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Message from the Coordinator

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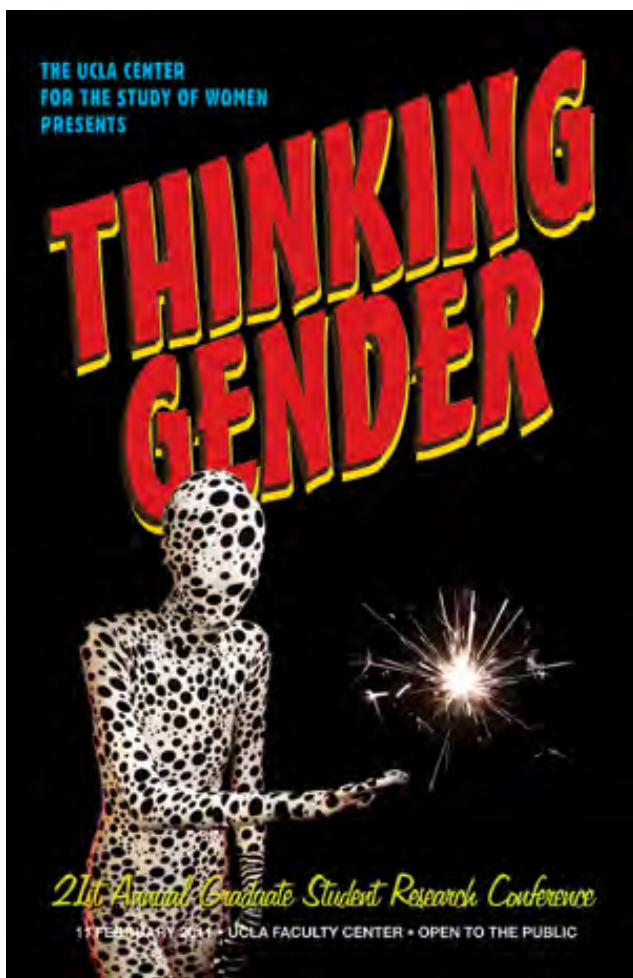
THINKING GENDER

Special Issue!!

on the 21st Annual Graduate Student Research Conference



Message from the Coordinator



WHEN I BEGAN MY TENURE as Thinking Gender 2011 Conference Coordinator, I was thrilled by the opportunity. Having presented at two previous Thinking Gender conferences and attended two others, I knew what would be in store for me at the 21st annual graduate student research conference: a thoroughly enjoyable and thought-provoking day characterized by open dialogue, networking, intellectual rigor, and excitement. This year's conference did not disappoint!

Thinking Gender 2011 had an excellent turnout and attendees (especially those who were visiting from more wintry climates) found time to enjoy the fortuitously sunny day—typical of Southern California, but not of recent Thinking Gender conferences—between panels. As in past years, we featured panelists from all over the world, some traveling from as far as Nigeria and Israel. One thing that distinguished

this year's conference from those of previous years, however, was the high number of multi-disciplinary panels. A panel on "Transgender Enlightenment," for instance, featured papers on kinship relations and male-to-female gender transition, transsexual male pornographer Buck Angel, the "psychic dick," and the examination of gender through the lens of sex discrimination law. Our wonderful moderators did an excellent job of identifying connections among such diverse papers, facilitating thoughtful discussion, and providing helpful feedback on the presentations. The panelists and attendees whom I spoke with generally agreed that the interdisciplinary nature of the panels led to provocative and insightful questions and comments following the presentations.

This year's plenary panel on women and business was also a resounding success. Entitled "Making It Our Business: Development, Cof-



fee, Sex, and the Workforce," the panel featured a diverse group of papers—focusing on subaltern Filipinas and micro-credit, transgender phenomena in the fair trade coffee

collective Café Femenino, women filmmakers in the adult video industry, and gender and sexual orientation as factors in hiring and compensation decisions. Along with Stephanie Santos, Evangeline Heiliger, and Benjamin Everly, I was honored to be among the plenary presenters. As in previous years, the plenary session was full to overflowing. As I spoke from the podium, it was heartening (if a bit nerve-wracking!) to present my research to a room packed with roughly 150 audience members; including a number of people standing in the back of the room. Although the presenters approached

their very different topics from an array of disciplinary perspectives, the moderator, Professor Purnima Mankekar, seamlessly tied together the papers and initiated a fruitful and lively discussion in the Q&A session.

I have consistently found that, unlike many large disciplinary conferences, Thinking Gender tends to generate a supportive (rather than competitive) atmosphere, which lends itself to positive experiences. Nonetheless, I was thrilled to receive abundant positive feedback, both in person and in the conference evaluation forms. Many conference attendees and moderators remarked on how much they enjoyed the experience, and a number of presenters expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to make excellent contacts and engage in lively academic conversation. One moderator in particular noted the air of excitement and scholarly exchange and expressed her wish that conferences like *Thinking Gender* had been around when she was a graduate student.

To all who were unable to attend or would

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Some of the presentations from Thinking Gender 2011 are available for viewing on the UCLA YouTube channel.

simply like to relive the experience of the conference, I am pleased to announce that many of the presentations from this and previous conferences are available at CSW's site on the California Digital Library: <http://www.escholarship.org/csw>. Videos of some of the sessions from this year's conference can be viewed on the UCLA YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/UCLA>.

The conference could not, of course, have been so successful without the invaluable contributions of the moderators and presenters, the generous support of CSW's donors, and the smiling faces of the conference attendees. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank CSW Director Kathleen McHugh; CSW staff members Julie Childers, Brenda Johnson-Grau, Erma Acebo, and Emily Walker; and CSW's work-study students, GSRs, and volunteers for their hard work and dedication. The regular staff meetings to prepare for the conference were consistently productive and informative, and—as the brainstorming sessions were frequently punctuated with good-natured laughter—I was pleasantly surprised to discover that they were

also fun! This year, aside from Kathleen and Brenda, the staff was entirely new to *Thinking Gender*, and so I am all the more grateful for and impressed by their incredibly helpful contributions. I am especially indebted to Kathleen for her ongoing support, guidance, and mentorship. She is always generous with her time and quick with an insightful suggestion, and the continued success of *Thinking Gender* is a testament to her efforts.

—Jen Moorman