLETTER

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